



Securing U.S. Diplomatic Facilities and Personnel Abroad: Legislative and Executive Branch Initiatives

Alex Tiersky

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The September 11, 2012, attack on U.S. facilities in Benghazi, Libya, prompted sustained congressional attention on the specific circumstances of the events in question, as well as broader questions regarding how U.S. diplomatic personnel and facilities abroad are secured. Ensuring that the Department of State is better prepared for the possibility of similar attacks in the future has been a central congressional concern.

The Department of State undertook a number of measures in response to the attack, including immediate steps to bolster security at posts around the world; an investigation of the incident through an Accountability Review Board; and longer-term measures implementing the board's recommendations, including requests for significantly greater funding than in recent years.

Congress has conducted oversight through investigations by a number of committees and through a number of hearings. Members have also put forward legislative proposals on issues ranging from the composition of Accountability Review Boards to procedures for awarding local security guard force contracts.

In the 113th Congress, two wide-ranging bills incorporating many of these areas have been considered and approved by committees: H.R. 2848, the Department of State Operations and Embassy Security Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2014, and S. 1386, the Chris Stevens, Sean Smith, Tyrone Woods, and Glen Doherty Embassy Security, Threat Mitigation, and Personnel Protection Act of 2013.

This report briefly summarizes and tracks congressional and State Department actions in response to the attack, and will be updated as necessary to reflect further developments and actions on ongoing policy proposals. Readers seeking background information on recent embassy attacks, State Department policies and procedures relevant to embassy security, or information on recent year embassy security funding trends should consult CRS Report R42834, Securing U.S. Diplomatic Facilities and Personnel Abroad: Background and Policy Issues.



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