



One Hundred Thirteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

September 26, 2014

Mrs. Julia A. Pierson
Director
United States Secret Service
Washington, D.C. 20223

Dear Director Pierson,

I write today concerning the events of September 19, 2014, when a subject identified as 42-year-old Omar Gonzalez scaled the north fence and ran to the unlocked front doors of the White House. Fortunately, Gonzalez was stopped, but not before he ran nearly 70 yards across the White House lawn and entered the White House complex. I sincerely appreciated you taking the time to brief me personally after the incident occurred and sharing your plan of action.

However, it was recently announced that Gonzalez was under indictment for a weapons related offense in Virginia stemming from a pursuit on July 19, 2014, and had been stopped by the Uniformed Division of the Secret Service on August 25, 2014 after observant officers near the south fence of the White House noticed a hatchet in his waistband. At the time of his arrest in Virginia, Gonzalez was in possession of a sawed-off shotgun, two rifles, and a map with the White House clearly marked.

My colleagues on the Committee on Homeland Security and I remain concerned about this security breach. We are also concerned about what could be perceived as a lack of communication between state officials and the U.S. Secret Service concerning potential threats to the President.

In order to better assist this Committee in its efforts to support the Secret Service, please provide responses to the following questions:

1. What is the timeline of events related to the incursion by Gonzalez from the date of his arrest on July 19, 2014 to the point he was apprehended on September 19?
2. What is the process for receiving and acting on information from state or local law enforcement that involves not only specific threats to the President and First Family, but also issues that could involve threats to the White House complex, as seen with Gonzalez in July 2014?

3. What are your recommendations to better fortify the White House complex? Specifically, what short and long-term steps is the Secret Service taking to improve security at the White House complex? What additional training, if any, will Uniformed Division officers receive in response to this incident?
4. When was the current Secret Service Use of Force Policy last updated for the White House complex?
5. Please outline the policies for the use of deadly force at the White House complex.
6. To what extent does the presence or absence of the President and First Family affect the level of authorized force, personnel assignments, and the mission posture for officers responsible for external White House Security, if at all?
7. What role did canine units play in the incident?
8. When will Secret Service complete its internal investigation and what is the scope of this investigation?
9. Will personnel found to be responsible for the breach be held accountable?
10. When was the last comprehensive risk assessment conducted of the White House complex?
11. What can the Congress do to enhance and strengthen the protective mission of the Secret Service?

Please provide a classified and/or unclassified written response to the Committee no later than October 10, 2014. If you have any questions, please have your staff contact Mr. Ryan Consaul with the Committee on Homeland Security Majority Staff at (202) 226-8417.

Sincerely,



MICHAEL T. McCAUL
Chairman

Cc: The Honorable Jeh Johnson, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security