

BENGHAZI: THE ATTACKS AND THE LESSONS LEARNED

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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JANUARY 23, 2013
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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2013

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:03 a.m., in room SH-216, Hart Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert Menendez presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez, Boxer, Cardin, Casey, Shaheen, Coons, Durbin, Udall, Murphy, Kaine, Corker, Risch, Rubio, Johnson, Flake, McCain, Barrasso, and Paul.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY

Senator MENENDEZ. Good morning. The committee will come to order.

Let me begin by welcoming the new members to the committee—Senators Kaine and Murphy, Senators Johnson, McCain, Flake, and Paul. Since the full Senate has not yet passed the committee resolution officially seating members, I want to ask unanimous consent of returning members to allow our prospective members to participate in today's hearing; and if there is no objection, so ordered.

Madam Secretary, let me welcome you and thank you for honoring your commitment to come before the committee after the Administrative Review Board's findings. You said you would after the findings were completed, and you had a bit of an intervening challenge, but we are thrilled to see you here today doing well and taking time out of your schedule in these final days to discuss the tragic events that occurred in Benghazi on September the 11th and the lessons we need to learn from that event to ensure that all American personnel are fully protected and our embassies are fully secure wherever they are.

In your tenure as Secretary of State and your appearances before this committee, you have always been upfront, forthright, and energetic in defending our Foreign Service officers and their needs, and I, for one, commend you for it. Unfortunately, the tragic events in Benghazi are a sad reminder of the inherent risks that come with diplomatic engagement in parts of the world that are struggling to build new governments from what has often been chaotic situations and underscore the very real courage of the unsung men and women who put their lives at risk to serve this Nation's interests abroad.

Let me say that I respect what you have done during your tenure as Secretary of State in representing not only this Nation, but those in our Foreign Service who are on the diplomatic front lines in turbulent and dangerous parts of the globe. It is a reflection of your leadership as well as your patriotism and your abiding belief in the power of our policies to move the world toward democracy, peace, and the preservation of human rights.

Your candor before this committee has been a trademark of your service as Secretary of State, and I believe that every member has always welcomed your openness and your cooperation. Your letter of December 18 to Chairman Kerry was appreciated by members of both sides as another example of that openness and cooperation.

Let me say that we share your mission and that we look forward to a constructive dialogue today to learn from the events that occurred in Benghazi and to devise better policies to protect the nearly 70,000 men and women serving in Washington, DC, and at more than 275 posts around the world.

Ambassador Chris Stevens, Sean Smith, Tyrone Woods, and Glen Doherty lost their lives on September 11, 2012, during terrorist attacks on the special mission in Benghazi. As a committee, we honor their service to our Nation and we grieve with their families, but we also resolve to take specific actions to prevent future incidents.

We may not be able to prevent every single terrorist attack in the future, but we can—and we must—make sure that our embassies and employees, starting with those in high-risk, high-threat posts, are capable of withstanding such an attack. To that end, Secretary Clinton and the Department of State have embraced and agreed to implement all 29 of the Administrative Review Board's recommendations. Today we will hear more about the progress that the State Department has already made toward implementing many of these recommendations.

But I would add that Congress is not without responsibility here. We also have an obligation to do our part to comply with the Administrative Review Board's recommendations. It is my intention to work with the members of the committee and the State Department in the coming months on legislation that will improve security and better protect our employees.

One of the first and easiest things we can do is ensure that the State Department's contracting rules allow for sufficient flexibility to allow them to quickly make decisions where security is at risk and to hire local guards, not only on the basis of the lowest price technically acceptable, but also on a best-value basis, to ensure that we are not just checking the box when it comes to securing our buildings and protecting our people.

State has this authority through March in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq, but value should be a priority in all locations and particularly in high-risk environments. We are also looking at situations where sole-source contracting may be appropriate for certain security-related contacts.

The Administrative Review Board also supports expanding the Marine Security Guard Program, hiring and equipping more Diplomatic Security personnel and authorizing full funding for the embassy construction Capital Cost-Sharing Program. The Capital

Cost-Sharing Program for embassy construction was created in the aftermath of the 1998 bombings of the U.S. Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam that resulted in 224 deaths, including 11 American citizens.

In its first year, it funded the construction of 13 new facilities, followed by 11 in 2006 and 9 in 2005. Nearly every year since, fewer facilities have been built than in the previous year due to both decreases in funding and the fact that the allocations to the account have never been indexed to inflation. Costs in the construction industry worldwide have risen tremendously.

At the current anticipated funding rate for fiscal year 2013, the Department of State estimates it will be able to construct just three new facilities, though there are several dozen posts that have now been designated as High Risk, High Threat Posts that need to be replaced immediately.

But the lessons of Benghazi aren't only about adequately resourcing our security operations. They are also about the flow of information between the State Department and our foreign facilities, within the Department itself, among all the agencies engaged in international work, and between the Department and Congress. The Department should be assessing and regularly designating which posts it considers to be high threat and high risk, using that information to drive decisions about security, and reporting to Congress on the security conditions at these posts.

The Administrative Review Board also makes it clear that there were failures in Benghazi that resulted in an inadequate security posture and that responsibility for these failures was shared by Washington, by the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli, and by the inexact and nonstatus designation of the special mission. This left unclear what the security requirements of the mission were, or should be, and left staff in the field with limited ability and resources to fix the situation. Clearly, that needs to change.

There are two other crucial points made by the Administrative Review Board that I think deserve broader attention by members of this committee. First, the ARB emphasized the growing challenge faced by all American officials operating overseas of how to remain active in high-threat environments, and how to get out beyond the fortified walls of our facilities to conduct the direct local interaction required for effective diplomacy. How do we remain accessible to foreign governments, civil society, and the private sector while still securing our embassies and protecting our people in these environments?

Second, the Administrative Review Board correctly points out that the Department of State has been resource-challenged for many years, and this has constrained our missions and led to the husbanding of resources to such a degree that restricting the use of resources, even for security, has become a conditioned response.

Decisions about security resources are being made more on costs than on need and value. The answer cannot be to cut more from other foreign affairs accounts to fund security. That approach fails to recognize that diplomacy and foreign aid are but downpayments that yield dividends to us in terms of good will, open borders for the export of American products, protection of our intellectual

property, and, most importantly, cooperation on security and counterterrorism.

So there is a lot to discuss. Madam Secretary, welcome again. We very much appreciate your time.

On a personal note, since this is likely to be your last hearing before this committee—and your leadership will be missed—I know I speak for many when I say that you have been an outstanding Secretary of State, an exemplary representative of American foreign policy and American values and interests to every leader around the world. You have changed the face of America abroad and extended the hospitable reach of our Nation to ordinary citizens, as well as to world leaders.

During your tenure, you have steered us through economic crises in Europe, dealt with changing relations with Asia, regime changes in the Arab world, a momentous transition in Libya, and a trend toward global strength based on economics rather than arms. I personally appreciate that you have used your office to aggressively implement sanctions against Iran.

In addition to these priorities, on nearly every trip you have taken—I think, the most traveled Secretary in history—you also supported, met with, and provided a voice to those individuals that do not live in the limelight—women, children, the LGBT community, and religious minorities. You have made a real difference in the lives of so many people, and for that, you have the thanks of a grateful nation.

I know you will not go gently from the world stage, and I look forward to working closely with you in the future.

We thank you for your service here in the Senate and as Secretary of State. We welcome you back any time to talk about the issues of the day, recognizing that you may not care to spend any more time in that chair than you already have, but we certainly appreciate your incredible service.

With that, let me turn to my friend and colleague, the new ranking member of the committee, Senator Corker.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BOB CORKER,
U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE**

Senator CORKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for your comments and also for following through, as we have all discussed, to have this hearing today.

I want to welcome the new committee members, and I know there will be a time for us to talk a little bit about the committee going forward. In many ways, this is closing out business from before, but I thank you very much again for having this hearing and look forward to working with everybody on the committee.

Madam Secretary, I want to thank you also. I know we have had a number of conversations over the last several weeks and actually over the last 4 years. And I want to thank you for coming in today and honoring the commitment that you made some time ago.

I know you have had some health issues, still ongoing, and yet you are here today. And I think we all respect the tremendous amount of hard work that you have put forth over the last 4 years. You have probably traveled more than any Secretary of State in history and came at your job in the way we all thought you would,

with hard work and diligence, and I know all of us appreciate the transparency with which you talk to all of us and, candidly, with irreverence from time to time, which is much appreciated.

I do want to say that Benghazi, I think, to all of us represents a lot of different things. In some ways, the aftermath in particular that we saw, it represents the very worst of Washington. The most bizarre briefing I think I ever attended was the briefing we had on September 20, where the intelligence community said more than nothing, and it was a bizarre briefing at best.

It happened in the middle of a political campaign, and obviously, there was a lot of spin from the White House and a lot of comments made on both sides of the aisle, which heightened a lot of the focus on Benghazi. I think it also represented a sclerotic Department that in many ways made decisions that were not based on what was best for those in the field.

I think it represented in many ways a denial of the world as it really is today. And I think, after reading the ARB, it also represented to me a committee that has never done its work, or at least in the 6 years that I have been here has never done the kind of oversight that this committee ought to do.

But I think it also represents an awakening. I know that you have known this and I know especially many of the members on this committee have known this: the spiking of the ball and the thinking that when Osama bin Laden was gone that was the end of al-Qaeda; we know nothing could be further from the truth.

And the Arab Spring has actually ushered in a time where al-Qaeda is on the rise. The world in many ways is even more dangerous, as we lack a central command and instead have these nodes that are scattered throughout North Africa and other places. And I think this creates an opportunity for us to develop a policy that really addresses the world as it really is today.

And then, thirdly, Madam Secretary, I know that it was a great personal loss to you that Chris Stevens died in the way that he did and his three colleagues died in the way that they did. I know that you know I was on the ground in Libya immediately after this, and I know you have experienced this and some of the other members of the committee have as well. But to look at the faces of those on the ground in Libya, they were in a state of shock. Those people that we sent there doing expeditionary diplomacy, who felt like they were on a tether and, candidly, did not have the support from Washington that they needed to do the things that they needed to do.

So I think this is an opportunity for us to examine the systemic failures. I know that you are going to be, as per our conversation last night, as transparent as you have always been. I think this is a great opportunity for the incoming Secretary to learn from what has happened.

And I know that many times political appointees have great difficulties with the bureaucracy that exists within a department, or sometimes people feel they can wait you out until the next person comes along. So I think this is an opportunity for us to look at those failures.

I think it is an opportunity for us also as a committee, but also as a country to develop a foreign policy that reflects, again, the dynamics of the region as they really are today.

And then, lastly, I think this is an opportunity for this committee to finally do the work that it should have been doing for years. When you read the ARB report you realize that we have never done an authorization of the State Department in the 6 years that I have been here. We have never looked at how foreign aid has been spent. We have never done a top-to-bottom review. I know that is something that people like you, who come to this position, look at as something that is healthy and can be done in partnership.

I know there was some mention of cost, and I was really disappointed with the ARB when the first thing that came out of the mouths of two people that I respect was money, money, money. The fact is this committee would have no idea whether the appropriate amount of money was being spent that could have prevented what happened in Benghazi, because we have never done an authorization.

So I look at this as a tremendous opportunity, and I want to close again by thanking you for your service, thanking you for your friendship, thanking you for your transparency, and I certainly look forward to your testimony. I know it will be presented in a way that will be constructive and helpful to us in the future.

Thank you.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Senator Corker.

With that, Madam Secretary, we welcome your remarks.

STATEMENT OF HON. HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON, SECRETARY OF STATE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Secretary CLINTON. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, members of the committee, both older and new, I am very grateful for this opportunity, and I thank you very much for your patience to give me the chance to come and address these issues with you.

As both the chairman and the ranking member have said, the terrorist attacks in Benghazi on September 11, 2012, that claimed the lives of four brave Americans—Chris Stevens, Sean Smith, Tyrone Woods, and Glen Doherty—are part of a broader strategic challenge to the United States and our partners in North Africa. Today, I want briefly to offer some context for this challenge, share what we have learned, how we are protecting our people, and where we can work together to not only honor our fallen colleagues, but continue to champion America's interests and values.

Any clear-eyed examination of this matter must begin with this sobering fact. Since 1988, there have been 19 Accountability Review Boards investigating attacks on American diplomats and their facilities. Benghazi joins a long list of tragedies for our Department, for other agencies, and for America—hostages taken in Tehran in 1979, our Embassy and Marine barracks bombed in Beirut in 1983, Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia in 1996, our Embassies in East Africa in 1998, consulate staff murdered in Jeddah in 2004, the Khost attack in 2009, and too many others.

Since 1977, 65 American diplomatic personnel have been killed by terrorists.

Now, of course, the list of attacks foiled, crises averted, and lives saved is even longer. We should never forget that our security professionals get it right more than 99 percent of the time against difficult odds all over the world. That is why, like my predecessors, I literally trust them with my life.

Let us also remember that administrations of both parties, in partnership with Congress, have made concerted and good faith efforts to learn from these attacks and deaths, to implement recommendations from the review boards, to seek the necessary resources, and to do better in protecting our people from what has become constantly evolving threats. That is the least that the men and women who serve our country deserve. It is what, again, we are doing again now with your help. As Secretary, I have no higher priority and no greater responsibility.

As I have said many times, I take responsibility, and nobody is more committed to getting this right. I am determined to leave the State Department and our country safer, stronger, and more secure.

Now, taking responsibility meant moving quickly in those first uncertain hours and days to respond to the immediate crisis, but also to further protect our people and posts in high-threat areas across the region and the world. It meant launching an independent investigation to determine exactly what happened in Benghazi and to recommend steps for improvement. And it meant intensifying our efforts to combat terrorism and figure out effective ways to support the emerging democracies in North Africa and beyond.

Let me share some of the lessons we have learned, the steps we have taken, and the work we continue to do. First, let us start on the night of September 11 itself and those difficult early days.

I directed our response from the State Department, stayed in close contact with officials from across our Government and the Libyan Government. So I saw firsthand what Ambassador Pickering and former Chairman Mullen called “timely and exceptional coordination.” No delays in decisionmaking. No denials of support from Washington or from our military.

And I want to echo the review board’s praise for the valor and courage of our people on the ground, especially the security professionals in Benghazi and Tripoli. The board said the response saved American lives in real time, and it did.

The very next morning I told the American people that “heavily armed militants assaulted our compound,” and I vowed to bring them to justice. And I stood with President Obama in the Rose Garden as he spoke of “an act of terror.”

It is also important to recall that in that same period, we were seeing violent attacks on our Embassies in Cairo, Sana’a, Tunis, and Khartoum, as well as large protests outside many other posts where thousands of our diplomats serve. So I immediately ordered a review of our security posture around the world, with particular scrutiny for high-threat posts.

I asked the Department of Defense to join Interagency Security Assessment Teams and to dispatch hundreds of additional Marine security guards. I named the first Deputy Assistant Secretary of

State for High Threat Posts so missions in dangerous places get the attention they need. And we reached out to Congress to help address physical vulnerabilities, including risks from fire, and to hire additional diplomatic security personnel.

Second, even as we took these steps, I hurried to appoint the Accountability Review Board, led by Ambassador Pickering and Admiral Mullen, so we could more fully understand from objective, independent examination what went wrong and how to fix it. I have accepted every one of their recommendations. I asked the Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources to lead a task force to ensure that all 29 of them are implemented quickly and completely, as well as pursuing additional steps above and beyond the recommendations.

I also pledged in my letter to you last month that implementation would begin, and it has. Our task force started by translating the recommendations into 64 specific action items. They were assigned to bureaus and offices with clear timelines for completion.

Eighty-five percent are now on track to be completed by the end of March. A number are already completed, and we will use this opportunity to take a top-to-bottom look and rethink how we make decisions on where, when, and whether people operate in high-threat areas, and then how we respond to threats and crises.

We are initiating an annual High Threat Post Review chaired by the Secretary of State and ongoing reviews by the Deputy Secretaries to ensure that pivotal questions about security do reach the highest levels. We will regularize protocols for sharing information with Congress. These are designed to increase the safety of our diplomats and development experts and reduce the chances of another Benghazi happening again.

We have also been moving forward on a third front—addressing the broader strategic challenge in North Africa and the wider region because, after all, Benghazi did not happen in a vacuum. The Arab revolutions have scrambled power dynamics and shattered security forces across the region. Instability in Mali has created an expanding safe haven for terrorists who look to extend their influence and plot further attacks of the kind we saw just last week in Algeria.

And let me offer our deepest condolences to the families of the Americans and all the people from many nations who were killed and injured in that recent hostage crisis. We are in close touch with the Government of Algeria. We stand ready to provide assistance. We are seeking to gain a fuller understanding of what took place so we can work together with Algerians and others to prevent such terrorist attacks in the future.

Concerns about terrorism and instability in North Africa are, of course, not new. They have been a top priority for the entire administration's national security team. But we have been facing a rapidly changing threat environment, and we have had to keep working at ways to increase pressure on Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and the other terrorist groups in the region.

In the first hours and days, I conferred with leaders—the President of Libya, Foreign Ministers of Tunisia and Morocco—and then I had a series of meetings at the United Nations General Assembly,

where there was a special meeting focused on Mali and the Sahel. In October, I flew to Algeria to discuss the fight against AQIM.

In November, I sent Deputy Secretary Bill Burns to follow up in Algiers. And then in December, in my stead, he cochaired an organization we started to respond to some of these threats, the Global Counterterrorism Forum, which was meeting in Abu Dhabi, as well as a meeting in Tunis of leaders working to build new democracies and reform security services.

We have focused on targeting al-Qaeda's syndicate of terror, closing safe havens, cutting off finances, countering extremist ideology, slowing the flow of new recruits, and we continue to hunt the terrorists responsible for the attacks in Benghazi and are determined to bring them to justice. We are using our diplomatic and economic tools to support these emerging democracies and to strengthen security forces and help provide a path away from extremism.

But let me underscore the importance of the United States continuing to lead in the Middle East, in North Africa, and around the world. We have come a long way in the past 4 years, and we cannot afford to retreat now.

When America is absent, especially from unstable environments, there are consequences. Extremism takes root. Our interests suffer. Our security at home is threatened.

That is why I sent Chris Stevens to Benghazi in the first place. Nobody knew the dangers better than Chris, first during the revolution and then during the transition—a weak Libyan Government, marauding militias, terrorist groups. A bomb exploded in the parking lot of his hotel, but he did not waver because he understood it was critical for America to be represented there at that time.

Our men and women who serve overseas understand that we accept a level of risk to protect the country we love, and they represent the best traditions of a bold and generous nation. They cannot work in bunkers and do their jobs. So it is our responsibility to make sure they have the resources they need and to do everything we can to reduce the risks.

For me, this is not just a matter of policy. It is personal. I stood next to President Obama as the Marines carried those flag-draped caskets off the plane at Andrews. I put my arms around the mothers and fathers, the sisters and brothers, the sons and daughters, and the wives left alone to raise their children.

It has been one of the great honors of my life to lead the men and women of the State Department and USAID. Nearly 70,000 serving here in Washington, more than 275 posts around the world, they get up and go to work every day—often in difficult and dangerous circumstances—because they believe, as we believe, the United States is the most extraordinary force for peace and progress the world has ever known.

And when we suffer tragedies overseas, as we have, the number of Americans applying to the Foreign Service actually increases. That tells us everything we need to know about what kind of patriots I am talking about. They do ask what they can do for their country, and America is stronger for it.

So, today, after 4 years in this job, traveling nearly 1 million miles, visiting 112 countries, my faith in our country and our future is stronger than ever. Every time that blue and white air-

plane carrying the words “United States of America” touches down in some far-off capital, I feel again the honor it is to represent the world’s indispensable nation. And I am confident that with your help, we will keep the United States safe, strong, and exceptional.

So I want to thank this committee for your partnership and your support of diplomats and development experts. You know the importance of the work they do, day in and day out. You know that America’s values and vital national security interests are at stake.

And I appreciate what Ranking Member Corker just said. It is absolutely critical that this committee and the State Department, with your new Secretary and former chairman, work together to really understand and address the resources, support, and changes that are needed to face what are increasingly complex threats.

I know you share my sense of responsibility and urgency. And while we may not agree on everything, let us stay focused on what really matters—protecting our people and the country we love. And thank you for the support you personally have given to me over the last 4 years.

I now would be happy to take your questions.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Clinton follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SECRETARY OF STATE HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity.

The terrorist attacks in Benghazi on September 11, 2012, that claimed the lives of four brave Americans—Chris Stevens, Sean Smith, Tyrone Woods, and Glen Doherty—are part of a broader strategic challenge to the United States and our partners in north Africa. Today, I want to offer some context for this challenge and share what we’ve learned, how we are protecting our people, and where we can work together to honor our fallen colleagues and continue to champion America’s interests and values.

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Of course, the list of attacks foiled, crises averted, and lives saved is even longer. We should never forget that our security professionals get it right 99 percent of the time, against difficult odds all over the world. That’s why, like my predecessors, I trust them with my life.

Let’s also remember that administrations of both parties, in partnership with Congress, have made concerted and good faith efforts to learn from the tragedies that have occurred, to implement recommendations from the Review Boards, to seek necessary resources, and to better protect our people from constantly evolving threats. That’s what the men and women who serve our country deserve. And it’s what we are doing again now, with your help. As Secretary, I have had no higher priority, and no greater responsibility.

As I have said many times since September 11, I take responsibility. Nobody is more committed to getting this right. I am determined to leave the State Department and our country safer, stronger, and more secure.

Taking responsibility meant moving quickly in those first uncertain hours and days to respond to the immediate crisis and further protect our people and posts in high-threat areas across the region and the world. It meant launching an independent investigation to determine exactly what happened in Benghazi and to recommend steps for improvement. And it meant intensifying our efforts to combat terrorism and support emerging democracies in north Africa and beyond.

Let me share some of the lessons we have learned, the steps we have taken, and the work we continue to do.

First, let’s start on the night of September 11 itself and those difficult early days. I directed our response from the State Department and stayed in close contact with

officials from across our Government and the Libyan Government. So I saw first-hand what Ambassador Thomas Pickering and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen, called “timely” and “exceptional” coordination. No delays in decisionmaking. No denials of support from Washington or from the military. And I want to echo the Review Board’s praise for the valor and courage of our people on the ground—especially the security professionals in Benghazi and Tripoli. The Board said our response saved American lives in real time—and it did.

The very next morning, I told the American people that “heavily armed militants assaulted our compound” and vowed to bring them to justice. And I stood with President Obama as he spoke of “an act of terror.”

You may recall that in that same period, we also saw violent attacks on our Embassies in Cairo, Sanaa, Tunis, and Khartoum, as well as large protests outside many other posts where thousands of our diplomats serve.

So I immediately ordered a review of our security posture around the world, with particular scrutiny for High Threat Posts. We asked the Department of Defense to join Interagency Security Assessment Teams and to dispatch hundreds of additional Marine Security Guards. I named the first Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for High Threat Posts, so missions in dangerous places get the attention they need. And we reached out to Congress to help address physical vulnerabilities, including risks from fire, and to hire additional Diplomatic Security personnel.

Second, even as we took these steps, I also appointed the Accountability Review Board led by Ambassador Pickering and Admiral Mullen so that we could more fully understand what went wrong and how to fix it.

I have accepted every one of their recommendations—and I asked the Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources to lead a task force to ensure that all 29 of them are implemented quickly and completely . . . as well as to pursue additional steps above and beyond those in the Board’s report.

Because of the effort we began in the days after the attacks, work is already well underway. And, as I pledged in my letter to you last month, implementation has now begun on all 29 recommendations. Our task force started by translating the recommendations into 64 specific action items. All of these action items were assigned to specific bureaus and offices, with clear timelines for completion. Fully 85 percent are on track to be completed by the end of March, with a number completed already.

We are taking a top-to-bottom look, and rethinking how we make decisions on where, when, and how our people operate in high threat areas, and how we respond to threats and crises.

As part of our effort to go above and beyond the Review Board’s recommendations, we are initiating an annual High Threat Post Review chaired by the Secretary of State, and ongoing reviews by the Deputy Secretaries, to ensure pivotal questions about security reach the highest levels. And we will regularize protocols for sharing information with Congress.

All of these actions are designed to increase the safety of our diplomats and development experts and reduce the chances of another Benghazi happening again.

Now, in addition to the immediate action we took and the Review Board process, we have been moving forward on a third front: addressing the broader strategic challenge in north Africa and the wider region.

Because Benghazi didn’t happen in a vacuum. The Arab revolutions have scrambled power dynamics and shattered security forces across the region. And instability in Mali has created an expanding safe haven for terrorists who look to extend their influence and plot further attacks of the kind we saw just last week in Algeria.

And let me offer my deepest condolences to the families of the Americans and all the people from many nations who were killed and injured in the recent hostage crisis. We remain in close touch with the Government of Algeria and stand ready to provide assistance if needed. We are seeking to gain a fuller understanding of what took place so that we can work together to prevent terrorist attacks like this in the future.

Concerns about terrorism and instability in north Africa are not new. Indeed they have been a top priority for our entire national security team. But after Benghazi, we accelerated a diplomatic campaign to increase pressure on Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and other terrorist groups across the region.

In the first hours and days, I conferred with the President of Libya and the Foreign Ministers of Tunisia and Morocco. Two weeks later, I met with regional leaders at the United Nations General Assembly and held a special meeting focused on Mali and the Sahel. In October, I flew to Algeria to discuss the fight against AQIM. In November, I sent Deputy Secretary Bill Burns to follow up in Algiers. And then in December, he cochaired the Global Counterterrorism Forum in Abu Dhabi and a meeting in Tunis of leaders working to build new democracies and reform security services.

In all these diplomatic engagements, and in near-constant contacts at every level, we have focused on targeting al-Qaeda's syndicate of terror—closing safe havens, cutting off finances, countering extremist ideology, and slowing the flow of new recruits. We continue to hunt the terrorists responsible for the attacks in Benghazi and are determined to bring them to justice. And we're also using all our diplomatic and economic tools to support the emerging democracies of the region, including Libya, to strengthen security forces and provide a path away from extremism.

The United States must continue to lead . . . in the Middle East and all around the globe. We have come a long way in the past 4 years. We cannot afford to retreat now. When America is absent, especially from unstable environments, there are consequences. Extremism takes root, our interests suffer, and our security at home is threatened.

That's why Chris Stevens went to Benghazi in the first place. Nobody knew the dangers better than Chris, first during the revolution and then during the transition. A weak Libyan Government, marauding militias, even terrorist groups . . . a bomb exploded in the parking lot of his hotel, but he didn't waver. Because he understood that it was critical for America to be represented in that pivotal place at that pivotal time.

Our men and women who serve overseas understand that we accept a level of risk to protect this country we love. They represent the best traditions of a bold and generous nation. And they cannot work in bunkers and do their jobs.

It is our responsibility to make sure they have the resources they need to do their jobs and to do everything we can to reduce the risks they face.

For me, this is not just a matter of policy . . . it's personal.

I stood next to President Obama as the Marines carried those flag-draped caskets off the plane at Andrews. I put my arms around the mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, sons and daughters.

It has been one of the greatest honors of my life to lead the men and women of the State Department and USAID. Nearly 70,000 serving here in Washington and at more than 275 posts around the world. They get up and go to work every day—often in difficult and dangerous circumstances thousands of miles from home—because they believe the United States is the most extraordinary force for peace and progress the earth has ever known.

And when we suffer tragedies overseas, the number of Americans applying to the Foreign Service actually increases. That tells us everything we need to know about what kind of patriots I'm talking about. They ask what they can do for their country. And America is stronger for it.

Today, after 4 years in this job, after traveling nearly 1 million miles and visiting 112 countries around the world, my faith in our country and our future is stronger than ever. Every time that blue and white airplane carrying the words "United States of America" touches down in some far-off capital, I feel again the honor it is to represent the world's indispensable nation. And I am confident that, with your help, we will continue to keep the United States safe, strong, and exceptional.

So I want to thank this committee for your partnership and your support of our diplomats and development experts around the world. You know the importance of the work they do day in and day out, and that America's values and vital national security interests are at stake. It is absolutely critical that we work together to ensure they have the resources and support they need to face increasingly complex threats.

I know that you share our sense of responsibility and urgency. And while we all may not agree on everything, let's stay focused on what really matters: protecting our people and the country we all love.

Now I am now happy to answer your questions.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Madam Secretary, for your statement.

We have a full committee present. So, to give each member an opportunity to ask questions in the timeframe that we have, I will limit those questions to 5 minutes, and I will start myself.

Madam Secretary, we saw some late night reporting on discussions about the physical location of Mission Benghazi, and I understand this information came from the production of documents by the State Department, we appreciate your cooperation in providing those documents.

My understanding is that the discussion of the location of Mission Benghazi was an ongoing one and that the ultimate conclusion of Ambassador Stevens was that we needed to be in Benghazi, the cradle of the Libyan revolution. That, while he was continuously reviewing other location options, it was his conclusion—as well as that of security personnel in the State Department—that the current mission site was the best choice despite a higher price tag because it was more secure than returning to the hotel where there had been a bomb and bomb threats or moving closer to the annex because it was closer to the road.

Can you give us your insights on the decisionmaking process regarding the location of the Benghazi Mission? And as part of your answer can you touch upon what actions were you and your staff taking the night of September 11 and into September the 12th?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, first, you are right, Mr. Chairman, that there was an ongoing discussion. When Chris first landed in Benghazi, he stayed in a hotel, along with other representatives of different nations. There were attacks in the vicinity, including the parking lot of the hotel.

The decision was made to move. The compound was selected as being a much better location in terms of security than the alternatives. But there was an ongoing discussion between Chris and others in the Embassy in Tripoli, those going in and out of Benghazi, about how best to situate our post there.

I did see some overnight reporting about a document. I am not sure what it is, but I would observe that there were a lot of ongoing efforts because it was important that we were constantly asking what was the best place. As you said, in general, Chris was committed to not only being in Benghazi, but to the location. The professionals in Washington paid close attention to Chris's judgment, based on his experience and his firsthand knowledge.

And so, we stayed. We continued to try to upgrade the facility that was attacked. Obviously, as the ARB has pointed out, there were inadequacies in the response, and those are the specific kinds of recommendations that we are currently implementing.

Regarding what I was doing on September 11, I was at the State Department all day and late into the night. During most of the day prior to getting notice of the attack on our compound at Benghazi, we were very focused on our Embassy in Cairo. That was under assault by a group of protesters.

We were assessing the security of our Embassy, which is, as those of you who have been there, certainly well defended. But there were crowds that were intent upon trying to scale the wall, and we were in close communication with our team in Cairo.

I was notified of the attack shortly after 4 p.m. Over the following hours, we were in continuous meetings and conversations, both within the Department, with our team in Tripoli, with the inter-agency, and internationally. I instructed our senior Department officials and our diplomatic security personnel to consider every option, to just break down the doors of the Libyan officials to get as much security support as we possibly could, to coordinate with them.

I spoke to the National Security Adviser, Tom Donilon, several times. I briefed him on developments. I sought all possible support from the White House, which they quickly provided. Tom was my first call.

I spoke with our chargé in Tripoli to get situation updates. I spoke with former CIA Director Petraeus to confer and coordinate, given the presence of his facility, which, of course, was not well known but was something that we knew and wanted to make sure we were closely lashed up together. I talked with the then-Libyan National Congress President to press him on greater support not only in Benghazi, but also in Tripoli.

I participated in a secure video conference of senior officials from the intelligence community, the White House, and DOD. We were going over every possible option, reviewing all that was available to us, any actions we could take. We were reaching out to everyone we could find to try to get an update about Ambassador Chris Stevens, also our information specialist, Sean Smith. So it was a constant, ongoing discussion and sets of meetings.

I spoke with President Obama later in the evening to bring him up to date, to hear his perspective. Obviously, we kept talking with everyone during the night. Early in the morning on the 12th, I spoke with General Dempsey, again with Tom Donilon.

The two hardest calls that I made were obviously to the families of Ambassador Stevens and Sean Smith. And they, I have to say, were extraordinary in their responses, in their understanding of the pride we had in both men and gratitude we had for their service.

I would also just quickly add, Mr. Chairman, that while this was going on and we were trying to understand it, get on top of it, we were continuing to face protests, demonstrations, violence across the region and as far as India and Indonesia. There were so many protests happening, and thousands of people were putting our facilities at risk.

So we were certainly very determined to do whatever we could about Benghazi. We were relieved when we finally got the last of the Americans out of Benghazi, but then we were turning around, dealing with the very serious threats facing so many of our other facilities.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you very much. My time has expired.
Senator Corker.

Senator CORKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Secretary, I agree with you when people go into the field to do the things they do, they do it knowing of the risk, and I agree with you one of the untold stories here is that of the heroic nature of many in Libya and what they did to save lives. I met several of the JSOC folks and others that risked their lives saving others.

But I also have to say, in reading all the cables and that many of us have done, there were systemic deficiencies. And I know you know that. And I would like for you to just speak to that for a moment.

To my knowledge, no one has been held accountable. Our staff had a meeting with one of the State Department officials, and I hate to use this word again, but it was nothing short of bizarre as they talked about the communications. These officials were scream-

ing out for more security, and I am just wondering if you might mention one reform that would be helpful so that you would have known of the needs there of security that went undone.

Secretary CLINTON. Well, obviously, I have thought about this almost constantly since that date, Senator, because I do feel responsible. I feel responsible for the nearly 70,000 people who work for the State Department. I take it very seriously.

But the specific security requests pertaining to Benghazi, you know, were handled by the security professionals in the Department. I didn't see those requests. They did not come to me. I did not approve them. I did not deny them. That is obviously one of the findings that Ambassador Pickering and Admiral Mullen made that, you know, these requests do not ordinarily come to the Secretary of State.

Senator CORKER. If we could, I respect you tremendously, but we have a short amount of time. They did come in to folks.

Secretary CLINTON. That is right.

Senator CORKER. We did have SST people on the ground at no cost to the State Department. They were asked to be extended by the Ambassador. Someone at the State Department turned that down. They were at no charge, 16 officers. So I just wonder what has happened inside to make sure that never happens again?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, several things. Not only are we on the path to implement all of the ARB recommendations, but we have gone beyond that. We did immediately do this high-threat assessment, using DOD assets as well as our own. That had never been done before.

We have asked the Congress to help us reallocate funds. The Senate has given us that authority. We do not yet have it from the House. So that we can get more Marine guards. We can get more diplomatic security guards. We can try to put more money into the maintenance, the upgrades, construction that is needed.

I created the first-ever—it sounds like it should have been done years ago—but first-ever Deputy Assistant Secretary for High Threats. I am also recommending that there be a regular process that includes the Secretary and the Deputies in these decisions because nobody wants to sit where I am and have to think now about what could have, should have, would have happened in order to avoid this.

Now, as I said, we have had 19 ARBs. Only two have ever been unclassified. The one coming out of the East Africa bombings, where there was full transparency, there was a set of recommendations, many of which have been implemented, along with recommendations from other ARBs. But this committee never had a public hearing about the 17 other ARBs because they were classified.

So we are putting into action steps that we think will help the next Secretary be able to make these decisions, be part of these decisions, have more insight into what is going on, and we would obviously welcome the opportunity to work closely with a subcommittee or a set of members to make sure that that is what is happening.

Senator CORKER. Well, thank you. Many, 19 or 17, have been done. I will say none of them have ever been fully implemented.

Secretary CLINTON. Senator, that is not accurate. Because I heard you say that when Bill Burns and Tom Nides were here, and it shocked me. So we did—we went back. We did a full and thorough investigation. The vast majority have been implemented, and we will give you a report to that effect.

Because that is the kind of—to go back to your point, Senator, if there were an authorization process, that is the kind of information that would be shared. And I see my former compatriot on the Armed Services Committee, there is always an Armed Services authorization, and there needs always to be a Foreign Relations Committee authorization.

[The written information supplied by the State Department follows:]

There have been 18 previous ARBs, with a total of 164 recommendations. The Department has implemented 95 percent of these past recommendations. The remainder were not implemented because they were either not in the purview of the State Department to implement; implementation raised alternate safety concerns; or alternate actions that were deemed to be more effective were taken.

As the Secretary stated during her testimony, she accepted all 29 recommendations of the Accountability Review Board (ARB). When the ARB report was issued, the Department immediately evaluated the 29 recommendations, and developed 64 separate taskings needed for their implementation. We formed working groups, issued guidance, and developed a path to implementation. Some of the recommendations have already been implemented; some are well on their way to completion; and some will require long-term action, but we have set milestones to achieve implementation of all of them. The Department will monitor and track these recommendations to ensure their implementation.

It is important to note that implementing many of the recommendations is dependent on sufficient funding. We are seeking legislative language that would authorize us to transfer previously appropriated funds from one of our accounts to another. We will continue to work with Congress on funding and any needed legislative authorities.

Senator CORKER. My last question. It is my sense that, as a nation, we were woefully unprepared for what happened in northern Africa in general. I think you share that view.

I know you made some opening comments regarding us leading in that area. But it seems to me that Benghazi symbolizes just the woeful unpreparedness that our Nation had as it relates to issues in North Africa, and I hope you will address that as you move ahead.

Secretary CLINTON. Well, Senator, let me just briefly address what is, I think, one of the key issues for this committee, for the administration, for our country. When I was here 4 years ago testifying for my confirmation, I do not think anybody thought that Mubarak would be gone, Gaddafi would be gone, Ben Ali would be gone. That we would have such revolutionary change in this region.

There were hints of it. Several of us said the institutions were sinking in the sand, as I said in Doha shortly before Tahrir Square. So there was some feeling out there, but I do not think any of us predicted this, least of all the people in these countries, who then were given a chance to chart their own futures.

This is a great opportunity, as well as a serious threat to our country. I hope we seize the opportunity. It is not going to be easy because these new countries have no experience with democracy. They do not have any real experience among the leaders in running countries, in doing security.

So, yes, we now face a spreading jihadist threat. We have driven a lot of the AQ operatives out of the Fatah, out of Afghanistan, Pakistan, killed a lot of them, including, of course, bin Laden. But we have to recognize this is a global movement. We can kill leaders, but until we help establish strong democratic institutions, until we do a better job communicating our values and building relationships, we are going to be faced with this level of instability.

And I do have a lot of thoughts about what more we can and should do, given this new reality we face.

Senator CORKER. Thank you again.

Senator MENENDEZ. Senator Boxer.

Senator BOXER. Thank you very much.

Madam Secretary, you have represented our country with tremendous strength and poise. You have won us friends, but you have always spoken out forcefully where required.

I want to thank you because this is maybe the last time you come before us as Secretary here. I want to thank you for your advocacy on behalf of women around the globe. You will be sorely missed, but I, for one, hope not for too long.

As you have said, you were heartbroken by those losses in Benghazi. We saw it in your face many times, today as well. You were heartbroken personally and professionally. But rather than pointing to others for their deficiencies, you stepped up and you convened an Accountability Review Board to look into this attack in detail, and you asked them to tell it the way they saw it.

And I want to give you my take on that Board. I want to go to something Senator Corker said, which I agreed with. The first report we got from the intelligence community about a week or so after was very confusing. It was not helpful to us. All of us, I think, felt that way.

But I want to speak for myself. The difference between that meeting and the meeting we had with those cochairs, which was also a classified briefing, couldn't have been more different. They were so impressive. They were thorough. They were strong. They did call it the way they saw it, the way you wanted them to do.

And I am grateful that you have unequivocally committed to ensuring that their recommendations are implemented to the fullest extent, and this brings me to a question. As we all know, the House of Representatives urged and voted for a cut of \$300 million for embassy security.

Now maybe it is irrelevant for some here, but I have a message. It does cost money to pay for embassy security or police on the beat or military personnel or police here at the Capitol that protect us, which we are very grateful for and we pay for. It does cost money.

So, to me, I was not disappointed to hear the cochairs say, "Congress must do its part to meet this challenge and provide necessary resources to the State Department to address security risks and meet mission imperatives." Frankly, I think it is a no-brainer, and the fact that we would even have a problem with it, to me, doesn't make any sense.

I hope we can work together to get the resources that we need for security, which brings me to a question about working more closely with the DOD. And here it is. Have you already engaged with DOD to provide additional Marines at U.S. facilities to fulfill

the ARB's recommendation that State and DOD work together to provide more capabilities and capacities at higher risk posts?

And before you answer that, could you maybe address the issue in Mali right now? When you look at Mali, you see a government that is weak. They do not have the best security. Are we working on that post?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, Senator, thank you.

You have raised a lot of very important issues. I will try to be as quick as I can in responding to them. Let me start with the budget because this is a bipartisan issue.

Since 2007, the Department has consistently requested greater funding for embassy construction and diplomatic security. With the exception of 2010, Congress has consistently enacted less than requested. Most notably, in 2012, the Department received \$340 million less than requested, close to 10 percent less than the request. And then over the last 2 years, cuts to embassy construction, security, and maintenance budgets were almost 10 percent off as well.

Now the ARB, as you said, has recommended an increase in facilities funding to \$2.2 billion per year to restore the construction levels called for in the 1998 ARB report, the only other one that was ever public. And I would go back to something the chairman said because this was a point made in the ARB. Consistent shortfalls have required the Department to prioritize available funding out of security accounts.

And I will be the first to say that the prioritization process was at times imperfect, but as the ARB said, the funds provided were inadequate. So we need to work together to overcome that. We are asking for funding for more Marine security guards, for refilling the capital account so that we can begin to do the kind of upgrades and construction that is needed.

Deputy Secretary Nides briefed House and Senate appropriations and authorizing staff. We have sent letters to the House and Senate leadership to ask for transfer authority language. Not new money right now, but transfer authority language. The Senate was good enough to put it into the Senate version of the Sandy supplemental. It did not get into the House side. So we are still looking for the House to act.

With respect to Mali, Senator, there was a country that had been making progress on its democracy. Unfortunately, it suffered a military coup by low-ranking military officers, which threw it into a state of instability with the Tuaregs, who, as you know, some groups of, as well as other groups, had been in the employ of Gaddafi for years. He used them as mercenaries.

With his fall, they came out of Libya, bringing huge amounts of weapons from the enormous stores of weapons that Gaddafi had that insurgents liberated, as well as the others. And they came into northern Mali. At the same time, there was a move by Al Qaeda in the Maghreb to establish a base in northern Mali.

We have been working to try to upgrade security around northern Mali among a number of the countries. Algeria is the only one with any real ability to do that. Most of these countries do not have the capacity to do that.

We are now trying to put together an African force from ECOWAS so that African soldiers will be in the front of this fight.

The Malians asked the French to come in. Obviously, France is one of our oldest allies. We are trying to provide support to them. But this is going to be a very serious ongoing threat because if you look at the size of northern Mali, if you look at the topography, it is not only desert. It is caves. Sounds reminiscent. We are in for a struggle.

But it is a necessary struggle. We cannot permit northern Mali to become a safe haven. People say to me all the time, well, AQIM has not attacked the United States. Well, before 9/11/2001, we hadn't been attacked on our homeland since I guess the War of 1812 and Pearl Harbor. So you can not say, well, because they haven't done something, they are not going to do it.

This is not only a terrorist syndicate, it is a criminal enterprise. So make no mistake about it. We have got to have a better strategy, and I would hope we would have not only a strategy that understands making it possible for these governments to defend themselves better, for people to understand and agree with us that these terrorists are not in any way representative of their values, but that we can bolster democracy and try to give these Arab revolutions a real chance to succeed.

Senator BOXER. Thank you.

Senator MENENDEZ. Senator Risch.

Senator RISCH. Madam Secretary, thank you for your service.

Secretary CLINTON. Thank you, Senator.

Senator RISCH. And thank you for the kindness you have shown this committee over the time you have been there. I particularly appreciate your facilitating the meetings with us at the State Department with yourself when we have had issues.

Moving to the issues at hand, this morning the national media is reporting that some of the—or a number of the attackers in Algeria are people who participated in the attack in Benghazi. Can you confirm that for us this morning?

Secretary CLINTON. Senator, I cannot confirm it. I can give you the background that I was able to obtain. This information is coming from the Algerian Government related to their questioning of certain of the terrorists that they took alive. We do not have any way to confirm it as yet, but I can certainly assure you we will do everything we can to determine that.

You may know that Director Mueller was just in the region meeting with leaders. He is very well aware that we have to track every one of these connections, and this will be a new thread that will be followed.

Senator RISCH. I appreciate that. Only one person has been arrested regarding the attack on Benghazi and was then released. Can you tell us whether he was one of the people that participated in the Algerian attack?

Secretary CLINTON. We have no information to that effect. I think you are referring to the Tunisian, Harzi, who appeared in a Tunisian court. Upon his release, I called the Tunisian Prime Minister. A few days later, Director Mueller met with the Tunisian Prime Minister.

We have been assured that he is under the monitoring of the court. He was released because at that time—and Director Mueller and I spoke about this at some length—there was not an ability for

evidence to be presented yet that was capable of being presented in an open court.

But the Tunisians have assured us that they are keeping an eye on him. I have no reason to believe he is not still in Tunis, but we are checking that all the time.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

You just testified in your prepared remarks that you said, "The very next morning," which would have been Wednesday morning, "I told the American people that 'heavily armed militants assaulted our compound' and vowed to bring them to justice."

I am assuming that you had rock solid evidence to make such a bold statement at that time?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, we had four dead people, and we had several injured, one seriously, who is still in Walter Reed. And although we did not have the chance yet to meet with any of our returnees, our team in Tripoli had received them, gotten medical care for them, and had sent them on.

So we knew that, clearly, there was an attack, a heavily armed attack. Who these people were, where they came from, why they did it, that was still to be determined.

Senator RISCH. I think you probably know where I am going with this. The next sentence is, "And I stood with President Obama as he spoke of an act of terror."

Secretary CLINTON. Right.

Senator RISCH. And, of course, there has been a lot of debate as to the context that the word "terror" was used in. But be that as it may, I want to move to the next Sunday morning when Ambassador Rice went to the Sunday morning talk shows. And I think we all realize this happened at a politically charged time here in the country as we approached an election. Notwithstanding that, the American people are still entitled to be told the truth about this.

Did you select Ambassador Rice to deliver the message to the American people?

Secretary CLINTON. No; I did not, Senator. And let me take this opportunity to address this because, obviously, even though I have not had a chance to testify, I certainly have seen the resulting debate and concerns about this.

You are right, it was a terrorist attack. I called it an attack by heavily armed militants.

Senator RISCH. Well done.

Secretary CLINTON. And, you know, that is clearly what happened. We know that. But second, the harder question is what caused it, and that we did not know. We did not know who the attackers were, what their motives were.

Third, as the ARB makes clear after their months of research, the picture remains still somewhat complicated. And I say that because in the unclassified ARB, it is, "Key questions surround the identity, actions, and motivations of the perpetrators remain to be determined." I recommend that all members and staff read the classified version of the ARB, which goes into greater detail. I obviously cannot speak to it, but it does go into greater detail because there were a variety of potential causes and triggers for this attack.

There is evidence that the attacks were deliberate, opportunistic, and precoordinated, but not necessarily indicative of extensive planning. And fourth, Senator, I would say that I personally was not focused on talking points. I was focused on keeping our people safe because as I said, I have a very serious threat environment in Yemen. It turned out we had people getting over that wall in Cairo doing damage until we got them out. We had a serious threat against our Embassy in Tunis. I had to call the President of Tunisia and beg him to send reinforcements, which he did, to finally save our Embassy, which could have been disastrous. They burned and trashed our school.

So I was pretty occupied about keeping our people safe, doing what needed to be done in the followup to Benghazi. I really do not think anybody in the administration was really focused on that so much as trying to figure out, you know, what we should be doing.

And, you know, I was not involved in the talking points process. As I understand it, as I have been told, it was a typical interagency process where staff, including from the State Department, all participated to try to come up with whatever was going to be made publicly available. And it was an intelligence product, and it is my understanding that the intelligence community is working with appropriate committees to kind of explain the whole process.

Senator RISCH. Well, thank you. I have some followup questions to that, but my time is up. But I gather you still stand by the statement you made less than 24 hours that heavily armed militants assaulted our compound, and that you vowed to bring them to justice. You still stand by that.

Secretary CLINTON. Absolutely.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Senator MENENDEZ. Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary Clinton, first, congratulations, and thank you for your extraordinary service to our country during these past 4 years as Secretary of State. I believe the world is safer today because America is better understood around the world. And you have been instrumental in integrating diplomacy in our national security agenda. And I thank you for that because I do think it has paid off in heavy dividends for the American people.

I particularly want to acknowledge your leadership in advancing basic rights. Senator Boxer already acknowledged the gender equity issues that you have taken an international leadership on. I also want to thank you for your help in dealing with corruption, particularly with transparency in the extractive industries and the progress that we have made in that regard.

Benghazi was a tragedy. We have all acknowledged that, the loss of American life. And we have also acknowledged the bravery of those people on the ground. They did extraordinary service and saved lives, and that is what they are trained to do, and we want to make sure that we acknowledge that.

Also let me just point out that you have been very open with the committee. We had a hearing on December 20 with your Deputies, and they provided all the information. And you are here today, and we thank you very much for that.

I want to follow up on one area of northern Africa. You point out the risk factors that we currently have in northern Africa. Algeria is a reminder of the global security concerns. We do not know, as Senator Risch pointed out, the individuals who may have been involved in Libya may have been in Algeria. We do not know that. But we do know there are reports from the United Nations and others that weapons have gotten from Libya into Algeria, which points out our need, as we look at transitions occurring in that region, Syria, Assad is not going to be there we think much longer. There are a lot of weapons in Syria.

Do we have a strategy to make sure as we go through transition in countries that their weapons are—we are mindful that these weapons could end up harming U.S. interests. And it needs to be part of our strategy to make sure as we support alternative governments and the rebels, that there is a strong priority in protecting the source of these weapons not ending up harming Americans or harming our interests.

Secretary CLINTON. Well, Senator, you are absolutely right. One of the reasons that we and other government agencies were present in Benghazi is exactly that. We had a concerted effort to try to track down and find and recover as many man pads and other very dangerous weapons as possible.

Libya was awash in weapons before the revolution. Obviously there were additional weapons introduced. But the vast, vast majority came out of Gaddafi warehouses and were, as they were saying, liberated and then went on the black market, were seized by militias, seized by other groups, and have made their way out of Libya into other countries in the region, and have made their way to Syria, we believe.

It is a redline for this administration with respect to Syria concerning the use of chemical weapons. Syria, as you probably know, in addition to having the fourth-largest army before this revolution, has a very significant supply of chemical and biological weapons.

Given the instability in Syria right now, what we are trying to do is to coordinate closely with a number of like-minded nations, neighbors, and partners to be able to work to try to prevent those from falling into the wrong hands—jihadist hands, Hezbollah hands—but also to try to work with the internal opposition for them to understand the dangers that are posed.

So this Pandora's box, if you will, of weapons coming out of these countries in the Middle East and North Africa is the source of one of our biggest threats. There is no doubt that the Algerian terrorists had weapons from Libya. There is no doubt that the Malian remnants of AQIM have weapons from Libya. So we just have to do a much better job.

The final thing I would say about this is, you know, AFRICOM was stood up about 10 years ago. I think a lot of people at the time wondered why would we have another command in the world and why in Africa. I now think we need to pay much more attention to AFRICOM, to its capacity inside Africa. It is based in Stuttgart, Germany, for all kinds of complicated logistical and political reasons. Carter Ham has been a very dedicated leader of AFRICOM during his time there.

But we are going to see more and more demands on AFRICOM, and I think that is something else that the Senate and the House are going to have to address.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Madam Secretary.

Senator MENENDEZ. Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you. Madam Secretary, we all wish this had never happened so this hearing would never had to have happened, but we are glad to see you here, and wish you all the best.

And secondarily, I want to share the sentiments of my other colleagues of tremendous respect for the hard work and service that you have put in on behalf of our country, both as a Member of this Chamber and then obviously now in the role that you have.

One of the things that I am most interested in exploring with you today a little bit is how information flows within the State Department, and looking forward, how we can prevent some of this from happening.

And so I was curious about a number of things. First of all, were you ever asked to participate in any sort of internal or interagency meeting before this attack with regard to the deteriorating security situation in Libya?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, Senator, you know, again, I appreciate your kind words, you know, and I reiterate my taking responsibility. And as I have already said, with specific security requests, they did not come to me. I had no knowledge of them.

With regard to the situation in Libya, not just eastern Libya, across Libya, there were a number of conversations and meetings to try to see what we could do while Libya went through this transition from transitional government, to interim government, to elections, to try to get in there and help them with security, because it was clear that that was going to be one of their highest needs once they finally got stabilized. So, you know, there were a number of meetings.

And I, personally, went to Libya in October 2011. I spoke with the then-leadership. I met with them in international settings. We sent teams out both civilian and military experts to try to help them.

Until recently while they were going through their transitions, it was a very difficult conversation because they did not have, you know, the authority they thought. But now we are beginning, and we have a long list of ways that we are trying to help improve security in Libya.

Senator RUBIO. For example, the October 2011 meeting, at that meeting, did this issue come up with regards to the inability of the Libyan Government to protect our diplomatic institutions? Did that issue come up at all in that conversation?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, we obviously talked a great deal about the deteriorating threat environment in Libya. One of the reasons we had our own people on the ground, and why we were looking to try to figure out how to better protect Benghazi, and how to have understandings with those in the annex is because it is a host country responsibility, but, you know, they were not in a position to do what we would expect from an organized country. But they did have the militias.

And, you know, the February 17 Brigade had proven to be responsive in the past prior to 9/11. Other militias in Tripoli had proven to be responsive. You know, when I landed in Tripoli, I was met by the Zintan militia. That was the welcome I had, all these guys dressed completely in black, holding their automatic weapons. That was my welcoming party.

So we knew that we were piecing together what a host-nation was not yet able to.

Senator RUBIO. Right. And then there was another meeting on March 2012. So just to be clear, by October 2011 and then again in March 2012, I believe that was here with the Prime Minister. And neither one of these meetings was there a specific conversation between you and them with regards to concerns that we had that of not just the deteriorating security situation, but the inability of them as a host-country to meet their obligations to provide security.

Secretary CLINTON. Of course.

Senator RUBIO. There was a conversation.

Secretary CLINTON. Oh, absolutely. I mean, this was a constant conversation, Senator. And what I found with the Libyans was willingness, but not capacity. You know, in Tunisia, as I told you, they had capacity, but I had to call and just tell them we had to get that capacity out there because, you know, they were still trying to figure out how to be a state without being a security state. With Cairo, we had to call and tell the Egyptians get your people out there.

So with Libya it was different. The Libyans were very responsive, very willing, but no levers to pull. And what we have been trying to do, and, you know, we need your help to help us pay for what we are trying to do, we are trying to help them build a decent security force, to try to rein in the militias as best they can. So this was a constant conversation.

Senator RUBIO. Before the attack in Benghazi, what had we done specifically to help them build their security capacities?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, there is a long list, and I will be happy to provide that to you because it is filled with, you know, training, with equipment, with the kind of planning that they had not done before. And I would be happy to send you the detail on that, Senator.

[The written information supplied by the State Department follows:]

Libyan officials have requested U.S. advice and assistance in rebuilding their security sector architecture and establishing control over their land borders. Since the revolution, the United States has provided the Government of Libya with targeted technical assistance in a number of critical areas to help establish security sector institutions appropriate for a democratic state, and to develop the capacities needed to control loose weapons, counterterrorism, and improve border security management.

During multiple visits to Libya by the Department of Defense's Defense Institution Reform Initiative in 2012, we advised the Libyan Ministry of Defense on establishing defense institutions and armed forces that are unified, capable, and subject to civilian control and the rule of law. Furthermore we are providing training for Libyan military leaders in military officer professional development schools and familiarization visits to the United States, and provided assistance to develop an English learning lab to promote military-to-military cooperation. We have also been providing counterterrorism training to the Libyan military.

Our FY 2012 bilateral budget for Libya includes \$800,000 in Anti-Terrorism Assistance to enhance the government's control through law enforcement, border security, and investigation capacity assistance. This budget also includes \$1.3 million in assistance to build capability and capacity among Libya's border security agencies to detect, interdict, investigate, and prosecute illicit weapons transfers. This assistance awaits resolution of a hold in the House of Representatives.

Further, we have been working with the Libyan authorities since August 2011 to secure and disable Qadhafi-era weapons stockpiles. Our Conventional Weapons Destruction programs have identified Libya's ammunition storage areas and continue to inventory and control conventional weapons and munitions with an emphasis on man-portable air defense systems and other advanced conventional weapons with the help of trained Libyan nationals. On September 4, 2012, we designated Libya as a country eligible for the Global Security Contingency Fund, a joint Department of Defense and State initiative pooling together resources and expertise to provide security assistance.

Senator MENENDEZ. Senator Casey.

Senator CASEY. Madam Secretary, thank you for being here today to provide the assessment. I am going to ask you a question that relates to the implementation of the Accountability Review Board recommendations.

Before I do that, I want to express what I think is a widely shared sentiment, both by way of gratitude and commendation for your work. We do not have time today to do a full listing of all the achievements that you should get credit for, but I will mention maybe two or three in light of the work that you have done and some of the work we have done together.

I want to thank you for your work on the terribly difficult challenge of dealing with and reducing the flow of calcium ammonium nitrate from Pakistan into Afghanistan. Calcium ammonium nitrate finds its way into the roadside bombs that kill our troops, known more popularly as IEDs.

I also want to commend you for your work that was mentioned by Senator Boxer and others on behalf of women throughout the world, but also women and girls particularly in Afghanistan. Third, even though we are still in the throes of responding to the challenge in Syria, the great work that you have done on humanitarian assistance and other elements of that strategy that we have worked on together.

Also I want to commend not just the approach, but the remark you made earlier about not retrenching and not retreating when it comes to getting that balance right between engagement and security, both high priorities.

I am glad you were so specific on page 3 of your testimony, about the details on implementation. Twenty-nine recommendations by the Board have translated into a set of 64 specific action items. You said in your testimony, "Fully 85 percent are on track to be completed by the end of March with a number completed already."

I will ask you one question about that and then one followup. What, if any, impediments to implementation do you perceive right now, and are there impediments to meeting those deadlines that this committee and the Congress can help you with by way of meeting that deadline and implementation?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, thank you, Senator. And let me thank you for those three topics you covered, and particularly your very clear focus on the IED problem and the ammonium nitrate problem in Pakistan. You and I have talked about this. You have gone

there. I have gone there and carried that message, and I thank you for making it an issue.

Let me say that we need your help. We need your help, No. 1, to hold us accountable, you know, to keep asking whoever sits in this chair or anybody else in the Department with any responsibility in this area, what are you doing and how are you doing it. And it will help to clear up misconceptions, like no ARB recommendations have ever been fully implemented, which I know is not the case. But it will also help to keep driving the change.

You know, I really believe that an authorization process will dramatically change the dynamic, and I strongly urge it be tried. And again I go back to my Armed Services Committee experience with Senator McCain over those years. We had subcommittees. We took it very seriously. We held hearings. We brought people in. We had a 3-day markup that was sacrosanct. But we also had the Quadrennial Defense Review, the QDR, where the Defense Department submitted that, and it helped to provide a framework.

So when I got to the State Department, I said there is nothing like that at the State Department, so I started the first ever Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, the first ever QDDR. You can help me continue that and make the Department have to ask the hard questions if you legislate it the way the QDR is legislated for the Defense Department.

Second, you can help by making sure that the needs we come to you with, like what are the training needs, the budgetary needs, the bureaucratic changes that are needed, that you help support that. And certainly we have talked a little bit about the budget, but getting that transfer authority, if you can help us with the House. It is \$1.4 billion. Marine security guard detachment, \$553 million. We have been closely coordinating with DOD. Historically Marine security guards do not do personal security. They only do protection of classified materials. So we are working through what the guards will do and how we can use more of them.

Second, more diplomatic security personnel, \$130 million. That would fund an additional 155 DS personnel and related equipment. And then facility construction upgrades, \$736 million. We are going to have periodic reviews by these teams. I started the Defense/State interagency security assessment teams. We are going to start a High Threat Post review by the Secretary, which had not happened before.

We are going to strengthen the mutual security agreements between the State Department and other government agencies when they are not colocated. We had a very good relationship with the annex in Benghazi. We helped them. They helped us. But there was not anything that was—it was more on the ground working together. It was not part of an overall template.

So there is a lot that I think we can take from this ARB because, you know, I told Ambassador Pickering and Admiral Mullen, put it out there, you know. I want to know more than anybody what happened. Do not hold any punches. Tell us what the facts are. But now we have to act on it or shame on us.

Senator CASEY. Thanks very much.

Senator MENENDEZ. Senator Johnson.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Madam Secretary, I would like to join my colleagues in, you know, thanking you for your service sincerely. And also I appreciate the fact that you are here testifying, and glad that you are looking in good health.

Secretary CLINTON. Thank you.

Senator JOHNSON. Did you—were you fully aware in real time—again, I realize how big your job is and everything is erupting in the Middle East this time. Were you fully aware of these 20 incidents reported in the ARB in real time?

Secretary CLINTON. I was aware of the ones that were brought to my attention. They were part of our ongoing discussion about the deteriorating threat environment in eastern Libya. We certainly were very conscious of them.

I was assured by our security professionals that repairs were underway. Additional security upgrades had taken place.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you. Did you see personally the cable on, I believe it was August 12 specifically asking for basically reinforcements for the security detail who was going to be evacuating or leaving in August? Did you see that personally?

Secretary CLINTON. No, sir.

Senator JOHNSON. OK. When you read the ARB, it strikes me how certain the people were that the attacks started at 9:40 Benghazi time. When was the first time you spoke to or have you ever spoken to the returnees, the evacuees? Did you personally speak to those folks?

Secretary CLINTON. I have spoken to one of them, but I waited until after the ARB had done its investigation because I did not want there to be anybody raising any issue that I had spoken to anyone before the ARB conducted its investigation.

Senator JOHNSON. How many people were evacuated from Libya?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, the numbers are a little bit hard to pin down because of our other friends.

Senator JOHNSON. Approximately.

Secretary CLINTON. Approximately 25 to 30.

Senator JOHNSON. Did anybody in the State Department talk to those folks very shortly afterward?

Secretary CLINTON. There was discussion going on afterward, but once the investigation started, the FBI spoke to them before we spoke to them. And so other than our people in Tripoli, which I think you are talking about Washington, right?

Senator JOHNSON. Yes.

Secretary CLINTON. Yes.

Senator JOHNSON. The point I am making is a very simple phone call to these individuals I think would have ascertained immediately that there was no protest prior to this. I mean, this attack started at 9:40 p.m. Benghazi time, and it was an assault. And I appreciate the fact that you called it an assault. But, I mean, I am going back to then-Ambassador Rice 5 days later going on the Sunday shows and what I would say purposefully misleading the American public.

Secretary CLINTON. Well, Senator—yes.

Senator JOHNSON. Why was that not known? And again, I appreciate the fact of the transparency of this hearing, but why were we not transparent to that point in time?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, first of all, Senator, I would say that once the assault happened and once we got our people rescued and out, our most immediate concern was, No. 1, taking care of their injuries. As I said, I still have a DS agent at Walter Reed seriously injured. Getting them into Frankfurt, Ramstein, to get taken care of, the FBI going over immediately to start talking to them. We did not think it was appropriate for us to talk to them before the FBI conducted their interviews. And we did not—I think this is accurate, sir. I certainly did not know of any reports that contradicted the IC talking points at the time that Ambassador Rice went on the TV shows.

And, you know, I just want to say that, you know, people have accused Ambassador Rice and the administration of, you know, misleading Americans. I can say trying to be in the middle of this and understanding what was going on, nothing could be further from the truth. Was information developing? Was the situation fluid? Would we reach conclusion later that were not reached initially? And I appreciate the—

Senator JOHNSON. But, Madam Secretary, do you disagree with me that a simple phone call to those evacuees to determine what happened would have ascertained immediately that there was no protest? I mean, that was a piece of information that could have been easily, easily obtained.

Secretary CLINTON. Well, but, Senator, again—

Senator JOHNSON. Within hours if not days.

Secretary CLINTON. Senator, you know, when you are in these positions, the last thing you want to do is interfere with any other process that is going on, No. 1.

Senator JOHNSON. I realize that is a good excuse.

Secretary CLINTON. No. 2—well, no, it is the fact. No. 2, I would recommend highly you read both what the ARB said about it and the classified ARB because even today, there are questions being raised.

Now, we have no doubt they were terrorists. They were militants. They attacked us. They killed our people. But what was going on and why they were doing what they were doing is still—no.

Senator JOHNSON. No, no, no. Again, we were misled that there were supposedly protests and then something sprang out of that, and assaults sprang out of that. And that was easily ascertained that that was not the fact. And the American people could have known that within days, and they did not know that.

Secretary CLINTON. And with all due respect, the fact is we had four dead Americans.

Senator JOHNSON. I understand.

Secretary CLINTON. Was it because of a protest or was it because of guys out for a walk one night who decided they would go kill some Americans? What difference, at this point, does it make? It is our job to figure out what happened and do everything we can to prevent it from ever happening again, Senator.

Now, honestly I will do my best to answer your questions about this. But the fact is that people were trying in real time to get to the best information. The IC has a process, I understand, going with the other committees to explain how these talking points came out. But, you know, to be clear, it is, from my perspective, less important today looking backward as to why these militants decided they did it than to find them and bring them to justice. And then maybe we will figure out what was going on in the meantime.

Senator JOHNSON. OK. Thank you, Madam Secretary.

Senator MENENDEZ. Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much, Secretary Clinton. And I want to echo the praise from my colleagues for your extraordinary service. And I want to thank you for your leadership on Benghazi, for taking responsibility for what happened there, for initiating an investigation so we would understand what happened, for moving forward to address threats in other high-risk areas, and for all of your efforts to implement the recommendations of the Accountability Review Board report. Thank you. That is the kind of leadership we want to see across our government.

I want to first go back to what I thought you said about still looking for the funding to be transferred, the \$1.3 billion—

Secretary CLINTON. Four.

Senator SHAHEEN. Four billion from the OCO account to address the security threats not just in Libya, but around the world. And do I understand that we still have not had that money transferred, and so that means that the \$553 million for Marine security guards, the \$130 million for diplomatic security, the \$691 million for security installations, that is all on hold, and so we cannot move forward until that has been approved by the House?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, now we have to start over because it was in the Senate version of Sandy. It was not put into the House version of Sandy. So, no, we cannot move money we already have to address the needs and deficiencies that the ARB has recommended we do.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, I would just echo the comments that have been made already by this committee and by you that this is action that we need to get moving on immediately, because we still have people at risk around the world, and we need to take the action that is going to ensure their security. So I would certainly urge the chairman and the ranking member to move the committee to do everything we can to make this happen.

I want to go back to something that Secretary Nides said at the hearing on December 20, because I asked him about the cooperation between the Department of Defense and State. And what the situation was on the ground before the Benghazi attack in terms of the placement of our military in the region, he talked about the unprecedented cooperation between State and Defense in response to Benghazi.

But I wonder if you could talk about how we ensure that this is a standard way of doing business, and that we are acting in cooperation when we are looking at the threats facing us, particularly as we look at what is happening in northern Africa and across the Middle East.

Secretary CLINTON. Well, Senator, that is a really important and timely question because certainly our cooperation around this crisis was exemplary. You know, the President told the Secretary and the Chairman to do everything they possibly could, to spare no effort or resource. And we had a very good interagency response as the ARB found.

But the fact is we have to look closely now at what more State and DOD can do together to prepare for contingencies such as this. And I think it is a challenge that needs to be taken up because in Iraq and now in Afghanistan, our diplomats and our military work closely together. But as we saw in Iraq, when the military left, you know, that was putting a lot of burdens on our civilians in Iraq that are very difficult for us to be able to address because we relied on our DOD colleagues for so much.

Similarly, as we are starting to look at the drawdown in Afghanistan, what kind of civilian presence are we going to be able to leave there, and what can DOD do to help us to try to determine what that can and should be?

And I think you get a sense of the challenge of this from a statement that Admiral Mullen made. You know, he said, "On the night of the attacks, Benghazi, Tripoli, and Washington communicated and coordinated effectively with each other. They looped in the military right away. The interagency response was timely and appropriate, but there was simply not enough time for U.S. military forces to have made a difference. Having said that," Admiral Mullen goes on, "it is not reasonable nor feasible to tether U.S. Forces at the ready to respond to protect every high-risk post in the world."

So we have to look at this from the State Department and the Department of Defense perspective. And we do not have assets of any significance right now on the African Continent. We are only building that up. And so what do we need in Africa? What countries will welcome us there, give us both our military and civilian teams a good, safe base out of which to operate. So if we are focusing just on Africa, and particularly, North Africa right now, there has got to be a great deal of planning and coordination between Department of Defense and AFRICOM and between the State Department and the rest of the administration.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Senator MENENDEZ. Senator Flake.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Madam Secretary. Thank you for your testimony and also thank you, as others have said, for your service. Traveling over a million miles and more than 100 countries, I think those of us who have not done it cannot appreciate how difficult that is and the commitment that you have had to it over the years. And I thank you.

With regard to the appearance of Dr. Rice on the morning shows, you mentioned that you did not select her. Were you consulted in that decision?

Secretary CLINTON. No. No; but it would not be in any way unusual for Ambassador Rice to represent the administration on a foreign relations issue.

Senator FLAKE. Right. I do not think it was either. But afterward, after she testified, it was clear that what she testified to was

at variance with a lot of communications from the State Department, and a lot of the information that had been gathered, and things that had been said by yourself and others at the State Department.

Can you just enlighten us a bit as to discussions that went on at the State Department after that testimony? Was there—I mean, these are professionals that you oversee who do a lot of hard work to give analysis and this kind of assessment. What she said was clearly at variance with a lot of the research and analysis that had gone on about the nature of these attacks. Can you just enlighten us as to what discussions were had at the State Department after this testimony?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, I do not think—I cannot speak to any conversation I specifically had because the conversations were ongoing before and after Ambassador Rice's appearance on the Sunday talk shows. And we did not conclude finally that there were no protests at all until days after the attack.

So maybe it was an abundance of caution. Maybe it was trying to make sure we did not step on anybody's toes while we were gathering information. Maybe it was because the IC was still looking at all of their sources and having different threads coming in. But, you know, as the ARB said, even today the motivations, the actions before they went onto the compound, all of that is still not nailed down.

So I think we were trying very hard to provide information. Maybe one of the lessons learned here is, you know, just withhold. Do not say what you do not know for sure until it is finally decided, but that is not part of who we are as Americans and as public officials. We get out there. We say here is what we think happened. It is subject to change.

And so I think we all wish that nobody had ever in any way raised doubts, but certainly Ambassador Rice and all the other administration officials were speaking off of what had been determined were the most acceptable talking points.

Senator FLAKE. All right. Well, I think we know now that the talking points—we do not exactly know where they were changed or how they were changed, but they were changed or altered. And I think that we can all concede that we were not given a clear picture of what went on.

Secretary CLINTON. Well, but, Senator, you know, we did not have a clear picture. I wish I could sit here today and tell you that within days, within a week, by September 20 when we came up here we had a clear picture. We did not have a clear picture. And that—you know, if you wish to fault the administration, it is that we did not have a clear picture, and we probably did not do as clear a job explaining that we did not have a clear picture until days later, creating what I think are legitimate questions, you know.

I understand—I have been on the other side of the table. I understand trying to figure out what was going on, and why were we told this, that, and the other. But I can only assure you that as the information came to light and as people thought it was reliable, we shared it, but that took some time.

Senator FLAKE. Right. Thank you. In the remaining seconds left, you mentioned that many of the recommendations have now been

put in place. There are protocols in place to make sure that if security is not adequate, that we move our diplomats and others to places where they are more secure or whatever.

But let me just say there were protocols in place before this. There were tripwires that we tripped. And the actions that were outlined to be taken were not taken. How can we be assured here that the new protocols that are in place with these new recommendations being implemented will be followed or adhered to, because they clearly were not before.

Secretary CLINTON. Well, Senator, I want to make clear that no one in the State Department, the intelligence community, any other agency ever recommended that we close Benghazi. We were clear-eyed about the threats and the dangers as they were developing in eastern Libya and in Benghazi. But there was no decision made and nothing that prompted such a decision.

Now sitting here today, we have probably at least 20 other posts that are under a serious threat environment as I speak to you. We are working with the other agencies in our government, some of whom are colocated with us, others of whom are nearby. We are constantly assessing. And sometimes we get it wrong, but it is rare that we get it wrong. This was one of those terrible tragic times when, you know, there was an assessment shared by the Ambassador, shared by others, that turned out not to take into account the militants attacking that night.

So I can tell you there are, as you say, tripwires, but we are going to try to do is elevate the discussion and the decisionmaking so that there is not any doubt that everybody is on the same page, that we are not missing information, we are not husbanding resources, and thereby making less than optimal decisions. That is what we are going to try to institutionalize going forward.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Senator MENENDEZ. Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. I want to thank Senator Menendez for chairing this critically important hearing and to thank you, Secretary Clinton, for testifying today. We deeply regretted you were unable to appear before due to your illness, and I am thrilled to see you have made a full recovery.

I want to start by just thanking you for your remarkable leadership as Secretary of State. One of many stops in the million miles that you have traveled and the 112 countries you have visited was a stop we shared jointly on a trip to Liberia for the second inauguration of Ellen Sirleaf Johnson. And it gave me an opportunity as a freshman Senator to see up close your remarkable skills and stamina and your determination.

Your leadership has helped restore America's credibility, build bridges with their international partners, and you have also built bridges here on the Hill where your leadership at State is respected on both sides of the aisle and has been widely praised. While your likely successor, Senator Kerry, has my full confidence, you will be deeply missed. You said in your opening statement you are determined to leave the State Department and our country safer, stronger, and more secure. And in my view, because of your leadership, they are.

Today we continue the consideration of the recommendations of the Advisory Review Board, which found that security was, "grossly inadequate" to deal with the attack that took place in Benghazi in September. The mistakes that were made are simply unacceptable, and I am pleased that the State Department has begun to promptly implement the Board's recommendations, thanks to your leadership.

I know you agree that the massive security failures, such as those witnessed in Benghazi that cost the lives of four brave Americans, simply cannot happen again. And I look forward to working with my colleagues on this committee in a searching review of the resources needed and the State Department structure to ensure that we do better to protect our diplomats and other Americans who put their lives at risk each and every day.

As chairman of the Africa Subcommittee, I am particularly pleased that you have drawn, for this committee today in your testimony, the links between this tragic incident in Benghazi, the recent terrorist incident in Algeria, and the unfolding challenges in Mali. I chaired a hearing on Mali on December 5, and I have been impressed with your engaged leadership of visits to Algeria, sort of raising the alarm about AQIM.

And I welcome your testimony today on how you see the regional threat from AQIM, how you see the consequences of this recent incident in Algeria, and what role you think there is for the United States in both supporting the current actions by the French and the Malian military and the need for our ongoing insurance investment to restore democracy in Mali, to restore development in some positive prospects moving forward for the people of Mali, and how you think we can ensure that State and Defense are coordinating through AFRICOM in West and North Africa going forward.

Secretary CLINTON. Well, Senator, I appreciate greatly your sustained attention to Africa, and I think it is going to be viewed as quite prophetic because there will be, I believe, a continuing set of challenges. You mentioned some of them. But by no means, you know, we have got Boko Haram in Nigeria posing the threat of instability to one of the most important oil-producing nations in the world, something very important to our country. We have got other unrest and challenges coming down the West Coast of Africa.

But we also have a success story, at least a hoped-for beginning success story in Somalia. And what did the United States do there? You know, when I became Secretary of State, I recommitted American money to the AMICOM forces. We worked to train the Ugandans and the Burundis and others. We worked with the Kenyans when they went in. We worked with the Djiboutis.

It took time. There were no shortcuts. But we had literally the boots of our American soldiers and the boots of American diplomats on the ground. I visited one of the training camps in Uganda, and what we have to do is recognize we are in for a long-term struggle here. And that means we have got to pay attention to places that historically we have not chosen to or had to.

So I would hope that this committee can make that case to the rest of the Congress. We are now looking at, you know, troops coming from other neighboring African countries. We cannot just send them into Mali. They do not have training to do that. We are going

to have to work with other partners to train them and equip them, and then to sustain them just like we did with the troops in Somalia.

So, you know, 4 years ago al-Shabbab was one of the biggest threats not only to East Africa, but to the United States. We have a chance to really continue on a positive track there, but it did not happen by accident. It took American money, American know-how, American experience. And we have to make the decision we are going to do the same in North Africa as well.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Madam Secretary. I certainly look forward to continuing to get your advice, direction, and encouragement as I try to work with my colleagues here to ensure the same sort of success going forward in West Africa that we have recently enjoyed in East Africa. Thank you for your testimony.

Senator MENENDEZ. Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Madam Secretary, and it is wonderful to see you in good health and as combative as ever. We thank you for your outstanding and dedicated service to this Nation, and we are proud of you. All over the world where I travel, you are viewed with admiration and respect.

Four months or months after the Benghazi tragedy—it is a tragedy when we lose four brave Americans—there are many questions that are unanswered. And the answers frankly that you have given this morning are not satisfactory to me. Were you and the President made aware of the classified cable from Chris Stevens that said the United States consulate in Benghazi could not survive a sustained assault? Numerous warnings, including personally to me, about the security were unanswered or unaddressed. It took a CNN reporter looking through the consulate to find Chris Stevens' last warning.

When were you made aware of that cable? When were you made aware of the attack on the British Ambassador, and the assassination attempts, and the closing of the consulate there? And what actions were taken? What was the President's activities during that 7-hour period?

On the anniversary on the worst attack in American history, September 11, we did not have Department of Defense forces available for 7 hours. Two brave Americans died in the last hour. With all these warnings, all these things took place. We did not have a single Department of Defense asset apparently available to come to the rescue.

I categorically reject your answer to Senator Johnson about, well, we did not ask these survivors who had flown to Ramstein the next day, that this was not a spontaneous demonstration. To say that it was because an investigation was going on.

The American people deserve to know answers, and they certainly do not deserve false answers. And the answers that were given the American people on September 15 by the Ambassador of the United Nations were false, in fact, contradicted by the classified information which was kept out of the Secretary of the United Nations report, who, by the way, in the President's words, had nothing to do with Benghazi, which questions why she was sent out to start with.

Why is it that the administration still refuses to provide the full text of e-mails regarding the deletion of references to al-Qaeda and terrorism in their talking points? Why do we care? Because if the classified information had been included, it gives an entirely different version of events to the American people.

Going to the American people and tell them what happened, then you ought to have your facts straight, including the Ambassador said, "Al-Qaeda is decimated, and our consulates and embassies are secure." So here we are 4 months later, and we still do not have the basic information.

Now if you want to go out and tell the American people what happened, you should at least have interviewed the people who were there instead of saying, no, we could not talk to them because an FBI investigation was going on. And by the way, as I said at the time, I just happened to be on one of those talk shows, people do not bring RPGs and mortars to spontaneous demonstrations. That is a fundamental.

And of course, the President continued to say days afterward—September the 12th, he made a reference to an act of terrorist. September 12 on "60 Minutes," too early to know. September 20 on "Univision," we are still doing an investigation. September 24 on "The View," we are still doing an investigation. The President of the United States as late as September 24, 2 weeks later, did not acknowledge that this was an act of terror conducted by people who were at least somehow connected to al-Qaeda.

Finally, Madam Secretary, I strongly disagree with your depiction of what we did after Gaddafi fell. We did not provide the security that was needed. We did not help them with border security. We did not give them the kind of assistance that would have been necessary to help dismantle these militias that still to this day remain a challenge to democracy in Libya and freedom.

You knew Chris Stevens very well. I knew him very well. I knew him on July 7 when I went to Libya to observe the elections, and at that time on July 7 he expressed to me his deep and grave concerns about security, particularly in Benghazi. And he continued to communicate with the State Department, and I do not know who else was privy to those cables, of his deep concern about the security there and the need for additional assistance. And I will argue with facts that after that event took place, after the fall of Gaddafi, the, "soft footprint" was partially, to some degree, responsible for the tragedy that took place.

The American people and the families of these four brave Americans still have not gotten the answers that they deserve. I hope that they will get them.

Secretary CLINTON. Well, Senator, I understand your very strong feelings. You knew Chris. You were a friend of Chris. You were one of the staunchest supporters of the efforts to dislodge Gaddafi and try to give the Libyan people a chance. And we just have a disagreement. We have a disagreement about what did happen and when it happened with respect to explaining the sequence of events.

We did get to talk to the DS agents when they got back to this country. We did so. It was not before September 15. We had no ac-

cess to the surveillance cameras for weeks, which helped to answer a number of questions.

But with respect to helping the Libyans, and that also goes to the question Senator Rubio asked, we will provide a list of everything we were doing and were attempting to do. But I will also tell you that since March 2011, congressional holds have been placed on programs for many months for aid to Libya. We have had frequent congressional complaints—why are we doing anything for Libya? It is a wealthy country. It has oil. Disagreement from some sources that we should never have been part of any U.N. mission in Libya. Currently the House has holds on bilateral security assistance, on other kinds of support for antiterrorism assistance.

So we got to get our act together between the administration and the Congress. If this is a priority and if we are serious about trying to help this government stand up security and deal with what is a very dangerous environment from east to west, then we have to work together.

So I hope that we can have the kind of discussion where we can agree on certain approaches that will make a difference. And again, I would urge that you look and read both the classified and unclassified versions of the ARB that tries to deal with the very questions that you and Senator Johnson are raising—the timing of it and the like.

But I also hope we are looking forward because right now Libya is still dangerous. It is still in a very unstable statute. And whatever we can do for them, we at least ought to agree we need to do and get out there and start delivering.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Madam Secretary. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MENENDEZ. Madam Secretary, I want to honor our commitment to keep you within a certain timeframe, knowing you have to also go before the House. I also want to allow every member to ask a question. I appreciate your very thorough and thoughtful answers, but, to some degree, you will dictate your own timeframe.

With that, Senator Durbin.

Senator DURBIN. Madam Secretary, thank you for being here. Excuse me. It was a little more than 4 years ago that a number of your colleagues, myself included, encouraged you to take on this responsibility, believing you would have a profound impact on the world and on the diplomacy of the United States; and you have. Thank you so much for all you have done.

I also want to say a word on behalf of Ambassador Rice, an extraordinary individual who has served this country well. I think some of the criticism that was heaped on her was unfair and did not reflect the fact that she was reporting the best information she had available at the time. And as you have said, more information became available, and it was dutifully reported.

I do want to make one point for the record here about whether the American people are told everything right away in the right way so that they can be fully informed. And I would like to refer to five words for them to reflect on: Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. We were told by every level of government here there were Iraqi weapons of mass destruction that justified a war, the invasion of the United States. We are still searching for those weapons.

They did not exist. Thousands of Americans lost their lives. We could have a hearing on that if you would like.

The point I am trying to get to is, two extraordinarily talented individuals, Admiral Mullen, and maybe one of the best diplomats of our time, Ambassador Pickering, did a thorough review here, found shortcomings in our protection of our people overseas and reported them honestly. You not only initiated that review, you accepted its findings in their totality—no cover up. An attempt to be totally honest to make sure a tragedy like this never occurs again.

The second point I would like to make is this. Some on the committee have already criticized the notion that this is about money. They might argue you cannot solve a problem by throwing money at it. Madam Secretary, you cannot solve a problem by throwing money at it unless the problem is lack of money.

And what I understand you to testify is, you have asked this Congress for the authority to transfer existing funds to protect ambassadors and diplomatic personnel around the world, and you have been refused by the House of Representatives. They will not give you the authority to even take existing funds. If I am not mistaken in a few weeks, your Department is going to face sequestration, and we not only will not have additional funds, we will cut some \$129 million when it comes to construction of facilities to protect people who represent the United States overseas, and cut money for the individuals necessary to protect those same diplomats.

So I would like you to comment how can we keep our commitment to be a leader in the world in the area of diplomacy, in state craft, to avoid the necessity of war if we do not give the most basic resources to your Department, which commands, as I understand it, about 1½ percent of the Federal budget.

Secretary CLINTON. Actually it is less than one, but let us not quibble.

Look, I am well aware that there are deficiencies and inadequacies in the Department. I went about doing what I could in the 4 years I had through the QDDR process, through creating some additional incentives and changes in culture to try to assist everybody in the State Department and USAID to do as much as they could with whatever they had, you know, because we were never going to reach parity with the Defense Department. We were always going to be one-twelfth or less of the budget. That was fine, but to do what we can.

But at the same time, we have asked for the funds we think we need to be able to fulfill the mission you have described, Senator Durbin. And we need the help of this committee. I mean, I am one who believes that we have to both walk and chew gum at the same time. We have to deal with our own economy and our fiscal situation. That is a given because that is the source of our strength and our capacity. But we also have to be smart about making the right investments in diplomacy and development to try to solve problems and prevent them.

So, you know, I have outlined what should be a no-brainer. Let us have the permission to take money we already have—we are not

asking for more money—and put it to work where the ARB told us to do. And then let us look at the budget as we move forward.

Now sequestration will be very damaging to the State Department and USAID if it does come to pass because it throws the baby out with the bath. Are there programs that we could reduce, make more efficient? Yes, that is part of what I have been trying to do is to push that forward, and that what is the QDDR process was about. But there are also a lot of very essential programs, first and foremost, the security of our personnel in dangerous places, that we cannot afford to cut more of.

And so I hope we get the transfer authority and then have a sensible budget discussion going forward.

Senator DURBIN. Thank you.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you.

Senator BARRASSO.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Secretary, I want to thank you for your incredible commitment to this country as First Lady, as a member of this body, as well as Secretary of State. And as a doctor, I will tell you I have seen you work yourself to exhaustion not for your own benefit, but for the benefit of the people of this country, and the country is grateful for that.

Secretary CLINTON. Thank you.

Senator BARRASSO. I, like you, agree that we need to make sure that something like this never happens again. And I have kind of looked at it like the *Challenger* explosion where we lost those seven astronauts because of an O-ring and problems there. And we said, well, we did not see it coming, but we could have seen it coming and should have seen it coming.

As you said, you never saw the security request. Vice President Biden in the Presidential debate said no one told us. I mean, the concern is that we should have been seeing these sorts of things. There were the attacks on the British Ambassador. There were the attacks on the Red Cross that they pulled out of Benghazi. There were attacks on the consulate itself. And yet we had no evacuation plan established in spite of the fact that months earlier in Libya we had, I think, had to get an Italian ferryboat to be able to get people out who were in danger who were diplomats at the time. So those are the concerns.

We want to make sure that there is security for our ambassadors, which gets to the issue of we talk about what happened on the talk shows and they said the best information was what was best available at the time. The American people heard “we had a substantial security presence.” They heard “we obviously did have a strong security presence.” They heard “obviously there was a significant security presence.” And I just believe that that was not the case.

And I would ask you today if you believe that we had a significant, substantial, and strong security presence in Libya at that time, because we want that for all of our ambassadors.

Secretary CLINTON. Right. Well, Senator, we had a security presence that was mutually reinforced with the annex. We had had, as you rightly point out and others before you, previous incidents, not only against our compound, but against the British, the Red Cross, and others. And what we have accepted from the ARB recommen-

dation is that even though there was a back and forth in the cables and discussions, you need three DS agents or do you need five. We had five there, but we had an unprecedented attack. As one of the former RSOs, regional security officers, testified, an attack that truly was not expected, even though on that night we had the requisite number of DS agents.

So, you know, we can get mired in the back and forth, but I believe we will be doing more to help prevent future tragedies and attacks if we take the ARB recommendations, because after all, they had no stake in this debate one way or the other. They just wanted to look at the facts, which they did an excellent job doing, and then tell all of us what we needed to do. And that is what I think our highest responsibility is.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Madam Secretary. You know, thinking about future attacks and trying to prevent those, on September 12, the President vowed to, "bring to justice the killers who attacked our people in Benghazi." So we asked the question—and Senator Risch talked about it—Were the people that perpetrated the recent attacks in Algeria? Were they part of this or were they made perhaps emboldened because no one has yet paid a penalty for the attack on our facility in Benghazi? And how can we make sure that people are actually brought to justice there?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, I believe that—well, I know that the FBI has been briefing some committees. I assume members or staff of this committee are included—I do not know that, but I would assume—about the progress of their investigation. I got the most recent update from the Director just a few days ago when he returned from North Africa. They are following some very promising leads and putting together cases. They would have to speak to you directly about that in a classified setting.

But I think what they are trying to determine is how best to respond. And I think what the President clearly said is we will respond, and we will bring those to justice. And I do not think anybody should doubt this President at his word. We have some very good examples that it may take time, but he does not in any way divert attention from the goal of bringing them to justice.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Madam Secretary. The President also said al-Qaeda has been decimated. And in light of the recent terrorist activities that we continue to see in North Africa, around the world, would you characterize that al-Qaeda has been decimated?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, core al-Qaeda certainly has been. I think you would hear the same from the intelligence community or DOD. The work that has been done in Afghanistan and the border areas between Afghanistan and Pakistan certainly has taken out a whole cadre of leadership.

What we are seeing now are people who have migrated back to other parts of the world where they came from primarily, who are, in effect, affiliates. Part of the jihadist syndicate, some of them, like al-Qaeda and the Islamic Maghreb, use that name. Others use different names.

But the fact is they are terrorists. They are extremists. They have designs on overthrowing existing governments, even these new Islamist governments, of controlling territory. So although

there has been the decimation of core al-Qaeda in the Afghanistan/Pakistan region, we do have to contend with the wannabes and the affiliates going forward.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Madam Secretary.

Senator MENENDEZ. Senator Udall.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Madam Secretary, for being here. And it is great to see you today. You have been, I think, a real and dedicated public servant for this country. And your travels around the world, as many here have talked about, and the million miles that you have put on, and all the countries you visited. And I think you have been to many countries where they have never had a Secretary of State. And I have seen firsthand when I have been to many of these countries the difference it makes to have you there on the ground. So I, first of all, just wanted to thank you for that, and I know it does take a toll. But you are incredibly dedicated to that.

Second, it is great to see you here in good health—

Secretary CLINTON. Thank you.

Senator UDALL [continuing]. Smiling and engaging with all of us. And I want to add to the list people—Senators going down the line talked about some of your accomplishments. I know previously I talked to you about cookstoves, which I know has been one of your initiatives. And it is once again an example of picking something where people around the world who are living on a dollar or two a day, if you put in a technology, like an up-to-dated cookstove, you can make a big difference on their health and the health of their children. And you can make a big difference on the environment. So I would add that to the list that has been given here today of very thoughtful policymaking on your part.

Now, one of the findings that the board made in its report is that—and I am quoting here—“The total elimination of risk is a nonstarter for U.S. diplomacy given the need for the U.S. Government to be present in places where stability and security are often most profoundly lacking, and host government support is sometimes minimal to nonexistent.”

And this report really, as you know, Madam Secretary, underscores the difficulty in finding the right balance between engagement and security. And I fully support, as you have asked here and you have made the point to our committee, the idea that we should reprogram this \$1.4 billion, get our act together, and respond to the recommendations.

But my question here revolves around these high-risk posts. I think the term you have used is having 20 of them. Is this how many there are, how many high-risk posts we have around the world?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, it is a sliding scale.

Senator UDALL. Yes.

Secretary CLINTON. There is very high and there is high. I mean, it is a constantly evolving threat environment.

Senator UDALL. Can you give us a little bit of a range? I mean, very high.

Secretary CLINTON. Yes. You know, I would like to give you that in a classified document because I do not think it helps us to point

out the ones that we think are most at risk, and then the ones that would be perhaps in a secondary category.

But I think it is fair to say, Senator, we operate in Pakistan. We operate in Iraq, in Afghan, in Yemen. We operate in places where we know that our facilities are being surveilled for potential attacks, where we have a steady intel stream of plotting against us. We know that. And we make the decision, which is a difficult decision, as to whether or not that mission continues.

And I have to say that we really rely on our security professionals to implement the protocols and the procedures. And I have to say they do a tremendous job. The vast majority of the cases—I could give you a long list of attacks averted, of assassinations stopped, of the kinds of daily efforts that our diplomatic security professionals are engaged in.

So I have a lot of confidence in them, but we are going to do what we can to make sure that they get the support within our bureaucracy that they deserve out on the ground protecting our diplomats.

Senator UDALL. And now I want to obey the time limits here because you need to do—move over to the House, and others want to question. But maybe you could answer this one for the record. Does it make sense that in some of these high-risk areas that we consolidate those particular areas with more secure areas, and then be able to be in a situation where our personnel would be safer? And I am not asking you really to answer that now. My time has run out, and I want others to be able to question. But if you could give us an answer for the record, that would be great.

[The written information supplied by the State Department follows:]

Presently the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS), in consultation with other agencies, assigns threat levels to each post. Six threat categories inform the Security Environment Threat List (SETL): terrorism, political violence, residential crime, nonresidential crime, human intelligence, and technical threat. A rating is then assigned for each category based on a four-level scale: Critical, High, Medium, and Low.

The SETL assists DS management in prioritizing overseas security programs and ensures that effective allocation of resources is applied to meet Overseas Security Policy Board standards based on overall threat levels. The Under Secretary for Management will be pleased to brief you on the SETL, at your convenience, in an appropriate setting.

Secretary CLINTON. I will do that, and I will say, Senator, one of the recommendations out of the East Africa ARB was to do that, and that is done again in the vast majority of cases wherever it is possible to do what is called collocate. But we are taking a look at that as well to see what more we can do.

[The written information supplied by the State Department follows:]

The Secure Embassy Construction and Counterterrorism Act of 1999 (SECCA) requires certain collocation waivers, and such waivers currently exist for all facilities not located on compounds constructed since the law was enacted in 1999. A database of these locations is maintained by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security.

By February 28, 2013, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations will have an established and cross-referenced list of non-collocated facilities that predate the SECCA.

By March 31, 2013, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations will develop two action plans: (1) a prioritized list of facilities that will be required to move forward with collocation; and (2) a list of

facilities that are either unable to collocate or legislatively authorized not to be collocated. Any facilities in this second group that lack a waiver will be required to submit requests for collocation waivers.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Madam Secretary.

Senator MENENDEZ. Senator Paul.

Senator PAUL. Thank you for appearing, Secretary Clinton, and I am glad to see your health is improving.

One of the things that disappointed me most about the original 9/11 was no one was fired. We spent trillions of dollars, but there were a lot of human errors. These are judgment errors, and the people who make judgment errors need to be replaced, fired, and no longer in a position of making these judgment calls.

So we have a review board. The review board finds 64 different things we can change. A lot of them are common sense and should be done, but the question is, it is a failure of leadership that they were not done in advance and four lives were lost because of this.

I am glad that you are accepting responsibility. I think that ultimately with your leaving, you accept the culpability for the worst tragedy since 9/11, and I really mean that. Had I been President at the time and I found that you did not read the cables from Benghazi, you did not read the cables from Ambassador Stevens, I would have relieved you of your post. I think it is inexcusable.

The thing is, is that, you know, we can understand that you are not reading every cable. I can understand that maybe you are not aware of the cable from the Ambassador in Vienna that asked for \$100,000 for an electrical charging station. I can understand that maybe you are not aware that your Department spent \$100,000 on three comedians who went to India on a promotional tour called "Make Chai Not War."

But I think you might be able to understand and might be aware of the \$80 million spent on a consulate in Mazar-e-Sharif that will never be built. I think it is inexcusable that you did not know about this and that you did not read these cables.

I would think by anybody's estimation, Libya has to have been one of the hottest of hot spots around the world. Not to know of the request for security really I think cost these people their lives. Their lives could have been saved had someone been more available, had someone been aware of these things, more on top of the job.

And the thing is, is I do not suspect you of bad motives. The review board said, well, these people were not willfully negligent. I do not think you were willful. I do not suspect your motives of wanting to serve your country.

But it was a failure of leadership not to be involved. It was a failure of leadership not to know these things.

And so, I think it is good that you are accepting responsibility because no one else is. And this is—there is a certain amount of culpability to the worst tragedy since 9/11, and I am glad you are accepting this.

Now my question is, Is the United States involved with any procuring of weapons, transfer of weapons, buying, selling, anyhow transferring weapons to Turkey out of Libya?

Secretary CLINTON. To Turkey? I will have to take that question for the record. Nobody has ever raised that with me. I don't—

Senator PAUL. It has been in news reports that ships have been leaving from Libya and that they may have weapons. And what I would like to know is the annex that was close by, were they involved with procuring, buying, selling, obtaining weapons, and were any of these weapons being transferred to other countries? Any countries, Turkey included?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, Senator, you will have to direct that question to the agency that ran the annex. I will see what information is available and—

Senator PAUL. You are saying you do not know?

Secretary CLINTON. I do not know. I do not have any information on that. And you know, with respect to personnel, Senator, you know, first, that is why we have independent people who review the situation as we did with the Pickering and Mullen ARB, and all four individuals identified in the ARB have been removed from their jobs. Second, they have been placed on administrative leave while we step through the personnel process to determine the next steps.

[The written information supplied by the State Department follows:]

The United States is not involved with any transfer of weapons from Libya to Turkey.

Secretary CLINTON. Third, both Ambassador Pickering and Admiral Mullen specifically highlighted the reason why this is complicated because under Federal statute and regulations, unsatisfactory leadership is not grounds for finding a breach of duty. The ARB did not find these four individuals breached their duty. So I have submitted legislation to this committee, to the Congress, to fix this problem so future ARBs will not face this situation.

Senator PAUL. But here is the problem. The review board has all these recommendations, but there is one thing they failed to address and I think you have failed to address, and it sets us up for another tragedy like this. They should have never been sent in there without a military guard.

This should have been an embassy like in Baghdad in a war zone, and it should have been under military guard, significant military guard, Defense Department command. I do not think the State Department is capable of being in a war zone and protecting these people. I still do not think that.

I think another tragedy could happen. I think another tragedy could happen in another war zone around the world. I think someone needs to make an executive decision, someone needs to take leadership, and with that leadership should be you should not send them in with no Marines. You should not send them in with Marines who are to guard records, not people. You should not send them in with the same kind of Ambassador or Embassy staff that you have in Paris.

I think that is inexcusable.

Secretary CLINTON. Well, Senator, the reason I am here today is to answer questions the best I can. I am the Secretary of State, and the ARB made very clear that the level of responsibility for the failures that they outlined was set at the Assistant Secretary level and below.

The administration has sent officials to the Hill more than 30 times. We have given as much information—we have been as transparent as we can. Obviously, we will continue to brief you and others, to answer any and all questions that you have about going forward.

The reason we put into effect an Accountability Review Board is to take it out of the heat of politics and partisanship and accusations and to put it in the hands of people who have no stake in the outcome. The reason I said make it open, tell the world, is because I believe in transparency. I believe in taking responsibility, and I have done so.

And I hope that we are going to be able to see a good working relationship between the State Department and the committee going forward.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you.

Senator MURPHY.

Secretary MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Clinton, I approached this hearing with some degree of sadness. It is my first and your last. But I am so appreciative of your service. You have done such credit to this Nation, and we will be sorry to see you go. We know that you will continue to give us good counsel and good advice in the coming years.

I think if some people on this committee want to call the tragedy in Benghazi the worst since 9/11, it misunderstands the nature of 4,000-plus Americans lost over 10 years of war in Iraq fought under false pretenses. It was fought under false pretenses, but it was also fought, I think, because we had a misunderstanding of what we could do and what we could manage in that region—what was under our control.

And I guess my question to you, Secretary Clinton, is about what our expectations are going forward in North Africa. And I think you referenced this in your opening remarks about actually what is under our control.

One of the criticisms in the review board was that we did not have a full understanding of this complicated set of allegiances between jihadist groups that are shifting on an almost daily basis. And I worry sometimes that when we do this retrospective hand-wringing over a tragedy like this that we sometimes give the impression to the American people that we can know all and see all and control all in a region where we certainly are just beginning to stand up the kind of presence that we may ultimately need and want.

And so, I guess I present this as an open-ended question to you: As we move forward, and especially for new members of this committee who are probably going to be spending a lot more time on Africa and North Africa than this committee has ever spent before, what are the expectations that we should set for the American public as to what we can control, what we can know, and potentially what changes on the diplomatic side we need to make in order to have a more solid footprint and relationship with neighbors there who may be willing to help us when it comes to intelligence and intervention with this very complicated landscape of jihadist groups?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, Senator, you are going to make an excellent member of this committee based on that question. Because it is a multipart question, but it raises really the heart of the challenge we face.

We are in a new reality. We are trying to make sense of changes that nobody had predicted, but which we are going to have to live with. I cannot do justice in the time I have left here to the really important issues that you have highlighted, but I think, first and foremost, let us be honest. Let us be honest with ourselves. Let us avoid turning everything into a political football.

Let us instead try to just say, look, this is unprecedented. We do not know what is going to happen in this new revolutionary environment across North Africa and the Middle East, but let us see what lessons we can learn from what worked in the past, see what is applicable, and then let us bring people together who will really have the kind of open discussion that used to be the hallmark of this committee and of the Senate.

I mean, people used to have hearings where it was not to just have administration officials come up and ask the questions and go on from there, but really to delve into what works and what does not work. Bring in outside experts. Let them debate in front of you. Try to figure out what the best information going forward is.

I mean, over the last weeks, I have pulled writings from, you know, what you would call very conservative and very liberal commentators who kind of reach the same conclusion about what we should be doing in this region. We have to approach it with humility. But we have got some real assets if we deploy them right and helping to rebuild security is essential.

We did it in Colombia. It took a decade. We did it directly in Colombia. We did it as a partner with others in Somalia, and there are a lot of other examples all the way across the world. Let us be smart and learn from what we have done in the past and see what can be transferred into the present and the future, and let us be honest in trying to assess it to the best of our abilities.

And I think with the new chairman and the new ranking member, from my conversations with both of them, I think this committee could play such an essential role in trying to answer your questions and put forth a policy that would not go lurching from administration to administration, but would be a steady one like we did with Colombia, like we did in the cold war.

Let us be smart about this. We have more assets than anybody in the world, but I think we have gotten a little bit off track in trying to figure out how best to utilize them.

Senator MURPHY. I hope this committee takes up those wise recommendations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you.

Senator KAINE.

Senator KAINE. Madam Secretary, I also regret that our overlap will be so brief. I think the country is at its strongest when we balance military strength with diplomatic strength, economic strength, and strength of our moral example, and I cannot think of a person that exemplifies that balance in a public service career as well as you do, and I appreciate that.

Secretary CLINTON. Thank you, Senator.

Senator KAINE. A few questions, sort of detailed questions that trouble me. In the unclassified version of the ARB, there is a comment, a brief one. In December 2011, the Under Secretary for Management approved a 1-year continuation of the U.S. Special Mission in Benghazi, which was never a consulate and never formally notified to the Libyan Government.

Why wasn't this special mission notified to the Libyan Government? Is that a common practice? Did the lack of the notification have any connection with the weak Libyan governmental response on the 11th, and are there any changes in connection with the ARB recommendations to the idea of special missions that are not notified formally to their host governments?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, Senator, congratulations to you as well. And welcome to this committee.

The United States notified to the Libyan Government the specific names of people who were serving in Libya in both Tripoli and in Benghazi. That, in no way, affected the legal obligation of Libya under the Vienna Convention. The problem, as I said, was not their willingness. It was their capacity.

And as you know, from the first time Chris Stevens arrived before the fall of Gaddafi, he relied not on any Libyan governmental security, but on the February 17th Brigade, and then we supplemented that after Gaddafi's fall with DS agents, with private security contractors.

So there was no affect on anything from the Libyan Government that was related to that. However, we do think that needs to be looked at going forward. The ARB made a very important point that the so-called temporary nature of the mission did prove to be confusing to people down the chain responsible for reading those cables.

We get about, I do not know, how many millions of cables do we get? And I have to confess I do not read all the cables that come into the State Department. That is why we have a huge workforce of people who are given responsibility and expected to carry forward that responsibility.

And I think designating it as temporary, in the ARB's findings, did cause an extra level of uncertainty, to some extent. You know, as the chairman said at the very beginning, quoting from the ARB, there has been an acculturation in the State Department to husband resources, to try to be as careful in spending money as possible. And then I think adding to that the fact that it was "temporary" probably did lead to some of the confusion that we later saw played out in the cables, but not the status of it for the Libyan Government.

Senator KAINE. How common is it for us to rely on local non-governmental security, as was the case with the Blue Mountain and February 17 Brigades in Benghazi?

Secretary CLINTON. Well, it is very common. We employ privately employed security guards in a very high number of our posts around the world. I mean, if you go to the Embassy in Baghdad or you go to the Embassy in Kabul or really many of our high-threat places, you will see private security guards.

Now, because of problems with private security guard contracts that came to light in Iraq, where, as you remember, there were a

lot of difficulties—these were private security guards who were protecting diplomats and development experts, other civilians—many countries have put very stringent requirements on private security guards.

And in fact, in Libya, the transitional government prohibited private security guards, which is why there was this—unless they approved them. So they approved this Blue Mountain company that was a joint Libyan-British organization. But we use private security guards in many places because, as I said, historically, Marine guards do not protect personnel. Their job is to really take care of classified material and to destroy it, if necessary.

We had no classified material at Benghazi. And it was unfortunate that we evacuated all the Americans and unclassified material was left behind, but we had no classified material. So there is going to be an effort because of this work that I have directed to really sort this out so that you know, that everybody knows exactly what the protocols and the rules are, and we act accordingly.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Madam Secretary, Mr. Chair.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you.

Madam Secretary, thank you for your thorough, thoughtful, and forthright answers. It is what we have become accustomed to from you.

I understand we are going to be able to welcome you one more time when you come tomorrow to introduce Senator Kerry to the committee. We look forward to welcoming you there as well.

I think that there are several takeaways here that are incredibly important. One is that we have to look at the totality of the threat environment versus just looking for a specific credible threat when we are thinking about the protection of our Foreign Service personnel, and I see that we are moving in that direction.

The other one is changing the State Department to have clear lines of authority and responsibility for security matters instead of silos looking at a horizontal level. And I understand that is under way.

A lot has been said about resources here. Secretary Gates used to famously argue that there are more people in military bands than in the entire Foreign Service. It seems to me that, surely, we can find the funds to protect our diplomats who serve on the front lines. I am concerned when the ARB says that the State Department has been engaged for years in a struggle to obtain the resources necessary to carry out its work which has conditioned the thinking of some in the State Department that it is imperative for the State Department to be mission driven rather than resource constrained, particularly in increasingly risky parts of the world.

So I look forward to immediately working with the ranking member to reach out to Chairman Royce to get that transfer authority within the existing budget. It is not about additional money. It is about taking money that has already been appropriated so that you have the ability to start working, and the next Secretary has the ability to start working to protect our people as robustly as we can. A failure to do so is going to be a poor judgment call on the part of this Congress, if we cannot get, at a minimum, the transfer authority.

Finally, I know a lot has been made about what was said and what was not said. I think that there are lessons to be learned there as well, in our drive to produce information about a tragedy as quickly as possible, as we should. But I think what we know and what we do not know is equally as important, and maybe the admonition that we should know before we speak is incredibly important. That would have been incredibly important when we were told that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

As someone who voted against the Iraq war in the House and did not believe, based upon what I was able to review, that there was adequate information, when we talk about tragedies—and certainly, Benghazi was a tragedy—when we lost 4,486 American lives in Iraq, had thousands who have been injured and had their lives changed forever, and the increased influence of Iran, I think from my own perspective, that was truly a tragedy.

And so, there are lessons to be learned here. There will be questions for the committee to ask for the record by the close of business tomorrow, since we do not expect you to be much longer in your position.

The committee thanks you for your appearance here today and your service. Senator Corker, a final word?

Senator CORKER. I want to actually add three more takeaways, and I know they are based not only on testimony here today, but conversations we have had over the last several days.

You alluded to the over-the-transom issues that the State Department and the White House deal with on a constant basis. I think this committee will be useful and can be useful in setting a long-term exploration of what our national interest is so that we look at this over a longer term context. I know you alluded to that in your testimony.

Secondly, I know we have talked extensively about the importance of having a full authorization. That actually would be very helpful to people like you who come in for a very short period of time for us to help set those priorities. That would be something you would embrace and something this committee has never done since I have been here.

And thirdly, that we live in a world now where we know that al-Qaeda is going to be a threat in North Africa for years to come, and we need to have policies that realize that and address it.

I, too, thank you for your service. I know a lot of nice things will be said again tomorrow when you come here, but thank you so much. I appreciate it.

Senator MENENDEZ. On that bipartisan note and with the thanks of the committee, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:35 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. War of Terror: Secretary Clinton, I appreciated your comment in the letter you sent us in December, that we cannot just play better defense, but must do much better on offense as well. We have had great success in degrading terrorism networks globally and specifically the core al-Qaeda leadership; however, there has been a growth in offshoot and extremists networks, particularly in north Africa as

a result of political turmoil on Libya and Mali. These threats make terrorism cooperation and coordination in north Africa and in the Gulf of primary importance.

- ◆ Is the war on terrorism shifting grounds as extremists splinter into small, more regional groups?
- ◆ What is our offensive strategy for countering extremists and al-Qaeda splinter groups?

Answer. Denying al-Qaeda and its affiliates safe havens will continue to be a challenge, and we know that terrorists enjoy safe haven in sparsely populated territories in Africa. While we have had much success in combating al-Qaeda and its primary affiliates, the threat has become more widely dispersed. We will continue to work to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat extremists in this evolving landscape through a range of efforts, especially those enabling partners around the world to counter the threat within their own borders. Denying safe havens, whether individuals in such areas enjoy membership in al-Qaeda, or like-minded or associated smaller groups, plays a major role in undermining terrorists' capacity to operate effectively and forms a key element of U.S. counterterrorism strategy. Through technical assistance, training, and the provision of equipment, we aim to improve the capacities of partner nations. We also work to deny terrorist groups continuing flows of recruits. The challenges we face are considerable, but we believe that applying a comprehensive set of tools is the best approach for achieving our counterterrorism objectives against violent extremist groups.

A core element of our approach to the shifting terrorism networks of today is a strategy that focuses not only on strengthening the military, intelligence, and civilian capabilities of our partners, but also one that supports their efforts to address the political, economic, and social drivers of violent extremism. The U.S. counterterrorism approach in west and north Africa, for example, has focused on encouraging and enabling local ownership over counterterrorism efforts in the region and building sustainable capabilities that will ultimately deny terrorists the ability to operate with impunity.

The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) was developed with this comprehensive approach in mind—as was its counterpart in East Africa, the Partnership for Regional East African Counterterrorism (PREACT). TSCTP uses a multisectoral approach involving the Department of State, USAID, and the Department of Defense to address the threat of terrorism in west and north Africa. We are also engaging in a range of activities to undermine violent extremists' narrative with the establishment of the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC). Through CSCC, the U.S. Government is providing a counternarrative to extremist propaganda and pushing back openly in online forums in Arabic, Urdu, and Somali.

We are also working multilaterally to advance a more strategic, long-term approach to address the terrorist threats in the region through the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF). With partners from 29 countries and the European Union, the GCTF is helping to bring together U.S. and European CT efforts, with those of various countries in north Africa and the Middle East—for example, Algeria, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates, as well as many others—to combine international efforts and address new challenges as terrorist networks morph and tactics change. The Forum's Working Groups on the Sahel and on Criminal Justice/Rule of Law are strengthening the civilian capacities of countries in the region to prevent and respond to terrorism within a rule of law framework and are bringing together practitioners and policymakers to identify priorities, devise solutions, and mobilize additional resources from the donor community to help the region confront the terrorist threat it is facing.

Question. Preventing Tragedy: The ARB's findings indicate that were failures on both ends—at the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli, as well as with the Department here in Washington. The ARB found that the Embassy “did not demonstrate strong and sustained advocacy with Washington for increased security for Special Mission Benghazi” and that in D.C. that “there appeared to be very real confusion over who, ultimately, was responsible and empowered to make decisions based on both policy and security considerations.”

- ◆ Can you detail for me from start to finish how such requests will be considered in the future, particularly from High Risk, High Threat Posts?
- ◆ Who will make the request for additional security at an Embassy or other U.S. facility?
- ◆ Who will receive the request, who will review it, who will make the decisions about the request and in what timeframe can we expect a request to be received, considered, and a determination made?

Answer. The Chief of Mission is directly responsible for the security of his or her mission. However, security is also a shared responsibility with other Department personnel.

We will continue to balance this shared security responsibility with U.S. interests and policy priorities, evolving security threats, and the mitigation of security risks.

The Department is creating a mechanism for determining which posts should be included in the High Threat Post (HTP) designation. Diplomatic Security (DS) will perform the requisite research, conduct a review, and prepare a recommendation for the Under Secretary for Management's approval. The action memorandum will reflect the circumstances and criteria that warrant the HTP designation. To lead this effort, and in line with the ARB's recommendation, I have created the first-ever Deputy Assistant Secretary for High Threat Posts in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security.

Once a High Threat Post designation is approved, the regional bureau and post will determine the size and scope of a continuing U.S. presence based upon policy imperatives and security requirements. A High Threat Post would be expected to perform a critical review of staffing levels, adhere to enhanced security parameters for the facility, and enhanced transportation security.

As with the current process, the Chief of Mission is ultimately responsible for requesting additional security assets. When a request for additional security is received for a High Threat Post, each request will be carefully considered by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Regional Bureau, and other Department principals in close consultation with the Chief of Mission.

The Department is constantly assessing security protocols to reflect rapidly changing environments and the threats they present, and considers a range of options from mitigating steps, to reduced presence, to closing.

Question. Host-Country Security: As our diplomats are increasingly called to represent the United States in the world's most dangerous places—Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, our security standards and protocols must adapt to ensure that the facilities in which they work and the personnel protecting these facilities are adequate to the threats posed by the specific environment, particularly where the host country is unable to meet its obligations under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and provide protection to embassies and consulates. We must be, as the ARB states, self-reliant and enterprising in developing security platforms, profiles and staffing and make assessments on a case-by-case basis.

- ◆ What assessments have been or are being undertaken with regard to reliance on host-country security in High Risk, High Threat Posts?
- ◆ What alternative arrangements are you considering where there is a need for a U.S. presence in a short timeframe that does not allow for adherence to normal facility requirements—as in Benghazi, but where the host country cannot provide suitable security?

Answer. The Department has undertaken a worldwide review of our overall security posture in light of the evolving security challenges in the Middle East and elsewhere to identify and implement additional measures to bolster the security of our facilities and personnel where necessary. As part of this review, the Department assessed the host-nation's ability to respond to an attack on our facilities.

Every attempt is made to acquire sites or facilities that meet the physical security standards set forth in the overseas security policy board (OSPB) standards regardless of the length of time we plan to occupy the facility. If the OSPB standards cannot be met, the Department takes steps to mitigate any security vulnerabilities to ensure our staff have a safe and secure platform to conduct foreign policy.

The Department currently has an increased security proposal pending congressional approval. With this proposal, we will be able to increase the Marine Security Guard Detachments, hire additional Bureau of Diplomatic Security special agents, and build additional secure facilities overseas.

Question. Contracting: The ARB, and in his testimony before this committee, Under Secretary Nides stated that State may need additional contracting authority to ensure that the Department has the ability to quickly execute a contract where necessary to address security concerns.

- ◆ Does the Department presently have the ability to use sole-source contracting to address urgent security needs?
- ◆ Second, I understand that presently the Department currently contracts for local guards on the basis of the lowest price technically acceptable, which essentially means that the focus is lowest price, but not necessarily the best value and certainly not the best guards. Do you support a change in contracting

authority to allow the Department to let local guards contracts based on the best value to the Department?

Answer. The Department welcomes congressional support for our efforts to award local guard contracts to support our worldwide missions based on best value, in lieu of the current lowest price, technically acceptable requirement. Additionally, while there is generally sufficient and flexible authority to accomplish the Department's procurement goals, the Department is seeking congressional assistance to obtain additional authority to make awards final and unreviewable, thereby avoiding lengthy bid protests which put at risk our ability to secure our embassies.

Question. Authorization of Resources: Members of this committee have argued that improving embassy security doesn't require resources or that if we need additional resources for diplomatic security and embassy construction that it can be transferred from elsewhere in the Department. House Republicans actually prevented the inclusion in the Sandy supplemental of the administration's request for a transfer of \$1.1 billion in Iraqi security funds to address urgent security issues, like enhancing the Marine Security Guard program despite the fact that this is only a reprogramming of funds that won't be used in Iraq.

- ◆ Putting aside the congressional limitations on transferring funds between accounts, what is your response to these critics?
- ◆ Do you have the resources elsewhere in the Department to make up for the shortfalls in funding to increase the number of diplomatic security agents, make securing upgrades and repairs at facilities and to fund embassy construction at a pace that reflects the urgency of the situation for about two dozen High Risk, High Threat Posts around the world?

Answer. The Department has not received sufficient funding to address our critical Embassy Security Construction Program. As originally envisioned, this program was designed to support the construction of 10 or more facilities per year. Reduced funding, both requested and appropriated, coupled with overseas inflation has cut the number of facilities by over 50 percent—only five were awarded in FY 2012. The Department has determined that it will take approximately \$2.2 billion per year, from all sources (which includes other agency contributions based on their staffing presence overseas) to get back on track.

As indicated in the question, there are limitations on the Department's ability to transfer funding between and among state operations appropriations, particularly for construction, which marginalizes the ability to make the most efficient use of the funds which have been appropriated. In an effort to make the most of the funding the Department does receive, the Department is pursuing additional authorities that would permit the transfer of funds appropriated for State operations to increase security at U.S. embassies and other overseas posts. Specifically, at the Department's request, the Senate included in its version of the supplemental for Hurricane Sandy, which passed at the end of the 112th Congress, a provision that would allow the Department the flexibility to transfer Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funds from FY 2012 and from the FY 2013 Continuing Resolution between State Department operating accounts to meet emergent and emergency construction needs. Unfortunately, this provision was not carried in the House version of the supplemental. Thus, the Department is seeking the next earliest available legislative opportunity for Congress to provide the requested authority to transfer these funds to jump-start our enhanced embassy security proposal and related construction program.

In addition, the Department intends to work with the Office of Management and Budget and Congress to seek ongoing transfer authority that would permit additional flexibility to transfer operating funds to the Embassy Security, Construction, and Maintenance account so that funding can be more rapidly made available for security upgrades at overseas facilities. Our current transfer authority limits the Department's ability to address new requirements, particularly in High Risk, High Threat Posts, because it places a cap on the amount of money that may be moved.

Question. Training: One of the ARB recommendations that hasn't received so much attention, but actually may be one of most important things the government could do in the short term is to make sure our people on the ground have the training to take care of themselves to the best of their abilities, particularly folks charged with securing our embassies and people. State currently has multiple facilities that handle security training and I know you are hoping to bring the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center at Fort Pickett on line as soon as possible.

- ◆ What other steps is the Department taking on the ARB recommendation to enhance training to prepare our personnel for leadership positions in High Risk,

High Threat Posts? Are you specifically looking to expand and improve counter-threat training for all U.S. Government personnel operating overseas?

Answer. The Department agrees that expanded training will be a major part of implementing the ARB recommendations.

On December 20, 2012, the Under Secretary of State for Management made Foreign Affairs Counter Threat training mandatory for all personnel assigned under Chief of Mission authority to High Threat Posts, as well as third-party contractors, when appropriate. This expansion of Foreign Affairs Counter Threat training will have resource implications that we are working to address immediately. We look forward to congressional support for enhancing our security and training.

On January 3, 2013, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) established a panel of Supervisory Special Agents to participate in a Program Review of the High Threat Tactical Course. This Diplomatic Security panel will review current the High Threat Tactical Course content, as well as review the findings of the Diplomatic Security Training Center internal program review of the High Threat Tactical Course. Changes to the High Threat Tactical Course will respond to the independent Accountability Review Board recommendations. Preliminary indications are that the High Threat Tactical Course may need to expand beyond its current 5-week course.

Currently, DS is working to develop a training module for Locally Employed Staff, who assist the foreign government to provide security protection for Chiefs of Mission. This "Protection 101" course will provide DS Agents assigned as regional security officers with course materials, lesson plans, and exercises needed to present a 40-hour block of instruction to Locally Employed Staff.

Implementing several of the ARB recommendations will also require additional training.

- For the recommendations dealing with fire safety, staff will receive training for any new equipment issued for fire protection.
- The Department is evaluating and planning for additional language training for current and future staff at High Threat Posts, including specialized training based on needs and/or asymmetric language designated positions).

Question. Worldwide Review: You informed us in your letter in December that you ordered a worldwide review of our overall security posture, particularly for high-threat posts.

- ◆ What are the initial results of this review?
- ◆ Are there specific lessons from Benghazi that should be implemented with respect to these posts?

Answer. All posts were directed to review their security in light of the Benghazi ARB report. The Department also identified a number of posts deemed to be at particular risk. The recommendations resulting from these reviews range from increased personnel to physical security enhancements to the introduction of new technologies.

These reviews also identified other issues, such as the importance of carefully reviewing the overall staffing footprint, protection of accelerants, provision of fire-fighting and safety equipment, adequacy of safe havens, enhanced nonlethal area denial agents, consideration of expanding the role and presence of Marine Security Guard detachments, and expanded training for personnel assigned to high threat posts.

The Department has submitted an Increased Security Proposal to Congress, including a legislative proposal to enable the transfer of previously appropriated Overseas Contingency Operations funding. With this proposal, we will be able to increase the number of Marine Security Guard Detachments, hire additional Bureau of Diplomatic Security personnel, build additional secure facilities overseas, and supply additional security equipment to high threat posts.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TOM UDALL

Question. How would you characterize Libyan cooperation with the investigation?

Answer. The Government of Libya has been cooperative with us on the investigation within their limited capabilities. The Libyan people have also demonstrated their support for the United States, with tens of thousands marching against the militia violence shortly after the attacks in Benghazi. However, the government's investigative capacity on the ground is limited; security sector officials in Libya have been the targets of frequent assassination attacks and the overall security situation there is fragile, especially in Benghazi. We refer you to the FBI for any details about

the current status of their investigation into the attacks on our facilities in Benghazi.

Question. What is your assessment of the capacity and intention of Libyan authorities to bring those responsible to justice?

Answer. While the Government of Libya has demonstrated its willingness to cooperate with the investigation, its investigative capacity is limited. We are working with the interagency and the Libyan authorities to help them address these limitations so as to bolster their ability to cooperate with the FBI investigation.

Question. What support has the United States offered to Libya?

Answer. Since the revolution, the United States has provided the Government of Libya with targeted technical assistance in a number of critical areas to help establish security sector institutions appropriate for a democratic state, and to develop the capacities needed to control loose weapons, counter terrorism, and improve border security management.

Specifically, during multiple visits to Libya by the Department of Defense's Defense Institution Reform Initiative in 2012, we advised the Libyan Ministry of Defense on establishing defense institutions and armed forces that are unified, capable, and subject to civilian control and the rule of law. Furthermore we are providing training for Libyan military leaders in military officer professional development schools and familiarization visits to the United States. These visits by high-level Libyan officials are ongoing. We have also been providing counterterrorism training to the Libyan military.

We are poised to provide further assistance to build capability and capacity among Libya's border security agencies to detect, interdict, investigate, and prosecute illicit weapons transfers—pending resolution of a congressional hold—and we have been working with the Libyan authorities since August 2011 to secure and disable Qadhafi-era weapons stockpiles. On September 4, 2012, we designated Libya as a country eligible for the Global Security Contingency Fund (GSCF), a joint Department of Defense and State initiative pooling together resources and expertise to provide border security and Special Operations Forces (SOF) programs.

During a December 17 meeting of senior officials in London, a Libyan interministerial delegation worked with the U.N. Support Mission in Libya, the United States, and other international partners to identify and address these priorities. This meeting, which the United States strongly encouraged and facilitated, catalyzed efforts by the Libyan authorities to better evaluate offers of assistance. We are working with the U.N. and other international partners to build on the December 17 meeting and assist Libya with its articulated security sector priorities.

Question. It is my understanding that many of the security personnel in diplomatic security are trained to defend the embassy, its personnel, and critical information.

- ◆ In a case like Benghazi, would it have made sense to have more security personnel trained with counterassault capabilities to take on the militants in order to more effectively fight back the thrust of their attack, and should the Department of State consider placing more security personnel with these capabilities at high-risk locations as a deterrent to would be attackers?

Answer. The Department of State does place Diplomatic Security personnel with enhanced training at overseas locations, including in Tripoli. The Department has requested additional funding through the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on November 27, 2012, to permit us to have additional security personnel both from Diplomatic Security and the U.S. Marine Corps.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. In testimony before the committee, the Accountability Review Board (ARB) stated that our overreliance on Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs) was a contributing factor in the Benghazi terrorist attacks.

- ◆ Would you also agree that the State Department relies too heavily on FSNs in countries where there is a high counterintelligence (CI) threat as well?

Answer. In its official report, the independent Accountability Review Board determined that “reliance” on the quasi-governmental February 17 militia “for security in the event of an attack was misplaced . . .” This observation informed the ARB’s general recommendation, which the State Department is implementing, that, “The Department must strengthen security for personnel and platforms beyond tradi-

tional reliance on host government security support in High Risk, High Threat Posts.”

On the separate question of FSNs or “Locally Employed Staff”—that is, host country nationals employed by U.S. missions abroad—the independent Accountability Review Board concluded that: “The Department needs to review the staffing footprints at High Risk, High Threat Posts, *with particular attention to ensuring adequate Locally Employed Staff (LES) and management support.* High Risk, High Threat Posts must be funded and the human resources process prioritized to hire LES interpreters and translators.” [Italics added.] We agree that such support is essential to advancing America’s interests and keeping our people safe, including in countries where there is a high counterintelligence threat.

Question. What steps is the State Department currently taking to reduce the reliance of FSNs in countries where the physical and CI threat is elevated?

Answer. The Department of State, consistent with the recommendations of the independent ARB, is assessing the role of Locally Employed Staff, or Foreign Service Nationals, where appropriate. As the ARB report states, “The Department needs to review the staffing footprints at High Risk, High Threat Posts, with particular attention to ensuring adequate Locally Employed Staff (LES) and management support. High Risk, High Threat Posts must be funded and the human resources process prioritized to hire LES interpreters and translators.” But to be clear, local guards are not LES.

Question. What is your opinion of how the FBI investigation into the Benghazi terrorist attacks is proceeding?

Answer. I spoke to this matter during the hearing and refer you to the FBI for further details about the current status of the investigation. The Libyan Government has been supportive of, and cooperated with, the FBI investigation. At the same time, however, the Libyan Government’s limited investigative capacity presents serious challenges. We are working with the Libyan authorities to help them address these limitations and bolster their ability to cooperate with the FBI investigation.

Question. Have we fulfilled the President’s promise to bring those perpetrators responsible to justice?

Answer. As I stated during the hearing, the FBI is following some promising leads, and we are committed to bringing those responsible for these attacks to justice. We defer to the FBI for any details about the progress of their investigation into the attacks on our facilities in Benghazi. In high-level interactions with Libyan Government officials, we have made clear that this is a top policy priority both for the President and for me.

Question. Could you please describe the State Department Foreign Affairs Counter-Threat (FACT) training for RSOs going to Libya?

Answer. State Department and other U.S. Government personnel who serve in certain high threat posts, such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Libya, Sudan, South Sudan, Yemen, and Mexican border posts are required to receive security familiarization training, known as Foreign Affairs Counter-Threat Training (FACT), to provide enhanced security and life safety skills. (Certain officials who have received more advanced security training are exempted from this requirement.) The FACT training is a 5-day course and FACT training modules include but are not limited to: medical first responder, personnel recovery, firearms familiarization, surveillance detection, counterthreat driving, and explosive countermeasures.

Instead of receiving FACT training, each of the DS Special Agents and Regional Security Officers serving in Libya were trained in one of two more advanced security courses: the High Threat Tactical Course (HTTC) or the Mobile Security Deployments Green Team (MSD GT) course. HTTC is a 5-week course that provides in-depth training on all of the course material covered in the FACT course plus additional medical, firearms, and tactical training. MSD GT is a 6-month advanced tactical course given to members of DS’s tactical operations unit, the Office of Mobile Security Deployments, which covers material beyond both FACT and HTTC. (Since 2009, DS Agents and SPS who have completed either HTTC or MSD GT are exempt from taking the FACT course.)

Question. Were any FACT requirements waived or abbreviated for Libya?

Answer. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security Directorate of Training did not waive or abbreviate the FACT training course for any personnel assigned to take the training.

Question. What other organizations in Africa is the Department of State currently considering for designation as a Foreign Terrorist Organization?

Answer. As a matter of general practice, the Department does not publicly comment on prospective Foreign Terrorist Organization designations because doing so would risk undermining the effectiveness of the designation by alerting the potential target of the upcoming sanctions. For example, such prenotification could result in the flight of assets in the financial system before they could be frozen.

The Department will continue to work with other relevant U.S. agencies and international partners in identifying ways we can further erode the capacity of organizations carrying out terrorist attacks in Africa, as well as to build the capacity of foreign partners to address terrorist threats within their countries and regions.

Question. On what date was Ali Ani al-Harzi detained in Turkey?

Answer. Information regarding al-Harzi's detention in Turkey is associated with an ongoing investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Questions regarding this matter should be directed to the Department of Justice.

Question. On what date was Ali Ani al-Harzi transferred to Tunisia? On what date was the FBI granted access to Ali Ani al-Harzi? On what date did the FBI interview Ali Ani al-Harzi?

Answer. For questions related to the ongoing criminal investigation of the Benghazi attacks, I would refer you to the Department of Justice.

Question. On what date was Ali Ani al-Harzi released from Tunisian custody?

Answer. Al-Harzi's lawyer announced his release from Tunisian custody on January 7.

Question. Did the State Department make any requests on behalf of the U.S. Government to interview Ali Ani al-Harzi while he was in Turkish custody? If no, why not? If yes, what was the answer to our requests?

Answer. The information on this matter is associated with an ongoing investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Questions regarding this matter should be directed to the Department of Justice.

Question. Once transferred to Tunisian custody it appears it took over a month and a half for the FBI to gain access to al-Harzi.

- ◆ How many formal demarche's and diplomatic notes were sent to the Tunisians after his transfer from Turkey and before the FBI was granted access?
- ◆ Did Ambassador Walles make any calls to officials in the Tunisian Government asking for access to al-Harzi? If yes, to whom and on what dates? If no, why?
- ◆ Did you make any calls to officials in the Tunisian Government asking for access? If yes, to whom and on what dates? If no, why?
- ◆ Did the U.S. Government issue any formal demarche's or diplomatic notes protesting his release?
- ◆ Did Ambassador Walles make any calls to Tunisian Government officials protesting his release? If so—to whom and on what dates?

Answer. Bringing the perpetrators to justice is a top priority for the U.S. Government. Since the September 14 attack on the U.S. Embassy in Tunis, the State Department and the Justice Department have vigorously pursued greater law enforcement cooperation with the Government of Tunisia. Tunisian officials have responded to our request for legal cooperation in the Benghazi attack investigation.

Senior State Department officials have raised this case with Tunisian leadership. Most recently on December 14, Deputy Secretary Burns traveled to Tunis on behalf of the Secretary and discussed the issue with the Prime Minister. Between October 7 and December 21, Ambassador Walles had numerous conversations in person and by phone with the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Interior, the Foreign Minister, MFA State Secretary, and the Senior Advisor to the Prime Minister to request FBI access to an individual who was detained in Tunisia subsequent to the Benghazi attack. He also discussed this with the Tunisian President and Prime Minister. The Embassy transmitted numerous diplomatic notes and letters to the Tunisian Government during this period formally seeking access to this individual and providing additional information.

Ali Ani al-Harzi was conditionally released from Tunisian custody on January 7. As I noted in my testimony, we have been assured that the Tunisian Government is monitoring his whereabouts. We have expressed concern about his release on multiple occasions. I called Prime Minister Jebali on January 13. Ambassador Walles, together with the FBI Director, met with the Prime Minister and Minister of Justice on January 17 to express concern. The Tunisian Government explained that the in-

investigative judge had to release al-Harzi because there was not sufficient evidence to continue to detain him.

We will continue to work closely with the Tunisian Government on this investigation, carrying out President Obama's directive that "we will not waiver in our commitment to see that justice is done for this terrible act."

Question. On what date did you learn that al-Harzi would be released?

Answer. We learned of the release on January 7. We did not receive advance notice.

Question. Was any request made or discussions had about requesting that he be transferred to U.S. custody (either from Turkey or Tunisia)?

Answer. Information regarding al-Harzi's detention is associated with an ongoing investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Questions regarding this matter should be directed to the Department of Justice.

Question. Have any other individuals been detained by foreign governments (to include Libya) who may have knowledge about the September 11, 2012, Benghazi terrorist attacks and would be useful for the FBI or the intelligence community to have access to? If so, who, and in what countries are they being detained?

Answer. We defer to the FBI on the details of the investigation into the Benghazi attacks.

Question. What actions has State Department taken to gain access to these individuals?

Answer. We are committed to bring those who attacked our compound to justice. Where we have been aware that another government has detained an individual in relation to the Benghazi attacks, we have engaged with that government to assist the FBI with gaining access to that individual.

Question. What actions have you taken to get either the FBI or the intelligence community access to these individuals?

Answer. We are committed to bring those who attacked our compound to justice. Where we have been aware that another government has detained an individual in relation to the Benghazi attacks, we have engaged with that government to assist the FBI with gaining access to that individual.

Question. If countries have individuals in their custody and are not making them available to the FBI or intelligence community, would you consider listing them with the designation of nonfully supporting U.S. antiterrorism efforts (under section 40a of the Arms Export and Control Act)?

Answer. We will consider all available diplomatic tools to use to ensure that the U.S. Government has full access to any suspects related to the Benghazi attacks.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. Did you review or were you briefed on the cables sent from post in the months leading up to September 11 regarding the security situation in Libya, specifically in and around Benghazi?

Answer. As I stated in my testimony before the committee, I am responsible for the nearly 70,000 people who work for the Department of State. Specific security requests pertaining to Benghazi were handled by the security professionals in the Department. While I did not see those requests, I was made aware of certain incidents in Benghazi, as well as the deteriorating security environment in Libya more generally, which was a topic of discussion with Libyan officials.

Question. Were you aware of post's requests in March and July 2011 for extended or additional security?

Answer. As I stated in my testimony before the committee, I had no knowledge of specific security requests, including those in March and July 2012. These were handled by the security professionals in the Department.

Question. Were you aware of the more than 200 security incidents that occurred in Benghazi in the 13 months leading up to the attack on the U.S. compound that caused most other Western diplomats to leave the city?

Answer. As I have stated, I was aware of the broader deterioration of the security environment in Libya and of certain incidents that took place in Benghazi, such as

those that occurred at our facility. I would note that other Western diplomats also did not leave Benghazi due to the security situation prior to September 11, 2012.

Question. Can you provide a complete list of how many, if any, internal or inter-agency meetings you participated in to discuss the deteriorating security situation in Benghazi in the months that preceded the attack?

Answer. As I stated in my testimony before the committee, there were a number of conversations and meetings where the topic of Libya's democratic transition and how we could assist in strengthening the Libyan Government's security capabilities throughout the country were discussed. We do not have a precise count of how many such meetings occurred, particularly since Libya was one of a number of topics discussed—such as transitions in north Africa.

Question. Secretary Clinton visited Libya in October 2011 and Senior State Department officials visited the country in April and May 2012. Deputy Secretary Burns visited the country in July 2012.

- ◆ (a) Was the deteriorating security situation in Benghazi specifically raised in any of the meetings that took place during those visits, either with the country team or with Libyan officials?

Answer (a). The security situation in Libya has always been a topic of conversation and a priority for both the United States and Libya. We have engaged with Libyan officials at the highest levels about these issues.

- ◆ (b) Did Secretary Clinton, Deputy Secretary Burns, or other officials visiting Libya in the months prior to the attacks discuss either in person or through memos the role of militias and the security situation that contributed to post's concerns?

Answer (b). Since the ouster of Qadhafi from power we have been urging the government to consolidate control over the militias. The militias had strong political credibility in Libya due to their service during the revolution, and have often provided security services where weak official security sector institutions could not, including by providing security in some locations during the July elections. I met with Libyan Prime Minister Abdurrahim ElKeib in Washington in March 2012 and Deputy Secretary Burns met the Libyan Deputy Prime Minister in June 2012.

Question. If the United States had played a leading role in accelerating the downfall of the Qaddafi regime, do you believe that we could have helped create a more stable post-Qaddafi security environment that would have been safer for our diplomatic personnel?

Answer. The United States was a key and critical participant in the NATO-led operation that supported the Libyan people during the uprising against Muammar Qadhafi's dictatorship. We have supported the new Libyan authorities following the end of the conflict, and we were one of the first countries on the ground following the revolution. We have provided the new, democratically elected government with U.S. assistance to foster a more stable security environment for the Libyan people.

Question. Secretary Clinton met with Libyan Prime Minister Abdurrahim ElKeib in Washington in March 2012 and Secretary Burns met the Libyan Deputy Prime Minister in June 2012.

- ◆ Did either Libyan official express any concern about the security situation in Benghazi? If so, was this message shared with others in the U.S. Government?

Answer. In March 2012 the security situation in Eastern Libya remained relatively stable. The focus of the ElKeib visit was on shepherding political support for Libya for national elections in July, a goal that was perceived by many to be overly ambitious for the fledgling transitional government. The visit also focused on building commercial ties with the oil-rich country.

Question. What State Department officials involved in reviewing Embassy Tripoli's security resources requests has resigned from government service for their decisions to reject post's requests?

Answer. All four individuals identified in the independent Accountability Review Board's (ARB) report have been removed from their jobs and placed on administrative leave while we step through the personnel process to determine next steps. The ARB did not find these four individuals to have breached their duty, because, as the Board highlighted, unsatisfactory leadership is not grounds for finding a breach of duty under Federal statute and regulations. We have submitted legislation to Congress to clarify that the Department may take disciplinary action on the basis of unsatisfactory leadership in relation to a security incident and to permit further leeway to future ARBs to recommend such disciplinary action.

Question. When on the evening of September 11 were you notified of the attacks on the Benghazi facilities?

Answer. As I stated in my testimony before the committee, I was notified of the initial attack on our compound in Benghazi shortly after 4 p.m. Eastern Standard time.

Question. What actions did you take to ensure that all effort was made to assist U.S. personnel in Benghazi? Who else in the U.S. Government did you consult about this? Were you involved in any meetings or telephone calls with President Obama or White House officials that evening?

Answer. As I stated during the hearing, upon learning of the attack on September 11 we engaged in continuous conversations within the Department, the interagency, and internationally to ensure all effort was made to assist our personnel in Benghazi. I immediately instructed Senior Department officials and Diplomatic Security personnel to consider every option to seek as much security support as possible and to coordinate with Libyan authorities.

I spoke several times with National Security Advisor Tom Donilon to seek all possible support from the White House, which they quickly provided. I also spoke with our Chargé d'Affaires in Tripoli to receive updates on the situation and to former CIA Director Petraeus to confer and coordinate. I called Libyan General National Congress President Magariaf to press him for greater support, not only in Benghazi but also in Tripoli. I participated in a secure video conference of senior officials from the intelligence community, the White House, and the Department of Defense, during which we reviewed the options and the actions we were taking. And I spoke with President Obama later in the evening to update him on the situation. I spoke early on the morning of September 12 with General Dempsey and again with Tom Donilon. As I told the committee, the two hardest calls that I made were obviously to the families of the families of Ambassador Stevens and Sean Smith.

Question. Did the Libyan Government request any security assistance or training in the months that followed the fall of Qaddafi, during your visit in October 2011 or during any of the visits of other State Department officials? Were those requests approved or denied?

Answer. Libyan officials have requested U.S. advice and assistance in rebuilding their security sector architecture and to establish control over their land borders. Since the revolution, the United States has provided the Government of Libya with targeted technical assistance in a number of critical areas to help establish security sector institutions appropriate for a democratic state, and to develop the capacities needed to control loose weapons, counter terrorism, and improve border security management.

During multiple visits to Libya by the Department of Defense's Defense Institution Reform Initiative in 2012, we advised the Libyan Ministry of Defense on establishing defense institutions and armed forces that are unified, capable, and subject to civilian control and the rule of law. Furthermore we are providing training for Libyan military leaders in military officer professional development schools and familiarization visits to the United States, and provided assistance to develop an English learning lab to promote military-to-military cooperation. We have also been providing counterterrorism training to the Libyan military.

Our FY 2012 bilateral budget for Libya includes \$800,000 in Anti-Terrorism Assistance to enhance the government's control through law enforcement, border security, and investigation capacity assistance. This budget also includes \$1.3 million in assistance to build capability and capacity among Libya's border security agencies to detect, interdict, investigate, and prosecute illicit weapons transfers. This assistance awaits resolution of a hold in the House of Representatives.

Further, we have been working with the Libyan authorities since August 2011 to secure and disable Qadhafi-era weapons stockpiles. Our Conventional Weapons Destruction programs have identified Libya's ammunition storage areas and continue to inventory and control conventional weapons and munitions with an emphasis on man-portable air defense systems and other advanced conventional weapons with the help of trained Libyan nationals. On September 4, 2012, we designated Libya as a country eligible for the Global Security Contingency Fund, a joint Department of Defense and State initiative pooling together resources and expertise to provide security assistance.

Question. What, if any specific actions has the administration taken since the September 11 attacks in Benghazi to assist the Libyan Government in its efforts to dismantle militias and extend government control throughout the country?

Answer. After Libya's Prime Minister and his cabinet were seated in November 2012, we pressed the new government to use its mandate from the people to articulate its security sector priorities, noting that the United States stands ready to assist. During a December 17 meeting of senior officials in London, a Libyan inter-ministerial delegation worked with the U.N. Support Mission in Libya, the United States, and other international partners to identify and address these priorities. This meeting, which the United States strongly encouraged and facilitated, catalyzed efforts by the Libyan authorities to better evaluate offers of assistance. We are working with the U.N. and other international partners to build on the December 17 meeting and assist Libya with its articulated security sector priorities.

Question. The New York Times reported a month after the Benghazi attacks that the United States was increasing efforts to help Libya build its own niche military capabilities, including Special Forces, to combat the types of groups that were involved in the attack on our diplomats.

◆ Why was such assistance not a higher priority prior to Benghazi?

Answer. Helping to grow Libya's security capabilities and capacity has always been a high priority for both of our governments, especially with the presence of militant groups' looking to fill any security vacuum especially following Qadhafi's fall. Following the July 7 elections, the new democratically elected Libyan authorities felt they had the mandate to improve the security situation and accepted a U.S. proposal in August 2012 to help them build niche military counterterrorism capabilities.

Question. Looking at the security situation today in Libya, what lessons have we learned and should apply about how the United States and our allies handle future post-conflict situations?

Answer. Every situation is unique but there are lessons to learn from Libya. Despite overthrowing a brutal regime and organizing successful democratic elections in July 2012, Libyans have struggled to rebuild their country and establish a government with the necessary capacity. The security situation remains fragile and Libyans face numerous challenges as they seek to reform the country's institutions, disarm and reintegrate the militias into civilian life, and provide security throughout the country, not least for diplomatic missions. Libya's various transitional governments have asked the United States and its other international partners, including the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), to assist with technical advice, training, and other support. We have since the fall of Qadhafi endeavored to respond to those requests, and we need congressional support to do so. Libya is a wealthy country, so we have looked to provide assistance principally in areas that the government could not support quickly or where government support is inappropriate. We continue to examine ways to increase this support and make it more effective. Unfortunately, progress has been slow and the Libyan Government has not yet succeeded in restoring security throughout the country.

There is no easy solution for ensuring post-conflict stability in any nation. It is clear that the days and weeks immediately following a regime change are crucial to the longer term trajectory. But limited U.S. resources and the importance of a Libyan led reconstruction means that it is not simply a question of more resources. It is crucial for the United States to move quickly in the first days, to target its assistance at specific sectors where we have a strong national interest, demonstrated competence, and buy-in from local authorities. Finally, it is important to coordinate closely with our allies to share the burden of post-conflict stabilization and to ensure that our messaging to new governments is consistent and reinforcing.

Question. On Security Resources Allocation: In testimony given on October 10, 2012, State Department officials indicated that security weaknesses in Benghazi did not result from a lack of security resources.

◆ Can you identify the pressing security needs that diverted resources from Benghazi prior to the attacks?

Answer. The issue of resources is global, not specific, as explained in the independent Accountability Review Board (ARB) report. The report states, "For many years the State Department has been engaged in a struggle to obtain the resources necessary to carry out its work, with varying degrees of success. This has brought about a deep sense of the importance of husbanding resources to meet the highest priorities, laudable in the extreme in any government department." In light of the ARB report, we are reexamining how we allocate resources to security requests and stepping up engagement with Congress to ensure that we have adequate resources.

Question. As the Report of the Accountability Review Board on Benghazi confirmed, security at the U.S. facilities in Benghazi was woefully inadequate to the threat environment in the area.

- ◆ What unique requirements are in place today that mandate review and approval by higher level officials of decisions that allocate or deny security resources to posts with extraordinary or evolving security situations?

Answer. We are undertaking a thorough review of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's organization and management. A panel is being formed to focus on operating overseas, both in the policy and security arenas. This panel will begin its work in February and will be tasked to provide guidance and recommendations on restructuring the organization of Diplomatic Security to ensure effective allocation of resources.

In addition, the Department established a new Deputy Assistant Secretary position for High Threat Posts and has provided requisite staff. This will focus attention and resources allocation for security at these posts.

As a result of the ARB report, we are looking at ways to ensure that Assistant Secretaries, Deputy Assistant Secretaries, and special envoys who support U.S. missions abroad share responsibility with Senior Department principals, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations—to support Chiefs of Mission in protecting U.S. personnel and facilities, exercising judgment to balance U.S. interests and policy priorities, evolving security threats, and the mitigation of security risks.

We believe these steps, and others that will be identified as we move forward implementing the ARB recommendations, will make allocating our resources for security more effective, with appropriate scrutiny applied at crucial decision points.

Question. Does the State Department require that officials at the Bureau of Diplomatic Security responsible for decisions on the allocation of security resources have a background in overseas security operations or threat analysis? If so, what are those requirements?

Answer. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) is the security and law enforcement arm of the U.S. Department of State. DS special agents are Federal law enforcement officers who serve worldwide. Throughout an agent's career, from basic training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center to accredited training at the Diplomatic Security Training Center, special agents receive the necessary training for the design, development, implementation, and review of comprehensive security programs.

Question. In your opinion, how clearly defined were the roles of different agencies in responding to a security threat or attack on the installations in Benghazi on the day of the attacks?

Answer. The interagency worked quickly and collaboratively to respond to the attack in Benghazi on September 11, and the independent Accountability Review Board stated that "Washington-Tripoli-Benghazi communication, cooperation, and coordination on the night of the attacks were effective." The President gave clear directions to Secretary Panetta and Chairman Dempsey to work to mobilize all available assets and move them into the region as rapidly as possible, which the Department of Defense immediately set out to do.

The ARB report also weighed in on this issue: "The Board found no evidence of any undue delays in decisionmaking or denial of support from Washington or from the military combatant commanders. Quite the contrary: the safe evacuation of all U.S. Government personnel from Benghazi 12 hours after the initial attack and subsequently to Ramstein Air Force Base was the result of exceptional U.S. Government coordination and military response and helped save the lives of two severely wounded Americans." Still, it is important that we do more to coordinate with the Department of Defense and other interagency colleagues as we adjust our posture in light of the new landscape we face today in the region. And we have already started to do just that.

Question. What steps have been taken by the State Department and other relevant elements in the national security structure to clarify interagency responsibilities in case of an emergency response in similar far-flung outposts?

Answer. As the independent Accountability Review Board (ARB) reported, "The interagency response was timely and appropriate, but there simply was not enough time given the speed of the attacks for armed U.S. military assets to have made a difference. Senior-level interagency discussions were underway soon after Washington received initial word of the attacks and continued through the night." Further, the ARB found that, "Washington-Tripoli-Benghazi communication, coopera-

tion, and coordination on the night of the attacks were effective, despite multiple channels of communication among Washington, Tripoli, Benghazi, and AFRICOM headquarters in Stuttgart, as well as multiple channels of communication within Washington itself.”

To further improve interagency cooperation on diplomatic security, the Department has worked with Department of Defense on defining requirements for identified high-risk posts. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security has been engaged with the U.S. Marine Corps in discussions to increase the number of Marine Security Guard detachments overseas.

We will also have broader discussions with the Department of Defense to evaluate providing more capabilities and capacities at higher risk posts.

In furtherance of these efforts, the Department submitted an increased security funding proposal, which would include establishing additional Marine Security Guards, to the Congress in November 2012. In order to fully implement this increased security proposal, additional transfer authority is essential to be able to transfer existing Overseas Contingency Operations funds between State operations accounts to address urgent security and construction requirements at posts abroad.

Question. Considering the need for forward-leaning diplomatic engagement and activities in places with evolving security conditions, do you expect any revisions to the Security Environment Threat List (SETL) that informs the work of the Diplomatic Security Service?

Answer. The SETL is a long-range planning tool and should not be viewed as comprising dynamic ratings that are adjusted in relation to constantly evolving contemporaneous threats. DS’s Office of Intelligence and Threat Analysis is the lead office within DS responsible for compiling the SETL, which is published annually. The very few off-cycle changes to the annual SETL ratings are coordinated between DS headquarters and post.

While the SETL provides guidance, it is not the definitive word in asset allocation, especially in a global society that is ever-evolving where we must continuously evaluate risks and needs. This is especially true in nations with fragile governments or emerging democracies where additional security resources may be committed to posts as necessary in response to the emergent circumstances regardless of the threat levels assigned in the annual SETL.

Presently, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS), in consultation with other U.S. agencies, assigns threat levels to each post across six categories: terrorism; political violence; residential crime; nonresidential crime; human intelligence; and technical threat. These six threat categories, and the corresponding ratings assigned to each post, in turn inform the Department’s Security Environment Threat List (SETL). Ratings are assigned for each category based on a four-level scale: Critical, High, Medium, and Low.

Additionally, the SETL assists DS management in determining the needs of overseas security programs and helps advise effective allocation of resources in order to meet Overseas Security Policy Board (OSPB) standards.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JEFF FLAKE

Question. In the wake of the attacks on our facilities in Benghazi, I was surprised to see Susan Rice, our Ambassador to the United Nations, as the representative chosen to speak to the press and the American people about those attacks. And as we all now know, the talking points she was given were inaccurate and painted a false account of what really happened in Benghazi. I do not believe the administration has satisfactorily explained why those talking points were inaccurate, but I do not intend to address that here.

On November 14, President Obama excoriated some of my colleagues on the issue of Susan Rice and Benghazi, stating that, “for them to go after the U.N. Ambassador, who had nothing to do with Benghazi . . . is outrageous.” My question for you, Secretary Clinton, is

- ♦ Why was Susan Rice deputized to be the face of Benghazi for the administration, when even the President has said that Rice “had nothing to do with Benghazi?” Was she the correct person to tap for this position, in your opinion?

Answer. As I stated during my testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on January 23, it was not in any way unusual for Ambassador Rice—a senior administration foreign policy official and member of the Cabinet—to have represented the administration by speaking to a full range of foreign affairs and national security issues on the Sunday talk shows on September 16.

Just as President Obama and I said several times during the week following the attacks, as Ambassador Rice stated in her remarks, and as I said when I appeared before you last week: We were sharing the best, most current information that we had at the time, making it clear that it would likely change, as is often the case after such incidents.

Question. The gaps in security at our facility in Benghazi have been addressed, the Accountability Review Board has given recommendations to address them, and things have started to happen at the State Department as a result. But several questions remain about the Benghazi facility itself.

According to the report issued on December 30 by the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee (HSGAC), “despite the inability of the Libyan Government to fulfill its duties to secure the facility, the increasingly dangerous threat assessments, and a particularly vulnerable facility, the Department of State officials did not conclude the facility in Benghazi should be closed or temporarily shut down.”

- ◆ Why did the facility in Benghazi remain open despite the security risks it faced?
- ◆ The committee report also notes that collocation of the various governmental facilities in Benghazi was being considered in December 2011. Why was this plan never realized?

Answer. Benghazi is at the heart of a larger struggle within Libya between those who want to build a stable and prosperous democracy, and extremists who are pursuing a radical agenda. The new Libya was being born in Benghazi and we had to be present to understand the post-revolutionary conditions. We have learned again and again that when America is absent—especially from the dangerous places—there are consequences: extremism takes root, our interests suffer, and our national security is threatened.

Neither staff in Libya nor in Washington recommended that the TMF be closed. Ambassador Stevens had traveled to Benghazi on September 10 to carry out routine diplomatic business, reconnect with his contacts from his time as special envoy in Benghazi, and to open a cultural center to reach out to local youth.

Our security personnel at the Benghazi TMF and the security team at the Annex maintained a close working relationship and reinforced one another when needed. While collocation had been discussed as an option, and was still under consideration, it was never implemented by the two teams on the ground.

Question. In an exchange with Senator Cardin during the hearing, you mentioned that the regime of Muammar Gaddafi had stockpiled warehouses of weapons, many of which have made their way into the black market and into the hands of terrorists since Gaddafi’s ouster. And questions have arisen as to whether some of the same terrorists involved in the Benghazi attacks were also involved in the recent attack on an oil field in Algeria.

- ◆ When the decision was made that the United States would involve itself in the military effort to oust Gaddafi, were we aware of the stockpiled weapons inside Libya? How many were there, and where did they initially come from?

Answer. We and our NATO partners had long been aware that Muammar Qadhafi had amassed a vast arsenal of conventional weapons and munitions, including man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS), during the four decades of his dictatorship.

Due to the secretive nature of the regime and Libya’s relative diplomatic isolation we are unable to determine the precise size of the Qadhafi regime’s weapons holdings.

The opaque nature of the Qadhafi regime also means we have incomplete information about the suppliers and sources of these conventional weapons. We know that Soviet/Warsaw Pact nations were major suppliers, along with China and several other states.

- ◆ To what degree were these weapons a factor in planning for Libyan reconstruction?

Answer. Loose, poorly secured, and otherwise at-risk weapons and munitions prolong instability, complicate reconstruction planning, and delay Libya’s ability in reconstruction. We recognized this threat prior to the conflict, and began working to directly address this threat as soon as areas were freed from Qadhafi control. Beginning even before the fall of the Qadhafi regime, State Department-funded contractors provided support to transitional authorities in an effort to rapidly account for and secure MANPADS and other advanced conventional weapons. (In the east, for instance, we began working with the Transitional National Council to assist in

securing and destroying weapons once the fight against Qadhafi had moved further west.)

The United States, in coordination with the United Nations, the European Union, and other international partners, continues to support the Government of Libya as it seeks to bring peace and stability to the country with technical assistance in the areas of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), police training, and border security. As the new Libyan Government continues to stabilize and make decisions as the country's first elected government in over 40 years, we will continue our engagement and explore opportunities to expand our assistance in this regard. Libyan leadership is essential to success in this area, and we remain uniquely positioned to provide assistance as requested by the new Libyan Government.

◆ What efforts were taken to secure these warehouses and stockpiles?

Answer. Since April 2011, the United States has led an international effort, in cooperation with the Government of Libya, to account for Libya's advanced conventional weapons, including MANPADS. Through these ongoing efforts, we have accounted for, secured, or destroyed more than 5,000 MANPADS and components.

Once the revolution began, we funded the work of two nongovernmental organizations operating in the eastern parts of Libya to clear unexploded ordnance at ammunition storage areas, hospitals, and schools. Beginning even before the fall of the Qadhafi regime, State Department-funded contractors provided support to transitional authorities in an effort to rapidly account for and secure MANPADS and other advanced conventional weapons.

With the arrival of the first democratically elected Libyan Government in over four decades on July 7, 2012, we transitioned this program into a longer term effort to identify, inventory, and secure or dispose of stockpiled armaments and munitions. In all, the United States has committed approximately \$40,000,000 in assistance to the Government of Libya for this collaborative effort. As an essential element of this approach, the United States is also cooperating closely with the U.N., the European Union, and key international partners including the United Kingdom, Canada, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France, to support the Libyan Government in securing its stockpiles.

◆ How is it that these weapons are now turning up in other deadly attacks across north Africa?

Answer. In the immediate aftermath of the revolution, transitional authorities in Libya were unable to track all of the weapons removed from stockpiles during the power vacuum created by the fall of the regime. Moreover, the new government continues to encounter various challenges establishing control over these weapons as it works to reconstitute the country's decimated security sector institutions. It is still negotiating with tribal and militia forces to account for weapons held by these groups. Militants and smugglers have taken advantage of this protracted power vacuum for their own nefarious interests, and have destabilized north Africa and the Sahel.

As noted above, we continue to lead an international effort to support the Government of Libya as they identify, inventory, and secure or dispose of stockpiled armaments and munitions. The government is developing plans, assisted by the United States, the European Union, Italy and other allies, to address Libya's porous borders and develop its military and border security forces.

Libya's neighboring countries are also mobilizing to address this threat and build needed capacities—a daunting task considering their long and unpopulated borders, and long timelines required to develop effective measures. We have engaged the governments of countries across the region and coordinated with partners to build these capacities. For example, we have assisted the Governments of Niger and Chad to mitigate the threat of weapons proliferation, expanding assistance for their efforts to comprehensively patrol their borders and interdict weapons traffickers. As an essential element of this approach, the United States is also cooperating closely with the U.N., the European Union, and key international partners including the United Kingdom, Canada, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France, to support these governments in addressing these threats.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO

Question. In the letter dated December 18, 2012, you stated, "We continue to hunt the terrorists responsible for the attacks in Benghazi and are determined to bring them to justice." During the hearing in December, I asked the status of bringing those responsible to justice.

- ◆ Has the United States identified the terrorists responsible for the deaths of the four brave Americans, the injuries of two U.S. personnel, and the destruction of U.S. facilities?

Answer. As I stated during the hearing, the FBI is following some promising leads, and we are committed to bringing those responsible for these attacks to justice. This is still a complex picture, and the FBI and our intelligence community continue to piece it together. We defer to the FBI for any details about the progress of their investigation. In high-level interactions with Libyan Government officials, we have made clear that this is a top policy priority both for the President and for me.

Question. Are there any individuals currently being detained who have information about the attacks? Is so, who are they and where are they located? Has the U.S. been granted access to question them?

Answer. We defer to the FBI for any details about the progress of their investigation into the attacks on our facilities in Benghazi. The State Department is working with the interagency to explore every opportunity to gain information to bring the perpetrators of this crime to justice.

Question. What specific steps has the Department of State taken to identify, locate, and bring the terrorists to justice?

Answer. We defer to the FBI on the details of the investigation into the Benghazi attacks. However, where we have been aware that another government has detained an individual subsequent to the Benghazi attack, we have aggressively engaged with that government so the FBI can gain access to that individual.

Question. On October 4, 2012, the FBI and an investigation team finally arrived in Benghazi, Libya, after the attack on September 11, 2012. While the investigation team was unable to make it to the consulate, CNN had reporters on the scene and accessing unsecured materials within 3 days of the attack.

- ◆ Why did it take 23 days for the U.S. investigators to get to Benghazi to secure information when media reporters were there within 3 days after the attacks?

Answer. I instructed the Department to ensure that we were good partners to the FBI. The weekend after the attack, we worked with the Libyan Embassy to ensure that the Bureau's team had expedited visas and that they were able to travel to Libya as soon as possible, which they did. However, in the days and weeks following the attack the U.S. Government did not want to send our employees back to Benghazi until we concluded it was safe to do so. We also understood from Libyan officials that U.S. Government officials would have been a target in Benghazi at that time.

Question. Following the terrorist attack, what specific requests were made by the U.S. Government to the Government of Libya? How did the Government of Libya respond to the requests of the United States?

Answer. The security of our personnel and posts around the world is the highest priority for me and the Department. We have requested the cooperation of the Government of Libya at the highest levels as we work to bring the perpetrators of the attacks on our facilities in Benghazi to justice. We worked closely with the Libyan Government to request additional security at our facilities in Tripoli following the attack in Benghazi and continue to coordinate with the government based on threat information. The Libyan authorities are challenged by the deteriorating security situation in the area and their limited institutional capabilities. These challenges have affected the pace of the investigation. FBI Director Robert Mueller, Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence Michael Vickers, Deputy Secretary William Burns, and I have all proposed U.S. security assistance to help the Libyan Government overcome these obstacles and Libyan authorities have welcomed these offers.

Prior to the Benghazi attack Libyan security vehicles patrolled the area of our Embassy in Tripoli. Following the attack, additional Libyan security personnel were provided. Subsequently, and in response to our requests, Libyan authorities positioned security vehicles and personnel at our Embassy. Also following the Benghazi attack, the Libyan authorities facilitated the deployment of a U.S. Marine Corps FAST platoon to protect our Embassy in Tripoli. The arrival of a DS Mobile Security Deployment team to Tripoli following the attack was also supported and facilitated by the GOL.

Question. How would you characterize the support, cooperation, and assistance provided to the United States from the Government of Libya? Other countries in the region?

Answer. The new, democratically elected Government of Libya has demonstrated political will to help, but very limited investigative capacity. I defer to the FBI on questions referring to the current progress of the investigation into the Benghazi attacks.

Question. What efforts are being taken by the Department of State to ensure other governments are cooperating and granting access to vital information needed in our investigation?

Answer. We are committed to bringing those who attacked our compound to justice. Whenever we are aware of a possible lead in this case, we aggressively engage with the government that has that information in order to gain access.

Question. The Secretary of State established an advisory panel on the security of overseas facilities after the bombing of our Embassy in Beirut in 1983. It issued an extensive report, referred to sometimes as the Inman Report.

After the East Africa Embassy bombings in 1998, an Accountability Review Board was established. Its extensive report cited many times to the Inman Report.

The recent Accountability Review Board report on Benghazi cites to both the Inman and the East Africa Embassy bombings Accountability Review Board reports. For example, it says “a recurring theme throughout the Board’s work was one also touched upon by the Nairobi and Dar es Salaam [Accountability Review Boards] in 1999,” pertaining to stove-piped decisionmaking.”

◆ Why has the Department of State failed to fully implement the recommendations of these previous Boards?

Answer. There have been 18 previous ARBs, with a total of 164 recommendations. A preliminary review indicates the Department has implemented over 90 percent of these past recommendations. The implementation of a few recommendations remains ongoing, and less than 10 recommendations were assessed and not implemented because they were either not in the purview of the State Department, implementation raised alternate safety concerns, or alternate action was taken.

In order to execute most effectively the recommendations from the most recent and previous ARBs, ongoing funding is required—and as such it is critical there is a strong partnership between the Department of State and the Congress. Declining funding has, as Ambassador Pickering and Admiral Mullen noted, led to a slowdown in the Department’s ability to build new Inman facilities.

Question. How are you going to ensure that future Accountability Review Boards are not going to cite this report as lessons told but never implemented?

Answer. As I stated during my testimony, I accepted all 29 recommendations of the independent Accountability Review Board (ARB). When the ARB report was issued, we immediately evaluated the 29 recommendations, and developed 64 separate taskings needed for their implementation. We formed working groups, issued guidance, and developed a path to implementation. Some of the recommendations have already been implemented; some are well on their way to completion; and some will require long-term action, but we have set milestones to achieve implementation of all of them. The Department has been monitoring and tracking these recommendations and the specific taskings related to each to ensure their implementation. As I stated, implementation of all of the recommendations will be underway, and a number completed, by the time the next Secretary of State takes office.

It is important to note that implementing many of the recommendations is dependent on sufficient funding and support from Congress. We are seeking legislative language that would authorize us to transfer previously appropriated funds from one of our accounts to another, which would allow the Department to use the funds more effectively to support increased security measures. We will continue to work with Congress on funding and any needed legislative authorities.

Question. The Accountability Review Board’s report recommended that we strengthen security beyond the traditional reliance on host government security support in High Risk, High Threat Posts.

◆ At present, how many High Risk, High Threat Posts are there in the world?

Answer. This is a complicated question and one that we are constantly evaluating. Currently the newly established Deputy Assistant Secretary for High Threat Posts oversees 28 posts in 17 nations.

Question. How many of those posts currently have security beyond the traditional reliance on the host government’s security support?

Answer. Currently, 10 of the High Threat Posts have security programs to augment host government security support.

Question. How many posts rely on local armed militias rather than central government forces?

Answer. Host nations generally provide additional protection for diplomatic personnel within their borders. Libyan governmental authorities arranged for February 17th Brigade personnel to provide us with security in Benghazi.

Libya was unique. I will be happy to send up experts to brief you on our security posture in high-threat locations.

Question. To what extent does the Department of State use similar “Special Mission” designations and what are the implications regarding security provisions for those posts?

Answer. The Department of State officially designates overseas posts as either an embassy, a consulate, or consulate general, an interest section, or a mission to an international organization. As an interim facility, there was no formal designation assigned to Benghazi. “Special Mission” is used informally, but is not an official designation for facilities by the Department of State and therefore, there are no specific implications regarding security.

Question. The report on page 11 recommends certain security measures at what are known as non-Inman and non-SECCA facilities.

These facilities appear to not comply with the physical security recommendations of the advisory panel on the security of overseas facilities established after the bombing of our Embassy in Beirut in 1983, and of the Secure Embassy Construction and Counterterrorism Act of 1999, passed in the wake of the 1998 East Africa Embassy bombings.

In your letter to Congress, you state there are more than 275 diplomatic posts around the world.

- ◆ How many of these posts are non-Inman and non-SECCA facilities? Why do these posts continue to be in noncompliance?
- ◆ Which regions might you anticipate a need for funding that is not in the current budget request?

Answer. To the extent the budget process allows, the Department, with congressional support, continues to upgrade overseas facilities and, where necessary, replace facilities to increase their safety, security, and functionality. Since the 1999 enactment of SECCA, the Department has completed 71 new diplomatic facilities and has 19 under design or construction to provide a safer, more secure work environment for U.S. Government employees and locally employed staff. Prior to SECCA, the Department completed 19 Inman projects and 8 pre-Inman projects that incorporated the new standards to the extent possible. These 117 posts represent about 42.5 percent of our overseas posts. This leaves approximately 158 posts that have facilities that may not meet current security standards. Many of these facilities were built or acquired prior to the establishment of the current security standards, and others are subject to authorized waivers and/or exceptions.

Each year, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security develops a list of the 80 most vulnerable posts and the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations uses this list to inform the Department’s Capital Security Construction Program. These posts represent all regions of the world. Replacement of these facilities is an ongoing and long-term program and is driven by ever-changing terrorist threats, which result in evolving security standards, and is affected by budgetary constraints. But one thing is clear—we will not allow a mission to open or to remain open if we believe that we are unable to protect our people and mitigate risks.

Posts not scheduled for new embassy construction in the near term receive compound security upgrades to protect our overseas staff and facilities. In addition, as security standards change, the Department goes back and retrofits more recently built facilities with additional security measures.

The Accountability Review Board recommended increasing the budget for embassy replacement to accelerate the program and counter the loss of funding due to inflation so we can expedite the replacement of facilities that predate the current security standards.

The Department would be pleased to provide a briefing on our overseas construction programs.

Question. In your letter to Congress, you spoke of the diplomatic campaign being undertaken to address strategic challenges in the region. The 9/11 Commission specifically recommended that a comprehensive U.S. strategy to counter terrorism should include economic policies that encourage development and more open societies. It noted that we had announced a goal of working toward a Middle East Free Trade Area by 2013.

- ◆ Will the MEFTA be complete this year? What is the status of your efforts on that initiative?

Answer. We remain fully engaged with our partners in the region on trade and investment issues and share your view that a comprehensive U.S. economic strategy in the region is necessary. At present we have Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with five countries in the region: Israel, which entered into force in 1985; Jordan (2001); Morocco (2006); Bahrain (2006); and Oman (2009). These agreements have played a key role in increasing U.S. exports and in enhancing prosperity in the region.

Since early 2011, we have been pursuing Trade and Investment Partnerships (TIPs) with Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, and Jordan. These partnerships include reaching agreement with our partners on a Joint Declaration on Principles of International Investment; a Joint Declaration of Principles on Trade in Information and Communication (ICT) Services; and a Protocol on Trade Facilitation and Customs Procedures. We reached agreement with Morocco in December 2012 and have concluded all except the Trade Facilitation Protocol with Jordan. Egypt is sending a delegation in early February for bilateral discussions on the three agreements, and we have invited a delegation from Tunisia to Washington for discussions in the near future.

Question. The United States accepts a certain amount of risk to operate in areas like Benghazi. The Accountability Review Board stated, “risk mitigation involved two imperatives—engagement and security—which require wise leadership, good intelligence and evaluation, proper defense and strong preparedness, and at times, downsizing, indirect access, and even withdrawal.”

- ◆ What are the factors the Department of State considers when determining whether a location is simply too dangerous to support a diplomatic presence?

Answer. The Department of State, in coordination with other U.S. Government agencies, considers a number of factors in making a determination whether a particular location is permissible for a U.S. diplomatic presence. This includes the importance to advancing the Nation’s foreign policy interests and enhancing security at home and the capability and willingness of the host government to provide host-nation security. Other factors include the extent and level of instability to include political and internal violence such as crime, uncontrolled rioting, civil war and insurgency, and ongoing military operations. The ability to establish and maintain secure facilities from which to operate is another factor for consideration. In situations where it is deemed that vital U.S. interests mandate a presence in a hostile environment, every effort is made to protect our personnel overseas, but it is also recognized that advancing U.S. foreign policy objectives overseas always carries with it inherent risk.

Question. What are the conditions or triggers that require the Department of State to evaluate whether to withdraw U.S. presence from a country?

Answer. The specific conditions or triggers for evaluation of continued U.S. diplomatic presence vary by country. When evaluating whether to close a U.S. mission numerous factors are considered, including but not limited to: the political stability of the host-nation, the security environment, the ability to mitigate potential threats, host-nation willingness and capability to provide security support, and U.S. foreign policy significance and importance.

Question. The Accountability Review Board explained that the responses from the Libyan guard forces were inadequate and reliance on them for security in the event of an attack was misplaced.

- ◆ Who was responsible for making the decision to utilize the February 17th Martyrs Brigade?

Answer. Host-nations generally provide additional protection for diplomatic personnel within their borders. Libyan governmental authorities arranged for February 17th Brigade personnel to provide us with security in Benghazi.

Question. The Accountability Review Board explained that the responses from the Libyan guard forces were inadequate and reliance on them for security in the event of an attack was misplaced.

- ◆ What assessments of the capabilities and intentions of the February 17th Martyrs Brigade did the State Department rely on prior to making a decision to enter into a security arrangement with Brigade members?

Answer. Host nations generally provide additional protection for diplomatic personnel within their borders. Libyan governmental authorities arranged for February 17th Brigade personnel to provide us with security in Benghazi.

Question. U.S. Ambassadors are often put in difficult positions and dangerous posts. However, it is not just the ambassadors but also U.S. personnel that are put at risk.

- ◆ What procedures and requirements are in place to protect ambassadors during their travel in-country?

Answer. The size, configurations, and profile of an ambassador's Chief of Mission (COM) protective detail are based upon a number of factors, which are compiled and published in the Security Environment Threat List (SETL). Additionally, other factors can include any specific threats against an ambassador that are independent of a country's threat rating. COM security details are tailored to the ambassador's operational requirements, known threat, and prevailing security conditions including the legal authority to conduct protective operations. Protective security operations may employ armored vehicles, follow vehicles, and bodyguards provided by host-nation, security personnel working directly for an Embassy under the operational control of a Regional Security Officer (RSO), a contract protective security detail also under the RSO or a combination of the above.

Question. Are there mechanisms in place to prevent travel to areas that place undue risk to the safety of ambassador's and U.S. personnel?

Answer. U.S. diplomatic missions maintain an Emergency Action Committee (EAC), which is comprised of members of the country team, chaired by the Deputy Chief of Mission and validated by the Chief of Mission. The RSO plays a critical role in the EAC, which provides the ambassador with guidance in preparing for and responding to threats, emergencies, and other crises at the post or against U.S. interests elsewhere in-country. The EAC also reviews security policies, such as post's travel policy, which may recommend particular modes of transport and prohibited times and/or locations of travel.

Question. How involved are U.S. Ambassadors in dictating the security postures of the posts under their management?

Answer. Pursuant to The Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Anti-Terrorism Act Of 1986 (Public Law 99-399 (22 U.S.C. 4801, et seq.)), as amended, the Secretary of State and, by extension, the Chief of Mission, is responsible for developing and implementing policies and programs that provide for the protection of all U.S. Government personnel on official duty abroad (except for Voice of America correspondents on official assignment and those under the command of a U.S. area military commander who has responsibility for personnel security) and their accompanying dependents.

Question. Do U.S. Ambassadors have sole discretion in determining their travel plans to various areas in the country? Do they receive intelligence reports about the dangers in the areas tentatively scheduled for visits?

Answer. The Chief of Mission is guided by the respective travel policy for his/her post. The travel policy is set by post with input from the Emergency Action Committee (EAC). The Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) Regional Security Officer (RSO) at post, as part of the EAC, provides input from a local security perspective for the development of post's travel policy. Ultimately the ambassador is responsible for the approval and enforcement of the policy.

A U.S. Ambassador, acting as the personal representative of the U.S. President, is responsible for the full range of American interests and programs in their given country of assignment and maintains a valid security clearance. U.S. Ambassadors have access to intelligence information from a variety of sources. U.S. Ambassadors normally coordinate their travel plans with the RSO, who in turn determines if the intended travel sites present security concerns. Those security determinations can be supported by intelligence information, if any specific information exists at the time. After the evaluation, the RSO makes a recommendation to the ambassador, so the ambassadors can make the final decision.

Question. Why was Ambassador Stevens in Benghazi, Libya on September 11, 2012?

Answer. Ambassador Stevens was in Benghazi to meet with Libyan officials and reengage with the network of contacts that he had developed during his time there as special envoy and to reaffirm that he and the United States recognized the importance of Libya's second city, the cradle of its revolution.

Question. Why did he [Ambassador Stevens] and the Department of State believe it was safe to travel there [to Benghazi] on September 11, 2012?

Answer. Ambassador Stevens was in Benghazi to meet with Libyan officials and reengage with the network of contacts that he had developed during his time there

as special envoy, and to reaffirm that he and the United States recognized the importance of Libya's second city, the cradle of its revolution. Ambassador Stevens understood Benghazi better than anyone else in the U.S. Government. He understood that diplomacy, by its nature, must be practiced in dangerous places because our interests suffer and our security is threatened when we are absent.

The independent Accountability Review Board found that intelligence provided no immediate, specific tactical warning of the September 11, 2012, attacks in Benghazi. The intelligence community has spoken to this as well.

Question. Knowing that there was an existing Worldwide Protective Services program (WPPS) with several prime vendors, why didn't the Department of State's OPO (Overseas Protective Operations) or HTP (High Threat Protection) offices utilize the WPPS vendors to secure the Benghazi location?

Answer. As is the case in many countries around the world, including the United States, the Libyan Government would not allow the use of armed foreign national contractors in either a static security or personal security capacity.

Question. There were other WPPS resources around the world with experienced teams accustomed to working together in similar environments that could have been reallocated to Libya without having to train and stand up new resources on a very short timeline.

◆ Why was this option not utilized? Was this option not offered by the vendors?

Answer. As is the case in many countries around the world, including the United States, the Libyan Government would not allow the use of armed foreign national contractors in either a static security or personal security capacity.

Question. Were the OPO and HTP criteria for appropriate levels of security at overseas sites utilized and followed for implementing a security plan for the Benghazi site?

Answer. The Diplomatic Security High Threat Posts Directorate did not exist at the time of the Benghazi attack. One of the first steps I took was creating the position of Deputy Assistant Secretary for High Threat Posts, ensuring that there would be a security professional whose entire purview was posts in high threat areas. We also refer you to the findings of the independent Accountability Review Board.

Question. The Department of State contractors who work overseas must meet several criteria to work on security details, including medical screening, physical fitness testing, marksmanship, and about 9 weeks of mandatory training.

◆ Were the personnel who executed the security plan for the Benghazi site trained to WPPS's exacting standards? Were they medically screened? Were they tested for physical fitness? marksmanship? Were the staffing levels at the site commensurate with WPPS program staffing at other sites in the world?

Answer. Local guard forces (typically unarmed) are employed worldwide by the Department to provide additional protection for U.S. Government personnel and to protect U.S. facilities from damage or loss due to violent attack and theft. The local guards check and log visitor identification, screen visitors and packages entering the compound, and act as an early warning system. The local guards are also responsible for the activation of the Imminent Danger Notification System (IDNS) in the event of a terrorist or mob attack to notify all personnel to take cover and await further instructions.

The local guard force in Benghazi was not required to meet a Worldwide Protective Services standard with regard to medical screening or physical fitness. However, Libyan contract security guards were all required to undergo a suitability investigation. This included proof of employment, recommendations, a police check, a credit investigation, and a physical fitness examination. In addition to this vetting, guards received various forms of training, including on subjects like explosive detection, CCTV operation, emergency plans, and the use of deadly force.

Question. Were the local nationals (LNs) who were used in the security plan screened to the same standards as LNs at other State Department sites designated as in a high-threat environment?

Answer. Yes. The standard policies and procedures for hiring and vetting local guard force personnel are detailed in the Department of State's Foreign Affairs Manual; the Overseas Security Policy Board (OSPB) Standards; Foreign Affairs Handbook; and the Local Guard Handbook.

The Regional Security Officer (RSO) conducts local security checks as well as interagency database checks in the United States. In addition, each candidate is interviewed by a local investigator. The vetting of local guards in Benghazi included proof of successful employment during the past 3 years and recommendations from

their respective supervisors, in addition to a police check that includes criminal and/or subversive activities and a check of sources from their neighborhoods. It is worth noting that while there has been some confusion, local nationals and Locally Employed Staff are wholly different.

