

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 23, 2013

The Honorable John Boehner  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

We are writing to strongly object to your decision to issue a partisan Republican staff report on Benghazi and dispense with House procedures for vetting official committee reports to correct inaccuracies and mischaracterizations. By abandoning regular order and excluding Democratic Members entirely from this process, you are unnecessarily politicizing our national security and casting aside the system used by the House for generations to avoid making obvious mistakes, errors, and omissions.

Each of our committees has adopted rules governing the consideration, vetting, and adoption of official committee reports. They require that our Committee Members receive copies of proposed investigative reports several days before they are taken up for consideration, that our Committees approve reports at official business meetings with a quorum present, and that all of our Committee Members have the ability to file supplemental, minority, or additional views.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of these rules is to ensure that any report issued by our Committees has been subjected to at least a minimal level of consideration, debate, and substantive review. These procedures provide all Members—including both Republicans and Democrats—with the opportunity to review drafts, evaluate evidence including documents and interview transcripts, and propose amendments during regular business meetings to ensure that statements of fact are accurate and that conclusions are fully supported.

We are concerned that by issuing this staff report with only five Republican Committee Chairmen, you are sacrificing accuracy in favor of partisanship. You have stated repeatedly over the past several months that “It’s time for us to get back to regular order here in Congress.”<sup>2</sup> Yet, recent press accounts indicate that you are abandoning regular order on Benghazi and

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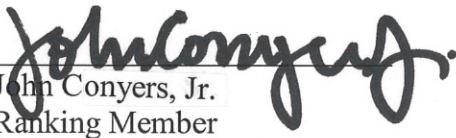
<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Rule 4(a), (b), (c), and (d), Resolution Adopting the Rules of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, 113th Congress (online at <http://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Committee-Rules-113th-Congress.pdf>).

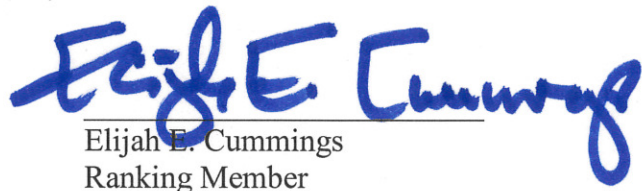
<sup>2</sup> Blog, Representative John Boehner (Mar. 4, 2013) (online at <http://boehner.house.gov/blog/?postid=321916>).

choosing to pursue this highly partisan approach because you are “trying to head off a GOP rebellion” over the way this investigation has been handled.<sup>3</sup>


Although staff reports may be appropriate in some circumstances, we do not believe a partisan staff report should be used in this case, which involves the death of a U.S. Ambassador and three other Americans and is based on sensitive and classified national security information. For all of these reasons, we urge you to abandon this partisan political approach to our country’s national security and work with us in a bipartisan manner going forward.

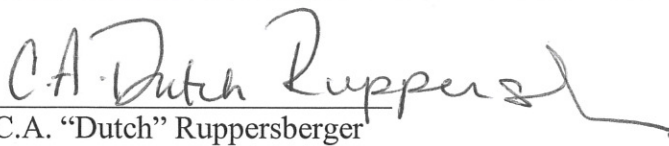
Sincerely,

  
John Conyers, Jr.  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary

  
Elijah E. Cummings  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

  
Eliot L. Engel  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Foreign Affairs

  
Adam Smith  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services

  
C.A. “Dutch” Ruppertsberger  
Ranking Member  
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

cc: The Honorable Bob Goodlatte, Committee on the Judiciary  
The Honorable Darrell E. Issa, Chairman, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
The Honorable Ed Royce, Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs  
The Honorable Buck McKeon, Chairman, Committee on Armed Services  
The Honorable Mike Rogers, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

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<sup>3</sup> *Boehner’s Hand Forced on Benghazi*, The Hill (Apr. 17, 2013) (online at <http://thehill.com/blogs/global-affairs/terrorism/294375-boehners-hand-forced-on-benghazi>).