



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

July 20, 2015

The Honorable Trey Gowdy, Chairman
Select Committee on Benghazi
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As you know, the United States and our P5+1 Partners recently concluded a historic deal to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. The Iran Nuclear Review Act of 2015 provides for a 60-day review period of this deal. During this time, we will be engaging intensively with the Congress to ensure that Members have the opportunity to fully analyze and assess this deal. This will include a series of briefings and hearings, as well as other Congressional engagement. This review is important to the Congress, and we have committed to make this a priority.

As a result, the next two weeks before Congress adjourns for its summer recess are a key time in which the Department must focus its efforts on answering Congress's questions regarding our deal with Iran. We take very seriously the role that Congress has asked the Department to play during its review and are looking forward to the hearings and briefings scheduled for the limited number of business days before Congress adjourns.

Your staff recently suggested the Department provide the Secretary's Chief of Staff next week for a hearing before the Select Committee on document production, notwithstanding his central role in the Iran negotiations and his limited role in document production. This will not be possible. The Secretary and his key staff who have been involved in the Iran issue for years must focus their efforts on this critical national security issue next week, and in particular on responding to the House and Senate's questions and concerns.

The Department will of course continue its work on complying with the Benghazi Committee's requests for documents and information. We are actively working on preparing documents for production to the Benghazi Committee, as well as scheduling interview dates for the 18 individuals the Committee recently

identified. We are also working to respond to your recent letters, which make a number of new requests for documents and information. We are making good progress and anticipate making at least one more substantial production and facilitating three interviews before Congress goes on recess.

In short, our cooperation will continue and you will continue to see tangible results. However, we cannot participate in the hearing your staff suggested for next week. Of course, we would be happy to discuss finding an appropriate witness to testify before the Committee on an appropriate date.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julia Frifield". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julia Frifield
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs

cc: The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings