

(U.S.)-White House Has 'Grave Concern' On Delayed Nominees

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Photo: Chuck Hagel

WASHINGTON (AP) - The new White House chief of staff says there's "a grave concern" about delays in assembling President Barack Obama's second-term national security team.

Senate Republicans have stalled the nominations of Chuck Hagel to be defense secretary and John Brennan to be CIA director.

GOP lawmakers want more answers about the White House's handling of the Sept. 11 attack on a diplomatic facility in Benghazi, Libya - but Hagel had no role in that crisis.

Obama aide Denis McDonough says Hagel, a Vietnam combat veteran and a former Republican senator, is well-qualified to lead the Pentagon. McDonough says Hagel "has one thing in mind: 'How do we protect the country?'"

As for Brennan, Republicans are demanding more details about Benghazi and about drone strikes against suspected terrorists.