
INTERVIEWS OF WITNESSES

BEFORE THE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON
THE EVENTS SURROUNDING
THE 2012 TERRORIST
ATTACK IN BENGHAZI
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, 2012–2016

VOLUME 7 OF 11

Printed for the use of the Select Committee on the Events Surrounding the
2012 Terrorist Attack in Benghazi



Available on the Internet:
www.fdsys.gov

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE
WASHINGTON : 2016

22–351

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Publishing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512–1800; DC area (202) 512–1800
Fax: (202) 512–2104 Mail: Stop IDCC, Washington, DC 20402–0001

HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI

TREY GOWDY, South Carolina, *Chairman*

LYNN WESTMORELAND, Georgia

ELIJAH CUMMINGS, Maryland

JIM JORDAN, Ohio

Ranking Minority Member

PETER ROSKAM, Illinois

ADAM SMITH, Washington

MIKE POMPEO, Kansas

ADAM SCHIFF, California

MARTHA ROBY, Alabama

LINDA SANCHEZ, California

SUSAN BROOKS, Indiana

TAMMY DUCKWORTH, Illinois

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

PHILIP G. KIKO, *Staff Director and General Counsel*

SUSANNE SACHSMAN GROOMS, *Minority Staff Director*

CONTENTS

	Page
Interview of Speechwriter #1	1
Interview of Speechwriter #2	111
Interview of Huma Abedin	213
Interview of Director, Office of Terrorism Analysis	435
Interview of Senior Libyan Desk Officer, Office of Maghreb Affairs	437
Interview of Chief of Base	549
Interview of Jeffrey David Feltman	551
Interview of Chief of Operations for the Near East Division	731
Interview of Thomas Nides	733
Interview of Bernadette Meehan	865
Interview of Deputy Director, Office of Maghreb Affairs	1011

INTERVIEW OF SPEECHWRITER #1

BEFORE THE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, OCTOBER 9, 2015

APPEARANCES

FOR THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI

CRAIG MISSAKIAN, *Deputy Chief Counsel*
MARK GRIDER, *Deputy General Counsel*
SUSANNE SACHSMAN GROOMS, *Minority Staff Director/General Counsel*
HEATHER SAWYER, *Minority Chief Counsel*
PETER KENNY, *Minority Senior Counsel*

FOR SPEECHWRITER #1

JONATHAN SU, Esq.
Latham & Watkins LLP
555 11th Street, Suite 1000
Washington, D.C. 20004

FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

* * *, *Attorney-Adviser*
ERIC SNYDER

Ms. [REDACTED], this is the transcribed interview being conducted by the House Select Committee on Benghazi. It is being conducted, as I understand it, voluntarily, that you're appearing voluntarily as opposed to pursuant to a subpoena, as part of the committee's investigation into the attacks on U.S. diplomatic facilities in Benghazi, Libya and related matters pursuant to House Resolution 567 of the 113th Congress and House Resolution 5 of the 114th Congress.

Could we begin by having you state and spell your name for the record?

Ms. [REDACTED]. Yes. It's [REDACTED], [REDACTED].

Mr. Missakian. First, let me thank you for appearing here today. We know you traveled a bit of a distance, so the committee appreciates your cooperation in the investigation.

My name is Craig Missakian, I'm one of the lawyers from the majority staff, and at this point, it's traditional for everybody in the room to introduce themselves to you, so why don't I start with Mr. Grider over there in the corner.

Mr. Grider. Hi, I'm Mark Grider.

Mr. Missakian. And then, Mr. Su, why don't you state your name and relationship to the witness, for the record.

Mr. Su. Sure. Jonathan Su, Latham & Watkins on behalf of Ms. [REDACTED]. And Craig, when you have a minute, I'd like to make a brief opening remark whenever you have a chance.

Mr. Missakian. Absolutely. [REDACTED]?

Ms. [REDACTED]. [REDACTED], attorney advisor for the U.S.

Department of State.

Mr. Kenny. Peter Kenny with minority staff.

Mr. Missakian. All right. Have you ever had your deposition taken before?

Ms. [REDACTED]. No.

Mr. Missakian. Have you ever been interviewed by Congress?

Ms. [REDACTED]. Nope.

Mr. Missakian. Okay. So this will be new to you. There are some procedural and ground rules. I'll just kind of go over those now, and then we'll let your attorney make the statement that he just referred to.

Off the record for a second.

[Discussion off the record.]

Mr. Missakian. Let's go back on the record.

Generally speaking, the way questioning proceeds during these interviews is that a member of the majority staff will ask questions for up to an hour, and then the minority will have an opportunity to ask you questions for an equal amount of time.

Questions may only be asked by a member of the committee or designated staff member. We then rotate back and forth, 1 hour per side until we are out of questions, and at that point, the interview will conclude

Unlike testimony or a deposition in a Federal court proceeding, the committee format is not bound by the rules of evidence. The witness or your counsel may raise objections for privilege, and those would be

subject to review by the chairman of the committee, Mr. Gowdy.

If the objections cannot be resolved during the interview, you may be required to return for an additional -- additional session or for a hearing or for a deposition. Members and staff of the committee are not permitted to raise objections when the other side is asking questions.

With regard to classified information, this session is going to be treated as unclassified. If any question calls for a classified answer, please let us know and we will reserve its answer until we move into a classified setting if we decide to do that. I don't expect that will happen today, but at any rate, just let us know if your answer requires the disclosure of classified information

You are welcome to confer with your attorney at any time during the interview, but if something needs to be clarified, then we simply ask you to let me know. If you don't understand one of my questions, just let me know, and I'm happy to rephrase it. If you need to discuss anything with your counsel off the record and outside the presence of the other members of the staff, just let me know, and we'll take a break. Beyond that, if you want to take a break for any other reason, just let me know.

With regard to the court reporter who you see seated here next to you, there will be -- she's an official court reporter and is taking down everything we say. So recognizing that, we just ask that your responses be verbal as opposed to a nod of the head, for example. Occasionally, the witness and the questioner, sometimes have a tendency

to talk over each other. It makes it difficult for the court reporter, so I will do my best not to talk over you, and I would just ask the same, that you allow me to finish my questions and then we'll allow you to answer.

Ms. [REDACTED], you are required to answer questions posed to you from Congress truthfully. Do you understand that?

Ms. [REDACTED]. I do.

Mr. Missakian. This also applies to questions that are posed to you by congressional staff in an interview. Do you understand that?

Ms. [REDACTED]. Yes.

Mr. Missakian. Do you also understand that witnesses that knowingly provide false testimony could be subject to criminal prosecution for perjury or for making false statements?

Ms. [REDACTED]. I do.

Mr. Missakian. Is there any reason why you're not able to give your best truthful testimony during this interview today?

Ms. [REDACTED]. No.

Mr. Missakian. Peter, do you have anything to add?

Mr. Kenny. I would just like to thank the witness, thank you, Ms. [REDACTED], for appearing here today. I look forward very much to hearing your statement.

Mr. Missakian. All right. Mr. Su, at this point, if I want to make a statement, please do

Mr. Su. Sure. So thank you for the opportunity to talk with you all today. Ms. [REDACTED] is here, as you noted, voluntarily, you know,

to answer the committee's questions. She has expressed an intent to, you know, cooperate with the committee, and that's why she's here.

As you know Craig, you and I, and Dana, Dana Chipman, had some brief correspondence earlier in the month regarding the scope of these proceedings, and we understood, and Dana confirmed that the relevant period of inquiry would be the 2012 attacks in Benghazi, Libya and the immediate days thereafter. That the committee's interest related solely to this witness' government service, and that, you know, the committee would advise me if there are any other specific matters of interest, and I have not heard any other than what's been described here. And further, that the committee's questions would not delve into any classified issues.

So that's kind of the bounds from which we, you know, prepared and are prepared to answer questions, but you know, with that, we'll let you proceed, and we'll go from there, if that makes sense

Mr. Missakian. Okay. Great. Thank you. That's my understanding as well with regard to the scope of the interview. Should something come up in one of your other answers that requires us to follow up on areas that may ordinarily fall outside that scope, we'll do our best to deal with that at the time, but I don't expect that I will have them, but if it does, we'll deal with it.

EXAMINATION

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Okay. First, let's start with the basics. When did you begin work at the State Department?

A I started work in March of 2009.

Q Where did you work prior to that?

A Immediately prior to that, I was at a firm here in town, a speech writing firm called West Wing Writers for a few months. Previous to that, I had been the speech writer for Michelle Obama, on the 2008 Obama for America campaign, and before that I was at this firm, West Wing Writers for about 5 years, if that makes sense.

So I stayed with this firm the whole time, except for a brief period when I left to -- moved to Chicago and write for Mrs. Obama.

Q When you say you were working for Obama for America, was it?

A Yes.

Q Is that the same as the Obama presidential campaign, or is that something different?

A Yes. No, no, no, the campaign.

Q How long did you work on the campaign?

A From August 2008 through election day.

Q Okay. When did you leave the State Department?

A In February 2013.

Q That was when Secretary Clinton left?

A Shortly after, yeah.

Q Was there any discussion of you staying after she left the State Department?

A Not really.

Q Was that typical for people in her speech writing department

to leave with her?

A I don't know actually how long everyone else stayed. I left.

Q Was it expected that people would leave when she left?

A I don't know actually. I know I had made up my mind to leave then, and so that kind of foreclosed the issue for me. And I didn't really talk seriously with anyone about staying, so I didn't -- I don't know. That was sort of the beginning of the end of the conversation in my own head.

Q Okay. Now, from March 2009 to February 2013, when you left, what was your title or titles during that time?

A Yeah. I was her speech writer. I think eventually I became her senior speech writer. Also, as a speech writer, I was also a member of the policy planning staff at the State Department speech writers -- their home is within policy planning.

Q Tell me a little bit more about the structure. So you have the -- who was the head of the policy planning staff at that time?

A When I started, it was a woman named Ann Marie Slaughter. She was director of policy planning for 2 years, so that's, I guess, roughly the calendar years of 2009, 2010. Having said that, I'm actually not positive about the dates of her service, but they're publicly available. So she was my first boss as the head of policy planning, and then she was replaced by Jake Sullivan for the last 2 years or so of the Clinton time.

Q Just so I understand, there's the policy planning staff,

and the speech writing department is under that, so --

A Right.

Q -- essentially your boss was first Ann Marie Slaughter and then Jake Sullivan?

A Yes. Although, as perhaps a slightly complicating circumstance.

Q Please.

A There's also a director of speech writing. So as a speech writer, I answer to both, I guess.

Q Who is that director?

A Well, at first it was a woman named [REDACTED] who hired me.

Q Could you spell that?

A Yes, her first name is [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and her last name is [REDACTED], [REDACTED].

Q Okay.

A So she hired me and she served as director for about 2 years, and then when she left, she was replaced by a man named [REDACTED].

Q When did [REDACTED] leave, to your knowledge?

A That's a good question. I don't -- around when I left, I think. I'm not sure.

Q Describe for us the relationship between the director of speech writing and Jake Sullivan, for example, the head of the policy planning staff?

A What do you mean by describe the relationship?

Q Well, tell us a little bit about the process of how Jake Sullivan fit into the process of approving the work product that came out of the speech writing department?

A Uh-huh. Well, he certainly read everything that we produced. He was an editor, or he weighed in on the drafts that we wrote, some more than others. He offered edits. Often we would meet with him before drafting to get his thoughts for what ought to be in a speech. We also did that with other high-level officials across the building, especially depending on what the content of the speech was. For example, if it were a speech about China, we would speak with the head of the East Asia Bureau or maybe whoever was the head of the China desk, so we do a lot of preliminary meetings, especially on big speeches with people around the department, including Jake, and he would generally be on the list of people who would vet speeches, who would read speeches, who would read drafts. Yeah.

Q Okay. And how would that work physically? Would somebody in your department do a Word document, for example, and then email it around?

A Exactly.

Q Okay. And physically, where was your department located in relationship to Jake Sullivan's policy planning staff?

A So the policy planning staff occupies several suites in like a general area that -- depending on how big we are, you know, I believe we sort of commandeered some rooms here and there in order to make sure everyone has a seat.

So there is one main suite of offices, it's relatively small, on the 7th floor of the State Department. That's where the policy planning director has his office, it's where his chief of staff is, it's where his deputy director is, and then there are like eight offices in that suite. Mine was one of them, and the director of speech writing also had one of them.

Q One thing we've learned in some of the other interviews is that various bureaus, for example, the one that we're most interested in here is the NEA bureau. Within that bureau and others, there are people that specialize in communications.

A Yeah.

Q What was your -- what was the relationship generally, between the speech writing department and those communications departments within the individual bureaus?

A It was small. I can't think now of who those people were in any -- I do know that there are -- you're right, that there are communication staff sort of scattered around the department.

Q Uh-huh.

A There are also other speech writers. Some people have speech writers. I don't even know who -- I don't know who they are.

Q So to the extent that you mentioned earlier that with regard to certain speeches you might talk to the folks in that particular area, I think you used China as an example, when you met with the people in that area of the world, were you talking to the communications people or more the, I don't know, policy, subject matter experts within that

department?

A Policy. I can't remember ever meeting with a communication staffer. It was almost always like the assistant secretary or the deputy assistant secretary, so it was the front office staff. Now, having said that, I certainly attended meetings in which there were like a bunch of people from that bureau, and I wouldn't know necessarily who all of them were. We might meet around a table like this and very quickly introduce ourselves, and then I would say, what do you all think?

Q Do you recall any instances where the people from the communications departments within those other bureaus were involved in the editing process of any speech that your shop had drafted?

A I don't remember many examples of that. There was a woman in the EURB, the European and Eurasian bureau who was a talented writer, and I think, I think wrote speeches for the assistant secretary, and he had, I think, at one point cc'd her to ask her to weigh in on edits. I remember this because they were very good, and there aren't a lot of woman speech writers, so I noticed this.

Apart from that, I have no memory of a communication staffer editing.

Q Okay. So it sounds like that was an exception rather than the normal process?

A I believe so, yes.

Q Let's talk a little bit about the relationship between speech writing -- before I get to that, just for the record, Heather

Sawyer from the minority staff has joined us.

Let's talk about the relationship between the speech writing department and the State Department's press office, which at the time, I believe, was headed up by Victoria Nuland. Is that correct?

A Uh-huh. She was our spokeswoman. I'm so bad with titles. I have no idea if she ran the office, but I trust that you know.

Q Let's not assume that.

A I know she was behind the podium every day.

Q Okay. So --

Mr. Su. Well, let's define time period, how about that? Is that --

Ms. [REDACTED]. Oh, that's a good point. When are you talking about?

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q All these questions just relate to the time period you were at the State Department.

A Okay. Well, there were several people during that time who were spokesperson.

Q Okay. Let's start with the structure of that department and identify the --

A Yeah.

Q -- positions first. We've identified the spokesperson, Victoria Nuland held that at some point in time.

A Right.

Q Who else was in that department?

A Boy, you're really exposing my ignorance here. I genuinely don't know a lot of -- I can't think of a lot of people that I knew in that department.

Q Would you know them by title or position?

A Maybe. No, I mean, I --

Q Okay.

A -- truly -- my mind is blank thinking of anyone in public relations, except Victoria.

Q Okay. Why don't you describe in general the interaction between State -- I mean, the speech writing shop and Victoria Nuland's --

A Right.

Q -- department?

A Well, Victoria herself was on a lot of the -- often was on the distribution list for speeches. She is a very beautiful writer herself, so she would often offer edits, and I often really admired them and took them, so she's someone that I knew well and worked with often. She also traveled with us.

Apart from her, I can't think of anybody in the public relations or public affairs bureau that I worked with.

Q Would it have been typical for Victoria Nuland to sit down with your group in one of these pre-meetings that you talked about?

A No.

Q So it sounds like she would have come into the process, if at all, after something had been drafted and then it was being

circulated for comment and edit?

A That's right. That is the process that I recall, yeah, generally.

Q Tell us more about who is in your department. We know about [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] --

A [REDACTED].

Q -- [REDACTED], thank you. Who else was in the department during that period from March 2009 to February 2013?

A Well, there were a number of people. This is speech writing specifically that you're talking about?

Q Speech writing department, yes.

A People came in and out, as you can imagine, during that time, so how would you like me to --

Q Let's talk start with how many permanent slots are there in that department?

A That's a good question. I think -- well, there was a director who at one point was [REDACTED] and one point was [REDACTED]. There was me, there was another permanent spot, which was filled for a time by a guy named [REDACTED].

Mr. Su. You are going to want to spell that for her.

A [REDACTED] is his first name, which is [REDACTED], and his last name is [REDACTED]. Then there is another permanent spot, which is somebody who writes both for the secretary and for the deputy secretaries, so that person has a multiple roles. We had a staff assistant, and then there were few other people who wrote with us who

I believe technically were seated -- belong to different bureaus but who were sort of on loan to us. There was one woman who had a presidential management fellowship.

Q Hold that thought.

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q All right. Do you remember where you were?

A Yeah. We were talking about the people that work with us. So I think there were about four permanent speech slots. We had a staff assistant as well that might have also been a fifth slot.

Then there were a few other people who wrote with us who I think technically belong to different bureaus who I don't think actually occupies our slots but who were effectively on our staff who wrote, who attended our meetings.

Q Do you recall anybody from the NEA bureau being in one of those slots?

A No.

Q How were those bureaus identified; do you recall?

A Well, in the case of one person, she was a presidential management fellow who was in a bureau where she wasn't really -- she didn't have that much to do, and she had an interest in speech writing, so she sort of helped out from time to time, and then it was clear that she was very talented, so her bureau was willing to lend her to us, so it really was the person, not the bureau, if that makes sense.

Q It does.

A That's the one person that I could think of actually.

Q At one point I think you mentioned that some people write speeches for the secretary, some people write speeches for the assistant secretary. Were there clear lines of demarcation or were assignments done more on an ad hoc basis?

A Well, for that one person who wrote for the deputy, the secretary and the two deputy secretaries of State, he was the only person who had that responsibility and no one else wrote for the deputies.

The rest of us all worked for the Secretary, and it was pretty ad hoc. It was basically who is next available got the next speech.

Q Now, one thing we've seen is on occasion, Jake Sullivan would put pen to paper and draft a statement that the Secretary would give or maybe even a speech. How were those decisions made? And by that I mean, the decision to have somebody in the speech writing department write the speech versus having somebody outside that department, like Jake Sullivan, weigh in and do something?

A That's a good question. I don't remember incidents of that happening, although it makes sense that they would, but I can't, I don't remember that happening, so I don't know how to answer that question.

Q Okay. That's fair. I have in mind one statement that we'll get to later on, we know that Jake Sullivan wrote or at least took part in writing. It was a short, not what I would describe as a speech. I mean, is it fair to say that the speech department wrote all the speeches and Jake Sullivan or others may have come in to write

statements, or did the speech writing department write statements as well? I mean, were the lines that clear or am I just reading too much into it?

A The lines were not that clear. Over the course of 4 years, an enormous amount of writing was produced in the form of speeches or occasionally written statements. We usually, for the most part, usually didn't write written statements. It was usually produced elsewhere. Sometimes we would give them a read or an edit or a polish. But it's hard to state authoritatively exactly where every product originated, if that makes sense.

So over the course of those 4 years, there was just so much that I'm sure that if I said this is how it always worked, there would be a counterexample.

Q Okay. So it sounds like the speech writing department did focus on speeches, and statements, not so much. Do you know why that is or was?

A Well, it's a volume issue. She gave a lot of speeches. She gave a lot of speeches. Every Secretary of State gives a lot of speeches, but she gave more than most or than previous secretaries had given, so we had a lot of work to do.

Q Okay. With regard to the statements that were prepared, were those sent to your department for vetting or were those vetted outside the speech department? By vetting I mean reviewed, edited, that kind of thing?

A That's another good question that I don't really know the

answer to that.

Q What do you recall personally? Do you ever recall seeing a statement come to you that you were asked to review and edit?

A I'm sure that happened, probably several times. I don't remember off the top of my head a specific statement, but I'm positive they exist. I don't know how speeches that I wasn't cc'd on or asked to review -- I mean, pardon me, statements. I don't know how those statements were vetted. You know, I would only know if they -- if I were on the email chain, I would be a part of that moment, but otherwise, I don't know how they were handled, if that makes sense.

Q Uh-huh.

A So I'd say as a -- I don't know if this is a hypothetical. I don't know if that's the right word, but like a general matter, if occasionally there was a statement that, you know, perhaps it borrowed language from a speech I had recently written, perhaps it was on an issue area where I had written a number of speeches on that area, I might be asked to take a quick look at this before we send it out, and I would.

Q All right. One thing that we've noticed is, on occasion, something being drafted, the State Department will be sent to somebody in the White House for review. For example, we've seen that with Ben Rhodes getting involved in the process. Can you shed any light on the relationship between, you know, the written product coming out of the State Department and the White House's review of that?

A I can remember off the top of my head one example of that.

I wrote a speech about energy diplomacy, energy security, and then at some point I sent it to Ben to have him take a look at it knowing that it was one of the first times she'd ever spoken on this topic. It was a fairly new bureau. We had created it. It was the first time that -- it was the first major policy statement about this issue area, and Ben wrote back to say something like looks good.

Q Okay.

A So it was a very light touch.

Q Okay. How did you know to send it to Ben Rhodes?

A Jake Sullivan asked me to send it to Ben Rhodes.

Q Did he give you an explanation for why Ben Rhodes was coming into the process?

A I don't believe he did so, no. I don't remember exactly, but no, I don't think so.

Q And going forward, did you have an understanding what if any role Ben Rhodes would play in reviewing speeches that you were drafting, for example?

A I don't know that I had an -- I don't really know how to describe it. There wasn't like a set of rules where it was like if you write a speech like this --

Q Uh-huh.

A -- please send it to Ben. That did not exist. It was more that in this one scenario, this one case that I do remember, it was that Jake said can you send it to Ben to make sure he sees this, or something like that, and I did, and that was kind of it. So you know,

that's how that incident worked. That's how that worked that time.

Q Do you recall how many discussions with your colleagues in the speech writing department about either Ben Rhodes reviewing their work or anybody else in the White House reviewing their work?

A I don't remember a conversation like that, no.

Q All right. Let's move to the night of the attack, September 11. Obviously, we are going to focus a little bit on that. Let's start out with the basics. Were you at the office that day?

A I was.

Q And at any point during that day, did you become aware of the protests that were going on in Cairo?

A I did. I did, at some point, come to know that, yeah.

Q Do you recall how you became aware of it?

A I do not.

Q So it could have been you were following a twitter feed, it could have been a conversation with one of your colleagues, at this point you don't know one way or the other?

A I just don't remember.

Q That's fine. We know it was awhile ago. What if anything do you recall about Cairo when you first heard about it?

A I remember being upset. I had gone to Cairo not that long before then, I think. Gosh, I should have that answer for you, I'm sorry. But at some point in the months preceding that, I had taken a trip to Cairo with the Secretary, so I remember thinking I know exactly where this is happening. I've been to that embassy. And at some point

I believe during that, those protests -- I mean, I think they crossed the -- the protestors got over a wall. I think they pulled down our flag. That was extremely distressing.

Q Do you remember how you were getting any of the information you had regarding Cairo?

A Well, I don't remember exactly if I had. I mean, what I would -- almost certainly I was glued to the television. I would have had, you know, the various newspaper and TV sites up on my computer. We also, likely, because it was a -- again, this is -- I'm sorry that I don't remember this exactly, but we usually get, when there is -- certainly when there is like an attack on an American facility, I think we would likely to have gotten an alert from the Op Center at the State Department, so I would have been hearing from them, too, probably.

Q We have seen some emails that come from Ops Alert at maybe State.gov, I don't remember. What's your understanding of who receives those Ops Alerts?

A I don't know the answer to that. I never signed up for them or anything like that, but I receive them, so I don't know if that means that everyone at the State Department gets them or if certain staffs do. I don't know, but I know that I did.

Q What was your understanding of where they were coming from?

A Well, there is an Ops Center, it's an office not far from our offices at the State Department, and I've seen in them once. It's like a 24-hour center that's pretty high-tech, and they follow events

around the world at all times, so I think they all come from that office.

Q At this point in time, September 11, 2012, was [REDACTED] the head of the speech writing department?

A He was.

Q He had taken over at that point. All right. Did you have any conversations within the speech writing department about -- professional conversations about how the speech writing department would fit into any messaging about what was going on in Cairo?

A I don't remember a conversation like that.

Q Do you recall any meetings with your colleagues about what was going on in Cairo?

A I do not.

Q Do you recall what time you left the office that night?

A I don't know that either. I'm sorry.

Q That's okay.

A So it's going to be -- sadly, that's going to be my answer for a lot, for what happened that day. I just don't remember a lot of what happened that day.

Q Can you say whether or not it was a normal day, you left at 6:00, 7:00, or whether you stayed later?

A It probably was a normal day. You know, I will say that as a speech writer, there are times when I'm up writing many days in a row, and then if it's -- if I don't have an active assignment, we'll leave early, or I might be staying late in order to get -- my hours

were extremely erratic, so it's hard to -- when you say like a normal day, there are actually -- there kind of weren't a lot of normal days for me in terms of hours at the office.

Q All right. So let's move ahead a little bit in the day. At some point at around 3:40 Eastern time, that's when the attacks in Benghazi occurred. Do you recall hearing about those attacks?

A I know that I did at some point hear that something terrible is happening in Benghazi. I don't remember when. 3:40, that's interesting. I wouldn't have been able to name that time.

Q Do you remember how you learned of the attacks?

A Again, I do not.

Q Do you recall what you learned about the attacks?

A No. I know that -- I mean, I know at some point I learned that something was happening, and I don't remember how it was described. I don't know.

Q What's your best recollection of what you heard, first off, about what was happening in Benghazi?

A Right. Well, I really don't know. I don't know. I don't know how it was originally described, or I don't know where I heard about it. I don't know. I think that if I had to make my best recollection, is that the phrase?

Q That's all we want is your best recollection.

A It's probably that I heard that it was a protest just like what was -- similar to what was happening that day in Cairo, but I'm sorry, I don't have a real recollection of this.

Q Okay. So if your best recollection is that you heard it was a protest, I mean, what's your best recollection of where you got that information?

A Well, probably a combination of an Ops Alert, which I'm just -- again, I don't remember receiving an Ops Alert about Benghazi, but that is what they do. That's exactly what they do. They send out alerts when something like Benghazi happens, so I probably was getting alerts from them.

And then if I recall, there was a great deal of press reporting about what was happening in Egypt that day, and in time ago, what was happening in Benghazi that day, so probably a combination of that.

Q Okay. So a combination of information from the Ops Alerts and then possibly what was being reported in the open media?

A Right.

Q Okay. With regard to what was being reported in the open media, I mean, would you have taken that as gospel, or how would you have treated that information?

A No, certainly not. I wouldn't take any press report as gospel, you know, ever.

Q As you sit here today, do you recall participating in any briefings that night about what was occurring in Benghazi?

A No, I did not.

Q There's some evidence that there was a SVTCS, a secure video teleconference, that night at 7:30 p.m. Did you take part in that?

A I did not.

Q Were you aware of it?

A I was not.

Q Until now?

A Until hearing about it now.

Q Is that something that Mr. ██████ would have taken part in, to your knowledge?

A I don't know. I don't know.

Q Have you spoken to Mr. ██████ about anything that occurred that night since you left the State Department?

A I have not.

Q Have you spoken to anybody about what occurred that night, other than your attorney?

A That's a good question. I can't think of an example with me talking to anybody about what happened that night. I talked to my family, but that was a really terrible night for a lot of us, and it's really -- it was certainly the worst day I ever had at the State Department. So though I can't remember a specific conversation about it, I don't want to foreclose the possibility that I've spoken about it with friends or colleagues.

Q Why don't you walk us through the events that night as best you can remember them. Why don't we start with, you know, around 3:40, which is when the attack occurred in Benghazi, and just as best you can, take us through what you did that night?

A Well, where my memory really kicks in is quite a bit later in the day, which is after I was home, it was in the evening, I was

ready to start winding down, and I got a call from my colleague [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who said that -- something like it looks like our facility in Benghazi has been attacked, some Americans might be dead, we're afraid that the Ambassador, that Chris might be dead, and we are going to have to put our heads together and write something for the Secretary because she's going to want to talk about this in the morning.

Q Did you get a sense that Mr. [REDACTED] was coming up with this idea on his own, or was this coming from Mr. [REDACTED]?

A No, I did not. I don't think he was coming up with this on his own. I actually don't know who would have been the person to give him the heads up that this was happening. I don't know.

Q So what did you say to him, as best you can recall, in that conversation?

A Well, we came up with a plan for how to get this done. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. I lived in Adams Morgan. I had been to his house quite a bit. We're friends. He has a comfortable home, so we agreed that I would grab my computer and I would come up to his house and we would sit together and try to write something good under tough circumstances.

Q How long was the phone call?

A Short. Basically as long as what just happened here.

Q Okay. So you hung up the phone, you packed up your stuff, and you went to his house.

A I did.

Q Shortly after the call.

A That's right.

Q Can you remember anything about what type of night that was?

A Just a straight up guess, an uninformed guess, 10:00, 10:30, in the evening. It was not early. It was late, at a point where I would normally be trying to get to sleep.

Q How late were you at Mr. [REDACTED] house that night?

A So soon after that, so --

Mr. Su. I think he's asking you -- I think Craig is asking you when you left, right?

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Yes. How late were you there?

A Well, that's a good question. I've seen an email that I wrote that had a time stamp like 3:30 in the morning, so certainly until then, maybe a little bit after that, 3:30, 4:00, something like that.

Q Was anybody else there besides you and Mr. [REDACTED]?

A Yes, one of our other colleagues, a guy named [REDACTED].

Q Could you spell that for us, please.

A Yes, it's [REDACTED]. Everyone's named [REDACTED] in my life, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED]. His last name is [REDACTED], [REDACTED].

Q [REDACTED]?

A [REDACTED], like [REDACTED], exactly, and he -- I called him after [REDACTED] [REDACTED] called me, and he came and picked me up, and the two of us drove up to [REDACTED].

Q And who is he, Mr. [REDACTED]?

A He is another speech writer with us, so the three of us were

colleagues.

Q At that point, I think you said you took your laptop. Did Mr. [REDACTED] and Mr. [REDACTED] both have their laptops as well?

A That's a good question. I think [REDACTED] did, it was his home, so I think his laptop was there. I don't know if [REDACTED] brought his laptop.

Q Did you have anything that gave you access to your work email?

A Yes. We had fobs that we used to sign into our work email from when we were not on from outside the building.

Q Do you recall doing that that night?

A I do not.

Q So we've got three people in the room, probably three laptops, at least one. What other information did you collect before you went over to Mr. [REDACTED] house?

A I don't remember collecting any.

Q What information did he have about the attacks when you got there, if any?

A I don't remember specifics. I do remember that we didn't know a lot.

Q Let's just take it step by step. You three got there. Did you have a kind of a conversation to get your bearings and decide who was going to do what at the outset? How did the evening begin?

A That's another great question that I don't have a great answer to, I'm sorry. You know, there's not like a set of steps that

you follow when you sit down to write a speech, no matter what, but certainly in a situation that just wasn't that --

Q Let me give you an example of what I'm thinking about.

A Please.

Q Potential one way to divvy up the labor is they could have said, [REDACTED], you're going to be writing the speech, Mr. [REDACTED], you're going to be collecting the information that goes into it, and Mr. [REDACTED], you're going to be ordering the pizza, whatever it turns out to be. I mean, did you have that kind of conversation where you're dividing up the labor at the outset, and what do you recall about that conversation?

A I don't think we did do that. I think we definitely -- part of the conversation that started then but really did last the whole time was, you know, what can we actually give her, what should she say.

Q Did you have any direction on what the -- first of all, were you just writing a speech in the abstract, or was this a speech that was intended for a specific event or a specific purpose?

A Right. Well, you know, so this now, at this point was like 3-and-a-half years into our time together writing for her, and then of three of us, several of us had been writing together. I mean, we now all had a few years, at least, under our belts.

So I'd say that we all knew, because of our previous months or years of experience, never quite in this situation but in similar sort of, you know, you got to write something quickly because of the fast-moving events somewhere in the world and she needs to say something

about it.

We knew basically a few things that we wanted to accomplish. If indeed some people had died, we knew that we wanted to give her some material that she could say about them, so she could say gracious things about them, which we knew she would have wanted to do. We knew that we would want to give her some sort of a -- something that she could say that would summarize what had happened, anticipating that, you know, if Americans were waking up and turning on their TV in the morning and their Secretary of State was standing there, that they would -- one of the questions on their mind would be what, what happened. We wanted to be able to give her some language that would at least begin to answer that.

And then, you know, we knew that, as we often do in response to a violent, you know, distressing worldly appalling moment, we knew that she would want to say something that reiterated our values, our purpose, our, you know, continuing on our mission, how we won't be swayed by this. So there were sort of, I guess, units, if that makes sense, of what we knew this document, this speech would need to cover.

We had a loose idea of how it would be delivered, which is that we knew that some time in the morning, so not too late in the day, she would want to go on camera, probably in the blue room at the State Department which is where she often does statements. And we knew it should be pretty short. I don't know if that's helpful, but that's sort of --

Q No, no, it's very helpful. Thank you. So you knew

that -- did you know she planned to go on camera the next morning, or was that just something that you expect that she would do?

A I don't know the answer to that. I'm not sure if we knew that for sure or if we assumed that she would want to.

Q Where was Mr. [REDACTED] in this process that night?

A He really wasn't a part of this process that night. I'm not -- I don't know if he knew that we were gathering like that. He may have. I wasn't in contact with him that day -- that night.

Q With regard to the, to use your term, the unit of the speech that explained to the American people what had happened in Benghazi. How did you all go about collecting the information to answer that question?

A That is such a great question because so many of the facts of the matter were like -- were very foggy at that moment. Often, in a circumstance like that, we would be getting the information from our people on the ground, but obviously, in this circumstance, it was impossible to get information from them because they were under attack.

So we wanted to write something that was, you know, safe, that we could have confidence in without going too far into any details that would turn out to be -- perhaps that would turn out to be wrong. We didn't want, as ever, never want to give her something that's wrong.

So I looked at the final text since then, and I think, if I recall, it's pretty -- it's actually fairly generic, which is just what happens in a circumstance like this. There's just not a lot that we could assert with total certainty. So we stuck with what we felt like we

could safely assert, that our compound was attacked by, I think we described them as heavily armed militants, which I believe -- I mean, that is like a fairly safe phrase, you know.

They were clearly armed, and they were -- anyone who attacks an American facility is a militant, so that was sort of how we settled on that. Just what can we have confidence in.

Q And we'll get into that statement in more detail later. So is it fair to say that you were not relying on anything that was being reported in the open source media?

A Well, I would say relying -- I don't think -- no. We were not relying on anything reported in the open source media, by which I mean we wouldn't see something reported in CNN or New York Times and say great, and cut and paste and put it in a document for her, absolutely not. Having said that, we were certainly following what was being reported in the open source media.

Q Sorry. Did you finish your answer?

A No, because --

Q Go on.

A Because you know, that was helpful.

Q Okay. Did you speak to anybody in the Ops Center that night about what was going on, because my understanding is that there were communications going back and forth between the United States and Benghazi, United States and Tripoli?

A Yeah.

Q Did you speak to anybody either in the DS command center

to the Ops Center that night?

A No.

Q Did you speak to anybody -- and this is again about what happened in Benghazi. Did you speak to anybody in the NEA bureau about what had happened in the attacks?

A I don't recall speaking to anyone in the NEA bureau.

Q Is that something you would have done? I mean, you talked earlier about the process. If you're writing a speech about China, you go to --

A Right.

Q -- the China experts and ask them. I mean, did that happen that night with regard to Libya?

A No, I don't think so. I don't recall any conversation with anyone from -- no.

Q All right. So let's just try to circumscribe the sources of information you three had that night. Obviously you had access to your State Department email?

A Right.

Q So whatever was in those emails is, you know, that was in those emails. We talked about the open source reporting. Were there any individuals that you spoke to either within the State Department or outside the State Department about what had occurred?

A So just putting it -- to add one thing. In terms of State Department emails, I don't recall what emails I received that night. Hopefully there is a record of them. But my guess is that we probably

were getting some information from people who were just sending us things, either us specifically, the speech writers, or that perhaps we were on a distribution list, I don't know. But I wouldn't be surprised if it turned out that, you know, in addition to an Ops Alert, perhaps we got some sort of an update maybe from NEA, maybe from -- I don't know. I don't know who else.

Q I mean, at this point --

A I don't want to foreclose the possibility that there was more information coming at us.

Q Right.

A If that makes sense.

Q The record of what emails you received is the record, whatever that is?

A Right.

Q Just sitting here today, you can't recall any specifics?

A Not a one.

Q With regard to speaking to anybody, do you recall speaking to anybody that night?

A Jake Sullivan is probably -- that's the only person I can think of, outside of that room.

Q When you had your conversation -- or let me ask you. Was it one conversation or multiple?

A Well, he joined us. I don't know if we spoke on the phone before he joined us.

Q He joined you in person?

A Yes. He came to [REDACTED] office -- apartment.

Q Apartment. At what point in the evening did Mr. Sullivan show up; do you recall?

A It was sometime after we got there, so my guess it was after midnight.

Q Was he alone?

A Yes.

Q What if anything did he bring with him?

A I don't think he brought anything.

Q No laptop, no briefcase, no files, no nothing?

A No. His Blackberry.

Q How long was he there, if you recall?

A He stayed with us until we were finished, so we all left together, whenever that was.

Q And prior to him showing up, I assume you knew he was coming?

A I probably did know that he was coming. I don't remember being surprised when he showed up.

Q All right. So I'm just trying to understand. If Mr. [REDACTED], the head of that department wasn't -- seems that maybe he wasn't involved, maybe he didn't even know about it, the three of you got together and decided to meet. Was that at Mr. Sullivan's suggestion or did you reach out to him and invite him to the --

A Right.

Q -- working group?

A So I don't remember the exact chain of events here. You

know, I don't remember exactly how that happened. I don't know why -- who called [REDACTED] originally and said something's happening, we think it could be very bad, we think Chris could be dead, you guys should write something.

I'm not sure who made that call to him. I'm not sure when -- if I told Jake at some point separately, hey, I'm on my way to [REDACTED]. I may have. Jake was our boss. We had worked together very, very closely for many years, for several years at this point, so it would have certainly been natural to say we're working on this, let us know if you need anything, or whatever, just to keep him in the loop as to the fact that someone was taking care of this, you know, certainly compared to everything else that was happening that night, this comparatively very small piece of what was happening, but you know, something that needed to get done. Having said all that, I don't remember for sure.

Mr. Su. So I am going to give you this advice, which is what Craig wants to know is what your recollection is.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Right.

Mr. Su. He understands that you are not -- by saying that you do not recall a specific event, that you're not necessarily foreclosing other possibilities, so --

Ms. [REDACTED]. Right.

Mr. Su. So I'll deign to speak for Craig. He's just asking for your recollection. So don't feel like, if you cannot recall a particular event, that what he's going to take from that, well, then

██████ is foreclosing any other possibility.

Ms. ██████. Right.

Mr. Su. I don't think he's taking that position. He just wants to know what you specifically recall.

Mr. Missakian. I couldn't have said it better myself. That's fair.

Ms. ██████. Thank you. Thank you.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Okay. So let's go back to Mr. Sullivan a little bit and finish off with him. Now, my understanding is that the State Department issued a statement at around 10 o'clock the night of the attacks, and I'm sure you're aware of that statement as you sit here today, but what I'm asking you is the night of the 11th when you were at Mr. ██████ apartment, were you aware that that statement had gone out?

A I don't remember.

Q Do you recall, when Mr. Sullivan got there, he had a copy of that statement? In other words, I mean, think of it in this context. He walks in, this is what we put out, let's get to work on the longer piece. Do you remember anything like that?

A I don't.

Q Okay. Well, as best you can recall, just take us through the evening before Mr. Sullivan got there, and then we'll go into after he got there?

A Well, there's not that much of a difference between before

and after. I mean, part of my answer is that, you know, writing a speech, I mean, I'm like pulling back the curtain on how to write a speech. It's like a very haphazard situation. There's no clear process.

We all started thinking out loud, you know, this would be a nice phrase, maybe she should say this. I can write a little bit about Chris. Let's find out a little bit more about the other guys if we can. Do we know who they are. Has it been confirmed. So it's just like a narrative conversational process.

I don't think that changed much once Jake got there. He certainly would have known more than we did about what was happening just by the nature of his work, but we just kind of kept that process going until there is a page-and-a-half written.

Q I'm sure you're aware that one of the possible motivations of what had occurred in Cairo was the video that was put out on YouTube. Now, prior to going to Mr. [REDACTED] apartment, do you recall being aware of that video?

A Yes.

Q How did you become aware of it?

A I don't remember.

Q What do you recall about the video? Again, this is back then.

A Right.

Q Not now.

A Well, I remember that the Egyptian television, I believe,

played it or played segments of it on the national Egyptian TV. I believe that was before the protest. I believe that is what triggered the protest. I haven't seen the video. My understanding of what it contains is some pretty ugly depictions of the Prophet Muhammad in pretty ugly situations.

Q Do you recall having any information that connected the video to what occurred in Benghazi prior to getting to Mr. [REDACTED] apartment?

A I do not.

Q Now, was there a draft of the speech that would be done prior to Mr. Sullivan getting there that night?

A No. Well, actually I don't really remember but almost certainly not because I think it took as long as it took. I think it took awhile.

Q Sorry.

A No, of course.

Q I've got to try harder. Do you remember who physically typed the speech that you three were working on, you four were working on eventually?

A I think we shared that duty. I know I certainly typed for awhile. I recall, for example, [REDACTED] at one point saying maybe we should say something about, you know, our strength in the face of situations like this. He was sort of musing out loud, and I remember being like write it, don't just narrate it.

Q What I'm trying to get at, and I probably didn't ask it in

the best way, is would there be a way for us as investigators to go back and kind of piece together the chronology of drafts that were done that night by you four?

A I don't know. I think that would be hard. I think it was just one document that we just worked on exclusively. I'm not really sure how one kind of forensically takes that kind of a draft apart, so I'm not really sure what you could do with that.

Q So your best recollection is there was one laptop and maybe you all traded off typing on it?

A That is my best recollection, yeah.

Q As you sit here today, is there anything about the process that you recall that night involving anything specific that was being said about what occurred in Benghazi, anything that stands out in your mind now?

A I don't remember if it happened while we were there or afterward, but I do remember there was a video taken by someone in the crowd that night that showed the Ambassador's body being taken to the hospital. It was incredibly upsetting, so I will never forget that. I think we saw that while we were all still together. It may have been --

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q On the news?

A No. It was someone had -- I mean, someone in the crowd had taken it and put it up, I think, on Twitter. Maybe I saw it on Facebook. It was on social media, and it was heartbreaking.

Q And do you recall any discussions on the video and how to treat that video in the speech that you were preparing?

A We definitely discussed it. I don't remember specifically what we said. I think whatever -- I'm sorry that I can't recite or don't quite remember exactly how we treated it in that first draft. But that -- how we treated it in that first draft would have been, obviously, the result of whatever conversation we had about it.

Q Right. As you sit here today, do you recall anything generally about the conversation specific to the video that night?

A No. Only that we thought it belonged in the statement.

Q Do you recall why you thought it belonged in the statement?

A Well --

Q When I say you, I don't mean you necessary. I mean you, the group?

A That's a good clarification because I was just about to say I can only tell you why I remember thinking, yeah, that should be in the statement.

Q Okay.

A Which is that I believed that it played a role in sparking the events of that night. And that any sort of conversation about what had happened, and what has to happen now would have to be taken into account in some way.

Q Okay, just so I understand, it was your view that night that the video should be referred to in the statement because in your mind, the video had played some role in the attack in Benghazi?

A Yeah, in sparking them or triggering them or motivating some of the people that night. Yeah, yes.

Q And so you were kind of going back to your point about one of the goals for this speech was to explain to the American people what had happened. For that reason you wanted to refer to the video. Is that fair?

A Yeah. I would say that's fair.

Q And as best you can, could you just tell us what you based that conclusion on, or that opinion that the video somehow sparked what occurred in Benghazi?

A Well, at the time it seems like the commonsense conclusion. You know, there was this incident happening in the same -- not far from Benghazi, just a few countries to the -- well, shoot, one country to the east. God, I'm failing on the geography -- a nearby country, Cairo, Egypt, on the same day there was this protest that seemed -- that was similarly targeting an American facility, that similarly had our facility breached in this alarming way. And that seemed to be very

clearly connected to this video since, again, I believe that not long before that protest broke out, the video had been broadcast on Egyptian news. So, you know, I was learning about what was happening in Egypt, and oh, look, the same day, something is happening at an American facility not far from there.

So I drew the conclusion that it was probably for the same reason. And I don't know if it was September 11, or September 10, or September 13. I'm not sure, but that week saw protests, incidents at American facilities in a lot of places, in Hong Kong, in Australia, in Afghanistan, in Pakistan, Dhaka, and just in tons of places, and in Europe -- American schools in Europe, there was a Tunisian school that was bombed, an American school in Tunis.

And many of those protests, were reported for what that's worth, were reported as being connected to the video, so I guess like the gestalt of these incidents seemed to involve the video. So I drew the conclusion, I guess, that what had happened in Benghazi was like that, was like those events.

Q Yeah, I understand. I understand, but what I really want to focus on, again, the circumscribing information you had had that night. Some of the protests you just referred to occurred after September 11 --

A That's right.

Q -- as you said. So at that point you have got the protest in Cairo, and nothing else, no other protest. So were there any other facts, other than the Benghazi attack followed the protest in Cairo,

that led you to that conclusion that the video sparked the Benghazi attacks that night?

A I don't recall anything else. I don't recall any other.

Q That's fine. That's fine.

A Yeah.

Q Do you recall anything that anybody else said in the room about the connection between the video and the Benghazi attacks that night?

A I do not.

Q Can you recall anything that anyone else said on the subject of the video, generally, that night?

A Well, I recall when we got to the section of the remarks where we wanted to reference and do, you know, deal with and quickly do away with the video, in the course of the remarks when she said that -- I don't remember exactly how it went, but she refers to them in the context of decrying people killing in the name of religion.

Q We will get to that. You don't have to guess about the --

A Great.

Q We will get to that.

A I remember when we got to that part and we thought we should say something about this. You know, we talked about -- I wouldn't be able to -- I don't remember exactly how that conversation went, but that's a tricky topic to try to handle in a few sentences, so --

Q Why do you consider it a tricky topic?

A Well, it's a complicated -- you know, religion, violence

motivated by religion, gosh, that's hard. So figuring out a way to have her talk about it in two or three sentences, is -- that's tough.

Q And do you recall that night being aware that a group called Ansar al-Sharia had taken responsibility for the attacks?

A I do not recall that.

Q Do you recall hearing anything at that point about the fact that the attacks began at the State Department facility and then continued at the classified CIA annex? Did you know that fact?

A I did not.

Q When did you learn that?

A I don't know, but it was after that night. I know because I remember being -- I remember learning that and going ah, okay, now I see that. I get it. It wasn't that night. It took a little time before that became clear to me at least.

Q Do you recall Mr. Sullivan telling the group anything about what he knew relating to the nature of the attacks, why they occurred, anything like that that night?

A I don't remember exactly what he said.

Q You are never going to remember exactly.

A Yeah, that I'm not sure.

Q If you remember generally.

A The one thing that I believe we were confident of by the time that we were asked was that Chris was dead, and that one other person was dead and we knew who that person was; this guy named Sean Smith. I'm pretty sure that came from Jake. I don't know where else

we would have learned that.

Q Okay, all right. I think my first hour is up, so -- see. We can go off the record.

[Recess.]

Mr. Missakian. Okay, let's go back on the record. Peter, can you just confirm on the record that you decided to forego your hour, and that you are going to reserve questions for the end?

Mr. Kenny. Yes, out of respect for the witness' time and the fact that we have additional witnesses this afternoon, we will be reserving our time for a second round.

Mr. Missakian. Okay, thank you.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Ms. [REDACTED], we have talked about the one speech that you participated in drafting on the night of September 11 going into the morning of September 12. Were there any other speeches, statements that you participated in drafting that week.

Mr. Su. Prior or after?

Ms. [REDACTED]. Yeah, that's a great question. Prior or after the attacks?

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Oh, okay.

A Prior to the attacks, I'm sure there were.

Q Yes, I'm sure there were. Let's focus on after that one.

A So at some point, I don't know if it was the next day or the day after, it might have been the next day, President Obama came

to the State Department to lend his support to everybody. It was, obviously, a really tough time. And I put together some talking points for her to use while the two of them were going to be standing together in the courtyard of the State Department, kind of impromptu talking to everybody. And as I remember because as I was working on them, I could hear her already talking, and I realized that some signals got crossed and I was working on something that was never going to be used because the event was starting. So that was one thing. And then --

Q You know, before you continue, I think I'm going to make this a little easier on you. I'm going to mark this document as an exhibit.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 1

Was marked for identification.]

MY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q It is a compilation of what we believe to be the statements the Secretary made on the subject of Benghazi --

A Great.

Q -- in the days and weeks after the attack. So it might be easier for you to look at this specific statement and tell us whether you participated or not.

A Perfect.

Q So I will mark this document as exhibit 1 to the transcribed interview of [REDACTED].

Mr. Su. And Craig, would you mind just -- is exhibit 1 a compilation that you all put together?

Mr. Missakian. No.

Mr. Su. Okay.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Thank you.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q For the record, what we have marked as exhibit 1, is a multi-paged document. The first page is an email from Jacob Sullivan, to H dated September 24, 2012. Below that is another email from [REDACTED], to Jake Sullivan also September 24, 2012. The document identification number on the first page is SCB0045474 through SCB0045498.

Mr. Su. So what Mr. Missakian is asking you to do is to review the statement, and then tell him of days which you recall working on. Fair?

Mr. Missakian. We will go through them one by one;.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Okay.

Mr. Missakian. Make it a little bit easier for you.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q So flip to the first page, sorry, the second page. The document control number at the bottom is 45475. At the top, there is a heading: "Statement on the Attack in Benghazi, September 11, 2012." Okay, if you could just read that and let me know when you're done.

A Okay.

Q Do you recognize that statement?

A I do not really. I'm sure that -- I don't remember reading this before, but --

Q And do you recall participating in the drafting of the statement at the top of the page?

A No.

Q Do you recall discussing the content of that statement with anybody?

A I do not.

Q All right, let's drop down to the next one on the page the heading is: "Statement on the Death of American Personnel in Benghazi, Libya." Below that is the date September 12, 2012. And it goes on to the next page, the top of the next page. So if you could just read that, and I will ask you a couple of questions.

A Okay.

Q Do you believe that you participated in drafting this statement?

A I do not think so.

Q Do you have an understanding of who drafted it?

A I do not.

Q Have you seen this statement before today?

A I don't remember seeing this statement before today.

Q Okay. Let's flip to the next page which has document control number 45476, beginning about a third of the way down the page the heading is, "Remarks on the Deaths of American Personnel in Benghazi, Libya." And below that the date appears September 12, 2012.

When you have had a chance to review that statement which goes on for two -- roughly two pages, let me know.

Go off the record for a second.

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Back on the record.

A Okay.

Q Is this a statement that you took part in drafting with Jake Sullivan and the other two individuals you have identified?

A It is.

Q And let's focus specifically on paragraph 5 on the second page, the fifth full paragraph on the second page. The paragraph begins, "There will be more time later to reflect."

And having read that paragraph, does that jog your memory at all as to any discussions you had that night between the four of you about the video?

A Actually, what I'm noticing is that this language tracks with the language from the statement the day before. Actually, almost looks like we just cut and pasted and then added a few sentences at the end of the graph. So I'm concluding from that that we said, let's use the language that was in the statement earlier when we got to this section.

Q As your attorney explained, I don't want you to guess about that.

A Right. Right.

Q There may be a logical inference from what you're seeing, --

A Exactly.

Q -- but what I really want to know is if just reading that now and seeing it on paper jogs your memory about any specific or general discussions you had that night with the other three individuals?

A It really doesn't. No.

Q Now, if, in fact, what happened is what you described, that it was cut and pasted from the earlier statement, mechanically how would that have occurred? In other words, would Mr. Sullivan have brought, you know, a thumb drive that had the statement on it, cut and paste possibly. How do you think that happened?

Mr. Su. Well, I think the problem with her answering that question is, as we noted, that was --

Ms. [REDACTED]. Yeah.

Mr. Su. You don't have a recollection of that, right?

Mr. Missakian. And if you don't know, that's a fine answer.

Ms. [REDACTED]. I don't know.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q So as you sit here today, you have read both statements and they appear to be the same or similar, but you can't say one way or another whether or not they were cut and paste -- cut and pasted, I should say?

A I can't say with certainty, no.

Q Would it be fair to say that if they were, in fact, cut and pasted, that this is something that Mr. Sullivan would have brought to the attention of the group because you were not aware of that statement previously?

A Right. I don't remember this statement. I don't know if that day I knew the statement had been put out a few hours earlier. I don't know. I don't know what Mr. Sullivan would have had to tell us by way of the put-out statement or if I knew that there had been a statement. I just don't remember.

Q You can't recall any discussion about a prior statement and how to use it in this longer speech, anything like that?

A I really don't. I will say that if this had been put out already, then it was on the -- right.

Mr. Su. Wait for his question.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Fair enough.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q I assume you were going to say if this had been put out already it would have been on the State Department's Web site?

A Exactly.

Q Is that something you would have ordinarily checked on your own without being prompted by Mr. Sullivan or somebody else to do that?

A Not -- I don't have a regular habit of checking in on the State Department Web site, but so maybe. Maybe not. I don't know.

Q Anything else in the statement to refresh your memory about what was discussed that night? And by that night, I mean September 11, your meeting with the other three individuals?

A Uh-huh. No. Not really. No.

Q Have you had any discussions with anybody since the day of this speech about its contents, aside from your attorney?

A Again, I don't remember any conversation I have ever -- I have had since then about this. This was a really sad and upsetting night, so I definitely talked to my mom about it. I definitely talked to my dad about it. But I don't remember any other conversation with anyone about that evening. And I don't remember any conversation with anyone about this text, no.

Q Right. We will get to the next statement in a moment, but flip to the first page again. I just want to ask you a couple of questions about that. The very first page. The first email from [REDACTED] -- and I don't know how to spell the person's last name -- pronounce the person's last name.

A [REDACTED].

Q [REDACTED] to Jake Sullivan. The subject line is just: "Benghazi/Protest Statements Attached." And then Mr. Sullivan appears to be forwarding this compilation to Secretary Clinton a short time after it was received.

Do you recall being involved in any process by which the Secretary's statements about Benghazi were collected?

A I do not. I don't remember being a part of that, no.

Q You don't recall ever being approached by Jacob Sullivan asking you to give us the statements that were put out on Benghazi?

A I don't recall.

Q Do you recall any discussion of that being done and if so, why?

A I do not.

Q All right. Let's go back to the statements now. We are at the page marked at the bottom 45478. About a third of the way down, the heading is, "Statement on the Deaths of Tyrone S. Woods and Glen A. Doherty in Benghazi, Libya." The date is September 13, 2012.

Do you recall participating in the drafting of this speech?

Mr. Kenny. And just to clarify, I don't think -- you just characterized this as a speech.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Well, I was just going to ask you. How would you characterize this? Is this a speech or a statement? What's the difference?

A Well, it's titled "statement," so I'm guessing it's a statement and not a speech. And that actually does have meaning. Statement is usually written. And a speech is usually delivered orally.

Q Oh, I see. Okay, fair enough.

A Remarks would also be delivered orally. So, yeah. I do not think I worked on -- was that your question?

Q Yes, do you recall participating in the drafting of this statement?

A I do not recall that, no.

Q Having read through it, does anything jog your memory about anything that may have been discussed about the Benghazi attacks?

A Not really.

Q Do you recall, we know that you took part in the remarks

on September 12.

A Yes.

Q Do you recall taking part in the drafting of anything else for the Secretary that week?

A Well, again, I did work on something for when the President was coming to the State Department.

Q Right. You testified to that.

A That may not have ended up being used.

Q Anything else that you recall?

A She spoke when the coffins were brought back to Andrews Air Force Base. I was not the principal author on those remarks. That was [REDACTED]. I would have been cc'd on them, and I would have read them, but I didn't write them.

Q All right. Okay, if we go to the statement on the one that we just referred to, no recollection of participating in that one?

A No.

Q All right. Let's flip to the next page. The number is 45479. About a third of the way down, and the heading is: "Remarks at the Opening Plenary of the U.S. Morocco Strategic Dialogue." Dated September 13, 2012. When you have had a chance to read that, let me know.

A Okay.

Q Okay. Having read it, do you recall taking part in drafting it?

A No, I will tell you, I do not know who wrote this. It might

have been me. I don't know. Usually I can tell, but I can't tell if I wrote this one.

Q Okay. Let's take a look at paragraph 4. It's the paragraph that begins, "To us, to me personally, this video is disgusting and reprehensible."

Reading over that paragraph, does that jog your memory with regard to anything that was said or discussed about the video, why it should be included in remarks, statements, or speeches, anything like that?

A No.

Q Do you recall having any, just generally speaking, any discussion about the video with any of your colleagues in the Speech Writing Department?

Mr. Su. In the week after the attacks?

Mr. Missakian. At any point in time.

Ms. [REDACTED]. No.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Let's keep working our way through. Next one appears at page marked 45482, towards the bottom. The heading is: "Remarks at Reception Marking Eid ul-Fitr." I don't know if I'm pronouncing that right?

A I think it is Eid.

Q Eid. Thank you. The date is September 13, 2012.

A Uh-huh.

Q Okay. Do you recall participating in drafting of that statement?

A I do not.

Q Or those remarks, I should say?

A I do not, thanks, though.

Q You can take credit for it if you want.

Now, keep going on the next page, there is a portion that's been redacted. These are statements by Ambassador Aujali. Do you know why that would be redacted?

A I don't.

Q Now, then Secretary Clinton's name appears, and can you tell whether these are prepared remarks, or whether or not she is just speaking? Is it possible to tell? I assume they are prepared remarks, but I just want to confirm.

A I actually don't think you should assume that.

Q Okay.

A Well, the fact that it's long, perhaps it's prepared. It's hard to tell. You know, the fact that she speaks and that she passes it to someone else and then speaks again, makes -- I think it's possible this was extemporaneous, but I don't know.

Q But you do know you did not participate in drafting it if they were prepared remarks, or you can't recall?

A I don't believe -- yeah, I don't recall working on them.

Q All right. Let's keep going. Now we are at the page marked 45485. In the middle, the heading appears: "Remarks at the Transfer of Remains Ceremony to Honor Those Lost in Attacks in Benghazi, Libya." The date is now September 13, 2012. After you have had a chance to

review those remarks, let me know.

A Okay.

Q Having read through it, do you believe you took part in drafting these remarks?

A I do not.

Q Do you recall having any discussions with anybody about the remarks that Secretary Clinton gave at the return of the remains?

A I remember admiring the line that, "The people of Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Tunisia did not trade the tyranny of a dictator for the tyranny of a mob." I thought that was a good encapsulation of the situation in the region, and I remember telling █████ that I liked it. That's basically it.

Q Okay. And now we are on page marked 45487. Towards the middle of the page the heading is, "Remarks with Mexican Secretary of Foreign Relations Patricia Espinosa After Their Meeting." The date is now September 18, 2012. Let me know after you have had a chance to review those. They go on for a few pages.

A Okay.

Q Do you recall having taken part in drafting any of these remarks?

A I do not recall.

Q Flip ahead to the page marked 45490. Towards the bottom two-thirds of the page the heading is, "Remarks with Indonesian Foreign Minister Raden Mohammad Marty Muliana Natalegawa --" I'm not even going to try that last one -- "After Their Meeting." The date now is

September 20, 2012.

A Okay.

Q Okay. Do you recall taking part in drafting any of these remarks?

A I do not recall.

Q Please flip ahead to page marked at the bottom 45495. At the top third of the page, the heading is, "Remarks with Pakistani Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar Before Their Meeting." The date now is September 21, 2012. If you could read that over and let me know when you are done.

A Okay.

Q Do you recall taking part in drafting any portion of these remarks?

A I do not.

Q If you would take a look at paragraph one, two, three, four, five, it's the paragraph that begins, "Yesterday afternoon when I briefed the Congress --" do you see that?

A Uh-huh.

Q The second sentence reads as follows: "What happened in Benghazi was a terrorist attack and we will not rest until we have tracked down and brought to justice the terrorists who murdered four Americans."

Now, I have read through the other statements that we went through and to my reading, this is the first time we see the word "terrorist" being used in the statements that are part of this compilation, at any

rate.

Do you recall any discussion about the use of that term in any statement that the Secretary was making, whether it be remarks, or a statement, or anything about what occurred in Benghazi?

A I do not.

Q So as you sit here today, you don't recall any discussion of whether to use that term or not?

A I don't.

Q And the last statement begins on the page marked 45497. This one, again, beginning about a third down the page, the title is, "Remarks With Tunisian Foreign Minister Rafik Abdessalem Before Their Meeting." The date now is September 21, 2012. And I'm happy to give you the spelling of all of these names, obviously.

A Okay.

Q Do you recall taking part in the drafting in any portion of these remarks?

A I do not.

Q I would like to jump ahead from September 11 to September 16. This is the Sunday when then Ambassador Rice appeared on the Sunday talk shows, and I'm sure you are aware of the controversy that followed in the wake of that.

One, did you see her appearance on any of those talk shows?

A I did not.

Q Have you since read a transcript of any of those appearances?

A I don't recall doing that. I don't remember doing that.

Q Okay, do you recall having any discussion with anybody at any time about Ambassador Rice's appearance on those talk shows and what she said?

A I do not.

Q Do you recall it being a topic of discussion within the Speech Writing Department in any way, shape, or form?

A I do not.

Q Do you recall, putting aside her appearance there on the talk shows, do you recall there being a discussion about what the State Department was saying about the attacks in Benghazi versus what she had said on the talk shows?

A Do I recall there being a conversation about any discrepancy?

Q Well, not necessarily a discrepancy, just comparing the two in any way?

A I don't recall.

Q So as you sit here today, you can't recall any discussions about Susan Rice's appearance on the talk show in any way, shape, or form?

A No.

Q Do you recall having any discussions with anybody about, you know, the controversy that surrounded the statements she made on those talk shows?

A I really don't.

Q Do you recall ever coming to the point in time where your views about what occurred in Benghazi and the attack changed from what you -- it sounds like you initially believed?

Mr. Su. In terms of the video?

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Sure. We can say tie it to the video. It sounds like you initially believed that the video sparked what occurred in Benghazi. Did that opinion ever change?

A It really didn't.

Q So to this day, you are still of the mind the video sparked what occurred in Benghazi. Is it fair to say?

A Yes, I would say that I continued to believe that the video played a role in sparking those events.

Q Okay, and you earlier on testified and gave us the basis for that conclusion. Have you added any additional facts to your analysis since, you know, September 11 essentially?

A Well, there has been at least one comprehensive review done by the New York Times about a year after Benghazi about whether the video played a role and it concluded that it did. So upon reading that, my initial conclusion seemed to hold.

Q Okay, anything other than what you read in the New York Times?

A No.

Q Okay. Thank you, I don't have any other questions. So you guys want to take over?

Mr. Kenny. Let's just take a quick 5-minute break.

[Recess.]

EXAMINATION

BY MR. KENNY:

Q So we will go back on the record. The time is now 12:37. Ms. [REDACTED], on behalf of Ranking Member Cummings, all of the Democratic Members, I would just like to thank you for appearing here today; take a just a quick moment to introduce myself. I'm Peter Kenny. I'm counsel with the committee minority staff. I am joined by our staff director Susanne Sachsman Grooms. And we just wanted to reiterate at the outset here how much we appreciate your willingness to come, and look forward to concluding this as quickly and as comfortable for you as possible.

I just want to make this process easy, comfortable for you. If at any point in time you are not clear as to a question that I'm asking you, please feel free to stop me. I'm happy to either rephrase it so that you better understand it.

We ended the last round walking through a series of the Secretary's statements that were made, and I think what would be helpful, at least from our perspective, would be to take a step back and talk a little bit about the context in which some of these statements, some of the remarks were being prepared. We spent a bit of time speaking specifically about one drafting session, I believe in Mr. [REDACTED] either house or apartment. But I would like to just maybe ask for your -- ask for you to step back and just kind of describe

for us generally what this period was like for you, how challenging the circumstances were under which you and some of the other speechwriters were operating. If you could maybe just start with that for us.

A You mean when you say "this period," do you mean like this week, or --

Q Well, start with the days immediately following the attack, including the night of when you first found the first drafting session and through just the days into that next week.

A Well, it was an unusual time. I can't think of a period of time that was like it during my years at the State Department. As those statements reflect, there was a lot of other business being done still during that time. And yet, in all of those statements and remarks, even if they were about a different country, whether it was with the foreign -- not minister, but the foreign -- the equivalent of the Foreign Minister of Mexico, or Morocco, or wherever, the events of Benghazi still clearly loomed large and found their way into those remarks.

I don't remember a great deal about -- as I have explained earlier, comments I don't remember a lot about writing any specific remarks during that time. But there really was just this one thing that I was thinking about a lot, which, you know, this one -- this one night, this one incident. That was -- yeah, the very front of mind.

Q And to the extent that you can't remember whether you participated in an editing session or a drafting session with respect

to a specific statement or a speech, it has been over 3 years since the attacks and I would just like to ask for your perspective on how or whether the passage of time has had some sort of effect on your ability to recall some of those specific instances or moments?

A Yes, certainly. Thank you for asking that, yes, definitely. I remember actually very little about any specific day, or week, or set of remarks from that period, or, yeah, from a lot of my time at the State Department. I don't remember quite -- I don't remember a lot in terms of specifics or details.

Q And you recall it may have been at the beginning of the last hour I had written in my notes, you referred to a volume of work that you and the other speech writers would have prepared for the Secretary, and as we all know, the Secretary operates in a very public role, so she would issue, deliver statements or remarks fairly frequently, is that correct?

A Yes, often multiple times a day.

Q And over the course of your tenure, do you recall about how many statements, or drafts of remarks or statements you would have prepared for the Secretary?

A We did an accounting once after just the first year of her public statements, whether they were short or long, versus Secretary Rice, and Secretary Powell, who were the two preceding Secretaries of State, and she was almost double their volume. So at that point, I -- I'm sorry that I don't remember the numbers, but it was quite large. So over the 4 years that I was there, I certainly -- I wrote hundreds

of things. I may have crossed over into a thousand or more. I wrote a lot.

Q And sitting here today, if I were to show you a final version of one of those remarks, or those statements, would you be able to recall for us specific edits that perhaps you may have made to those?

A Almost certainly not. I will go further and say that if my name weren't on the top of the draft, for most of them I wouldn't know if I had been the one to actually write the first draft.

Q There was a discussion in the last hour about your belief of whether the video had played a role in the unrest in the region, to include the attacks in Benghazi. I would just like to ask, you know, there was quite a bit of focus on the video. I'd like to also ask your belief at the time to the best you can recall about whether you understood there had been a protest that took place at the Special Mission before the attacks commenced?

A That is my understanding. I'm not able to tell you where I got that understanding, but that is my understanding of what happened there, yes.

Q Okay. Were you aware of the initial assessment that the intelligence community had made regarding what had happened in Benghazi; that there had, in fact, been a protest before the attacks?

A I'm now aware of that. I don't know where I learned that. I don't know if I knew that at the time.

Q Okay. And if somebody had told you that the intelligence community had assessed that, would it have been appropriate for you

to second guess an assessment by the intelligence community?

A No.

Q Okay. Give me a moment as I review my notes here.

Returning to our discussion of the drafting session that took place at Mr. [REDACTED] house, and I believe we established that that was with respect to remarks that the Secretary issued in the treaty room on September 12?

A Yes.

Q Okay. You were asked some detailed questions about what information you had available to you at that time, what you recall knowing or learning at that time. And I would just like to ask if you have any recollection about whether you had an insufficient amount of information at that time on which to draft the statement that you ultimately wrote, or that you ultimately participated in drafting?

A Well, "insufficient" is an interesting word choice. I mean, we had to write something. She was -- we knew that she was going to do this. We had a task which was to write something. So, you know, we didn't have such insufficient knowledge that we were unable to do our task. Does that make sense?

Q Uh-huh.

A We definitely did not know a lot of what happened. We knew very few specifics about what was actually going on on the ground. So we used what we actually did have to write what we wrote.

Q And in terms of tasking, I believe you were asked about whether you recall receiving direction. But as someone who had worked

in the Speech Writers Office and had a few years, at least at this point, of experience drafting, was it your sense once you learned that these attacks occurred that you would have to draft some sort of statement for the Secretary or participate in a drafting session for her?

A My memory of what happened that night is that I, you know, learned in the same call from my colleague that what had happened in Benghazi had really spiralled far out of control, and perhaps people had died. That was the same call in which I learned that -- I don't know if it is fair to call it tasking so much as she is probably going to want to say something.

Q So I guess that's maybe what I'm trying to get at. I'm not being as clear as I should. You have a lot of experience as a speech writer. When something like this happens --

A Right.

Q -- can you anticipate that there would be this need to develop public remarks the Secretary to make?

A Certainly. Having said that before that call, I don't remember knowing that things had gone as poor -- that things had gone so catastrophically south as they had in Benghazi at that point. So I wasn't, you know, scribbling notes or coming up with ideas for something that she was going to say.

It was upon learning that -- I learned in the same conversation that things had gone very badly in Benghazi, and that we were asked to write something. So you're right that generally, if something bad goes wrong, or some breaking event happens, good or bad, you're right

that I can anticipate that probably something will have to be written.

Q When I used the term "insufficient information" before, I guess what I was trying to get at is your recollection, obviously, appeared to be limited from that evening. And if there were remarks that were prepared in a drafting session you participated in, and you felt that there wasn't a sufficient evidentiary basis for making those statements, is that something you would have remembered?

A Certainly, the idea of giving her something to read that we are not confident, is true. That's not an acceptable thing to do. You don't --

Q Accuracy is important in speech writing?

A Of course, yeah. So if you don't know that something is true -- if I didn't know that something was true, I wouldn't put it in text for a person to read.

Q Okay. And is there like a process that the speech writers would use in order to ensure the accuracy of speeches? You were asked a little bit about this earlier, but were there subject-matter experts, for instance, that you could reach out to either in the Office of Policy Planning or elsewhere in the State Department to review a speech to ensure its accuracy?

A Certainly. I don't know -- certainly, on this night, and almost always, in fact, perhaps always, something that I wrote would go through a vetting process before it reached the Secretary. I can't recall a time that I ever wrote something and just handed it to her and she walked out and delivered it. That's just not the way it works.

So that night, as with every set of remarks, a team of people would read it and weigh in on it and vet it.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q And would that team vary depending on either the urgency, the timing of when a statement needed to be released, or the actual content --

A Yes.

Q -- of that speech?

A Yes.

Q So there was no fixed formal process for who the recipients would be in the vetting process?

A That's right.

Q And to the best of your recollection, did the statement, the remarks that you helped prepare on September 11th, did they undergo that vetting process?

A They did.

Q And you know that because?

A I know that because, for one, I believe I was the one that circulated the draft to a team of people, senior staff members to vet it. And secondly, I guess I'm extrapolating, but she delivered the remarks. So -- I don't know, you know, who saw them beyond the group that I circulated it to. I don't know if anyone else in the State Department was included on --

Q So there would be emails to reflect that, though?

A Yes.

Q That both the draft of whatever speech or remarks or statement, as well as the traffic relating to the vetting of that speech?

A Yes.

Q Or remarks?

A I believe almost all of it would be done over email. It's, of course, possible that someone would have handed someone a draft and said read this, but it almost always would have happened over email.

Q And you mentioned that it would be helpful to your -- or would have been helpful to you that you can recognize a particular draft as yours because your name would appear in that draft. Is that right?

A Generally, yes. We have it like a heading that you would -- one would usually -- I would usually include on my drafts.

Q Okay. You were asked a little bit in the last round about some controversy surrounding Ambassador Rice's statements on the five Sunday talk shows of September 16th. There has also been some public criticism of some of the statements made by Secretary Clinton. I would just like to ask if you have any sort of response to when you hear or see that criticism, that statements she may have been about Benghazi, statements you may have helped draft or write, that those are either inaccurate, or worse, that they may have been intentionally inaccurate?

A Well, I can say with certainty that anything that I worked on was never intentionally inaccurate and that I don't have any knowledge of anyone that I worked with intentionally being inaccurate.

Certainly not. Absolutely not.

Q Okay.

A I don't have really much to say beyond that, I don't think.

Q Uh-huh. It's been alleged that the administration had created a false narrative related to the YouTube videos specifically, that that had somehow played a role in the attack, and I'd just like to ask what your response is to that allegation that the administration created a false narrative?

A I don't believe that's true.

Q And can you give us a sense of what your basis for that belief is?

A Well, I participated in drafting at least one set of her remarks about this, and we never heard or saw, or I don't -- nothing that I saw in that process suggested to me that anyone was doing anything other than trying to put together a set of remarks that was accurate and appropriate for this really difficult moment and that reflected American policy, American values, and that did right by these men who had died.

So just at no point in any of the work that I did on this, on these remarks or just generally during that entire period of time, I saw absolutely nothing that suggested anything other than like total integrity about my colleagues.

Q So at this point we'd like to move on, and I'll preface this next section just by remarking that this is now the eighth congressional investigation into the Benghazi attacks, and it's our duty to help

ensure that it's the last.

We've been asking every witness about a series of public allegations that have been made since the attack, and it's our understanding that even where they've been answered by other investigations, our colleagues in the majority may still be pursuing these allegations, and that's why we're continuing to ask about them.

While anyone can speculate about the Benghazi attacks, plenty of people have, only a limited population or universe of people actually have actual knowledge or evidence of what happened either before, during, or after the attacks, and I'm going to ask you about a series of allegations, and what we're asking for here is not speculation or opinion but just whether you have any firsthand information. And if you don't, simply move on to the next allegation, and there's about a dozen of these, so just please I'd just ask and appreciate your patience and bear with me.

First, it has been alleged that Secretary of State Clinton intentionally blocked military action on the night of the attacks. One Congressman has speculated that Secretary Clinton told Leon Panetta to stand down, and this resulted in the defense department not sending more assets to help in Benghazi. Do you have any evidence that Secretary of State Clinton ordered Secretary of Defense Panetta to stand down on the night of the attacks?

A I do not.

Q Do you have any evidence that Secretary of State Clinton issued any kind of order to Secretary of Defense Panetta on the night

of the attacks?

A I do not.

Q Next. It has been alleged that Secretary Clinton personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security to Libya. The Washington Post Fact Checker evaluated this claim and gave it Four Pinocchios, its highest award for false claims. Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security resources to Libya?

A I do not.

Q Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton was personally involved in providing specific instruction on day-to-day security resources in Benghazi?

A I do not.

Q It has been alleged that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risk posed by Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for military operations in Libya in spring 2011. Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risk posed by Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for military operations in Libya in spring 2011?

A I do not.

Q It has been alleged that the U.S. mission in Benghazi included transferring weapons to Syrian rebels or to other countries. A bipartisan report issued by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence found that, quote, "the CIA was not collecting and

shipping arms from Libya to Syria," close quote, and that they found, quote, "no support for this allegation," close quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict the House Intelligence Committee's bipartisan report finding that CIA was not shipping arms from Libya to Syria?

A I do not.

Q Do you have any evidence that U.S. facilities in Benghazi were being used to facilitate weapons transfers from Libya to Syria or any other foreign country?

A I do not.

Q A team of CIA security personnel was temporarily delayed from departing the Annex to assist the Special Mission Compound on the night of the attack, and there have been a number of allegations about the cause and the appropriateness of that delay. The House Intelligence Committee issued a bipartisan report concluding that the team was not ordered to, quote, "stand down," close quote, but instead there were tactical disagreements on the ground over how quickly to depart.

Do you have any evidence that would contradict the House Intelligence Committee's finding that there was no stand down order to CIA personnel?

A I do not.

Q Putting aside whether you personally agree with the decision to delay temporarily or think that it was the right decision, do you have any evidence that there was a bad or improper

decision -- reason, behind the temporary delay of the CIA security personnel who departed the Annex to assist the Special Mission Compound?

A I do not.

Q Concern has been raised by one individual that in the course of producing documents to the Accountability Review Board, damaging documents may have been removed or scrubbed out of that production. Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department removed or scrubbed damaging documents from the materials that were provided to the ARB?

A I don't.

Q Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department directed to anyone else at the State Department to remove or scrub damaging documents from the materials that were provided to the ARB?

A I don't.

Q Let me ask these questions also for documents provided to Congress. Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department removed or scrubbed damaging documents from the materials that were provided to Congress?

A I do not.

Q It has been alleged that CIA Deputy Director Michael Morell altered unclassified talking points about the Benghazi attacks for political respects and that he then misrepresented his actions when he told Congress that the CIA faithfully performed our duties in accordance with the high standards of objectivity and nonpartisanship.

Do you have any evidence the CIA Deputy Director Michael Morell gave false or intentionally misleading testimony to Congress about the Benghazi talking points?

A I do not.

Q Do you any evidence that CIA Deputy Director Morell altered the talking points provided to Congress for political reasons?

A I don't.

Q It has been alleged that Ambassador Susan Rice made an intentional misrepresentation when she spoke on the Sunday talk shows about the Benghazi attacks. Do you have any evidence that Ambassador Rice intentionally misrepresented facts about the Benghazi attacks on the Sunday talk shows?

A I don't.

Q It has been alleged that the President of the United States was, quote, "virtually AWOL as Commander in Chief," close quote, on the night of the attack, and that he was, quote, missing in action, close quote. Do you have any evidence to support the allegation that the President was virtually AWOL as Commander in Chief or missing in action on the night of the attacks?

A I do not.

Q It has been alleged that a team of four military personnel at Embassy Tripoli on the night of the attacks were considering flying on second plane to Benghazi were ordered by their superiors to stand down, meaning cease all operations. Military officials have stated that those four individuals were ordered to, quote, "remain in place,"

close quote, in Tripoli to provide security and medical assistance in their current location.

A Republican staff report issued by the House Armed Services Committee found that, quote, "there was no stand down order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi," close quote. Do you have any evidence to contradict the conclusion of House Armed Services Committee that there was, quote, "no stand down order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi," close quote?

A I do not.

Q Almost there.

A Okay.

Q It has been alleged that the military failed to deploy assets on the night of the attack that would have saved lives. However, former Republican Congressman Howard "Buck" McKeon, former chairman of the House Armed Services Committee conducted a review of the attacks after which he stated, quote, "given where the troops were, how quickly the thing all happened, and how quickly it dissipated, we probably couldn't have done more than we did" close quote.

Do you any evidence to contradict Congressman McKeon's conclusion?

A I don't.

Q Do you have any evidence that the Pentagon had military assets available to them on the night of the attacks that could have saved lives but that Pentagon leadership intentionally decided not to

deploy?

A I don't.

Q And with that, we'll go off the record.

[Recess.]

Mr. Missakian. Let's go back on the record.

I'm going to mark a second copy of exhibit 1 as exhibit 2.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 2

Was marked for identification.]

Mr. Missakian. And Ms. [REDACTED], I'd simply like you to flip to the statement that you helped draft on September 11 and September 12 with the other individuals you identified and just put your initials next to that statement so the record is clear about which statement we were referring to and which statement you were referring to.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Of course. Thank you.

Mr. Su. And just so I understand the purpose of this exercise. By Ms. [REDACTED] placing her initials next to the statement, it is basically and only a confirmation that this is the statement that we have been talking about that she worked on on the night of September 11th and then, or early morning of September 12th; is that fair?

Mr. Missakian. Yes.

Mr. Su. Okay.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Just so the record is accurate. That statement

begins on the page marked 45476 and continues to page 45478.

Ms. [REDACTED], I thought I heard you say that you had circulated a draft of that statement on the evening of September 11, morning of September 12th. Now, you recall doing that?

A I do, yes.

Q Okay. You did that by email?

A I did.

Q I don't recall having seen that email, maybe I just missed it, but do you recall who you sent it to?

A I don't. Specifically, I don't, no.

Q What's your best estimate of who you would have sent it to that night knowing that Mr. Sullivan was in the room with you when it was drafted?

A I would say the kind of core senior staff, so that would be Jake, Cheryl Mills. Probably Victoria Nuland as our spokeswoman. It would have been smart to include Beth Jones, who I think was the NEA assistant secretary at the time, and maybe Phillippe Reines, who is also a senior staff member. This is my best guess. Not a big group.

Q I understand. Do you recall receiving any comments about the draft?

A I don't.

Q Do you recall having any phone calls with any of the individuals you just named about the draft?

A I don't.

Q Do you recall becoming aware of any conversations, maybe

you didn't participate in them, but conversations between Jake Sullivan, for example, and any of those individuals about the draft?

A The one thing that I remember is going to work that morning, so that would be a few hours after leaving [REDACTED] office, I went home --

Q A few hours after leaving [REDACTED] --

A Apartment. So that was quite late that night. I went home, I took a shower, I went to the office, and I remember being in Jake Sullivan's office that morning. I remember Toria Nuland sitting at his desk with the document, the draft up, and I think she was reading it. I don't know if she was editing it. And I remember Secretary Clinton walking in and thanking me, basically, saying thank you for working on this last night, I think it's very good.

Q So at that point she had seen it?

A Yes.

Q Do you recall her making any other comments beyond thanking you?

A I do not.

Q All right. Thank you.

I don't have any further questions?

Mr. Kenny. And just so the record is clear, we believe that we have received that draft.

Mr. Missakian. Great.

Mr. Kenny. So we're happy to discuss --

Mr. Missakian. You mean the email circulating the draft?

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Yes.

Mr. Missakian. Okay. Great. Very good. Thank you, thank you, appreciate it. Off the record.

[Whereupon, at 1:08 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

EXHIBIT 1

UNCLASSIFIED
 U.S. Department of State
 Case No. F-2015-04841
 Doc No. C05739812
 Date: 05/13/2015

STATE DEPT. - PRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMM.
 SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT ON SENSITIVE INFORMATION & REDACTIONS. NO FOIA WAIVER.

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, September 24, 2012 10:17 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Benghazi/protest statements
Attachments: Compiled protest and Benghazi statements.docx

Attached is full compilation. You never said spontaneous or characterized the motives. In fact you were careful in your first statement to say we were assessing motive and method. The way you treated the video in the Libya context was to say that some sought to *justify* the attack on that basis.

From: Valliani, Amira
Sent: Monday, September 24, 2012 10:08 AM
To: Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: Benghazi/protest statements

Attached

UNCLASSIFIED
 U.S. Department of State
 Case No. F-2015-04841
 Doc No. C05739812
 Date: 05/13/2015

STATE DEPT. - PRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMM.
 SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT ON SENSITIVE INFORMATION & REDACTIONS. NO FOIA WAIVER.

STATE-SCB0045474

Statement on the Attack in Benghazi
 September 11, 2012

I condemn in the strongest terms the attack on our mission in Benghazi today. As we work to secure our personnel and facilities, we have confirmed that one of our State Department officers was killed. We are heartbroken by this terrible loss. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and those who have suffered in this attack.

This evening, I called Libyan President Magariaf to coordinate additional support to protect Americans in Libya. President Magariaf expressed his condemnation and condolences and pledged his government's full cooperation.

Some have sought to justify this vicious behavior as a response to inflammatory material posted on the Internet. The United States deplors any intentional effort to denigrate the religious beliefs of others. Our commitment to religious tolerance goes back to the very beginning of our nation. But let me be clear: There is never any justification for violent acts of this kind.

In light of the events of today, the United States government is working with partner countries around the world to protect our personnel, our missions, and American citizens worldwide.

Statement on the Death of American Personnel in Benghazi, Libya
 September 12, 2012

It is with profound sadness that I share the news of the death of four American personnel in Benghazi, Libya yesterday. Among them were United States Ambassador to Libya Chris Stevens and Foreign Service Information Management Officer, Sean Smith. We are still making next of kin notifications for the other two individuals. Our hearts go out to all their families and colleagues.

A 21 year veteran of the Foreign Service, Ambassador Stevens died last night from injuries he sustained in the attack on our office in Benghazi.

I had the privilege of swearing in Chris for his post in Libya only a few months ago. He spoke eloquently about his passion for service, for diplomacy and for the Libyan people. This assignment was only the latest in his more than two decades of dedication to advancing closer ties with the people of the Middle East and North Africa which began as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Morocco. As the conflict in Libya unfolded, Chris was one of the first Americans on the ground in Benghazi. He risked his own life to lend the Libyan people a helping hand to build the foundation for a new, free nation. He spent every day since helping to finish the work that he started. Chris was committed to advancing America's values and interests, even when that meant putting himself in danger.

Sean Smith was a husband and a father of two, who joined the Department ten years ago. Like

Chris, Sean was one of our best. Prior to arriving in Benghazi, he served in Baghdad, Pretoria, Montreal, and most recently The Hague.

All the Americans we lost in yesterday's attacks made the ultimate sacrifice. We condemn this vicious and violent attack that took their lives, which they had committed to helping the Libyan people reach for a better future.

America's diplomats and development experts stand on the front lines every day for our country. We are honored by the service of each and every one of them.

Remarks on the Deaths of American Personnel in Benghazi, Libya
 September 12, 2012

Yesterday, our U.S. diplomatic post in Benghazi, Libya was attacked. Heavily armed militants assaulted the compound and set fire to our buildings. American and Libyan security personnel battled the attackers together. Four Americans were killed. They included Sean Smith, a Foreign Service information management officer, and our Ambassador to Libya Chris Stevens. We are still making next of kin notifications for the other two individuals.

This is an attack that should shock the conscience of people of all faiths around the world. We condemn in the strongest terms this senseless act of violence, and we send our prayers to the families, friends, and colleagues of those we've lost.

All over the world, every day, America's diplomats and development experts risk their lives in the service of our country and our values, because they believe that the United States must be a force for peace and progress in the world, that these aspirations are worth striving and sacrificing for. Alongside our men and women in uniform, they represent the best traditions of a bold and generous nation.

In the lobby of this building, the State Department, the names of those who have fallen in the line of duty are inscribed in marble. Our hearts break over each one. And now, because of this tragedy, we have new heroes to honor and more friends to mourn.

Chris Stevens fell in love with the Middle East as a young Peace Corps volunteer teaching English in Morocco. He joined the Foreign Service, learned languages, won friends for America in distant places, and made other people's hopes his own.

In the early days of the Libyan revolution, I asked Chris to be our envoy to the rebel opposition. He arrived on a cargo ship in the port of Benghazi and began building our relationships with Libya's revolutionaries. He risked his life to stop a tyrant, then gave his life trying to help build a better Libya. The world needs more Chris Stevenses. I spoke with his sister, Ann, this morning, and told her that he will be remembered as a hero by many nations.

Sean Smith was an Air Force veteran. He spent 10 years as an information management officer in the State Department, he was posted at The Hague, and was in Libya on a brief temporary assignment. He was a husband to his wife Heather, with whom I spoke this morning. He was a father to two young children, Samantha and Nathan. They will grow up being proud of the service their father gave to our country, service that took him from Pretoria to Baghdad, and finally to Benghazi.

The mission that drew Chris and Sean and their colleagues to Libya is both noble and necessary, and we and the people of Libya honor their memory by carrying it forward. This is not easy. Today, many Americans are asking – indeed, I asked myself – how could this happen? How could this happen in a country we helped liberate, in a city we helped save from destruction? This question reflects just how complicated and, at times, how confounding the world can be.

But we must be clear-eyed, even in our grief. This was an attack by a small and savage group – not the people or Government of Libya. Everywhere Chris and his team went in Libya, in a country scared by war and tyranny, they were hailed as friends and partners. And when the attack came yesterday, Libyans stood and fought to defend our post. Some were wounded. Libyans carried Chris' body to the hospital, and they helped rescue and lead other Americans to safety. And last night, when I spoke with the President of Libya, he strongly condemned the violence and pledged every effort to protect our people and pursue those responsible.

The friendship between our countries, borne out of shared struggle, will not be another casualty of this attack. A free and stable Libya is still in America's interest and security, and we will not turn our back on that, nor will we rest until those responsible for these attacks are found and brought to justice. We are working closely with the Libyan authorities to move swiftly and surely. We are also working with partners around the world to safeguard other American embassies, consulates, and citizens.

There will be more time later to reflect, but today, we have work to do. There is no higher priority than protecting our men and women wherever they serve. We are working to determine the precise motivations and methods of those who carried out this assault. Some have sought to justify this vicious behavior, along with the protest that took place at our Embassy in Cairo yesterday, as a response to inflammatory material posted on the Internet. America's commitment to religious tolerance goes back to the very beginning of our nation. But let me be clear – there is no justification for this, none. Violence like this is no way to honor religion or faith. And as long as there are those who would take innocent life in the name of God, the world will never know a true and lasting peace.

It is especially difficult that this happened on September 11th. It's an anniversary that means a great deal to all Americans. Every year on that day, we are reminded that our work is not yet finished, that the job of putting an end to violent extremism and building a safe and stable world continues. But September 11th means even more than that. It is a day on which we remember

thousands of American heroes, the bonds that connect all Americans, wherever we are on this Earth, and the values that see us through every storm. And now it is a day on which we will remember Sean, Chris, and their colleagues.

May God bless them, and may God bless the thousands of Americans working in every corner of the world who make this country the greatest force for peace, prosperity, and progress, and a force that has always stood for human dignity – the greatest force the world has ever known. And may God continue to bless the United States of America.

Thank you.

Statement on the Deaths of Tyrone S. Woods and Glen A. Doherty in Benghazi, Libya
 September 13, 2012

The attack on our diplomatic post in Benghazi, Libya on Tuesday claimed the lives of four Americans. Yesterday, I spoke about two: Ambassador Chris Stevens and Information Management Officer Sean Smith. Today, we also recognize the two security personnel who died helping protect their colleagues. Tyrone S. Woods and Glen A. Doherty were both decorated military veterans who served our country with honor and distinction. Our thoughts, prayers, and deepest gratitude are with their families and friends. Our embassies could not carry on our critical work around the world without the service and sacrifice of brave people like Tyrone and Glen.

Tyrone's friends and colleagues called him "Rone," and they relied on his courage and skill, honed over two decades as a Navy SEAL. In uniform, he served multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. Since 2010, he protected American diplomatic personnel in dangerous posts from Central America to the Middle East. He had the hands of a healer as well as the arm of a warrior, earning distinction as a registered nurse and certified paramedic. All our hearts go out to Tyrone's wife Dorothy and his three sons, Tyrone Jr., Hunter, and Kai, who was born just a few months ago.

We also grieve for Glen Doherty, called Bub, and his family: his father Bernard, his mother Barbara, his brother Gregory, and his sister Kathleen. Glen was also a former Navy SEAL and an experienced paramedic. And he put his life on the line many times, protecting Americans in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other hotspots. In the end, he died the way he lived – with selfless honor and unstinting valor.

We condemn the attack that took the lives of these heroes in the strongest terms, and we are taking additional steps to safeguard American embassies, consulates, and citizens around the world. This violence should shock the conscience of people of all faiths and traditions. We appreciate the statements of support that have poured in from across the region and beyond.

People of conscience and goodwill everywhere must stand together in these difficult days against violence, hate, and division.

I am enormously proud of the men and women who risk their lives every day in the service of our country and our values. They help make the United States the greatest force for peace, progress, and human dignity that the world has ever known. We honor the memory of our fallen colleagues by continuing their work and carrying on the best traditions of a bold and generous nation.

Remarks at the Opening Plenary of the U.S.-Morocco Strategic Dialogue
 September 13, 2012

SECRETARY CLINTON: Good morning. Well, let me welcome our friends and colleagues from Morocco here to the Benjamin Franklin Room on the eighth floor of the State Department for this very important first session of the U.S.-Morocco Strategic Dialogue. Before I begin to address the significance of this Strategic Dialogue and the next step in our long relations with Morocco, I want to say a few words about the events unfolding in the world today.

We are closely watching what is happening in Yemen and elsewhere, and we certainly hope and expect that there will be steps taken to avoid violence and prevent the escalation of protests into violence.

I also want to take a moment to address the video circulating on the Internet that has led to these protests in a number of countries. Let me state very clearly -- and I hope it is obvious -- that the United States Government had absolutely nothing to do with this video. We absolutely reject its content and message. America's commitment to religious tolerance goes back to the very beginning of our nation. And as you know, we are home to people of all religions, many of whom came to this country seeking the right to exercise their own religion, including, of course, millions of Muslims. And we have the greatest respect for people of faith.

To us, to me personally, this video is disgusting and reprehensible. It appears to have a deeply cynical purpose: to denigrate a great religion and to provoke rage. But as I said yesterday, there is no justification, none at all, for responding to this video with violence. We condemn the violence that has resulted in the strongest terms, and we greatly appreciate that many Muslims in the United States and around the world have spoken out on this issue.

Violence, we believe, has no place in religion and is no way to honor religion. Islam, like other religions, respects the fundamental dignity of human beings, and it is a violation of that fundamental dignity to wage attacks on innocents. As long as there are those who are willing to shed blood and take innocent life in the name of religion, the name of God, the world will never know a true and lasting peace. It is especially wrong for violence to be directed against diplomatic missions. These are places whose very purpose is peaceful: to promote better understanding across countries and cultures. All governments have a responsibility to protect

those spaces and people, because to attack an embassy is to attack the idea that we can work together to build understanding and a better future.

Now, I know it is hard for some people to understand why the United States cannot or does not just prevent these kinds of reprehensible videos from ever seeing the light of day. Now, I would note that in today's world with today's technologies, that is impossible. But even if it were possible, our country does have a long tradition of free expression which is enshrined in our Constitution and our law, and we do not stop individual citizens from expressing their views no matter how distasteful they may be.

There are, of course, different views around the world about the outer limits of free speech and free expression, but there should be no debate about the simple proposition that violence in response to speech is not acceptable. We all -- whether we are leaders in government, leaders in civil society or religious leaders -- must draw the line at violence. And any responsible leader should be standing up now and drawing that line.

I wanted to begin with this statement, because, as our Moroccan friends and all of you know, this has been a difficult week at the State Department. I very much appreciate, Minister, the condolences your government expressed to our Embassy in Rabat. And even though that tragedy happened far away in Benghazi, we found a reminder of the deep bonds that connect Morocco to the United States. It was in the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco that one of the Americans we lost this week, Ambassador Chris Stevens, fell in love with the region when he served as a Peace Corps volunteer there. That experience set him on a decades-long career of service. So in the memory of fallen friends and colleagues, let us remind ourselves of the many ways in which not just our governments but the people of our two nations have worked together to build a better future.

In many ways, the United States looks to Morocco to be a leader and a model. His Majesty King Mohammed deserves great credit for the work you've undertaken. In fact, after my visit to Rabat earlier this year, I told my team: "We need to start a Strategic Dialogue with Morocco." No country has been a friend of the United States longer than Morocco. You were the first nation to recognize us back in 1777. But we're not satisfied with simply having a friendship that is longstanding. We want one that is dynamic, growing, looking toward the future. So let me highlight a few of the areas we should focus on today.

On political reform, we have all seen remarkable changes taking place across North Africa and the Middle East. I commend Morocco and your government for your efforts to stay ahead of these changes by holding free and fair elections, empowering the elected parliament, taking other steps to ensure that the government reflects the will of the people. Today, our political working group will discuss how the United States can continue to support your efforts to translate commitments into actions. Because as we all know, democracy, real reform, requires that people themselves feel the changes in their everyday lives: the courts reformed, the government more

open and transparent, universal human rights of all Moroccans – men and women alike – respected.

I'm especially pleased by Morocco's commitments to take on the deeply troubling problem of child marriage. We know that child brides are less likely to get an education, more likely to face life-threatening problems, particularly around child birth and delivery, which not only shortchanges them but can even rob them and their communities of their lives and talents. So we want to encourage the government and civil society to continue their important work together on this issue.

With regard to the Western Sahara, the United States continues to support efforts to find a peaceful, sustainable, mutually agreed-upon solution. U.S. policy toward the Western Sahara has remained consistent for many years. We have made clear that Morocco's autonomy plan is serious, realistic, and credible, and that it represents a potential approach that could satisfy the aspirations of the people in the Western Sahara to run their own affairs in peace and dignity. We continue to support the negotiations carried out by the United Nations and hope parties can work toward resolution.

With respect to the economy, our second working group will focus on what more can be done to deliver tangible economic benefits. Morocco's economy is relatively healthy, but you face the same problem that is now endemic across the world – unemployment is still too high, especially among young people,

That's why the United States is providing \$1.5 million to support an effort to attract foreign investors, foster local economic development, and combat corruption across the region. And I'm pleased to announce that later this year we will hold a Morocco business development conference here in Washington to connect businesses from both countries.

Today, we should discuss ways to build on all of these efforts by increasing bilateral trade, a particular goal of mine since so much trade from Morocco goes to Europe. I'd like to increase the amount of trade coming to the United States, and also to improve economic integration across North Africa, which could greatly benefit Morocco because of Morocco's stability and Morocco's very strong economic foundation. The greater integration there is, the greater the benefits for Moroccans.

Third, the attack in Benghazi this week reminds us that security remains a vital issue. Through our work together on the Global Counterterrorism Task Force, the United States and Morocco already share crucial information and best practices, and I thank Morocco for hosting a Global Counterterrorism Task Force workshop on threats in the South Atlantic next month.

We are also collaborating through USAID, the Peace Corps, and other agencies to help provide Moroccan youth with alternatives to criminal and extremist organizations. And so we are partnering to help strengthen Morocco's criminal justice system and law enforcement.

There will be a lot to discuss in the meeting today. And let me add, the United States greatly appreciates the constructive role Morocco is playing on the UN Security Council, especially your support for the effort to end the violence and bloodshed in Syria and help to usher in a new democratic future for that country. I commend Morocco for offering to host the next ministerial meeting of the Friends of the Syrian People, and we look forward to continuing to work closely together as close partners even after your term on the Security Council has ended.

Finally, our education and cultural ties are reason for much celebration. This year marks the 30th anniversary of our official program to facilitate academic exchanges and other bonds between us. There are more than 5,000 Moroccan alumni of these programs. Two are with us today – Dr. Benjelloun and Dr. Ouachicha – and we thank them. But among all our work on this front, from preserving Morocco's historic sites to empowering youth, there's one area I particularly hope we can focus on today and receive your advice and counsel – namely, interfaith dialogue.

In these tense and turbulent times, it's more important than ever for people of different faiths to exchange ideas, to build understanding, to promote religious tolerance. It's one of the great challenges of the 21st century, and it's one that we must address together.

So we have a lot of work to do, Minister, but our friendship runs long and deep, and as the treaty our nations signed in 1786 says, and I quote, "Trusting in God, it will remain permanent." I'm confident that we will continue to solve problems and produce results that make our nations stronger, more peaceful, more secure, more prosperous, and also contribute to doing the same for the world.

So again, let me welcome you, Minister. It's been a great pleasure for me to get to know you, to work with you, to be your colleague bilaterally, regionally, and globally, and also welcome your distinguished delegation.

Thank you. (Applause.)

Remarks at Reception Marking Eid ul-Fitr
 September 13, 2012

SECRETARY CLINTON: Good evening, and although I am many weeks overdue in saying it: Eid Mubarak. No matter how belated we are honoring Eid and the end of Ramadan, this is a cherished tradition here at the State Department. And I would like to thank all of you for being here, including the many members of the Diplomatic Corps.

Tonight, our gathering is more somber than any of us would like. This comes during sad and difficult days for the State Department family. We lost four Americans. They were good and brave men. They were committed to the cause of building a brighter future for the people of Libya. And we condemn the violence in the strongest terms, the violence against our posts in Benghazi, in Egypt, and now in Yemen.

The Libyan ambassador is with us tonight, and I want to take a moment to thank him for the support that his government and the Libyan people have shown to the United States in this tragedy, particularly the outpouring of feelings of grief and loss because of the killing of our ambassador.

Ambassador Aujali, would you mind saying a few words?

AMBASSADOR AUJALI: [redacted]

SECRETARY CLINTON: Thank you very much, Ambassador. I know that that was a very personal loss for you, as it was for me. I'm the one who sent Chris to Benghazi during the revolution to show support and be able to advise our government about what we could do to bring freedom and democracy and opportunity to the people of Libya.

Religious freedom and religious tolerance are essential to the stability of any nation, any people. Hatred and violence in the name of religion only poison the well. All people of faith and good will know that the actions of a small and savage group in Benghazi do not honor religion or God in any way. Nor do they speak for the more than one billion Muslims around the world, many of whom have shown an outpouring of support during this time.

Unfortunately, however, over the last 24 hours, we have also seen violence spread elsewhere. Some seek to justify this behavior as a response to inflammatory, despicable material posted on the internet. As I said earlier today, the United States rejects both the content and the message of that video. The United States deplores any intentional effort to denigrate the religious beliefs of others. At our meeting earlier today, my colleague, the foreign minister of Morocco, said that all prophets should be respected because they are all symbols of our humanity, for all humanity.

But both of us were crystal clear in this paramount message: There is never any justification for violent acts of this kind. And we look to leaders around the world to stand up and speak out against violence, and to take steps to protect diplomatic missions from attack.

Think about it. When Christians are subject to insults to their faith, and that certainly happens, we expect them not to resort to violence. When Hindus or Buddhists are subjected to insults to their faiths, and that also certainly happens, we expect them not to resort to violence. The same goes for all faiths, including Islam.

When all of us who are people of faith – and I am one – feel the pain of insults, of misunderstanding, of denigration to what we cherish, we must expect ourselves and others not to resort to violence. That is a universal standard and expectation, and it is everyone's obligation to meet that, so that we make no differences, we expect no less of ourselves than we expect of others. You cannot respond to offensive speech with violence without begetting more violence.

And I so strongly believe that the great religions of the world are stronger than any insults. They have withstood offense for centuries. Refraining from violence, then, is not a sign of weakness in one's faith; it is absolutely the opposite, a sign that one's faith is unshakable.

So tonight, we must come together and recommit ourselves to working toward a future marked by understanding and acceptance rather than distrust, hatred, and fear. We can pledge that whenever one person speaks out in ignorance and bigotry, ten voices will answer. They will answer resoundingly against the offense and the insult, answering ignorance with enlightenment, answering hatred with understanding, answering darkness with light; that if one person commits a violent act in the name of religion, millions will stand up and condemn it out of strength.

In times like these, it can be easy to despair that some differences are irreconcilable, some mountains too steep to climb; we will therefore never reach the level of understanding and peacefulness that we seek, and which I believe the great religions of the world call us to pursue. But that's not what I believe, and I don't think it's what you believe either here tonight. Part of what makes our country so special is we keep trying. We keep working. We keep investing in our future. We keep supporting the next generation, believing that young people can keep us moving forward in a positive direction.

So tonight I think it's important that we talk not just about that better tomorrow that we all seek, but also about some of the things – the real, practical, tangible things – that young people are doing to help shape that better future.

Two years ago in this room, at our Eid reception, we launched a program called Generation Change to lead a grassroots agenda of positive engagement with Muslim communities. And I asked the young Muslim leaders in the audience that night to be our unofficial ambassadors, to help build personal connections, seek out partners in other countries. And I can report to you tonight they did not disappoint. In a few minutes, you're going to meet some of these young leaders, each with a powerful story to tell.

The Generation Change network that started in this room now circles the globe. We are building an international alliance of young people who want to drive change in their own communities. They act as mentors, spark respectful debates, simply offer words of encouragement when needed. But most importantly, they inspire others to keep expanding the circle of mutual understanding and respect, one person at a time.

Even as we work to spread tolerance more broadly, we also are working to deepen our appreciation for the experiences of others. Our 2012 Hours Against Hate initiative encourages young people to put themselves in another person's shoes through service projects. So far, young people from all over the world have pledged thousands of volunteer hours to help people from a different background, to see them as a fellow human being, not a stereotype, not a caricature, but another real live person – people who don't look like you, live like you, pray like you, but with whom we will share this planet. And therefore, we have work to do.

People of faith and conscience are called to be the leaders of tolerance. In my tradition, like all traditions, we are expected to love one another. And together, we have to translate that into better understanding and cooperation. I'm particularly pleased that the young people you will hear from tonight are really setting an example, not only for young people elsewhere in the world but, frankly, for us who are older as well.

Let me now call to the stage someone who has been a tremendous assistance to me in these efforts. Farah Pandith is the Department's first Special Representative to Muslim Communities. And from the beginning, she has made reaching out to young people and civil society her top priority. Farah will introduce you to three young leaders who I am very proud of.

Remarks at the Transfer of Remains Ceremony to Honor Those Lost in Attacks in Benghazi, Libya
 September 14, 2012

SECRETARY CLINTON: Thank you very much, Chaplain. Mr. President, Mr. Vice President, Secretary Panetta, Ambassador Rice, Secretary Powell and Mrs. Powell, family members of the four patriots and heroes we bring home, members of the State Department family, ladies and gentlemen, today we bring home four Americans who gave their lives for our country and our values. To the families of our fallen colleagues, I offer our most heartfelt condolences and deepest gratitude.

Sean Smith joined the State Department after six years in the Air Force. He was respected as an expert on technology by colleagues in Pretoria, Baghdad, Montreal, and The Hague. He enrolled in correspondence courses at Penn State and had high hopes for the future. Sean leaves behind a loving wife Heather, two young children, Samantha and Nathan, and scores of grieving family, friends, and colleagues. And that's just in this world. Because online in the virtual worlds that Sean helped create, he is also being mourned by countless competitors, collaborators, and gamers who shared his passion.

Tyrone Woods, known to most as Rone, spent two decades as a Navy SEAL, serving multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. Since 2010, he protected American diplomatic personnel in dangerous posts from Central America to the Middle East. He had the hands of a healer as well as the arms of a warrior, earning distinction as a registered nurse and certified paramedic. Our hearts go out to Tyrone's wife Dorothy, and his three sons Tyrone, Jr., Hunter, and Kai, born just a few months ago, along with his grieving family, friends, and colleagues.

Glen Doherty, who went by Bub, was also a former SEAL and an experienced paramedic. He too died as he lived, serving his country and protecting his colleagues. Glen deployed to some of the most dangerous places on Earth, including Iraq and Afghanistan, always putting his life on the line to safeguard other Americans. Our thoughts and prayers are with Glen's father Bernard, his mother Barbara, his brother Gregory, his sister Kathleen, and their grieving families, friends, and colleagues.

I was honored to know Ambassador Chris Stevens. I want to thank his parents and siblings, who are here today, for sharing Chris with us and with our country. What a wonderful gift you gave us. Over his distinguished career in the Foreign Service, Chris won friends for the United States in far-flung places. He made those people's hopes his own. During the revolution in Libya, he risked his life to help protect the Libyan people from a tyrant, and he gave his life helping them build a better country.

People loved to work with Chris. And as he rose through the ranks, they loved to work for Chris. He was known not only for his courage but for his smile – goofy but contagious – for his sense of fun and that California cool.

In the days since the attack, so many Libyans – including the Ambassador from Libya to the United States, who is with us today – have expressed their sorrow and solidarity. One young woman, her head covered and her eyes haunted with sadness, held up a handwritten sign that said “Thugs and killers don't represent Benghazi nor Islam.” The President of the Palestinian Authority, who worked closely with Chris when he served in Jerusalem, sent me a letter remembering his energy and integrity, and deploring – and I quote – “an act of ugly terror.” Many others from across the Middle East and North Africa have offered similar sentiments.

This has been a difficult week for the State Department and for our country. We've seen the heavy assault on our post in Benghazi that took the lives of those brave men. We've seen rage and violence directed at American embassies over an awful internet video that we had nothing to do with. It is hard for the American people to make sense of that because it is senseless, and it is totally unacceptable.

The people of Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Tunisia did not trade the tyranny of a dictator for the tyranny of a mob. Reasonable people and responsible leaders in these countries need to do everything they can to restore security and hold accountable those behind these violent acts. And we will, under the President's leadership, keep taking steps to protect our personnel around the world.

There will be more difficult days ahead, but it is important that we don't lose sight of the fundamental fact that America must keep leading the world. We owe it to those four men to continue the long, hard work of diplomacy. I am enormously proud of the men and women of the State Department. I'm proud of all those across our government, civilian and military alike, who

represent America abroad. They help make the United States the greatest force for peace, progress, and human dignity the world has ever known. If the last few days teach us anything, let it be this: That this work and the men and women who risk their lives to do it are at the heart of what makes America great and good.

So we will wipe away our tears, stiffen our spines, and face the future undaunted. And we will do it together, protecting and helping one another, just like Sean, Tyrone, Glen, and Chris always did. May God bless them and grant their families peace and solace, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

And now, let me have the great honor of introducing someone who came to the State Department earlier this week to grieve with us. He well understands and values the work that these men were doing for our country. The President of the United States.

Remarks With Mexican Secretary of Foreign Relations Patricia Espinosa After Their Meeting
 September 18, 2012

SECRETARY CLINTON: Good afternoon, everyone. And it is such a pleasure for me to welcome my friend and colleague, Secretary Espinosa, along with a very distinguished delegation of officials from the Mexican Government for this continuation of consultation at the highest levels of each of our governments.

Before I turn to the matters discussed today, let me give a brief update on the ongoing U.S. response to the protests in the Middle East and elsewhere. I'm sure as you know already, we are taking aggressive steps to protect our staffs in embassies and consulates worldwide. That includes reviewing our security posture at every post and augmenting it where necessary. And we are working closely with the Libyan Government in our efforts to bring to justice those who murdered our four American colleagues in Benghazi.

The FBI is now in Tripoli to join the investigation with Libyan officials, and there is nothing more important to us than ensuring the safety of our American representatives worldwide. At the same time, as I have said to State Department employees, the incidents of the past week highlight how important our work is. The United States must and will remain strongly engaged in the world. Our men and women risk their lives in service to our country and our values, because they know that the United States must be a force for peace and progress. That is worth striving and sacrificing for, and nothing that happened last week changes this fundamental fact.

Now, turning to our friends and partners in Mexico, we are always pleased to have a chance to discuss matters of mutual interest and concern between us. Mexico is one of our closest friends as well as partner on dozens of critical issues. So we talk about every kind of issue you can imagine, from education and healthcare to poverty alleviation to the environment. But today, we focused on a top priority for us both -- security.

We just co-chaired the fourth meeting of the U.S.-Mexico Merida High-Level Consultative Group. This is the last one we will hold during the Calderon Administration. And I want to offer my personal appreciation to President Calderon and to Foreign Secretary Espinosa for their leadership and commitment to this partnership and to all on both sides of the border in our governments who have been deeply engaged and committed to it. The Merida Initiative represents an unprecedented level of security cooperation between Mexico and the United States.

As our countries continue to deal with the serious challenge of transnational criminal organizations, including drug traffickers, illegal arms traffickers, money launderers, and violent gangs that threaten people on both sides of the border, we well know there is no quick and easy way to stop these criminals and bring them to justice. But nevertheless, during the past now nearly four years, our countries have collaborated to an extraordinary and unprecedented degree. We have brought together policy makers and experts from across our governments and societies who have worked hand in hand to keep our people safe. And I think the habits of cooperation we have built are among our most important achievements, and we will rely on them for a long time to come.

Today, our delegations reviewed the gains we've made on key priorities, including improving law enforcement coordination, reducing the demand for drugs, modernizing our border infrastructure, strengthening the rule of law, and building more resilient and empowered communities. We also discussed the lessons we've learned and the work that lies ahead in these and other areas, which our joint statement will reflect. I want to underscore how important our security relationship with Mexico is to the United States.

The Government of Mexico and the Mexican people have faced the threat posed by these criminals with courage and resolve, and we remain committed to doing everything we can to support Mexico as it continues to work to bring those criminals to justice. This is a transnational problem, and it calls for a transnational solution, and the United States believes this is a matter of shared responsibility. That was the first message I brought as Secretary of State when I came to Mexico, and it continues to be the hallmark of our efforts together. Making sure our people are safe and our neighbors are safe is of the utmost importance to us.

Now, our two countries share many other priorities, and one of them, empowering women and girls, was also addressed today. We took the opportunity, the Foreign Secretary and I, to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between our countries to work together to advance gender equality, empower girls and women, promote their human rights, and enhance their security.

So again, Secretary Espinosa, let me thank you for years of work and effort, for our productive conversations in many places around the world and again today, and for being such a valuable colleague and partner. The United States deeply, deeply values our relationship with Mexico and the ties of family and friendship that connect so many millions of our people.

And we look forward to the future. We believe strongly that presidential administrations may change, elections will come and go, but we have established a firm foundation for cooperation that has already benefited both our countries and which will continue to benefit both of our countries for many years ahead. So thank you very much.

MS. NULAND: We'll take (inaudible), Margaret Brennan, CBS News.

QUESTION: Madam Secretary, thanks for your time. Are you any closer to finding who killed Ambassador Chris Stevens? Libya's President says this attack was planned for months. Are you confident he's wrong and that security measures were appropriate? And will you leave justice to the Libyans?

SECRETARY CLINTON: As I said at the outset, we are taking aggressive steps to protect our people and our consulates and embassies around the world. We are reviewing our security posture at every post and working with host governments to be sure they know what our security needs are wherever necessary. We are also working closely with the Libyan Government to bring the perpetrators to justice so that we can be assured that we have found who murdered our four colleagues and under what circumstances. As I said, the FBI has joined the investigation inside Libya, and we will not rest until the people who orchestrated this attack are found and punished.

It is also important to look at this strategically and understand what is going on across the region. In a number of places where protests have turned violent, we are seeing the hand of extremists who are trying to exploit people's inflamed passions for their own agendas. But overwhelmingly, we have found that the people of Egypt, of Libya, of Yemen and Tunisia are not prepared to trade the tyranny of a dictator for the tyranny of a mob. They want to turn their attention to the future to provide better opportunities for themselves and their children, and they want a strong partnership with the United States and the American people based on mutual interests and mutual respect.

This is part of a larger debate that is going on inside these societies. In Libya, for example, in their first free elections, moderates were successful at the polls. But look, there are extremists in all of these societies and on the outside who are working to take advantage of broad outrage in order to incite violence and specifically incite violence against Americans and American facilities.

And as I have said to many of the leaders I have spoken to over the past week, these extremist efforts are a threat to the people of the societies and the governments of those societies as well as to the region and the United States. And I think it's important at this moment for leaders to put themselves on the right side of this debate -- to speak out clearly and unequivocally against violence, whoever incites it or conducts it.

And in a struggle like this, there can be no doubt where the United States must stand. We support those who are fighting for the same values and rights that we believe in -- in democracy, in

UNCLASSIFIED
 U.S. Department of State
 Case No. F-2015-04841
 Doc No. C05739812
 Date: 05/13/2015

STATE DEPT. - PRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMM.
 SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT ON SENSITIVE INFORMATION & REDACTIONS. NO FOIA WAIVER.

freedom, in universal rights for men and women, for justice and accountability. And I want to underscore that the United States will continue to work with partners and allies in the region and around the world to help bring security to these nations so that the promise of the revolutions that they experienced can be realized.

And finally, on your specific point about Benghazi, we obviously never talk publicly about security at any of our missions for obvious reasons. But that said, let me assure you that our security in Benghazi included a unit of host government security forces, as well as a local guard force of the kind that we rely on in many places around the world. In addition to the security outside the compound, we relied on a wall and a robust security presence inside the compound. And with all of our missions overseas, in advance of September 11th, as is done every year, we did an evaluation on threat streams. And the Office of the Director of National Intelligence has said we had no actionable intelligence that an attack on our post in Benghazi was planned or imminent.

But let me state the obvious again. Our diplomats engage in dangerous work, and it's the nature of diplomacy in fragile societies and conflict zones to be aware of the necessity for security but to also continue the important diplomatic work that has to go on. There is risk inherent in what we do and what these brave men and women representing the United States are up against every single day, and we do our very best to limit that risk by ensuring that our security protocols reflect the environments in which diplomats work and the threats that they are presented with.

Thank you.

**Remarks With Indonesian Foreign Minister Raden Mohammad Marty Muliana
 Natalegawa After Their Meeting
 September 20, 2012**

SECRETARY CLINTON: Good afternoon, everyone. And it's such a pleasure, as always, to welcome the Indonesian Foreign Minister, and I believe the largest delegation that has ever come from Indonesia, for the purpose of our third meeting of the U.S.-Indonesia Joint Commission.

This commission is the result of a vision by our two presidents for a comprehensive partnership, and the agreement to that effect was signed in 2010. Thanks to this partnership, the United States and Indonesia are working more closely than ever on a range of issues from global security to clean energy and climate to regional trade and commerce.

And today, Marty and I had the chance to take stock of where our teams have come in the time of the last year, because we had our meeting in Bali a year ago. And I must say, I was very impressed. We covered a great deal today.

UNCLASSIFIED
 U.S. Department of State
 Case No. F-2015-04841
 Doc No. C05739812
 Date: 05/13/2015

STATE DEPT. - PRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMM.
 SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT ON SENSITIVE INFORMATION & REDACTIONS. NO FOIA WAIVER.

STATE-SCB0045490

But before I start, I'd like to say a few words about the protests in several countries around the world. We have condemned in the strongest possible terms the violence that has erupted from these protests. And as I have said, the video that sparked these protests is disgusting and reprehensible, and the United States Government, of course, had absolutely nothing to do with it.

But there is no justification for violence, and I want to thank the Foreign Minister and his government for speaking out against violence. We have to look to reasonable people and responsible leaders everywhere to stand up to extremists who would seek to take advantage of this moment to commit violent acts against embassies and their fellow countrymen.

Today's meetings have highlighted the strong foundation that we have built together. And one of our most important concerns is promoting peace and stability in the Asia Pacific. Today, I'm announcing that the Obama Administration has informed Congress of the potential sale of eight AH-64D Apache Longbow helicopters to the Indonesian Government. This agreement will strengthen our comprehensive partnership and help enhance security across the region.

On growth and prosperity, we are increasing our trade relationship that topped \$26 billion last year. Investments in transportation, energy, and infrastructure are creating jobs and supporting economic growth in both countries. For example, the deal between Lion Air and Boeing alone represents \$21 billion in trade over the next decade. Indonesia's Government has announced half a trillion dollars in infrastructure improvements, and we recently signed a memorandum of understanding to make it easier for American companies to bid on these projects.

And yesterday, we signed an agreement for implementing our Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact with Indonesia. Over the next five years, the United States will invest \$600 million in clean energy development, child health and nutrition programs, and efforts to help make Indonesia's Government more transparent and open.

The United States is also looking forward to Indonesia hosting APEC in 2013, and we are confident that Indonesia will come to this role with a commitment to promote greater economic integration across the Asia Pacific.

Both the Foreign Minister and I believe that strong education is essential to compete in a modern global economy. That's why the United States has expanded the Fulbright Program and supported partnerships between dozens of American and Indonesian universities. Academic exchanges between our countries are up and applications from Indonesian students to visit the United States have increased by one third. USAID has recently expanded its basic education program to provide \$83 million for teacher training and literacy programs for young children. And we're providing \$20 in scholarship funding for Indonesian graduate students.

UNCLASSIFIED
U.S. Department of State
Case No. F-2015-04841
Doc No. C05739812
Date: 05/13/2015

STATE DEPT. - PRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMM.
SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT ON SENSITIVE INFORMATION & REDACTIONS. NO FOIA WAIVER.

I also thanked the Minister for Indonesia's leadership in ASEAN. The Foreign Minister's personal leadership has helped lay the groundwork for diplomacy between ASEAN and China as it relates to the South China Sea. And we continue to support ASEAN's six-point principles, which we believe will help reduce tensions and pave the way for a comprehensive code of conduct for addressing disputes without threats, coercion, or use of force.

Finally, Indonesia and the United States have stood together on a range of global challenges, from democratic reform in Burma to combating climate change, to working to end the violence in Syria. We are also coordinating efforts to further develop south-south and triangular cooperation, such as enhancing disaster preparedness in Burma and convening a conference on women's empowerment.

We believe that as the second and third-largest democracies in the world, the United States and Indonesia have a special responsibility to promote democracy and human rights. And for the last four years, Indonesia has hosted the Bali Democracy Forum to promote peaceful, democratic transitions through example and open dialogue. Last year, more than 80 countries attended. And once again, the United States will be sending a high-level delegation.

So, Minister, thank you for everything. Thank you for the great partnership we've had between us and between our countries.

MS. NULAND: We'll take two questions today, we'll start with Ros Jordan of Al Jazeera English.

QUESTION: Thank you, Madam Secretary, Mr. Foreign Minister. Madam Secretary, my question is about the ongoing investigation into last week's attack at the consulate in Benghazi. You are meeting this afternoon with members of Congress to discuss the progress and the concerns that they understandably have. First, there is the federal mandate to establish an accountability review board. Have you done so? Who would you like to see chair it? Are there certain questions that you desperately want to have answered in order to safeguard the safety of Foreign Service Officers around the world?

And related to this, given the political instability and the successes of the past year and a half, are you satisfied that in light of those political changes, enough was done to protect those working in the Middle East and North Africa? And then finally -- and this is perhaps going into the area of rumor and speculation -- but there is at least one report suggesting that Ambassador Stevens felt that he was on a, quote, "al-Qaida hit list." Is this a scurrilous rumor? Is this gallows humor when one is working in a period of difficulty and great challenge, or is there something more to what he allegedly -- and I stress that word -- said?

UNCLASSIFIED
U.S. Department of State
Case No. F-2015-04841
Doc No. C05739812
Date: 05/13/2015

STATE DEPT. - PRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMM.
SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT ON SENSITIVE INFORMATION & REDACTIONS. NO FOIA WAIVER.

STATE-SCB004542

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, first, let me say I'm looking forward to the opportunity to go up to the Congress today. I will be briefing in two separate sessions, the House and the Senate, in a classified setting, along with my interagency colleagues, as we continue to work together, and with governments around the world, to ensure that our people and our facilities are safe. I will be joined today by the Director of National Intelligence, General Clapper, by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Ash Carter, by the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Sandy Winnefeld, along with experts from the FBI, the State Department, and elsewhere in the government.

Now, I anticipate that this briefing will cover our security posture before and during the events, and the steps we have taken since to do everything we can with host governments to protect our people and our embassies and consulates. The Director of National Intelligence will speak to the intelligence issues surrounding these events in Libya. Deputy Secretary Carter will brief on the superb support we have had from the U.S. military in the wake of these events, and we are at the very early stages of an FBI investigation. The team from the FBI reached Libya earlier this week. And I will advise Congress also that I am launching an accountability review board that will be chaired by Ambassador Thomas Pickering.

I will also talk about the importance of the broader relationships with these countries in light of the events of the past days. There are obviously very real challenges in these new democracies, these fragile societies, but as I said last week, the vast majority of the people in these countries did not throw off the tyranny of a dictator to trade it for the tyranny of a mob. And we are concerned first and foremost with our own people and facilities, but we are concerned about the internal security in these countries because ultimately, that puts at risk the men, women, and children of these societies on a daily ongoing basis if actions are not taken to try to restore security and civil order.

And let me just conclude by saying that there can be no doubt where the United States stands. We continue to support those who are fighting for universal values – values that we see at work in Indonesia – the third largest democracy in the world. We believe that these values of universal rights, of justice and accountability, of democracy, are there for every person regardless of where that person might live. So I will look forward to having a chance to talk with members of Congress.

As to your final question, I have absolutely no information or reason to believe that there's any basis for that.

QUESTION: Thank you.

MS. NULAND: Last question. Victoria Sidjabat from *Tempo Magazine*, please.

QUESTION: Yes. Madam, thank you. My question is: Starting today, U.S. Embassy and Consulate are closed in Indonesia as the Muslim movie become wild fireball, which could be

designed as a weapon to attack U.S. by raising sentiment anti-U.S. from the countries which has Muslim majority population like Indonesia.

Madam Clinton, how do you see this threat as on the long run? If it's continuing happen, it's - obviously could give impact to the implementation of (inaudible) program in Indonesia. What is the reason U.S. Government closed the Embassy and Consulate in Indonesia? What is your expectation from Indonesia Government, for my Minister Marty Natalegawa? How Indonesia Government respond to the closing of this Embassy and Consulate, it's starting today? Is U.S. - Indonesia Government has capability to protect U.S. Embassy and Consulate. So the (inaudible) program implemented - could be implemented successfully in Indonesia. Thank you.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, let me begin by saying how grateful we are for the excellent cooperation we have received from the Government of Indonesia, and in particular, from the law enforcement and security institutions in Indonesia. We are very grateful for not only the cooperation and protection that has been provided to our facilities, but also to the strong statements condemning violence from the President, the Foreign Minister, and others.

In consultation with the Government of Indonesia, we have temporarily, for tomorrow, closed our facilities. We want to be sure that law enforcement in Indonesia has the ability to do what it needs to do to make sure that there is no disruption of civil order and security. So we are cooperating completely, and we're very grateful for the strong leadership provided by Indonesia.

FOREIGN MINISTER NATALEGAWA: Hello, (inaudible), if I may just also respond. Precisely as the Secretary had said, the decision by the United States Government to close temporarily its embassies and consulates tomorrow in Indonesia is a decision that's been made based on communication and conversation between the authorities in Indonesia and the United States as well. So in other words, it is an informed decision, a decision that is not intended to show any unfriendly intent on the part of anyone, but it is what it is, and it's quite some - it's the kind of step that governments actually carry out when situations requires it, even in our case. Some of our embassies abroad, when the situation requires us to have a temporary closing of the embassy, we do that as well. So it is something that is quite regular and something that is actually coordinated as well.

But if I may just broaden the subject matter, I think as our President had said in the past, Indonesian Government - the Indonesian people, even, obviously cannot and would not condone the - any acts of violence against diplomatic premises, against diplomatic personnel, because that is, truly - would be a challenge to the efficient and a proper conduct of relations among states. So that's our point of departure.

At the same time, of course, beyond the immediate issue of protection of the embassies, we have still ahead of us the challenge of how to prevent the kind of situations where we are now at in

terms of the kind of incendiary and the kind of statements or, in this instance, films that cause — that is now we have all deplored and condemned for these kind of activities not to be repeated. So we have a lot of homework to work towards in the future as well.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Thank you all very much.

FOREIGN MINISTER NATALEGAWA: Thank you.

**Remarks With Pakistani Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar Before Their Meeting
 September 21, 2012**

Good afternoon, and let me begin by welcoming Foreign Minister Khar on her first visit to Washington as foreign minister. We've had the opportunity to meet in Islamabad and other settings, but I am very pleased that we would have this chance to exchange views on our bilateral relationship as well as regional and global issues.

I want to begin by addressing the events of the day and the past week. Today, we've once again seen protests in several cities in Pakistan. Unfortunately, some of those protests have turned violent and, sadly, resulted in loss of life. I want to thank the Government of Pakistan for their efforts to protect our Embassy in Islamabad and consulates in Lahore, Peshawar, and Karachi.

And I want to be clear, as I have said on numerous occasions, the violence we have seen cannot be tolerated. There is no justification for violence. Of course, there is provocation, and we have certainly made clear that we do not in any way support provocation. We found the video that's at the core of this series of events offensive, disgusting, reprehensible.

But that does not provide justification for violence, and therefore it is important for responsible leaders, indeed responsible people everywhere, to stand up and speak out against violence and particularly against those who would exploit this difficult moment to advance their own extremist ideologies.

Yesterday afternoon when I briefed the Congress, I made it clear that keeping our people everywhere in the world safe is our top priority. What happened in Benghazi was a terrorist attack, and we will not rest until we have tracked down and brought to justice the terrorists who murdered four Americans. And we are taking aggressive measures at all of our posts to protect our staffs and their families along with locally employed people who provide so many important contributions to the work of our missions.

The Foreign Minister and I will have a chance to cover a full range of subjects today, and it is no secret that the past year and a half has been challenging for Pakistan and the United States. And we still have work to do to get our bilateral relationship to the point where we would like it to be, but we both recognize that we can achieve more when we work together on a focused agenda. So

today is the latest in a series of high-level meetings. Ambassador Marc Grossman has just returned from consultations in Islamabad. I look forward to seeing President Zardari next week at the UN General Assembly. At each meeting, we are working to identify the strategic goals we share -- and there are many -- and the concrete actions we can each take to accomplish them.

Our number one shared priority remains pursuing our joint counterterrorism objectives to ensure the security of American and Pakistani citizens alike. We face a common threat from a common enemy, and we must confront terrorism and extremism together. Earlier this month, I designated the Haqqani Network as a Foreign Terrorist Organization so we could make full use of every available legal authority to end their deadly attacks. Pakistan's parliament has called for expelling foreign fighters so that Pakistan's territory can be fully under control of the Pakistani Government and cannot be used to launch attacks against other nations.

And the follow-through on this is challenging but necessary, and we look forward to working with Pakistan as they continue to address these problems. We have both pledged to support a secure, stable, and prosperous Afghanistan, which is vital for the security of the region. And I want to thank Foreign Minister Khar for Pakistan's reopening of the NATO supply lines to allow the movement of goods to Afghanistan.

We will discuss the successful first meeting of the Safe Passage Working Group in Islamabad which brought together Afghan, Pakistani, and U.S. representatives to advance the peace process in Afghanistan. The Pakistani Government's public call for insurgents to come forward and talk with the Afghan Government was particularly important. We are ready to work together to build on these steps, and we will continue our discussions through bilateral consultations and the U.S.-Afghanistan-Pakistan Core Group.

Now, of course, our relationship goes far beyond our shared security concerns, and today we will discuss the many other ways in which we work together, particularly to create economic opportunity for Pakistanis. Foreign Minister Khar and I agree that we need to shift our economic relationship from aid to trade and investment. We are working to help Pakistan attract more private sector investment. We hope to finalize a bilateral investment treaty soon. And we've created a Pakistan private investment initiative to help more of Pakistan's small and medium sized companies get access to capital.

Over the past few years, we have seen Pakistan's civilian government begin to put down stronger roots. And if elections proceed as planned next year, it will mark the first time in Pakistan's history that a civilian-led government has served its full term. The United States supports Pakistan's economic development, and we have said many times that we want to see democracy succeed in Pakistan.

We also support Pakistan's sovereignty, but we are clear that all sovereign nations carry certain obligations to protect the human rights of their citizens, to control their territory, to prevent threats to their neighbors and the international community.

So we know that there is still much to be done, but I can assure the people of Pakistan that the United States remains committed to this important relationship and we are confident we can continue to move forward together one step at a time to reach our shared strategic objectives.

Thank you very much.

**Remarks With Tunisian Foreign Minister Rafik Abdesslem Before Their Meeting
September 21, 2012**

SECRETARY CLINTON: Good morning. I am pleased to welcome the Foreign Minister from Tunisia. I'm looking forward to our meeting. We obviously have a great deal to discuss, and I want to thank the Foreign Minister and the Government of Tunisia for their efforts over the last week to help secure our Embassy and the American Cooperative School of Tunis following the violent assaults of last Friday.

We are monitoring events closely today. There is no higher priority for President Obama and myself than the safety of our people. We've taken a number of steps around the world to augment security and to protect our personnel at diplomatic posts. And we are working closely with host governments in this effort.

As I have said before and as is embodied in the Vienna Convention and other international agreements, all governments have the duty, the solemn duty, to defend diplomatic missions. They must be safe and protected places so that governments can exchange views and work on many important issues, and leaders across the world must stand up and be counted in rejecting violence and holding violent actors accountable.

We are working closely with the Government of Tunisia. They have assisted us in enhancing the security of our facilities. We've also discussed with them the imperative of bringing to justice those responsible for these violent attacks. And we have offered and will continue to look for ways that we can assist the new Government of Tunisia in ensuring the rule of law throughout their country, first and foremost for the people of Tunisia themselves. We look forward to continuing to build our new partnership with the Tunisian Government and people. Our relationship is built around the shared principles of all democracies - a commitment to nonviolence, to tolerance, and inclusivity for all people, and to upholding the rule of law.

The Tunisian people have bravely put themselves on the road to democracy. They were the first of the Arab revolutions and they have made important progress in a very short period of time. They have worked too hard and sacrificed too much over too many years to see their progress hijacked or derailed by extremists with their own agenda. And those extremists, not only in

UNCLASSIFIED
U.S. Department of State
Case No. F-2015-04841
Doc No. C05739812
Date: 05/13/2015

STATE DEPT. - PRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMM.
SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT ON SENSITIVE INFORMATION & REDACTIONS. NO FOIA WAIVER.

Tunisia but in too many places around the world, look for opportunities to exploit this current situation or other situations, and all people and leaders must stand against them.

So as the Tunisian Government takes steps to strengthen security and protect the Tunisian people and economy from extremism and violent agendas, the United States stands ready to help. We also are working closely with Tunisia on the broader shared threat of terrorism, including from groups like al-Qaida and its affiliates.

So Minister, please know the United States remains committed to supporting Tunisia as you deal with this current situation, as you continue your democratic transition, and we want to be with you as you confront challenges and help seize opportunities together for the betterment of the future of Tunisia.

UNCLASSIFIED
U.S. Department of State
Case No. F-2015-04841
Doc No. C05739812
Date: 05/13/2015

STATE DEPT. - PRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMM.
SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT ON SENSITIVE INFORMATION & REDACTIONS. NO FOIA WAIVER.

STATE-SCB0045498

INTERVIEW OF SPEECHWRITER #2

BEFORE THE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, OCTOBER 9, 2015

APPEARANCES

FOR THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI

DANA CHIPMAN, *Chief Counsel*
CRAIG MISSAKIAN, *Deputy Chief Counsel*
HEATHER SAWYER, *Minority Chief Counsel*
PETER KENNY, *Minority Senior Counsel*

FOR SPEECHWRITER #2

JONATHAN SU, Esq.
Latham & Watkins LLP
555 11th Street, Suite 1000
Washington, D.C. 20004

FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

* * *

ERIC SNYDER

Mr. Missakian. Let's go on the record then. We are now beginning the transcribed interview of [REDACTED] conducted by the House Select Committee on Benghazi. This interview is being conducted voluntarily as part of the committee's investigation into the attacks on U.S. diplomatic facilities in Benghazi, Libya, and related matters pursuant to House Resolution 567 of the 113th Congress and House Resolution 5 of the 114th Congress.

Mr. [REDACTED], would you please state and spell your name for the record.

Mr. [REDACTED]. It's [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED].

Mr. Missakian. First off, on behalf of the committee, both the majority and minority staff, thank you for being here voluntarily. The committee appreciates your cooperation in our investigation. My name is Craig Missakian. I'm one of the attorneys on the majority staff side. At this point, we traditionally go around the room and have everyone introduce themselves just so you know who's here. So I'll start with Dana Chipman.

Mr. Chipman. I'm Dana Chipman with the committee staff.

Mr. Su. Jonathan Su from Latham & Watkins on behalf of Mr. [REDACTED].

Ms. [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]. I'm an attorney-adviser with the U.S. Department of State.

Mr. Snyder. Eric Snyder, Department of State.

Mr. Kenny. Peter Kenny with the minority staff.

Mr. Missakian. Before we begin questioning Mr. [REDACTED], I'd like to go over some of the ground rules that apply to the interview here today. Generally, the way the questioning proceeds is that a member of the majority staff will ask you questions for up to an hour, and then once I am done, I will hand it over to an attorney for the minority staff, and then we will go back and forth an hour at a time until we finish.

Have you ever had your deposition taken or testified before Congress before?

Mr. [REDACTED]. No, I have not.

Mr. Missakian. This procedure is slightly different than a deposition in that we don't follow the rules of evidence that might apply in a Federal District Court proceeding, for example. In that sense, the witness or your counsel may raise objections for privilege only, subject to review by the chairman of the committee, Congressman Gowdy. If the objections cannot be resolved in this interview, you may be required to return for a deposition or a hearing once those issues have been resolved.

Members of the staff committee are not permitted to raise objections when the other side is asking questions. This session is to begin as unclassified. If we get into any area where you would be required to disclose classified information, please let me know. We are not prepared to do that today, so we will have to make other arrangements if we decide we want to go there. You are welcome to confer with your counsel at any time during the interview; and if for

any reason, if I ask you a question that you don't understand, just tell me I don't understand and I'll do my best to rephrase it for you.

If you'd like to take a break at any point in time, talk to your counsel or for any other reason, just let us know and we'll be happy to accommodate that. As you can see, there is an official court reporter in the room taking down what you say and I say and what everybody else has said during the course of the interview, so the one thing we ask is that to the extent you answer a question, do so verbally rather than a nod of the head, for example, and we do our best not to step on each other's -- me on your answers and you on my questions, just for the sake of the court reporter and the clarity of the record.

You'll understand this as we go along. If there's a question I ask you you don't know the answer to or can't recall, that's fine. Just say you don't know or you don't understand. We don't want you guessing here. To the extent you have a best estimate or something that you've put together based on facts you do know, that's fine. But we just don't want any guesses.

Now, do you understand, Mr. [REDACTED], that you are required to answer questions posed to you by Congress truthfully?

Mr. [REDACTED]. Yes.

Mr. Missakian. Do you also understand that that obligation extends to questions I may ask you as a member of the staff of a congressional committee?

Mr. [REDACTED]. Yes.

Mr. Missakian. Do you also understand that a witness that

knowingly provides false testimony could be subject to criminal prosecution for perjury or for making false statements?

Mr. [REDACTED]. Yes.

Mr. Missakian. Is there any reason why your interview should not go forward today? Are you prepared to give your best answers to the questions?

Mr. [REDACTED]. I am.

Mr. Missakian. That's the extent of our preamble. Mr. Kenny, do you have anything you'd like to add?

Mr. Kenny. Yes, I'd just like to take the opportunity to thank Mr. [REDACTED] for coming in. I'm looking forward to hearing what you have to say today.

Mr. [REDACTED]. Thank you.

Mr. Missakian. Jonathan, would you like to add anything at this point?

Mr. Su. Sure. For the record, Craig, I'll say that Mr. [REDACTED] is here, as you know, appearing voluntarily before the committee. You and I have corresponded before about the scope of the interview, and it relates to the 2012 attacks in Benghazi, Libya, and the immediate days thereafter. You've confirmed that the committee's interest relates solely to this witness's government service and that the committee would advise me if there are any other specific matters of interest; and I've not understood there to be any other matters of interest. We are not getting into any classified information today. But, you know, with those caveats, we're certainly prepared to proceed

if that works for you.

Mr. Missakian. Yes, that does. That is my understanding of the scope of the interview, Mr. [REDACTED]. It may come to pass that an answer you give may open up other areas beyond the scope that your attorney just described. I may ask you questions there. I don't anticipate it, but it may happen. We'll see how it goes.

EXAMINATION

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q When did you begin work at the State Department?

A In early 2009.

Q Do you remember a month?

A I think February 2009.

Q And what were you doing immediately before the State Department?

A I worked for then-Senator Clinton in her Senate office in Washington.

Q Doing what?

A I was her deputy press secretary.

Q How long did you hold that position?

A I was deputy press secretary for all of -- for a year-and-a-half, and was in that office for about 3 years.

Q What did you do for Senator Clinton prior to becoming the deputy press secretary?

A I was the assistant to her chief of staff.

Q So you came to the State Department when Secretary Clinton

came to the State Department?

A Correct.

Q How long did you stay at the State Department?

A For 4 years.

Q Do you recall what month you left?

A I believe it was February of 2013.

Q What have you done since?

A I have continued to work for Secretary Clinton.

Q And what do you do for her?

A I'm her chief speech writer.

Q When did that employment begin?

A Immediately following the State Department, so February of 2013.

Q And what is the entity that employs you, if you know?

A Hillary for America, her presidential campaign.

Q So Hillary for America, I assume that's a corporation?

A That is, well, whatever kind of entity a political presidential campaign is, that is who employs me now.

Q Okay, but you began work for that entity, whatever form that may be in February 2013?

A No, the campaign did not exist then. In February 2013, I went to work for her in her personal office, Secretary Clinton's personal office, and then when the campaign began, which was in this year, I went to work for the campaign.

Q Again, what is your formal title with the campaign?

A Director of speech writing.

Q Do you know the name of the entity that employed you between the time you left the State Department and going to work for the Secretary's presidential campaign?

A I believe it was -- well, it was Secretary Clinton's personal office, and I believe the technical name was something like ZFS Holdings, or something like that.

Q During the time you were at the State Department, what was your job title?

A Speech writer.

Q And where did that position fit in the hierarchy of positions within the speech writing department?

A There was a director of speech writing, and then there were several speech writers. And then there was one or two junior, like a staff assistant, and that was it.

Q Let me ask you, who was the director of speech writing at that point when you first started with the State Department?

A Well, [REDACTED] was when I first started with the State Department.

Q And then it eventually became [REDACTED]?

A Yes.

Q Who were the other speech writers there with you at the time?

A Over the whole 4 years?

Q Over the whole 4 years, yes.

A I might forget somebody, but [REDACTED] for a period of

time, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], for a period of time [REDACTED], [REDACTED], myself, [REDACTED], [REDACTED]. For a very brief period, a gentleman named [REDACTED], I can't remember his last name. The core team that was consistent, [REDACTED] was there the whole time with me and [REDACTED] was there the whole time. He was the staff assistant, and then the rest of the team shifted around a little bit.

Q Have you had any conversations with any of those individuals that you just named about the Benghazi investigation?

A The fact of it, yes. The details of it, no.

Q Okay, who did you have that conversation with, the fact of it?

Mr. Kenny. Can you be specific? Which investigation?

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q That's fair. Any of the investigations that were stood up in the wake of the Benghazi attacks.

A Well, in my capacity as a speech writer, I wrote about the ARB report, and I helped prepare testimony the Secretary gave before the committee. Before which committee, it was the House and Senate Foreign Affairs Committees in 2012. So that was a collaborative process, and so, of course, much discussed.

Q So when you say you wrote material for Secretary Clinton's appearance before Congress, is that when she testified in January 2013?

A Correct. She gave an opening statement which I helped prepare.

Q Who else worked on that opening statement? Do you recall?

A I worked closely with Jake Sullivan, but I don't recall -- and it was a collaborative process, but I don't recall. I couldn't give you a list -- conditional list. I don't recall.

Q Did you take part in any prep sessions with the Secretary?

A I did not.

Q Who did?

A I don't know.

Q Do you know if those even occurred?

A I don't know about that.

Q Other than the conversation you had with Mr. Sullivan in connection with that statement, were there any other conversations you had with anybody about the congressional investigations that were stood up after the attacks?

A Are you referring to this committee?

Q Yes, this committee included.

A Well, I've discussed with my lawyer in preparation for this session.

Mr. Su. He doesn't want -- I'll speak again for Craig when I say he understands that, you know, you and I may have spoken, but he is not -- you know, you can assume he is phrasing his questions other than with your attorney.

Mr. [REDACTED]. I don't recall any conversations like that.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Okay, and that's from, you know, the time it happened up until today, other than your attorney?

A The fact of the committee being in existence has been much in the news, of course, you know, so -- but in terms of the details of it or what we would discuss here, no.

Q And who did you have those conversations with?

A About the fact that it exists?

Q Yes.

A I don't feel I could give you an exhaustive list, but I feel like, you know, sort of a comment, anyone you would discuss current events with, so any colleagues, coworkers, family members, but no one in particular that I could recall.

Q Okay, do you recall any conversations with Secretary Clinton about the investigation?

A No.

Q How about with Jake Sullivan?

A Insofar as Secretary Clinton, we have to prepare for Secretary Clinton's hearing, and I will once again probably help her prepare for that, but otherwise, no.

Q When you say Secretary Clinton's hearing, you're talking about helping her prepare for the upcoming appearance before this Benghazi committee on the 22nd?

A Correct.

Q Okay. Let's go back in time to September 11, 2012. I just want to ask you a few questions about that. Let's start with the protests in Cairo. Well, let me take you even a step back. Were you at the office that day?

A I was.

Q And do you recall when you left the office that day?

A The early evening.

Q Do you recall hearing about the protests in Cairo at any point during the day?

A I do, but I don't recall the details of how or when I heard.

Q What do you recall about how you heard and what you heard and when you heard?

A Yeah, I don't recall when or how I heard.

Q Do you recall generally anything about what you heard about Cairo?

A I recall that there was -- hearing that there was a protest

in Cairo, but I couldn't tell you when or how I heard that.

Q And do you recall how you heard about the attacks in Benghazi later that night?

A Jake Sullivan called me in the evening and told me about it.

Q Do you recall what time?

A I was at dinner, I imagine, so around dinner time.

Q Do you recall that being the first time you heard about the attacks?

A To the best of my recollection.

Q From what we have seen, the attacks began about 3:40 p.m. eastern time, so this would have been before you left the office. Did you hear anything about it before, or if I understood you --

A All these years later, I don't recall hearing about it before that phone call.

Q All right. Let's talk about the phone call again. Mr. Sullivan called you?

A Correct.

Q And how long did that phone conversation last?

A Maybe 5 or 10 minutes.

Q What do you recall being said by you and him during that call?

A He said that I should start working on remarks that the Secretary could give about an incident in our diplomatic post in Benghazi, that we had lost at least one colleague, that we didn't know

yet the status of the Ambassador, that it was a fluid situation, but I should start thinking about, you know, and working on what the Secretary could say.

Q Do you recall him giving you any details about what had occurred?

A Beyond what I just said, I don't recall any others.

Q Was there a plan discussed about how the process would unfold that night?

A In that first conversation, I don't think so.

Q So I gather there was another conversation after the first one?

A I spoke to him several times that evening.

Q By phone or in person?

A Both. We spoke a few more times by phone throughout the evening, and eventually, he came to my apartment in northwest Washington.

Q Let's focus on the phone calls first to begin. Do you recall anything that was said in any of the subsequent calls?

A You know, all these years later, I really can't distinguish now or remember now what was said in which call.

Q All right. That's fair. Let's just talk about what you remember without identifying it with any particular call. So just tell me what was said by each of you in all the calls.

A Well, as I said, he told me that we had lost one of our colleagues and that we didn't know the status of the Ambassador. Later

in the evening, he told me that the Ambassador was dead, but I can't recall whether that was in person or on the phone. And we discussed on the phone and in person, we discussed the tone that the Secretary's remarks should take; the goals that we would have to, in effect, eulogize the colleagues that we had lost; that we would have to demonstrate American resolve; that we would have to speak to a global audience and try to lower the temperature because, of course, it was a period of unrest, not just in Libya, but around the region and the world, and demonstrate, sort of, upholding American values. So we talked about that sort of tone.

Q Were there any other goals for the statement you were working on that you discussed?

A As I said, sort of honoring the colleagues that we lost, determination. I think I would add to the list sort of helping Americans make sense of a dangerous and difficult time, and sending a message to the world about American values, and lowering the temperature in a period of upheaval.

Q When you said helping Americans make sense, what did you mean by that?

A Well, we had lost a department personnel; and the world, there was all this upheaval across the region, and one of the goals of having a Secretary of State talk is so that Americans can understand America's role in the world and what are we doing there and what's the way forward. So any time the Secretary addresses a topic, that's part of it, and this would be no exception.

Q Was there any discussion of telling the American people who was responsible for the attacks in Benghazi and what their motives were?

A In fact, the opposite. What she said was that there would be time, that we were still learning about the motivations and methods of those who did this, and that there would be time for more reflection in the days ahead; so that was not a big focus of the remarks.

Mr. Su. Just so the record is clear, when you say she said that?

Mr. [REDACTED]. In her remarks, the Secretary --

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Maybe my question wasn't clear. Were still talking about conversations you had with Jake Sullivan the night of. Is there any discussion in any of those conversations about telling the American people who was responsible and what their motives were?

A No. And the opposite. We discussed, and we did write for her that sentiment, that we are still learning about the motivations and methods, and that there would be time to get into all that later.

Q I understand that's what was written. But my question was a different one. Hold on. We have to trade off here. I know it was written, but my question is, was it discussed? It sounds like you're saying it wasn't discussed, but then it was. Is there something reflected about it in the statements? I'm just not understanding.

A What I mean by that is insofar as we discussed that it would be appropriate to write that we were still learning, that was discussed, and then we wrote that. Beyond that, no.

Q So again, was there any discussion about telling the

American people who was responsible and what their motives were?

A Beyond that, we were still learning, no.

Q So that was the discussion. You two discussed we don't know what happened, so let's reflect that in the statement?

A I didn't say we don't know. I said we're still learning, but that was reflected.

Q Okay. Then if you were still learning, that suggests that you knew something at the time. What did you know at the time about who was responsible and their motives?

A I can only speak for myself.

Q That's all I'm asking about.

A And, you know, based on the information I had, had a group of heavily-armed militants had attacked our compound, and that's what I understood, and that's what we wrote.

Q Did you have any information beyond that in terms of motive or the identity of the individual attackers?

A No.

Q Where did you get that information?

A I got my information that evening primarily from Jake Sullivan. I was also part of -- I was on various internal State Department email chains, and I brought to it also the sort of context of what had been happening in the world over that day and previous days and weeks.

Q That night, and again, we're just focused on September 11, did you rely on any of the information you read in any newspaper reports

about the incident?

A Can you explain what you mean by "rely"?

Q Well, did any of the information you saw in media reports get reflected in the statement that you prepared?

A I think that, you know, media provided color and context for what was going on in the world, but beyond that, no.

Q I'm sorry. I don't understand what that means.

A I couldn't point to a specific newspaper article that I read that said, that I took facts from, no.

Q Thank you. That's what I meant. You talked about speaking to a global audience. What did you mean by that?

A I mean any time the Secretary of State speaks, the world is listening. We had -- it was a period of unrest across the Middle East, North Africa, and beyond; specifically, in the Muslim world, which was a source of concern; and how to lower that temperature and speak to that situation was an important issue.

Q Was that focused on the video?

A The video was the source of that unrest across the world in that period. And so, you know, lowering the temperature of that situation was one of our goals.

Q Again, focus just on the night of September 11. What information did you have that suggested that the video was, in any way, connected to what occurred in Benghazi?

A I don't recall any specific information.

Q Okay. What general information do you recall?

A I recall that it was the context with which we entered that night was protests across the Muslim world, specifically that day protests in Cairo that had turned violent at our embassy. That was the context with which we approached the situation, and then I couldn't recall for you that night a specific piece of information or not.

Q Just to be clear, my understanding is there was one protest in Cairo and that was it on September 11. Are you aware of others?

A What I'm aware of, this removed, these years later, is that throughout that period there were protests across the Muslim world. I couldn't tell you a chronology of which country and protest happened when, but I recall that we were concerned about it in the days before. We had seen, there was a history of inflammatory, provocative incidents leading to protests and violence, including the burning of a Koran, various incidents in Afghanistan, Danish cartoons. There is a long history there, and one that the State Department had to take seriously and be concerned about, and I could not recall the chronology of which protests happened when, but I recall the general sense that in that period, there was a lot of unrest.

Q You just said that you -- you, the State Department -- were concerned about the video, I gather, in the days before the September 11 attack. Did I hear that correctly?

A My recollection, again, I can't remember the whole chronology of when the protests were happening, but in general, I would say that is my recollection.

Q Do you recall being aware that protests were planned for

the Cairo Embassy prior to them occurring?

A That's nothing I know about.

Q I'm sorry?

A No, I don't recall anything like that.

Q So when you said that you were concerned about the protests, what do you mean?

A Well, there was a protest in Cairo at the Embassy, and that was concerning.

Q Right. I realize that, but you said you had been concerned days before that.

A I think, as I said, I can't reconstruct the entire chronology, but what I remember is in that period being concerned that there was a provocation that could lead to unrest and violence as we had seen in previous incidents.

Q So as you sit here today, you have no recollection of being concerned about protests prior to the protests in Cairo. Is that fair?

A What I can't recall now is whether the chronology of whether there were any or half dozen protests in the days before or whether they were all in the days after. I can't remember now.

Q Okay. So when you said you were concerned days before the Cairo protests, you just were misremembering at that point?

A I'm saying what I remember is that period, being concerned about it.

Q Okay. And I'm asking you, you stated, this is what you said, that you were concerned days before the protest in Cairo.

Ms. Sawyer. Craig, he's verified to you --

Mr. Missakian. Heather, please. We don't do this to you.

Ms. Sawyer. And I rarely do it to you, but you've asked the same question four times.

Mr. Missakian. I know, but I'm entitled to an answer to the question.

Ms. Sawyer. I think he has answered that. Sitting here today, he does not recall whether it was the days preceding or the days following. He just recalls it was generally around that time.

Mr. Missakian. I heard the same testimony you did. I just don't believe he answered my question.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q You said that you were concerned days before the Cairo protests about those protests?

Mr. Kenny. I'm actually not sure -- I mean, we can go back to the tapes. I heard "provocative event."

Mr. Su. Shall we just start over and maybe let him answer the question?

Mr. Missakian. That would be fine.

Mr. [REDACTED]. Do you want to reask the question?

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Right. If I misheard what you testified to earlier, that's fine, just tell me. But I thought I heard you say there were concerns about the protests before they occurred?

A I think, at this removed, I can't remember the chronology

of when -- I do not remember when I first learned of the videos existence, and I do not remember when I first learned of resulting unrest in the Muslim world, and I do not remember when the first protests began across the region. I do remember that in that period around September 11 of 2012, that it was a source of concern for me and for the Department as a whole that there was unrest in the Muslim world relating to this video.

Q So other than the existence of the Cairo protest, were you aware of any other information -- I'm talking again about the night of September 11 -- that connected the video to what occurred in Benghazi?

A I don't recall any specific piece of information.

Q Okay. What do you recall discussing about the video with Jake Sullivan that night, if anything?

A I really don't recall a specific conversation, the details of any specific conversation in that regard.

Q Do you recall generally how you were going to treat the video and any statements that were made about the attack?

A As I said earlier, I think one of our goals was to lower the temperature in the world, in the region, and speak to widespread unrest, but beyond that, I don't recall any specific conversation.

Q It's our understanding, and at some point that night, and I think you said this, that Jake Sullivan came to your apartment?

A That's correct.

Q And there were others there as well?

A Correct.

Q For the record, could you identify those others?

A Yes. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], my speech-writing colleagues.

Q Were you aware that night that the State Department had put out a statement about the attacks in Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q How did you become aware of that statement?

A How did I become aware that it existed?

Q Yes.

A I don't recall.

Q Do you recall if Mr. Sullivan brought a copy of it with him?

A He did not bring a copy with him.

Q Why do you remember that?

A I don't remember him bringing a copy with him.

Q All right. Tell us about what occurred that evening in your apartment?

A So I invited [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] over. Jake had told me we had to start working on remarks for the Secretary, as we have discussed. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] came over, and we started brainstorming what those remarks could include. We brainstormed and discussed for a period of hours. Jake then joined us. And we sort of collectively sort of began drafting and revising and drafting the statement until, you know, sort of the middle of the night.

Q Other than Mr. Sullivan and the information he gave you,

what other sources of information did you have about what had occurred in Benghazi?

A Right. So Jake was the primary source of information that night. I think there were other internal State Department emails that provided additional information. For example, we had to eulogize our colleagues that we lost, and we needed to gather information about their professional history, but I could not otherwise give you details about what those emails were or anything like that, but Jake was the primary source of information.

Q Were you on the ops alert distribution list?

A Yes.

Q To the extent ops alerts were sent out that night, you would have had access to them?

A As far as I know. I don't know whether ops sent out alerts that I didn't get. I frequently got ops alerts, and I believe I got them that night.

Q In the course of your work on the Secretary's remarks, did you speak to anybody in the NEA Bureau?

A I didn't speak to anyone other than, in NEA or on the phone or anything like that. I think that we -- I really can't remember.

Q Did you speak to anybody that night about what had occurred in Benghazi other than Jake Sullivan and the folks that were in the room with you?

A I don't think so. I don't recall having any other conversation.

Q At any point in the evening, was the talk of the video discussed?

A Yes.

Q Okay. What do you recall about those discussions?

A I don't recall details of what we discussed, but I do recall, as I said, that it was in the context that we were approaching the night was there was this, there was unrest across the region and caused by the video, and that was the backdrop to which we were -- that was the context in which we were operating. So that would have been on my mind.

Q What do you mean by that was the context in which you were operating?

A I mean, I don't want to go back over everything I've said before, but --

Q I understand the facts that you were aware of. I understand that there was a protest in Cairo. What I don't understand is what you mean by "this was the context in which we were operating."

A So one of the goals of the Secretary's remarks, in addition to honoring those we lost, would be to try to express American determination in our values and to lower the temperature across the region, because of the -- and the reason we needed to lower the temperature was there was unrest across the region that was a potential threat to American interests.

Q I think I understand. So when you say "context," you didn't mean to suggest that you were attempting to link what had occurred in Cairo with what had occurred in Benghazi?

Mr. Su. Do you understand the question?

Mr. [REDACTED]. I'm not sure I understand the question.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Well, you can make a statement in the context of what was happening in the region, or you could make a statement that suggests that there was a cause-and-effect relationship between what occurred in Cairo, and what occurred in Benghazi.

A Oh, I don't recall any conversation like that.

Mr. Su. Try to ask it this way: Do you recall any conversation that night in which there was an effort to link the issues in Cairo with the issues in Benghazi. Is that a fair --

Mr. Missakian. It's not actually what I'm asking. If you don't understand --

Mr. [REDACTED]. Do you want to clarify?

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q I'm just asking, trying to get clarification on the term "context" and how it's being used here. So do you recall any conversations in which it was discussed that what had occurred in Cairo was somehow linked to what had occurred in Benghazi?

A I don't recall a specific conversation like that.

Q Do you recall having -- generally, that that was a topic of discussion?

A I recall that that was the climate, the context, you know, of the day, but I don't recall a specific conversation, certainly not a specific conversation about cause or linkage, is what you asked. I

don't recall a conversation like that.

Q Let me ask you this then. Did you personally believe that what had occurred in Cairo that day was somehow connected to what had occurred in Benghazi?

A I'm trying to remember. I think that what I recall believing is, based on the information I had at the time, was that both events were playing out against the same backdrop of unrest across the region, and that is as far as my recollection goes of what I believed at the time.

Q Did you understand there to be protests outside the State Department facility in Benghazi prior to the facility attack that night?

A As I recall -- yes. Well, we should clarify that. It was hours after the attack. You know, I was learning information as the night went on, but at some point, I think that was my impression. I couldn't recall for you any details about that.

Q Okay. At some point that was your impression. At some point that night, or at some point in the days and weeks after?

A That night.

Q So was that your impression prior to finishing work on the statement?

A Yes.

Q And do you recall what that impression was based upon?

A I do not.

Q Do you recall if anybody else in the room shared that

impression?

A I wouldn't want to speak for anyone else. I couldn't speak for anyone else.

Q But you don't recall any discussions about it among the group?

A I don't recall any discussion.

Q All right. Tell us about the process of drafting the statement. For example, where did Jake Sullivan come into the process? Did you have an initial draft ready and then he came in and took part in editing? What was the chronology there, if you recall?

A As I said, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and I were there first. We were brainstorming. As part of the brainstorming process, we drafted sentences, paragraphs, moved things around. I don't recall when we had a rough draft, but it was largely a brainstorming process, and I couldn't tell you when Jake arrived or what the status of the draft, if any, was.

Q Do you recall that Mr. Sullivan had suggested mentioning the video in the statement prior to him arriving?

A I don't recall. I'm sorry.

Q Do you recall anything he said on the subject once he got to your apartment?

A I just don't.

Q Do you recall anything anyone else said on the subject of the video during the evening?

A No. All these years later, I don't.

Q And in your mind, and I know you've talked about this, but just for the record -- well, let me do it this way: What I'd like to do is mark as exhibit 1 to this transcribed interview a multi-page document. This is the same document that was marked previously. I've got fewer copies now. We can share.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 1

Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Mr. [REDACTED], this is a multi-page document. The first page is an email at the top from Jake Sullivan to what we believe to be Hillary Clinton, September 24, 2012. The pages after the first email appear to be a compilation of statements made by the Secretary that involve some reference to the attacks in Benghazi. If you could just flip through this and identify if it's here, the statement that you worked on with the group on the evening of September 11 and into the morning of September 12?

A Yes. I don't see page numbers, so this, at the bottom corner is says State SEB0045476, remarks on the deaths of American personnel in Benghazi, Libya, September 12, 2012.

Q If you could, just take your attorney's pen and mark your initials next to the statement so the record is clear that that's the statement we're referring to.

Mr. Su. So for the record, he's marked that statement on that particular Bates number for the sole purpose of identifying the remarks that he participated in developing the night of September 11.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Is that accurate?

A It is.

Q So let's flip to the second page in that series, fifth paragraph down, the paragraph that begins "There will be more time later to reflect." That paragraph. Do you see it?

A I do.

Q And the third sentence says, "We are working to determine the precise motivations and methods of those who carried out this assault." And then it continues, "Some have sought to justify this vicious behavior along with protests that took place at our Embassy in Cairo yesterday as a response to inflammatory material posted on the Internet." Do you see that sentence?

A I do.

Q Okay. What was the purpose for including that sentence in this statement?

A You read two sentences. Which one are you asking me about?

Q Thank you. What was the purpose for including the two sentences in the statement?

Mr. Su. And he is, of course, asking from your point of view, if you recall.

Mr. [REDACTED]. Right. You know, as I said earlier, the goals of our statement were to honor those who fell, to address the unrest in the region, to express American determination and adherence to our values. So these sentences were included to advance those goals, but

I couldn't tell you more about those specific sentences.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q So at some point that evening, a draft of the statement was completed; and I understand that it was then circulated for review. Did you take part in that process of circulating the statement to others for review?

A Could you clarify what you mean by "taking part"?

Q For example, if [REDACTED] previously stated that she took the draft statement and sent it by email to others to review -- she couldn't remember who, but she recalled sending that -- possibly some of those individuals who received it may have sent comments back, and there may have been a back and forth about changes to the draft you all had prepared. So that's what I mean. Did you take part in the process of reviewing the statement that was prepared?

A Got it. In the morning I went over our draft with Jake again, and made edits in the morning.

Q And were the edits that were made based on conversations with anybody, or was it you woke up and looked at it and thought it could be said better?

A I did not have any other conversations with others. My understanding is that Jake did, but I don't know the details of those conversations.

Q Okay. Did he discuss those conversations with you?

A He said, you know, we have to keep making edits. He didn't tell me the substance of the conversations he had had, just that there

were more edits to make.

Q Okay. What kind of edits?

A I can't, you know, all these years later, tell you which sentences we changed, but the only thing that I remember is, I think the formulation "heavily-armed militants" we added that morning in his office. But I could not beyond that give you chapter and verse about what we changed.

Q So specifically, what line and paragraph are you referring to with that change? Do you recall?

A The second sentence of the statement.

Q So again, just so the record is clear, if you could borrow your attorney's pen and put brackets around the language that you recall being added the next morning.

A I have done so.

Q Thank you. Do you recall how that sentence read the night before?

A I do not.

Q Do you recall why that change was made?

A I do not.

Q What, if anything, did Mr. Sullivan say about why that change should be made?

A I don't recall. I don't recall the conversation. That's the only phrase that stuck in my memory as having been added that morning, but I don't recall why or how.

Q Why is it, do you think, you recall that particular change?

A I couldn't say.

Q Is that a term that you had used before, the term "heavily-armed militants"?

A That I had used before?

Q Yeah.

A I don't recall.

Q Is that language you believe that he suggested?

A Yes.

Q Did you have the sense that this change was a result of conversations he had had with other people within the State Department?

A We would have to ask him. He said, Here are the edits I want to make, and we made them.

Q And beyond that one, you can't recall any others?

A No.

Q Do you recall about what time that change was made? Obviously, it was before the remarks were given.

A Right. I think around 8 a.m., but I can't be sure.

Q Now if you could, flip to the second page. This is a page marked 45475 at the bottom.

A Yes.

Q There's a statement at the top, the title is "Statement on the Attack in Benghazi." The date is September 11, 2012. My understanding is this statement was issued by the State Department at 10 p.m. on September 11.

A Okay.

Q Prior to today, have you seen this statement?

A Yes.

Q When did you see it?

A I saw it when it came out, so around 10 o'clock.

Q So at 10 o'clock that night. I gather at that point you were at your apartment working on the statement?

A Yes.

Q Did you have any part in drafting the statement?

A You know, I really don't remember.

Q Do you recall this statement being discussed in the context of what would be written in the statement you did work on?

A What I recall about this is that it says we have confirmed that one of our State Department officers was killed. What I recall is we didn't know what had happened to Chris Stevens. And I recall knowing that the statement, this paper statement, would address the one person lost because we didn't know about what was the status of the second person. That's what I recall about it.

Q Okay. But as far as you sit here today, you had no part in the drafting or discussion about content?

A I'm not saying I didn't. I just don't recall.

Q Back to the review process of the statement that you did participate in. Do you recall anything about that other than your discussions with Mr. Sullivan the next morning?

A That's all I recall.

Q All right. What I'd now like to do is go through the other

statements in this compilation and ask you if you had any part in drafting them. So I think we can just go page by page here. We have already obviously done the two on the second page. I take that back. Let's go to the second one on the second page, "Statement on the Death of American Personnel in Benghazi, Libya." Did you take part in drafting that statement?

A I believe I did.

Q Okay. Let's skip ahead to the page marked 45478. Do you recall taking part in drafting that statement?

A Yes, I did.

Q Do you recall having any conversations with anybody about the content of this statement?

A Yes. I recall doing some research, I could not tell you with whom or where, to get the biographical information. And I recall asking for the appropriate way to refer to the employment status of these two men.

Q Let's flip to the next one. This is now the Remarks of the Opening Plenary of the U.S.-Morocco Strategic Dialogue, dated September 13, 2012. Did you take part in drafting any portion of this statement?

A I don't believe that I worked on this one.

Q Just generally, at any point during the week, that week, meaning September 11, all the way to the weekend, do you recall receiving any information about the identity of the attackers in Benghazi or their motivations?

Mr. [REDACTED]. You say receive information?

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Yeah.

A No. I don't recall. I don't recall receiving information.

Q Do you recall receiving any classified briefings or classified intelligence reports during that week?

A No.

Q Is that something you normally would have received and reviewed?

A No.

Q All right. Let's keep going. Now we're at page 45482. The "Remarks at Reception Marking," if you can help me pronounce it.

A "Eid ul-Fitr."

Q Also dated September 13, 2012. Did you have any part in drafting any of the Secretary's remarks that are reflected here?

A I don't believe I had the pen on this one.

Q Okay. Let's flip forward then to page marked 45485. The title here, "Remarks at the Transfer of Remains Ceremony to Honor Those Lost in Attacks in Benghazi, Libya," now dated September 14, 2012. What role, if any, did you play --

A I did here. I did write these ones.

Q Did you have any discussions with anybody on the topic of how the identity of the attackers or their motive should be reflected in these remarks or were not reflected?

A I don't recall -- I don't recall any conversation like that.

Q Do you know one way or another whether or not Secretary Clinton herself reviewed the statement that you prepared on the night of September 11 before delivering it?

A Yes, she read it.

Q Okay. And how do you know that? Were you present?

A Yes.

Q Tell us about that. What happened?

A It was when we had a final draft, we printed it, handed it to her, she read it quietly, took a moment, and then walked out and delivered it.

Q All right. Do you know if she had had any input prior to that reading?

A I did not have any conversations with her. I don't know beyond that.

Q Do you know if Cheryl Mills had any input?

A I didn't have any conversations with her, and I don't know beyond that.

Q Please flip to page marked 45490. These are "Remarks With Indonesian Foreign Minister," dated September 20, 2012. Did you have any role in drafting any portion of these remarks?

A I honestly don't remember.

Q Okay. Let's flip to, now page 45495. These are "Remarks With Pakistani Foreign Minister," now dated September 21, 2012.

A I don't recall whether I wrote them or not.

Q Now, with regard to these remarks, in paragraph 5, we now see the word "terrorist attack" used and the word "terrorist." I read --

A I see it.

Q I read the other statements, and to my reading, those terms were not used prior to this statement on the 21st. I'm just going based on what's in this compilation.

Do you recall any discussions with regard to whether or not to use the word "terrorist" in connection with the Benghazi attacks at any point in time?

A I remember the President using the phrase "It was an act of terror" on the 12th, but I don't remember any internal conversation about the phrasing that we would use in those days.

Q Is that what you recall about the President's remarks, that he called it -- called it an act of terror?

A That's what I recall.

Q Okay. Have you read those statements recently?

A No.

Q So with regard to the use by the Secretary, are you suggesting that the word now appears in here because of the President's remarks?

A I'm not --

Q Why were you connecting it?

A I'm not suggesting that. I'm simply suggesting that I remember -- I remember him using that phrase. I do not remember -- I guess, I mention that because you asked about the word "terrorist." I do not remember any internal conversation about that word.

Q Do you remember any internal conversations about the use of that word divorced from what occurred in Benghazi just in general?

A You mean in other situations?

Q Sure, just in general in the State Department. Is there a word that could be used only in certain context, anything like that?

A No, it was used pretty interchangeably with "violent extremist" or other similar phrasing, so no, I don't remember it being, you know, not any particular conversation like that.

Q Okay. Could we go off the record for a second?

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Let's go back on the record.

Mr. [REDACTED], now going beyond December 11 up to that following Sunday when Ambassador Rice appeared on the talk shows. Do you recall -- what do you recall, if anything, about discussing the role of the video in the attacks in Benghazi, whether there was a protest in Benghazi prior to the attack? Do you recall anything on those topics?

A In relation to Susan Rice?

Q No, not in relation to Susan Rice. I just use that as an

end point in the discussion. Just that week.

A Would you ask it again then?

Q Sure.

A I got distracted by the Susan Rice part.

Q Right. In the period between the morning of September 12th and Sunday, September 16th, do you recall taking part in any discussions where the topic of discussion was, in whole or in part, whether the video was connected to the attacks in Benghazi or whether there was a protest in Benghazi prior to the attacks?

A I really don't. I really do not remember a conversation like that.

Q Do you recall ever discussing what had occurred in Benghazi with anybody in the NEA bureau?

A In that time period?

Q Yes.

A I do not recall discussing -- if your question is -- I think how you put it was -- will you just say again whether was the motivations or what was the question?

Q Sure. Whether the video had any connection to what occurred in Benghazi or whether there was a protest in Benghazi prior to the attacks.

A I did not discuss with anyone in any -- I don't remember discussing with anyone in NEA those questions.

Q Now, at some point, did you come to learn that there was not, in fact, a protest that preceded the attacks in Benghazi?

A No, I never came to learn that, as far as I recall.

Q Okay. So my telling you that here today is the first time you are hearing that or learning that?

A I am aware of the controversy, and I'm aware -- I certainly recall hearing that topic hotly debated. I myself don't have independent knowledge and not sure. You know, at this point, I couldn't tell you anything beyond what's, you know, in the public record.

Q Okay. So just so I understand, at no point while you were employed at the State Department did you come to learn that there was no protest?

A Oh, no, no. Not that I recall.

Q Do you recall watching Ambassador Rice make her appearances on the Sunday talk shows?

A I don't believe I did watch that.

Q Afterwards, did you read any transcripts of her statements?

A I don't believe I read a -- ever read a full transcript of the interview. As a consumer of news, I was aware, you know, especially when it became a controversy, I was aware of that, and I, you know, certainly recall now I knew that she spoke to it.

Q So you do recall becoming aware of the controversy --

A Yes.

Q -- surrounding her remarks?

A Yes.

Q Again, just for the sake of the court reporter, one at a

time.

How did you become aware of that controversy?

A As I said, I'm a consumer of news and a follower of current events. Beyond that, I couldn't recall specifically where I read or learned about that controversy.

Q Do you recall having any discussions about it with your State Department colleagues?

A No, I do not.

Q What do you recall of the nature of the controversy to be?

A Well, from this removed, I recall there being public controversy over the word "spontaneous," and the -- I guess the word "protest," and I honestly don't remember the full extent of what she said beyond that, but I remember there being a controversy.

Q Okay. Was that a subject that was covered in preparing Secretary Clinton to appear before Congress in January 2013?

A I can only speak to my role, which was in helping with the opening statement, and I don't -- I have not gone back to review that, and I do not recall her -- it being in the opening statement, and I don't recall discussing it. But again, I haven't reviewed it, so I can't be sure.

Q Do you recall any discussions concerning the video, concerning the protest, concerning the motive of the attackers, anything like that in the context of preparing that statement for Congress?

A No, I don't recall that aspect of it.

Q Do you recall at all the administration's version of events changing over time?

Mr. Su. So that's a bit of a broad question. I'm not sure how he -- I mean --

Mr. Missakian. Why don't we give him a chance.

Mr. Su. Okay.

Mr. [REDACTED]. Do I recall the administration's version of the events changing over time, that's the question?

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Yes.

A I mean, I can really only speak for, you know -- well, I guess are you asking me like a consumer of news or as, like, in my role at the State Department?

Q We're just talking about you. I can get to how, you know, you learned of it later, but I'm just asking you, if you became aware of it?

Mr. Su. Well, Craig, I mean, I don't know how he answers that question, and I'll just say it again, I mean, is he aware of the -- in what capacity, do you have a specific point of reference? I'm just not sure how he -- and that assumes a fact that I'm not sure he's agreed to, which is that the administration did change positions, so, you know, if you ask a question, he'll answer it.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q That's one way to answer it. You can say, "Mr. Missakian, I'm not aware of any change in the administration's version of what

occurred in Benghazi." Is that your testimony here today?

A No. I mean, I'm -- you know, as I recall -- I mean, the Secretary said on the 12th, we are learning about the motivations and methods of what -- of the attackers here, and I believe that to be true and that, you know, I didn't -- I was not involved in this, but I believe the senior officials to have -- continue to do their best to fill in the information with the picture of the information they had, but I only say that as a consumer of news, and from years later trying to remember, you know, what was said when in public, but I can't really say much more than that.

Q Okay. So I just want to understand. Are you aware that the administration's version of events changed over time? And that's a simple yes-or-no question. If you're not aware of it, please say it, and we'll move on.

A I am aware that the administration -- you know, that more was learned over time, but that's -- beyond that, I really -- I'm not aware of who learned what when. I just don't know.

Q Do you recall having any conversations with anybody about anything Susan Rice said on the Sunday talk shows?

A No.

Q Do you recall having any conversations with anybody about how to -- I'll withdraw that question. Did Susan Rice's comments factor in at all in the statements the Secretary was making about the Benghazi attacks?

A Not that I worked on, not that I know of.

Q Thank you. I don't have any further questions.

A Thank you.

Ms. Sawyer. I think, if you'd just give us a sec to switch seats, we can do it, and make sure everyone has water and what else they need, and I don't know that we need a lengthy break or anything, unless you are going to --

Mr. Su. We are ready.

Ms. Sawyer. Good.

Mr. Kenny. Mr. [REDACTED], you all set?

Mr. [REDACTED]. I am.

Mr. Kenny. You guys good? We'll go back on the record. The time now reads 3:13. This will begin the majority's portion of the questioning, and --

Mr. Chipman. Minority's.

Mr. Kenny. I'm sorry. For one, I could strike that. The minority's questioning. Thank you for the clarification.

EXAMINATION

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Mr. [REDACTED], just on behalf of Ranking Member Cummings and all the Democrat members, we would like to take the opportunity to thank you for appearing here today, and extend the remarks that were issued to you earlier. We know that the attacks have taken a toll on many in the Department and those who view the Department as a family, and so obviously, we want to try to be as respectful as possible, while at the same time, gathering information the committee deems is

necessary in order to conclude its investigation.

Just take a quick moment to reintroduce myself. My name is Peter Kenny. I'm with the minority staff. I'm joined here by chief counsel, Heather Sawyer. And again, we just appreciate your willingness to be here today. Thank you.

A Thank you.

Q I'd like to pick up where we left in the last round, where we were walking through a series of statements that the Secretary had issued. They're either statements, public remarks, speeches. This is exhibit 1. You were asked to comment or describe your participation in a series of -- the succession of these. And for a number of these, I had in my notes that you couldn't recall whether you participated, or you couldn't recall the extent to which you may have made specific edits and specific line edits to the speeches, to the remarks.

And I was hoping just to get your sense, you know, we are 3 years removed now from the events in question, and I was just wondering whether -- the passage of time, whether you could just provide for us, generally, your sense of your recollection of those specific edits and of the night in general, just based on the passage of time?

A Are you asking about the edits to the statement on the morning of September 12th?

Q So for any of these where you've identified that you did participate, and you were asked about specific edits you may have had, I thought I recall you indicating that you didn't have specific recollection about some of those, and so my question to you is just,

I thought I'd heard that you referenced back that this has now been 3 years, and so my question to you is whether the passage of time, how that's affected your ability to recollect, with specificity, these edits you've been asked about?

A Oh, yes. Well, it has been 3 years. I wrote a lot of words in this job. These are some of them. And I cannot now, you know -- there are certain phrases that I remember having worked on, but I can't, you know, all these years later, you know, really go through and say, well, this edit happened for this reason or not. It's just beyond my memory.

Q No, thank you. That's helpful. You know, as we understand it, the Secretary operates in a very public role as the face for the administration and implementer of our foreign policy. And so our understanding is also that she or he would also issue a number of statements or remarks frequently. Is that accurate?

A Absolutely.

Q Okay. And then over the course of your tenure, you said you were at the State Department for 4 years, I believe?

A Correct.

Q And a speech writer for that entire period?

A Yes. I spent 2 years in the Office of Strategic Communications in the Bureau of Public Affairs, and 2 years in the speech writing office of Policy Planning, but my responsibilities all 4 years were as a speech writer to the Secretary.

Q Okay. And during your 4 years as a speech writer, whether

servicing in one office or the other, do you have any recollection of how many speeches or statements you may have worked on, you may have prepared yourself?

A Gosh, a lot. I couldn't give you a number, but you are correct. She -- the Secretary spoke frequently, issued many paper statements also, and I had a hand in many of them, and so I couldn't begin to count, actually, but a lot.

Q Would you say dozens?

A Hundreds. Several each week.

Q And sitting here today, if I were to show you the final version of either a statement or a prepared speech, do you think you'd be able to share with us what specific edits or what that editing process was like for that speech, just as a general matter?

A Some are more memorable than others, but it's been so many years that it's very difficult to go back and reconstruct how, you know, specifically step by step how a speech gets edited, especially when you've written so many and it's been so many years.

Q When you say some may be more memorable than others, would you count these types of statements or speeches in that regard?

A I would say that the remarks of September 12th were memorable, important, but what I also said it was, which is it has been 3 years, and I don't remember all the specifics of which edit, of each edit.

Q Okay. Thank you. Just roughly, briefly, before we move on, and I know that there was a question about the word "context" in

the last hour.

A Yeah.

Q Context is something that we generally find to be helpful in understanding the events and circumstances surrounding the events of the attacks, as well as the administration's response. And I was hoping whether you could help us understand what sorts or types of challenges you, in the speech writing office, and your colleagues in the speech writing office, were facing during this period, and by this period, I mean from when you learned of the attacks through the last of the remarks or speeches that you were shown in exhibit 1?

A Well, you know, as I said earlier, you know, one of the -- part of the context here was unrest across the Middle East, North Africa, and beyond, protests in many countries sparked by an inflammatory video. There was a scary situation in Tunisia at our embassy. There was a scary situation in Sudan. There were protests in many countries.

Q Uh-huh.

A Part of my job as a speech writer in that period was to help craft remarks for the Secretary that would address that instability, lower the temperature, deny oxygen to -- or limit the oxygen to these issues, not inflame the situation more, and as I said, to express American determination and our values.

Q You used a phrase just a moment ago about not giving oxygen, or denying oxygen to these events. Could you just elaborate on what you mean by that?

A I just mean you have to decide, when you're speaking to a global audience, and for me, as a speech writer, as I'm helping prepare remarks for a global audience, the tone that you're going to take, which issues you're going to address and with which prominence, and sometimes it is helpful to talk about -- to take on a problem and sort of work your way through it, and sometimes doing that and talking a lot about an issue that's causing, say, unrest will just draw more attention to it and cause more unrest, and so you have to try to calibrate and balance in your public remarks, in your public presentation, the right way to do that to advance U.S. interests and values around the world, and so that's what I mean by oxygen.

Sometimes, you know, the job of the speech writer and communications, in general, you know, in that global setting, is to strike that right balance on sort of behalf of American interests.

Q Thank you. That's helpful. In the last round, you had also indicated, or you had referenced the burning of a Koran before, and what specifically were you referring to?

A I recall an incident in -- there was a pastor in Florida who threatened to burn a Koran and drew worldwide notice, and then I think eventually did. And also, through worldwide notice, these were issues, you know, of concern, for me at least.

Q And was that something that you had specifically dealt with in your capacity as a speech writer at the Department?

A I don't recall now in this room whether I ever wrote something about that, but I remember being aware and concerned about

it.

Q You were asked about your general awareness of when a YouTube video may have begun circulated, or first been posted onto YouTube as well as the effect that that may have on the region. I would just like to ask, were you aware -- I just want to drill down a little bit -- that the video had been posted on YouTube that summer? Was that something that you're aware of?

A You know, as I said earlier, I can't remember now the chronology of when I became aware of the video's existence, when I became aware that it was causing unrest in the region, and when various protests started across the region. I am -- what I recall now is that in that period, there -- that it was causing significant unrest around the world. That's what I remember.

Q I would like to shift to your recollection of the drafting process on the night of the 11th and the morning -- into the early morning of the 12th. You described a drafting session that occurred, took place at your residence, and I recall you were being asked a specific question about press reporting that night, and I wanted to reconcile that, because I thought I later heard you say that you were a consumer of the press. And I believe I had my notes that you didn't have a specific recollection of a specific news report from that night, but do you remember generally being aware of press reporting on the night of the attacks?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what's the basis for that recollection? Do you

recall there perhaps being a television on in the background that news alerts would have been coming into somebody's inbox?

A I do not recall a television being on, but -- and I do not recall a specific news story that I would have -- that I read that night, but I do recall being on the Internet, you know, reading -- I don't recall any specifics, but I do recall sort of there is an event unfolding, I was interested to know what the -- what was in the public domain, what are people saying about it. That is, of course, if you're a speech writer, that's important context to know, what is the climate in which you're writing.

Q So if I understand you correctly, it sounds like in order to do your job effectively, you need to be reading for this.

A Yes, yes.

Q Okay. And so your understanding is you would have then been reading the news; you just don't have a specific recollection?

A I do not have a specific recollection of I read this story, I read that story.

Q If you could take a look at -- referring back to exhibit 1. So these are the remarks, and I just -- just so the record is completely clear, these are the remarks that I believe you indicated that you had participated in the drafting of at your residence, and these are the same remarks that the Secretary then delivered on camera?

A The ones marked, "Remarks on the Death of American Personnel in Benghazi, Libya, September 12th, 2012."

Q Okay. And to the extent that there are two statements that

preceded here in this chronology, which was prepared by [REDACTED], it appears, was your understanding that there had been two public statements that had been issued prior to the delivery of these remarks?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

A These are paper statements. The first -- the remarks on the 12th are the ones that she delivered in person.

Q And in the last round, you described what you viewed as the purpose of the goals that these remarks -- that these remarks would serve. I guess, well, let me ask my question this way: Was one of the purposes to deliver a definitive accounting of the attacks that took place that night?

A No.

Q To provide every single detail about the attacks?

A No.

Q Okay. And to the extent that you would include factual information about the attacks, how did you decide which information you should include?

A It's a good question. I think it is definitely true, as just discussed, that the goal was not to provide a definitive accounting of the facts, and, you know, as she said, we were still -- there would be time to reflect later and that we were still learning about the motivations and methods.

So, I think we were -- that was our -- that was our guide. We -- and I can't recall conversations about specifically put this fact

in, don't put this fact in, but I do recall that sentiment, that we didn't need to provide a definitive accounting of the facts, and that that was not the goal of this statement, and that we -- there would be time to reflect later and that we were still learning about motivations and methods.

So we said all that, and beyond that, I can't recall, you know, the specific in-and-out discussion.

Q And in a statement like this, you know, you were directed to the fifth paragraph on the second page. It appears to be towards the bottom of the speech. As a speech writer, would you generally tend to, when you wrote a speech for the Secretary to deliver, put the most important information up front for the Secretary to deliver? In other words, is there some meaning to how information is presented in a speech in the order in which it's presented?

A I wouldn't want to draw too broad a generalization about that. As a -- different speeches have different structure.

Q What about here? And the reason I'm asking, the very first paragraph, the first two sentences indicate that there was an attack, and then that second sentence, which you were asked about in the previous round reads, quote, "Heavily armed militants assaulted the compound and set fires to our buildings," close quote. And you know, to us, our reading, that appears to be a fairly strong statement that's up front, and I just was trying to get your sense, or your reaction, to why language like that would be inserted not only in the speech, but at the beginning, very beginning of the speech?

A So, I think the balance that as a speech writer, I would try to strike in this situation is between what we just said, which is the goal of this speech is not -- or these remarks are not to provide a definitive factual record.

The goals are, as I said earlier, to honor those who fell, to express American determination and values, to lower the temperature around the world, and speak to a global audience, balanced against the need that the audience needs to know what she's talking about. So the audience was waking up in the morning, and the Secretary is giving remarks. The first two sentences reflect, you don't know what we're talking about, we're telling you what we're talking about, but beyond that, I think, you know, that's the balance to strike.

Q Okay. And -- so I would like to direct your attention now to the language that you referred to in the last hour, the sentence reads, quote, "Some have sought to justify this vicious behavior along with the protest that took place at our embassy in Cairo yesterday as a response to inflammatory material posted on the Internet," close quote.

And you've been asked your opinions, your beliefs about a protest, about a video, about whether -- the use of the word "terrorism," your recollection of that. And my question to you is, this sentence here, which is substantially similar to the sentence that appears in the very first public statement, did you view that as in competition with the first or second sentence of the remarks?

Mr. [REDACTED]. Not at all.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Okay. So it was accurate, or did you believe it to be accurate both that this first, I'm sorry, the second sentence, "Heavily-armed militants assaulted the compound and set fire to our buildings, and some have sought to justify this vicious behavior as a response to inflammatory materials on the Internet." You viewed both of those as accurate at the time?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

Ms. Sawyer. Did you view them in any way as mutually exclusive?

Mr. [REDACTED]. No. I didn't then and I don't now. I think that, you know, what I believed then is what the Secretary said, which is we were still learning about the motivations and methods. And I don't today, sitting here, claim to have any, you know, perfect knowledge about motivations of every person who participated in that attack. But there doesn't seem to me today to be any contradiction between some people -- some people being motivated having multiple motivations, or some being motivated by one thing and another by another thing. I don't see any contradiction between -- and certainly not between the fact that some have sought to justify the suspicious behavior with the idea that there were heavily-armed militants there.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q So you've been asked a little bit about specific underlying information to support or undergird your beliefs. And I'd just like to ask, at the time, do you recall having some sort of evidentiary basis in order to confirm that those statements were accurate?

A I relied primarily for information on Jake Sullivan. And was guided by the best information I had at the time.

Q And would that have been inappropriate in these circumstances? Can you just describe for us, for instance, the relationship between the speech writing team and Jake Sullivan, who I understand was the deputy chief of staff and later became also the director for policy planning.

A And by this point was director of policy planning.

He was our boss. The speech writing staff was housed in the Office of Policy Planning. Jake was the director of policy planning. He was very hands-on in the speech writing process. He was our primary conduit for guidance on policy and what was the Secretary's -- what the Secretary wanted to say at any given day. And so it was both appropriate and not unusual that I would rely on a him as my primary source of information.

Q And with specific respect to these remarks which were delivered in the treaty room on September 12, do you recall anyone either in your original drafting session or later raising concerns that any of the information here or any proposed edits were inaccurate?

A No. I do not recall anything like that.

Q Okay. And just to close out, this speech we had talked about some of the goals that you believed were your guiding principles for drafting this speech. And I'd just like to ask: Was it your opinion at the time that you felt that these remarks fulfilled those goals?

A Yes.

Q And just to follow up a little bit with that, and you may have already answered this question, but the specific line "some have sought to justify," if you've already explained it, I apologize. But explain to us how that line fit in with the overall goals that you described earlier?

A One of the goals that I mentioned for these remarks was to address a global audience and lower the temperature in a period of unrest across North Africa, the Middle East, and the Muslim world. That unrest was related to the inflammatory video. And so this sentence related to that goal.

I also mentioned the goal of being -- reaffirming American values in the world. And I think that this part of the speech was about that as well.

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q So in terms of you said sometimes there's a balance between fighting, not with specific regard to this speech, but overall, when to mention something in order to lower the temperature, and when not to mention in order to deny -- I think the phrase you used was deny oxygen to the issue?

A Right.

Q I don't know if there was concrete -- I'm not asking you necessarily whether you recall the concrete discussions about that balance here, but was there a sense that it was more important to mention it than to deny it, oxygen at this point in time, by refusing to mention it?

A I think that -- and, again, I don't recall the specific conversations that night about this. But I think where we ended up reflected our best judgment about that balance.

Q And that could have been a decision that changed over time, that balance and whether it was -- as the days progressed --

A Absolutely.

Q -- as to whether --

A We were dealing with -- over the course of the following days and weeks, we were dealing with an unfolding situation. As I said, there were incidents at other embassies in other countries, in Tunisia and Sudan and elsewhere. It was an ongoing global crisis. And as I worked on remarks throughout the following days and weeks, that was an ongoing discussion about how best to address that situation.

Q So a decision as to whether or not to mention, for example, the issues around the video in a particular speech versus deciding not to mention it, from your perspective, was driven by the factors that you've articulated here?

A Absolutely.

Q Were they ever driven by a desire to downplay the potential

role of extremists or terrorists with particular regard to Benghazi, because that's the one that the accusation has been made -- the calculus as to when to talk about the video and when not, were they ever driven by a desire to downplay the role of terrorists?

A No.

Q To deny that there might have been terrorists involved in the attack?

A No. I was never part of a conversation like that. I certainly don't recall any, that being something that was discussed.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q I'd like to move forward. And I'll direct your attention to -- it's Bates number SCB -- or document number SCB0045485. This is the September 14 ramp ceremony remarks.

A Yes.

Q And I believe you indicated that you had drafted this speech. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And could you just describe for us what the goals of this speech were. You mentioned that previously with the treaty room remarks, could you just describe generally what this speech was to accomplish?

A Sure. The goals were similar. But in this case, overwhelmingly, the goal was to honor those we had lost. Secondly, as with the previous remarks, we were still speaking to a global audience. We were speaking in the middle of an ongoing crisis, a period

of instability. So the primary goal was to honor those we lost. Secondary goal was to address that global audience and the ongoing events in the region and beyond.

Q And to your knowledge, do you recall whether it was important for the Secretary to attend this event?

A Yes. I mean, you know, it depends based on whose judgement. I guess if you are asking my judgment, I thought it was --

Q Please.

A -- important that she go. We had lost colleagues, and it was -- I went, and it was -- and a lot of other people did too. And it was an important moment.

Q I'd like to direct your attention on the second page about four paragraphs in. And this paragraph, the last sentence reads, quote, "The president of the Palestinian Authority who worked closely with Chris when he served in Jerusalem sent me a letter remembering his energy and integrity, and deploring, and I quote, 'an act of ugly terror,' close quote. Many others from across the Middle East and North America have offered similar sentiments," closed quote.

A North Africa.

Q North Africa. I apologize. "Have offered similar sentiments," close quote. It appears here that the Secretary, although not in her direct voice, refers to an act of ugly terror. Is that your understanding as well?

A Yes.

Q And do you recall whether that specific phrase was included

in the first draft of the speech that you prepared?

A Gosh. I can't remember the draft, how many -- whether this went through multiple -- I mean, I don't remember the first draft, so I couldn't say.

Q Do you remember any concern being raised about including that specific phrase?

A No. I do not recall any concern about that.

Q In the last round you were asked about the use of the term "terrorist," and you had mentioned, or indicated that you viewed that term somewhat interchangeably, I believe, with "extremists." Is that --

A Violent extremists.

Q -- is that right? Violent extremists.

A It was a common phrase in our lexicon.

Q Okay. Thank you. So you were asked about your awareness of the controversy surrounding what Ambassador Rice had said on the five Sunday talk shows September 16. There also has been some public controversy over some of the Secretary's remarks. And I would just would like to begin by asking how you feel when you see or read those criticisms. And they may be particular statements or remarks that you had drafted. How do you feel when you see criticisms that they may be inaccurate or that were said they were intentionally inaccurate?

A How I feel now today?

Q Sure.

A Are you -- well, I think as I said earlier, I don't see any

contradiction between what was -- you know, what we wrote in those remarks and what she said that this was an ugly act of terror, that there were heavily-armed militants, that there were some who sought to justify events because of an inflammatory video. I don't see any contradiction there. I feel proud of the remarks we wrote and the Secretary's leadership during a difficult time. Feel proud of my colleagues who pulled together, you know, after they lost friends and colleagues. And, you know, that's the -- that's -- when I look back, that's what I remember.

Q So sitting here today, you're proud of the work that you accomplished?

A Absolutely.

Q Okay. It's further been alleged the administration created a false narrative with respect to the YouTube video that caused so much unrest, and insinuating that it played a direct role in the attack. And, again, I'd just like to ask for your response to that allegation and your thought on whether the administration created a false narrative?

A I never heard anyone talk about anything like that. I never heard anyone talk about this in the context of politics. I never heard anyone say let's do anything other than be guided by the best information we have, and serve the American people the best we can. And so, no, I think that's way off base.

Q And just to follow up on that, anyone else you worked with on this speech, any speech or any statement that was related to the

Benghazi attacks, are you aware of anybody made any changes that were known at that time to be false?

A Never. I am not aware of any -- I mean, I can only speak for myself. But I certainly didn't do that. And I'm not aware of anyone else doing that either.

Q Okay. And so no one ever pressured you to make changes to any statement or speech about the Benghazi attacks that you believe to be false?

A Absolutely not.

Q And no one told you that they had been pressured to make changes that they knew were false?

A Absolutely not.

Q Okay. So at this point, we're going to shift gears a little bit, and in moving to this next section, I'll just preface by saying that this is the eighth Congressional investigation into the Benghazi attacks. And we feel certainly that it's our duty to ensure that it's the last. And in order to do that, we've been asking every witness about a series of public allegations that have been made since the attacks. It's our understanding that even where they have been answered by other investigations, our colleagues in the majority are pursuing them. And that's why we continue to ask about them. While anyone can speculate about the Benghazi attacks, and plenty of people have, only a limited universe of people have actual knowledge or evidence of what happened before, during, and after the attacks.

What I'm going to ask you for is not your opinion or speculation,

but just whether you have any firsthand information. If you don't, we'll simply move to the next allegation. And there's about a dozen of these. So please bear with me.

First, it's been alleged that Secretary of State Clinton intentionally blocked military action on the night of the attacks. One Congressman has speculated that, quote, "Secretary Clinton told Leon Panetta to 'stand down,'" closed quote, and this resulted in the Defense Department not sending more assets to help in Benghazi.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary of State Clinton ordered Secretary of Defense Panetta to stand down on the night of the attacks?

A I do not.

Q Do you have any evidence that Secretary of State Clinton issued any kind of order to Secretary of Defense Panetta on the night of the attacks?

A No. I don't.

Q It has been alleged that Secretary Clinton personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security to Libya. The Washington Post Fact Checker evaluated the claim and gave it Four Pinocchios, its highest award for false claims.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security resources to Libya?

A No, I don't.

Q Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton was personally involved in providing specific instruction on day-to-day security resources at Benghazi?

A No, I don't.

Q It has been alleged that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risk posed by Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for military operations in Libya in spring 2011.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risk posed by Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for military operations in Libya in the spring of 2011?

A No, I don't. And I hadn't heard that one.

Q It has been alleged that the U.S. mission in Benghazi included transferring weapons to Syrian rebels or to other countries. A bipartisan report issued by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence found that, quote, "The CIA was not collecting and shipping arms from Libya to Syrian," close quote, and that they found, quote, "no support for this allegation," close quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict the House Intelligence Committee's bipartisan report finding that the CIA was not shipping arms from Libya to Syria?

A No, I don't.

Q Do you have any evidence that the U.S. facilities in Benghazi were being used to facilitate weapons transfers from Libya to Syria or to any other foreign country?

A No. I don't.

Q A team of CIA security personnel was temporarily delayed

from departing the annex to assist the Special Mission Compound on the night of the attacks. And there have been a number of allegations about the cause of and appropriateness of that delay.

The House Intelligence Committee issued a bipartisan report concluding the team was not ordered to stand down, but that there were tactical disagreements on the ground over how quickly to depart.

Do you have any evidence that would contradict the House Intelligence Committee's finding that there was no stand-down order to CIA personnel?

A I do not.

Q Putting aside whether you personally agree with the decision, or you feel it was right, do you have any evidence that there was a bad or improper reason behind the temporary delay of the CIA security personnel who departed the Annex to assist the Special Mission Compound?

A No, I don't.

Q Concern has been raised by one individual that in the course of producing documents to the Accountability Review Board, damaging documents may have been removed or scrubbed out of that production.

Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department removed or scrubbed damaging documents from the materials or provided to the ARB?

A No. I don't.

Q Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department directed to anyone else at the State Department to remove or scrub

damaging document from the materials that were provided to the ARB?

A No.

Q Let me ask you questions also for documents that were provided to Congress. Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department removed or scrubbed damaging documents from the materials that were provided to Congress?

A No.

Q And it has been alleged that the CIA Deputy Director Mike Morell altered unclassified talking points about the Benghazi attacks for political reasons, and that he then misrepresented his actions when he told Congress and the CIA that the CIA "faithfully performed our duties in accordance with the highest standards of objectivity and nonpartisanship."

Do you have any evidence that CIA Deputy Director Mike Morell gave false or intentionally misleading testimony to Congress about the Benghazi talking points?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that CIA Deputy Director Morell altered the talking points provided to Congress for political reasons?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that Ambassador Susan Rice made an intentional representation when she spoke on the Sunday talk shows about the Benghazi attacks.

Do you have any evidence that Ambassador Rice intentionally misrepresented facts about the Benghazi attacks on the Sunday talk

shows?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that the President of the United States was, quote, "virtually AWOL as commander in chief," close quote, on the night of the attacks, and that he was, quote, "missing in action," close quote.

Do you have any evidence to support the allegation that the President was virtually AWOL as Commander in Chief or missing in action on the night of the attacks?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that a team of four military personnel at Embassy Tripoli on the night of the attacks were considering flying on a second plane to Benghazi were ordered by their superiors to, quote, "stand down," close quote, meaning to cease all operations. Military officials have stated that those four individuals were instead ordered to, quote, "remain in place," closed quote, in Tripoli to provide security and medical assistance in their current location.

A Republican staff report issued by the House Armed Services Committee found that, quote, "There was no stand-down order issued to the U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi," closed quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict the conclusion of the House Armed Services Committee that, quote, "There was no stand-down order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi," closed quote?

A No.

Q Last one. It has been alleged that the military failed to deploy assets on the night of the attacks that would have saved lives. However, former Republican Congressman Howard "Buck" McKeon, the former chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, conducted a review of the attacks, after which he stated, quote, "Given where the troops were, how quickly the thing all happened, and how quickly it dissipated, we probably couldn't have done more than we did," closed quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict Congressman McKeon's conclusion?

A No. I do not.

Q Do you have any evidence that the Pentagon had military assets available to them on the night of the attacks that could have saved lives, but the Pentagon leadership intentionally decided not to deploy?

A No.

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q I think we're just about done. We appreciate your time. I don't know if our colleagues have some follow-up. But in terms of -- you've, I think, done a nice job giving us a generalized sense of kind of the factors that would go into what was included in any particular speech and explaining that those might have evolved over time.

Today, you were shown only final versions of speeches. And that

was my understanding as well with Ms. [REDACTED]. You weren't shown any drafts. You know, it's my understanding that the committee does have, at least in some instances, drafts. With regard to those, we've reviewed them. We did not -- we thought they were mostly self-explanatory. But had the committee had a question about any particular draft on a document in our possession, would you have been willing and able to try to explain to us with regard to things like seeking to achieve these goals, learn the temperature versus denying an issue oxygen, seeking not to inflame the situation anymore, displaying American resolve, to the best of your recollection, based on an actual document, what factored into it?

A You know, based on my best recollection, I would try to be as helpful as I could. But, you know, as I said, it's hard 3 years later to reconstruct edit by edit. But I would be -- you know, so within my recollection, I would answer as best I could.

Q And just in the more general sense, without having a particular edit, these were the standards that you feel governed the speech writing at the time?

A Yes.

Q And I know it sounds like a strange question. It is a little strange. But I ask it in part, and I do want this on the record because we have, over the course of this investigation, asked for and received a number of documents from the State Department. We continue to press for more, and I'm sure we will continue to get more. But I do want the record to reflect that you were here, you were willing, you're

available to talk --

A Yes.

Q -- about any document in our possession that we had questions about?

A Yes.

Mr. Kenny. I think that concludes our round. And with that, we can go off the record.

[Discussion off the record.]

Mr. Missakian. Back on the record.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Mr. [REDACTED], I should have asked you this before. On the evening of September 11, there was a secure video teleconference at the State Department that began at 7:30 that we understand. Did you participate in that?

A No.

Q Did anyone discuss with you anything that was discussed during that call?

A No.

Q Are you aware that it even occurred?

A Not that I'm aware of.

I am, in retrospect -- sitting here, I'm aware of it. I was not then.

Q Now, you were asked some questions in response to which you said something to the effect that the statement we've been looking at, which is focused on in Exhibit 1, which is a statement that was prepared

on the evening of September 11, and then given the next morning on September 12, that your goal was not to give a definitive accounting of what had occurred during the attacks. Do you recall giving that answer?

A I believe I recall that exchange. I think I said that it wasn't the goal to provide a definitive accounting of all the facts or something like that. We can look at the transcript.

Q Right. I may have not gotten it exactly right.

Why was that not a goal?

A The goal of the statement -- the goals of the statement were, as I said, you know, to honor those who we lost, to express American determination and values, to address the global audience and period of instability, lower the temperature. And, you know, my role was, as a speech writer, was to help achieve those goals. The Secretary, you know, her role as the representative of the United States to the rest of world, those were her -- you know, as I understood them, those were her goals. So it was not -- you know, so those were the goals, and I don't think the other one was. It would be left to others.

Q So if I understand your testimony, the goal as you understood for that statement came directly from the Secretary?

A Well, they came from Jake. And Jake was my primary source of information and sort of what -- of information and of sort of guidance of what would be appropriate to provide for the Secretary.

Q I understand that. But you described them as her goals, meaning Secretary Clinton's. Were they Secretary Clinton's goals or

were they Jake Sullivan's goals?

A They were the goals that Jake communicated to me would be appropriate for the Secretary -- you know, for the remarks. So I did not have any independent conversation with the Secretary.

Q Do you have any basis for believing that Mr. Sullivan discussed the goals for the speech with the Secretary before communicating them to you?

A I don't know. I really couldn't say whether he talked to her or not. I don't know.

Q All right. So it wasn't that you all had a discussion and made a decision not to include an accounting of what had occurred, that was just not included in the set of goals that were communicated to you by Mr. Sullivan?

A That's generally right. I don't recall a specific conversation like that. What I do recall is, as I think I said earlier, is that, you know, we discussed, you know, striking the right balance in his remarks of advancing those goals. And being, you know, being guided by the best information we had, and -- and it's -- so, right. Exactly. I don't remember a specific conversation, in answer to your question.

Q On the night of the attack, were you aware that there was a separate CIA facility that had come under attack?

A I don't recall being aware of that that night. I'm aware of it now, but I don't recall being aware of it then.

Q Okay. I think you were asked some questions about whether

or not you were aware of the news reports that night. We know that you're a consumer of news. It's part of your job. Did you use anything you read in any of those news reports in any of the remarks that you drafted?

A I don't -- I don't remember any specific -- I don't remember drawing any kind of specific insight from any news reports that would have been reflected in the draft.

Mr. Missakian. That's it. Thank you.

Mr. [REDACTED]. Thank you.

Mr. Kenny. Off the record.

[Whereupon, at 4:04 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

EXHIBIT 1

UNCLASSIFIED
U.S. Department of State
Case No. F-2015-04841
Doc No. C05739812
Date: 05/13/2015

STATE DEPT. - PRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMM.
SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT ON SENSITIVE INFORMATION & REDACTIONS. NO FOIA WAIVER.

RELEASE IN
FULL

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, September 24, 2012 10:17 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Benghazi/protest statements
Attachments: Compiled protest and Benghazi statements.docx

Attached is full compilation. You never said spontaneous or characterized the motives. In fact you were careful in your first statement to say we were assessing motive and method. The way you treated the video in the Libya context was to say that some sought to "justify" the attack on that basis.

From: Valliani, Amira
Sent: Monday, September 24, 2012 10:08 AM
To: Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: Benghazi/protest statements

Attached

UNCLASSIFIED
U.S. Department of State
Case No. F-2015-04841
Doc No. C05739812
Date: 05/13/2015

STATE DEPT. - PRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMM.
SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT ON SENSITIVE INFORMATION & REDACTIONS. NO FOIA WAIVER.

UNCLASSIFIED
 U.S. Department of State
 Case No. F-2015-04841
 Doc No. C05739812
 Date: 05/13/2015

STATE DEPT. - PRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMM.
 SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT ON SENSITIVE INFORMATION & REDACTIONS. NO FOIA WAIVER.

Statement on the Attack in Benghazi
 September 11, 2012

I condemn in the strongest terms the attack on our mission in Benghazi today. As we work to secure our personnel and facilities, we have confirmed that one of our State Department officers was killed. We are heartbroken by this terrible loss. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and those who have suffered in this attack.

This evening, I called Libyan President Magariaf to coordinate additional support to protect Americans in Libya. President Magariaf expressed his condemnation and condolences and pledged his government's full cooperation.

Some have sought to justify this vicious behavior as a response to inflammatory material posted on the Internet. The United States deplors any intentional effort to denigrate the religious beliefs of others. Our commitment to religious tolerance goes back to the very beginning of our nation. But let me be clear: There is never any justification for violent acts of this kind.

In light of the events of today, the United States government is working with partner countries around the world to protect our personnel, our missions, and American citizens worldwide.

Statement on the Death of American Personnel in Benghazi, Libya
 September 12, 2012

It is with profound sadness that I share the news of the death of four American personnel in Benghazi, Libya yesterday. Among them were United States Ambassador to Libya Chris Stevens and Foreign Service Information Management Officer, Sean Smith. We are still making next of kin notifications for the other two individuals. Our hearts go out to all their families and colleagues.

A 21 year veteran of the Foreign Service, Ambassador Stevens died last night from injuries he sustained in the attack on our office in Benghazi.

I had the privilege of swearing in Chris for his post in Libya only a few months ago. He spoke eloquently about his passion for service, for diplomacy and for the Libyan people. This assignment was only the latest in his more than two decades of dedication to advancing closer ties with the people of the Middle East and North Africa which began as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Morocco. As the conflict in Libya unfolded, Chris was one of the first Americans on the ground in Benghazi. He risked his own life to lend the Libyan people a helping hand to build the foundation for a new, free nation. He spent every day since helping to finish the work that he started. Chris was committed to advancing America's values and interests, even when that meant putting himself in danger.

Sean Smith was a husband and a father of two, who joined the Department ten years ago. Like

UNCLASSIFIED
 U.S. Department of State
 Case No. F-2015-04841
 Doc No. C05739812
 Date: 05/13/2015

STATE DEPT. - PRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMM.
 SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT ON SENSITIVE INFORMATION & REDACTIONS. NO FOIA WAIVER.

STATE-SCB0045475

Chris, Sean was one of our best. Prior to arriving in Benghazi, he served in Baghdad, Pretoria, Montreal, and most recently The Hague.

All the Americans we lost in yesterday's attacks made the ultimate sacrifice. We condemn this vicious and violent attack that took their lives, which they had committed to helping the Libyan people reach for a better future.

America's diplomats and development experts stand on the front lines every day for our country. We are honored by the service of each and every one of them.

Remarks on the Deaths of American Personnel in Benghazi, Libya
 September 12, 2012

Yesterday, our U.S. diplomatic post in Benghazi, Libya was attacked. Heavily armed militants assaulted the compound and set fire to our buildings. American and Libyan security personnel battled the attackers together. Four Americans were killed. They included Sean Smith, a Foreign Service information management officer, and our Ambassador to Libya Chris Stevens. We are still making next of kin notifications for the other two individuals.

This is an attack that should shock the conscience of people of all faiths around the world. We condemn in the strongest terms this senseless act of violence, and we send our prayers to the families, friends, and colleagues of those we've lost.

All over the world, every day, America's diplomats and development experts risk their lives in the service of our country and our values, because they believe that the United States must be a force for peace and progress in the world, that these aspirations are worth striving and sacrificing for. Alongside our men and women in uniform, they represent the best traditions of a bold and generous nation.

In the lobby of this building, the State Department, the names of those who have fallen in the line of duty are inscribed in marble. Our hearts break over each one. And now, because of this tragedy, we have new heroes to honor and more friends to mourn.

Chris Stevens fell in love with the Middle East as a young Peace Corps volunteer teaching English in Morocco. He joined the Foreign Service, learned languages, won friends for America in distant places, and made other people's hopes his own.

In the early days of the Libyan revolution, I asked Chris to be our envoy to the rebel opposition. He arrived on a cargo ship in the port of Benghazi and began building our relationships with Libya's revolutionaries. He risked his life to stop a tyrant, then gave his life trying to help build a better Libya. The world needs more Chris Stevenses. I spoke with his sister, Ann, this morning, and told her that he will be remembered as a hero by many nations.

UNCLASSIFIED
 U.S. Department of State
 Case No. F-2015-04841
 Doc No. C05739812
 Date: 05/13/2015

STATE DEPT. - PRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMM.
 SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT ON SENSITIVE INFORMATION & REDACTIONS. NO FOIA WAIVER.

Sean Smith was an Air Force veteran. He spent 10 years as an information management officer in the State Department, he was posted at The Hague, and was in Libya on a brief temporary assignment. He was a husband to his wife Heather, with whom I spoke this morning. He was a father to two young children, Samantha and Nathan. They will grow up being proud of the service their father gave to our country, service that took him from Pretoria to Baghdad, and finally to Benghazi.

The mission that drew Chris and Sean and their colleagues to Libya is both noble and necessary, and we and the people of Libya honor their memory by carrying it forward. This is not easy. Today, many Americans are asking – indeed, I asked myself – how could this happen? How could this happen in a country we helped liberate, in a city we helped save from destruction? This question reflects just how complicated and, at times, how confounding the world can be.

But we must be clear-eyed, even in our grief. This was an attack by a small and savage group – not the people or Government of Libya. Everywhere Chris and his team went in Libya, in a country scared by war and tyranny, they were hailed as friends and partners. And when the attack came yesterday, Libyans stood and fought to defend our post. Some were wounded. Libyans carried Chris' body to the hospital, and they helped rescue and lead other Americans to safety. And last night, when I spoke with the President of Libya, he strongly condemned the violence and pledged every effort to protect our people and pursue those responsible.

The friendship between our countries, borne out of shared struggle, will not be another casualty of this attack. A free and stable Libya is still in America's interest and security, and we will not turn our back on that, nor will we rest until those responsible for these attacks are found and brought to justice. We are working closely with the Libyan authorities to move swiftly and surely. We are also working with partners around the world to safeguard other American embassies, consulates, and citizens.

There will be more time later to reflect, but today, we have work to do. There is no higher priority than protecting our men and women wherever they serve. We are working to determine the precise motivations and methods of those who carried out this assault. Some have sought to justify this vicious behavior, along with the protest that took place at our Embassy in Cairo yesterday, as a response to inflammatory material posted on the internet. America's commitment to religious tolerance goes back to the very beginning of our nation. But let me be clear – there is no justification for this, none. Violence like this is no way to honor religion or faith. And as long as there are those who would take innocent life in the name of God, the world will never know a true and lasting peace.

It is especially difficult that this happened on September 11th. It's an anniversary that means a great deal to all Americans. Every year on that day, we are reminded that our work is not yet finished, that the job of putting an end to violent extremism and building a safe and stable world continues. But September 11th means even more than that. It is a day on which we remember

UNCLASSIFIED
 U.S. Department of State
 Case No. F-2015-04841
 Doc No. C05739812
 Date: 05/13/2015

STATE DEPT. - PRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMM.
 SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT ON SENSITIVE INFORMATION & REDACTIONS. NO FOIA WAIVER.

STATE-SCB0045477

thousands of American heroes, the bonds that connect all Americans, wherever we are on this Earth, and the values that see us through every storm. And now it is a day on which we will remember Sean, Chris, and their colleagues.

May God bless them, and may God bless the thousands of Americans working in every corner of the world who make this country the greatest force for peace, prosperity, and progress, and a force that has always stood for human dignity – the greatest force the world has ever known. And may God continue to bless the United States of America.

Thank you.

**Statement on the Deaths of Tyrone S. Woods and Glen A. Doherty in Benghazi, Libya
 September 13, 2012**

The attack on our diplomatic post in Benghazi, Libya on Tuesday claimed the lives of four Americans. Yesterday, I spoke about two: Ambassador Chris Stevens and Information Management Officer Sean Smith. Today, we also recognize the two security personnel who died helping protect their colleagues. Tyrone S. Woods and Glen A. Doherty were both decorated military veterans who served our country with honor and distinction. Our thoughts, prayers, and deepest gratitude are with their families and friends. Our embassies could not carry on our critical work around the world without the service and sacrifice of brave people like Tyrone and Glen.

Tyrone's friends and colleagues called him "Rene," and they relied on his courage and skill, honed over two decades as a Navy SEAL. In uniform, he served multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. Since 2010, he protected American diplomatic personnel in dangerous posts from Central America to the Middle East. He had the hands of a healer as well as the arm of a warrior, earning distinction as a registered nurse and certified paramedic. All our hearts go out to Tyrone's wife Dorothy and his three sons, Tyrone Jr., Hunter, and Kai, who was born just a few months ago.

We also grieve for Glen Doherty, called Bub, and his family: his father Bernard, his mother Barbara, his brother Gregory, and his sister Kathleen. Glen was also a former Navy SEAL and an experienced paramedic. And he put his life on the line many times, protecting Americans in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other hotspots. In the end, he died the way he lived – with selfless honor and unstinting valor.

We condemn the attack that took the lives of these heroes in the strongest terms, and we are taking additional steps to safeguard American embassies, consulates, and citizens around the world. This violence should shock the conscience of people of all faiths and traditions. We appreciate the statements of support that have poured in from across the region and beyond.

People of conscience and goodwill everywhere must stand together in these difficult days against violence, hate, and division.

I am enormously proud of the men and women who risk their lives every day in the service of our country and our values. They help make the United States the greatest force for peace, progress, and human dignity that the world has ever known. We honor the memory of our fallen colleagues by continuing their work and carrying on the best traditions of a bold and generous nation.

Remarks at the Opening Plenary of the U.S.-Morocco Strategic Dialogue
 September 13, 2012

SECRETARY CLINTON: Good morning. Well, let me welcome our friends and colleagues from Morocco here to the Benjamin Franklin Room on the eighth floor of the State Department for this very important first session of the U.S.-Morocco Strategic Dialogue. Before I begin to address the significance of this Strategic Dialogue and the next step in our long relations with Morocco, I want to say a few words about the events unfolding in the world today.

We are closely watching what is happening in Yemen and elsewhere, and we certainly hope and expect that there will be steps taken to avoid violence and prevent the escalation of protests into violence.

I also want to take a moment to address the video circulating on the Internet that has led to these protests in a number of countries. Let me state very clearly -- and I hope it is obvious -- that the United States Government had absolutely nothing to do with this video. We absolutely reject its content and message. America's commitment to religious tolerance goes back to the very beginning of our nation. And as you know, we are home to people of all religions, many of whom came to this country seeking the right to exercise their own religion, including, of course, millions of Muslims. And we have the greatest respect for people of faith.

To us, to me personally, this video is disgusting and reprehensible. It appears to have a deeply cynical purpose: to denigrate a great religion and to provoke rage. But as I said yesterday, there is no justification, none at all, for responding to this video with violence. We condemn the violence that has resulted in the strongest terms, and we greatly appreciate that many Muslims in the United States and around the world have spoken out on this issue.

Violence, we believe, has no place in religion and is no way to honor religion. Islam, like other religions, respects the fundamental dignity of human beings, and it is a violation of that fundamental dignity to wage attacks on innocents. As long as there are those who are willing to shed blood and take innocent life in the name of religion, the name of God, the world will never know a true and lasting peace. It is especially wrong for violence to be directed against diplomatic missions. These are places whose very purpose is peaceful: to promote better understanding across countries and cultures. All governments have a responsibility to protect

those spaces and people, because to attack an embassy is to attack the idea that we can work together to build understanding and a better future.

Now, I know it is hard for some people to understand why the United States cannot or does not just prevent these kinds of reprehensible videos from ever seeing the light of day. Now, I would note that in today's world with today's technologies, that is impossible. But even if it were possible, our country does have a long tradition of free expression which is enshrined in our Constitution and our law, and we do not stop individual citizens from expressing their views no matter how distasteful they may be.

There are, of course, different views around the world about the outer limits of free speech and free expression, but there should be no debate about the simple proposition that violence in response to speech is not acceptable. We all -- whether we are leaders in government, leaders in civil society or religious leaders -- must draw the line at violence. And any responsible leader should be standing up now and drawing that line.

I wanted to begin with this statement, because, as our Moroccan friends and all of you know, this has been a difficult week at the State Department. I very much appreciate, Minister, the condolences your government expressed to our Embassy in Rabat. And even though that tragedy happened far away in Benghazi, we found a reminder of the deep bonds that connect Morocco to the United States. It was in the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco that one of the Americans we lost this week, Ambassador Chris Stevens, fell in love with the region when he served as a Peace Corps volunteer there. That experience set him on a decades-long career of service. So in the memory of fallen friends and colleagues, let us remind ourselves of the many ways in which not just our governments but the people of our two nations have worked together to build a better future.

In many ways, the United States looks to Morocco to be a leader and a model. His Majesty King Mohammed deserves great credit for the work you've undertaken. In fact, after my visit to Rabat earlier this year, I told my team: "We need to start a Strategic Dialogue with Morocco."³¹ No country has been a friend of the United States longer than Morocco. You were the first nation to recognize us back in 1777. But we're not satisfied with simply having a friendship that is longstanding. We want one that is dynamic, growing, looking toward the future. So let me highlight a few of the areas we should focus on today.

On political reform, we have all seen remarkable changes taking place across North Africa and the Middle East. I commend Morocco and your government for your efforts to stay ahead of these changes by holding free and fair elections, empowering the elected parliament, taking other steps to ensure that the government reflects the will of the people. Today, our political working group will discuss how the United States can continue to support your efforts to translate commitments into actions. Because as we all know, democracy, real reform, require that people themselves feel the changes in their everyday lives: the courts reformed, the government more

open and transparent, universal human rights of all Moroccans – men and women alike – respected.

I'm especially pleased by Morocco's commitments to take on the deeply troubling problem of child marriage. We know that child brides are less likely to get an education, more likely to face life-threatening problems, particularly around child birth and delivery, which not only shortchanges them but can even rob them and their communities of their lives and talents. So we want to encourage the government and civil society to continue their important work together on this issue.

With regard to the Western Sahara, the United States continues to support efforts to find a peaceful, sustainable, mutually agreed-upon solution. U.S. policy toward the Western Sahara has remained consistent for many years. We have made clear that Morocco's autonomy plan is serious, realistic, and credible, and that it represents a potential approach that could satisfy the aspirations of the people in the Western Sahara to run their own affairs in peace and dignity. We continue to support the negotiations carried out by the United Nations and hope parties can work toward resolution.

With respect to the economy, our second working group will focus on what more can be done to deliver tangible economic benefits. Morocco's economy is relatively healthy, but you face the same problem that is now endemic across the world – unemployment is still too high, especially among young people.

That's why the United States is providing \$1.5 million to support an effort to attract foreign investors, foster local economic development, and combat corruption across the region. And I'm pleased to announce that later this year we will hold a Morocco business development conference here in Washington to connect businesses from both countries.

Today, we should discuss ways to build on all of these efforts by increasing bilateral trade, a particular goal of mine since so much trade from Morocco goes to Europe. I'd like to increase the amount of trade coming to the United States, and also to improve economic integration across North Africa, which could greatly benefit Morocco because of Morocco's stability and Morocco's very strong economic foundation. The greater integration there is, the greater the benefits for Moroccans.

Third, the attack in Benghazi this week reminds us that security remains a vital issue. Through our work together on the Global Counterterrorism Task Force, the United States and Morocco already share crucial information and best practices, and I thank Morocco for hosting a Global Counterterrorism Task Force workshop on threats in the South Atlantic next month.

We are also collaborating through USAID, the Peace Corps, and other agencies to help provide Moroccan youth with alternatives to criminal and extremist organizations. And so we are partnering to help strengthen Morocco's criminal justice system and law enforcement.

There will be a lot to discuss in the meeting today. And let me add, the United States greatly appreciates the constructive role Morocco is playing on the UN Security Council, especially your support for the effort to end the violence and bloodshed in Syria and help to usher in a new democratic future for that country. I commend Morocco for offering to host the next ministerial meeting of the Friends of the Syrian People, and we look forward to continuing to work closely together as close partners even after your term on the Security Council has ended.

Finally, our education and cultural ties are reason for much celebration. This year marks the 30th anniversary of our official program to facilitate academic exchanges and other bonds between us. There are more than 5,000 Moroccan alumni of these programs. Two are with us today – Dr. Benjelloun and Dr. Ouachoucha – and we thank them. But among all our work on this front, from preserving Morocco's historic sites to empowering youth, there's one area I particularly hope we can focus on today and receive your advice and counsel – namely, interfaith dialogue.

In these tense and turbulent times, it's more important than ever for people of different faiths to exchange ideas, to build understanding, to promote religious tolerance. It's one of the great challenges of the 21st century, and it's one that we must address together.

So we have a lot of work to do, Minister, but our friendship runs long and deep, and as the treaty our nations signed in 1786 says, and I quote, "Trusting in God, it will remain permanent." I'm confident that we will continue to solve problems and produce results that make our nations stronger, more peaceful, more secure, more prosperous, and also contribute to doing the same for the world.

So again, let me welcome you, Minister, it's been a great pleasure for me to get to know you, to work with you, to be your colleague bilaterally, regionally, and globally, and also welcome your distinguished delegation.

Thank you. (Applause.)

Remarks at Reception Marking Eid ul-Fitr
 September 13, 2012

SECRETARY CLINTON: Good evening, and although I am many weeks overdue in saying it: Eid Mubarak. No matter how belated we are honoring Eid and the end of Ramadan, this is a cherished tradition here at the State Department. And I would like to thank all of you for being here, including the many members of the Diplomatic Corps.

Tonight, our gathering is more somber than any of us would like. This comes during sad and difficult days for the State Department family. We lost four Americans. They were good and brave men. They were committed to the cause of building a brighter future for the people of Libya. And we condemn the violence in the strongest terms, the violence against our posts in Benghazi, in Egypt, and now in Yemen.

The Libyan ambassador is with us tonight, and I want to take a moment to thank him for the support that his government and the Libyan people have shown to the United States in this tragedy, particularly the outpouring of feelings of grief and loss because of the killing of our ambassador.

Ambassador Aujali, would you mind saying a few words?

AMBASSADOR AUJALI: [redacted]

SECRETARY CLINTON: Thank you very much, Ambassador. I know that that was a very personal loss for you, as it was for me. I'm the one who sent Chris to Benghazi during the revolution to show support and be able to advise our government about what we could do to bring freedom and democracy and opportunity to the people of Libya.

Religious freedom and religious tolerance are essential to the stability of any nation, any people. Hatred and violence in the name of religion only poison the well. All people of faith and good will know that the actions of a small and savage group in Benghazi do not honor religion or God in any way. Nor do they speak for the more than one billion Muslims around the world, many of whom have shown an outpouring of support during this time.

Unfortunately, however, over the last 24 hours, we have also seen violence spread elsewhere. Some seek to justify this behavior as a response to inflammatory, despicable material posted on the internet. As I said earlier today, the United States rejects both the content and the message of that video. The United States deplores any intentional effort to denigrate the religious beliefs of others. At our meeting earlier today, my colleague, the foreign minister of Morocco, said that all prophets should be respected because they are all symbols of our humanity, for all humanity.

But both of us were crystal clear in this paramount message: There is never any justification for violent acts of this kind. And we look to leaders around the world to stand up and speak out against violence, and to take steps to protect diplomatic missions from attack.

Think about it. When Christians are subject to insults to their faith, and that certainly happens, we expect them not to resort to violence. When Hindus or Buddhists are subjected to insults to their faiths, and that also certainly happens, we expect them not to resort to violence. The same goes for all faiths, including Islam.

When all of us who are people of faith – and I am one – feel the pain of insults, of misunderstanding, of denigration to what we cherish, we must expect ourselves and others not to resort to violence. That is a universal standard and expectation, and it is everyone's obligation to meet that, so that we make no differences, we expect no less of ourselves than we expect of others. You cannot respond to offensive speech with violence without begetting more violence.

And I so strongly believe that the great religions of the world are stronger than any insults. They have withstood offense for centuries. Refraining from violence, then, is not a sign of weakness in one's faith; it is absolutely the opposite, a sign that one's faith is unshakable.

So tonight, we must come together and recommit ourselves to working toward a future marked by understanding and acceptance rather than distrust, hatred, and fear. We can pledge that whenever one person speaks out in ignorance and bigotry, ten voices will answer. They will answer resoundingly against the offense and the insult, answering ignorance with enlightenment, answering hatred with understanding, answering darkness with light; that if one person commits a violent act in the name of religion, millions will stand up and condemn it out of strength.

In times like these, it can be easy to despair that some differences are irreconcilable, some mountains too steep to climb; we will therefore never reach the level of understanding and peacefulness that we seek, and which I believe the great religions of the world call us to pursue. But that's not what I believe, and I don't think it's what you believe either here tonight. Part of what makes our country so special is we keep trying. We keep working. We keep investing in our future. We keep supporting the next generation, believing that young people can keep us moving forward in a positive direction.

So tonight I think it's important that we talk not just about that better tomorrow that we all seek, but also about some of the things – the real, practical, tangible things – that young people are doing to help shape that better future.

Two years ago in this room, at our Eid reception, we launched a program called Generation Change to lead a grassroots agenda of positive engagement with Muslim communities. And I asked the young Muslim leaders in the audience that night to be our unofficial ambassadors, to help build personal connections, seek out partners in other countries. And I can report to you tonight they did not disappoint. In a few minutes, you're going to meet some of these young leaders, each with a powerful story to tell.

The Generation Change network that started in this room now circles the globe. We are building an international alliance of young people who want to drive change in their own communities. They act as mentors, spark respectful debates, simply offer words of encouragement when needed. But most importantly, they inspire others to keep expanding the circle of mutual understanding and respect, one person at a time.

Even as we work to spread tolerance more broadly, we also are working to deepen our appreciation for the experiences of others. Our 2012 Hours Against Hate initiative encourages young people to put themselves in another person's shoes through service projects. So far, young people from all over the world have pledged thousands of volunteer hours to help people from a different background, to see them as a fellow human being, not a stereotype, not a caricature, but another real live person – people who don't look like you, live like you, pray like you, but with whom we will share this planet. And therefore, we have work to do.

People of faith and conscience are called to be the leaders of tolerance. In my tradition, like all traditions, we are expected to love one another. And together, we have to translate that into better understanding and cooperation. I'm particularly pleased that the young people you will hear from tonight are really setting an example, not only for young people elsewhere in the world but, frankly, for us who are older as well.

Let me now call to the stage someone who has been a tremendous assistance to me in these efforts. Farah Pandith is the Department's first Special Representative to Muslim Communities. And from the beginning, she has made reaching out to young people and civil society her top priority. Farah will introduce you to three young leaders who I am very proud of.

Remarks at the Transfer of Remains Ceremony to Honor Those Lost in Attacks in Benghazi, Libya
 September 14, 2012

SECRETARY CLINTON: Thank you very much, Chaplain. Mr. President, Mr. Vice President, Secretary Panetta, Ambassador Rice, Secretary Powell and Mrs. Powell, family members of the four patriots and heroes we bring home, members of the State Department family, ladies and gentlemen, today we bring home four Americans who gave their lives for our country and our values. To the families of our fallen colleagues, I offer our most heartfelt condolences and deepest gratitude.

Sean Smith joined the State Department after six years in the Air Force. He was respected as an expert on technology by colleagues in Pretoria, Baghdad, Montreal, and The Hague. He enrolled in correspondence courses at Penn State and had high hopes for the future. Sean leaves behind a loving wife Heather, two young children, Samantha and Nathan, and scores of grieving family, friends, and colleagues. And that's just in this world. Because online in the virtual worlds that Sean helped create, he is also being mourned by countless competitors, collaborators, and gamers who shared his passion.

Tyrone Woods, known to most as Rone, spent two decades as a Navy SEAL, serving multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. Since 2010, he protected American diplomatic personnel in dangerous posts from Central America to the Middle East. He had the hands of a healer as well as the arms of a warrior, earning distinction as a registered nurse and certified paramedic. Our hearts go out to Tyrone's wife Dorothy, and his three sons Tyrone, Jr., Hunter, and Kai, born just a few months ago, along with his grieving family, friends, and colleagues.

Glen Doherty, who went by Bub, was also a former SEAL and an experienced paramedic. He too died as he lived, serving his country and protecting his colleagues. Glen deployed to some of the most dangerous places on Earth, including Iraq and Afghanistan, always putting his life on the line to safeguard other Americans. Our thoughts and prayers are with Glen's father Bernard, his mother Barbara, his brother Gregory, his sister Kathleen, and their grieving families, friends, and colleagues.

I was honored to know Ambassador Chris Stevens. I want to thank his parents and siblings, who are here today, for sharing Chris with us and with our country. What a wonderful gift you gave us. Over his distinguished career in the Foreign Service, Chris won friends for the United States in far-flung places. He made those people's hopes his own. During the revolution in Libya, he risked his life to help protect the Libyan people from a tyrant, and he gave his life helping them build a better country.

People loved to work with Chris. And as he rose through the ranks, they loved to work for Chris. He was known not only for his courage but for his smile -- goofy but contagious -- for his sense of fun and that California cool.

In the days since the attack, so many Libyans -- including the Ambassador from Libya to the United States, who is with us today -- have expressed their sorrow and solidarity. One young woman, her head covered and her eyes haunted with sadness, held up a handwritten sign that said "Thugs and killers don't represent Benghazi nor Islam." The President of the Palestinian Authority, who worked closely with Chris when he served in Jerusalem, sent me a letter remembering his energy and integrity, and deploring -- and I quote -- "an act of ugly terror." Many others from across the Middle East and North Africa have offered similar sentiments.

This has been a difficult week for the State Department and for our country. We've seen the heavy assault on our post in Benghazi that took the lives of those brave men. We've seen rage and violence directed at American embassies over an awful internet video that we had nothing to do with. It is hard for the American people to make sense of that because it is senseless, and it is totally unacceptable.

The people of Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Tunisia did not trade the tyranny of a dictator for the tyranny of a mob. Reasonable people and responsible leaders in these countries need to do everything they can to restore security and hold accountable those behind these violent acts. And we will, under the President's leadership, keep taking steps to protect our personnel around the world.

There will be more difficult days ahead, but it is important that we don't lose sight of the fundamental fact that America must keep leading the world. We owe it to those four men to continue the long, hard work of diplomacy. I am enormously proud of the men and women of the State Department. I'm proud of all those across our government, civilian and military alike, who

represent America abroad. They help make the United States the greatest force for peace, progress, and human dignity the world has ever known. If the last few days teach us anything, let it be this: That this work and the men and women who risk their lives to do it are at the heart of what makes America great and good.

So we will wipe away our tears, stiffen our spines, and face the future undaunted. And we will do it together, protecting and helping one another, just like Sean, Tyrone, Glen, and Chris always did. May God bless them and grant their families peace and solace, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

And now, let me have the great honor of introducing someone who came to the State Department earlier this week to grieve with us. He well understands and values the work that these men were doing for our country. The President of the United States.

Remarks With Mexican Secretary of Foreign Relations Patricia Espinosa After Their Meeting
 September 18, 2012

SECRETARY CLINTON: Good afternoon, everyone. And it is such a pleasure for me to welcome my friend and colleague, Secretary Espinosa, along with a very distinguished delegation of officials from the Mexican Government for this continuation of consultation at the highest levels of each of our governments.

Before I turn to the matters discussed today, let me give a brief update on the ongoing U.S. response to the protests in the Middle East and elsewhere. I'm sure as you know already, we are taking aggressive steps to protect our staffs in embassies and consulates worldwide. That includes reviewing our security posture at every post and augmenting it where necessary. And we are working closely with the Libyan Government in our efforts to bring to justice those who murdered our four American colleagues in Benghazi.

The FBI is now in Tripoli to join the investigation with Libyan officials, and there is nothing more important to us than ensuring the safety of our American representatives worldwide. At the same time, as I have said to State Department employees, the incidents of the past week highlight how important our work is. The United States must and will remain strongly engaged in the world. Our men and women risk their lives in service to our country and our values, because they know that the United States must be a force for peace and progress. That is worth striving and sacrificing for, and nothing that happened last week changes this fundamental fact.

Now, turning to our friends and partners in Mexico, we are always pleased to have a chance to discuss matters of mutual interest and concern between us. Mexico is one of our closest friends as well as partner on dozens of critical issues. So we talk about every kind of issue you can imagine, from education and healthcare to poverty alleviation to the environment. But today, we focused on a top priority for us both – security.

We just co-chaired the fourth meeting of the U.S.-Mexico Merida High-Level Consultative Group. This is the last one we will hold during the Calderon Administration. And I want to offer my personal appreciation to President Calderon and to Foreign Secretary Espinosa for their leadership and commitment to this partnership and to all on both sides of the border in our governments who have been deeply engaged and committed to it. The Merida Initiative represents an unprecedented level of security cooperation between Mexico and the United States.

As our countries continue to deal with the serious challenge of transnational criminal organizations, including drug traffickers, illegal arms traffickers, money launderers, and violent gangs that threaten people on both sides of the border, we well know there is no quick and easy way to stop these criminals and bring them to justice. But nevertheless, during the past now nearly four years, our countries have collaborated to an extraordinary and unprecedented degree. We have brought together policy makers and experts from across our governments and societies who have worked hand in hand to keep our people safe. And I think the habits of cooperation we have built are among our most important achievements, and we will rely on them for a long time to come.

Today, our delegations reviewed the gains we've made on key priorities, including improving law enforcement coordination, reducing the demand for drugs, modernizing our border infrastructure, strengthening the rule of law, and building more resilient and empowered communities. We also discussed the lessons we've learned and the work that lies ahead in these and other areas, which our joint statement will reflect. I want to underscore how important our security relationship with Mexico is to the United States.

The Government of Mexico and the Mexican people have faced the threat posed by these criminals with courage and resolve, and we remain committed to doing everything we can to support Mexico as it continues to work to bring those criminals to justice. This is a transnational problem, and it calls for a transnational solution, and the United States believes this is a matter of shared responsibility. That was the first message I brought as Secretary of State when I came to Mexico, and it continues to be the hallmark of our efforts together. Making sure our people are safe and our neighbors are safe is of the utmost importance to us.

Now, our two countries share many other priorities, and one of them, empowering women and girls, was also addressed today. We took the opportunity, the Foreign Secretary and I, to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between our countries to work together to advance gender equality, empower girls and women, promote their human rights, and enhance their security.

So again, Secretary Espinosa, let me thank you for years of work and effort, for our productive conversations in many places around the world and again today, and for being such a valuable colleague and partner. The United States deeply, deeply values our relationship with Mexico and the ties of family and friendship that connect so many millions of our people.

And we look forward to the future. We believe strongly that presidential administrations may change, elections will come and go, but we have established a firm foundation for cooperation that has already benefited both our countries and which will continue to benefit both of our countries for many years ahead. So thank you very much.

MS. NULAND: We'll take (inaudible), Margaret Brennan, CBS News.

QUESTION: Madam Secretary, thanks for your time. Are you any closer to finding who killed Ambassador Chris Stevens? Libya's President says this attack was planned for months. Are you confident he's wrong and that security measures were appropriate? And will you leave justice to the Libyans?

SECRETARY CLINTON: As I said at the outset, we are taking aggressive steps to protect our people and our consulates and embassies around the world. We are reviewing our security posture at every post and working with host governments to be sure they know what our security needs are wherever necessary. We are also working closely with the Libyan Government to bring the perpetrators to justice so that we can be assured that we have found who murdered our four colleagues and under what circumstances. As I said, the FBI has joined the investigation inside Libya, and we will not rest until the people who orchestrated this attack are found and punished.

It is also important to look at this strategically and understand what is going on across the region. In a number of places where protests have turned violent, we are seeing the hand of extremists who are trying to exploit people's inflamed passions for their own agendas. But overwhelmingly, we have found that the people of Egypt, of Libya, of Yemen and Tunisia are not prepared to trade the tyranny of a dictator for the tyranny of a mob. They want to turn their attention to the future to provide better opportunities for themselves and their children, and they want a strong partnership with the United States and the American people based on mutual interests and mutual respect.

This is part of a larger debate that is going on inside these societies. In Libya, for example, in their first free elections, moderates were successful at the polls. But look, there are extremists in all of these societies and on the outside who are working to take advantage of broad outrage in order to incite violence and specifically incite violence against Americans and American facilities.

And as I have said to many of the leaders I have spoken to over the past week, these extremist efforts are a threat to the people of the societies and the governments of those societies as well as to the region and the United States. And I think it's important at this moment for leaders to put themselves on the right side of this debate -- to speak out clearly and unequivocally against violence, whoever incites it or conducts it.

And in a struggle like this, there can be no doubt where the United States must stand. We support those who are fighting for the same values and rights that we believe in -- in democracy, in

freedom, in universal rights for men and women, for justice and accountability. And I want to underscore that the United States will continue to work with partners and allies in the region and around the world to help bring security to these nations so that the promise of the revolutions that they experienced can be realized.

And finally, on your specific point about Benghazi, we obviously never talk publicly about security at any of our missions for obvious reasons. But that said, let me assure you that our security in Benghazi included a unit of host government security forces, as well as a local guard force of the kind that we rely on in many places around the world. In addition to the security outside the compound, we relied on a wall and a robust security presence inside the compound. And with all of our missions overseas, in advance of September 11th, as is done every year, we did an evaluation on threat streams. And the Office of the Director of National Intelligence has said we had no actionable intelligence that an attack on our post in Benghazi was planned or imminent.

But let me state the obvious again. Our diplomats engage in dangerous work, and it's the nature of diplomacy in fragile societies and conflict zones to be aware of the necessity for security but to also continue the important diplomatic work that has to go on. There is risk inherent in what we do and what these brave men and women representing the United States are up against every single day, and we do our very best to limit that risk by ensuring that our security protocols reflect the environments in which diplomats work and the threats that they are presented with.

Thank you.

**Remarks With Indonesian Foreign Minister Raden Mohammad Marty Muliana
 Natalegawa After Their Meeting
 September 20, 2012**

SECRETARY CLINTON: Good afternoon, everyone. And it's such a pleasure, as always, to welcome the Indonesian Foreign Minister, and I believe the largest delegation that has ever come from Indonesia, for the purpose of our third meeting of the U.S.-Indonesia Joint Commission.

This commission is the result of a vision by our two presidents for a comprehensive partnership, and the agreement to that effect was signed in 2010. Thanks to this partnership, the United States and Indonesia are working more closely than ever on a range of issues from global security to clean energy and climate to regional trade and commerce.

And today, Marty and I had the chance to take stock of where our teams have come in the time of the last year, because we had our meeting in Bali a year ago. And I must say, I was very impressed. We covered a great deal today.

But before I start, I'd like to say a few words about the protests in several countries around the world. We have condemned in the strongest possible terms the violence that has erupted from these protests. And as I have said, the video that sparked these protests is disgusting and reprehensible, and the United States Government, of course, had absolutely nothing to do with it.

But there is no justification for violence, and I want to thank the Foreign Minister and his government for speaking out against violence. We have to look to reasonable people and responsible leaders everywhere to stand up to extremists who would seek to take advantage of this moment to commit violent acts against embassies and their fellow countrymen.

Today's meetings have highlighted the strong foundation that we have built together. And one of our most important concerns is promoting peace and stability in the Asia Pacific. Today, I'm announcing that the Obama Administration has informed Congress of the potential sale of eight AH-64D Apache Longbow helicopters to the Indonesian Government. This agreement will strengthen our comprehensive partnership and help enhance security across the region.

On growth and prosperity, we are increasing our trade relationship that topped \$26 billion last year. Investments in transportation, energy, and infrastructure are creating jobs and supporting economic growth in both countries. For example, the deal between Lion Air and Boeing alone represents \$21 billion in trade over the next decade. Indonesia's Government has announced half a trillion dollars in infrastructure improvements, and we recently signed a memorandum of understanding to make it easier for American companies to bid on these projects.

And yesterday, we signed an agreement for implementing our Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact with Indonesia. Over the next five years, the United States will invest \$600 million in clean energy development, child health and nutrition programs, and efforts to help make Indonesia's Government more transparent and open.

The United States is also looking forward to Indonesia hosting APEC in 2013, and we are confident that Indonesia will come to this role with a commitment to promote greater economic integration across the Asia Pacific.

Both the Foreign Minister and I believe that strong education is essential to compete in a modern global economy. That's why the United States has expanded the Fulbright Program and supported partnerships between dozens of American and Indonesian universities. Academic exchanges between our countries are up and applications from Indonesian students to visit the United States have increased by one third. USAID has recently expanded its basic education program to provide \$83 million for teacher training and literacy programs for young children. And we're providing \$20 in scholarship funding for Indonesian graduate students.

I also thanked the Minister for Indonesia's leadership in ASEAN. The Foreign Minister's personal leadership has helped lay the groundwork for diplomacy between ASEAN and China as it relates to the South China Sea. And we continue to support ASEAN's six-point principles, which we believe will help reduce tensions and pave the way for a comprehensive code of conduct for addressing disputes without threats, coercion, or use of force.

Finally, Indonesia and the United States have stood together on a range of global challenges, from democratic reform in Burma to combating climate change, to working to end the violence in Syria. We are also coordinating efforts to further develop south-south and triangular cooperation, such as enhancing disaster preparedness in Burma and convening a conference on women's empowerment.

We believe that as the second and third-largest democracies in the world, the United States and Indonesia have a special responsibility to promote democracy and human rights. And for the last four years, Indonesia has hosted the Bali Democracy Forum to promote peaceful, democratic transitions through example and open dialogue. Last year, more than 80 countries attended. And once again, the United States will be sending a high-level delegation.

So, Minister, thank you for everything. Thank you for the great partnership we've had between us and between our countries.

MS. NULAND: We'll take two questions today, we'll start with Ros Jordan of Al Jazeera English.

QUESTION: Thank you, Madam Secretary, Mr. Foreign Minister. Madam Secretary, my question is about the ongoing investigation into last week's attack at the consulate in Benghazi. You are meeting this afternoon with members of Congress to discuss the progress and the concerns that they understandably have. First, there is the federal mandate to establish an accountability review board. Have you done so? Who would you like to see chair it? Are there certain questions that you desperately want to have answered in order to safeguard the safety of Foreign Service Officers around the world?

And related to this, given the political instability and the successes of the past year and a half, are you satisfied that in light of those political changes, enough was done to protect those working in the Middle East and North Africa? And then finally -- and this is perhaps going into the area of rumor and speculation -- but there is at least one report suggesting that Ambassador Stevens felt that he was on a, quote, "al-Qaida hit list." Is this a scurrilous rumor? Is this gallows humor when one is working in a period of difficulty and great challenge, or is there something more to what he allegedly -- and I stress that word -- said?

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, first, let me say I'm looking forward to the opportunity to go up to the Congress today. I will be briefing in two separate sessions, the House and the Senate, in a classified setting, along with my interagency colleagues, as we continue to work together, and with governments around the world, to ensure that our people and our facilities are safe. I will be joined today by the Director of National Intelligence, General Clapper, by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Ash Carter, by the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Sandy Winnefeld, along with experts from the FBI, the State Department, and elsewhere in the government.

Now, I anticipate that this briefing will cover our security posture before and during the events, and the steps we have taken since to do everything we can with host governments to protect our people and our embassies and consulates. The Director of National Intelligence will speak to the intelligence issues surrounding these events in Libya. Deputy Secretary Carter will brief on the superb support we have had from the U.S. military in the wake of these events, and we are at the very early stages of an FBI investigation. The team from the FBI reached Libya earlier this week. And I will advise Congress also that I am launching an accountability review board that will be chaired by Ambassador Thomas Pickering.

I will also talk about the importance of the broader relationships with these countries in light of the events of the past days. There are obviously very real challenges in these new democracies, these fragile societies, but as I said last week, the vast majority of the people in these countries did not throw off the tyranny of a dictator to trade it for the tyranny of a mob. And we are concerned first and foremost with our own people and facilities, but we are concerned about the internal security in these countries because ultimately, that puts at risk the men, women, and children of these societies on a daily ongoing basis if actions are not taken to try to restore security and civil order.

And let me just conclude by saying that there can be no doubt where the United States stands. We continue to support those who are fighting for universal values – values that we see at work in Indonesia – the third largest democracy in the world. We believe that these values of universal rights, of justice and accountability, of democracy, are there for every person regardless of where that person might live. So I will look forward to having a chance to talk with members of Congress.

As to your final question, I have absolutely no information or reason to believe that there's any basis for that.

QUESTION: Thank you.

MS. NULAND: Last question. Victoria Sidjabat from *Tempo Magazine*, please.

QUESTION: Yes. Madam, thank you. My question is: Starting today, U.S. Embassy and Consulate are closed in Indonesia as the Muslim movie become wild fireball, which could be

designed as a weapon to attack U.S. by raising sentiment anti-U.S. from the countries which has Muslim majority population like Indonesia.

Madam Clinton, how do you see this threat as on the long run? If it's continuing happen, it's -- obviously could give impact to the implementation of (inaudible) program in Indonesia. What is the reason U.S. Government closed the Embassy and Consulate in Indonesia? What is your expectation from Indonesia Government, for my Minister Marty Natalegawa? How Indonesia Government respond to the closing of this Embassy and Consulate, it's starting today? Is U.S. - Indonesia Government has capability to protect U.S. Embassy and Consulate. So the (inaudible) program implemented -- could be implemented successfully in Indonesia. Thank you.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, let me begin by saying how grateful we are for the excellent cooperation we have received from the Government of Indonesia, and in particular, from the law enforcement and security institutions in Indonesia. We are very grateful for not only the cooperation and protection that has been provided to our facilities, but also to the strong statements condemning violence from the President, the Foreign Minister, and others.

In consultation with the Government of Indonesia, we have temporarily, for tomorrow, closed our facilities. We want to be sure that law enforcement in Indonesia has the ability to do what it needs to do to make sure that there is no disruption of civil order and security. So we are cooperating completely, and we're very grateful for the strong leadership provided by Indonesia.

FOREIGN MINISTER NATALEGAWA: Hello, (inaudible), if I may just also respond. Precisely as the Secretary had said, the decision by the United States Government to close temporarily its embassies and consulates tomorrow in Indonesia is a decision that's been made based on communication and conversation between the authorities in Indonesia and the United States as well. So in other words, it is an informed decision, a decision that is not intended to show any unfriendly intent on the part of anyone, but it is what it is, and it's quite some -- it's the kind of step that governments actually carry out when situations requires it, even in our case. Some of our embassies abroad, when the situation requires us to have a temporary closing of the embassy, we do that as well. So it is something that is quite regular and something that is actually coordinated as well.

But if I may just broaden the subject matter, I think as our President had said in the past, Indonesian Government -- the Indonesian people, even, obviously cannot and would not condone the -- any acts of violence against diplomatic premises, against diplomatic personnel, because that is, truly -- would be a challenge to the efficient and a proper conduct of relations among states. So that's our point of departure.

At the same time, of course, beyond the immediate issue of protection of the embassies, we have still ahead of us the challenge of how to prevent the kind of situations where we are now at in

terms of the kind of incendiary and the kind of statements or, in this instance, films that cause - that is now we have all deplored and condemned for these kind of activities not to be repeated. So we have a lot of homework to work towards in the future as well.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Thank you all very much.

FOREIGN MINISTER NATALEGAWA: Thank you.

**Remarks With Pakistani Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar Before Their Meeting
 September 21, 2012**

Good afternoon, and let me begin by welcoming Foreign Minister Khar on her first visit to Washington as foreign minister. We've had the opportunity to meet in Islamabad and other settings, but I am very pleased that we would have this chance to exchange views on our bilateral relationship as well as regional and global issues.

I want to begin by addressing the events of the day and the past week. Today, we've once again seen protests in several cities in Pakistan. Unfortunately, some of those protests have turned violent and, sadly, resulted in loss of life. I want to thank the Government of Pakistan for their efforts to protect our Embassy in Islamabad and consulates in Lahore, Peshawar, and Karachi.

And I want to be clear, as I have said on numerous occasions, the violence we have seen cannot be tolerated. There is no justification for violence. Of course, there is provocation, and we have certainly made clear that we do not in any way support provocation. We found the video that's at the core of this series of events offensive, disgusting, reprehensible.

But that does not provide justification for violence, and therefore it is important for responsible leaders, indeed responsible people everywhere, to stand up and speak out against violence and particularly against those who would exploit this difficult moment to advance their own extremist ideologies.

Yesterday afternoon when I briefed the Congress, I made it clear that keeping our people everywhere in the world safe is our top priority. What happened in Benghazi was a terrorist attack, and we will not rest until we have tracked down and brought to justice the terrorists who murdered four Americans. And we are taking aggressive measures at all of our posts to protect our staffs and their families along with locally employed people who provide so many important contributions to the work of our missions.

The Foreign Minister and I will have a chance to cover a full range of subjects today, and it is no secret that the past year and a half has been challenging for Pakistan and the United States. And we still have work to do to get our bilateral relationship to the point where we would like it to be, but we both recognize that we can achieve more when we work together on a focused agenda. So

today is the latest in a series of high-level meetings. Ambassador Marc Grossman has just returned from consultations in Islamabad. I look forward to seeing President Zardari next week at the UN General Assembly. At each meeting, we are working to identify the strategic goals we share – and there are many – and the concrete actions we can each take to accomplish them.

Our number one shared priority remains pursuing our joint counterterrorism objectives to ensure the security of American and Pakistani citizens alike. We face a common threat from a common enemy, and we must confront terrorism and extremism together. Earlier this month, I designated the Haqqani Network as a Foreign Terrorist Organization so we could make full use of every available legal authority to end their deadly attacks. Pakistan's parliament has called for expelling foreign fighters so that Pakistan's territory can be fully under control of the Pakistani Government and cannot be used to launch attacks against other nations.

And the follow-through on this is challenging but necessary, and we look forward to working with Pakistan as they continue to address these problems. We have both pledged to support a secure, stable, and prosperous Afghanistan, which is vital for the security of the region. And I want to thank Foreign Minister Khar for Pakistan's reopening of the NATO supply lines to allow the movement of goods to Afghanistan.

We will discuss the successful first meeting of the Safe Passage Working Group in Islamabad which brought together Afghan, Pakistani, and U.S. representatives to advance the peace process in Afghanistan. The Pakistani Government's public call for insurgents to come forward and talk with the Afghan Government was particularly important. We are ready to work together to build on these steps, and we will continue our discussions through bilateral consultations and the U.S.-Afghanistan-Pakistan Core Group.

Now, of course, our relationship goes far beyond our shared security concerns, and today we will discuss the many other ways in which we work together, particularly to create economic opportunity for Pakistanis. Foreign Minister Khar and I agree that we need to shift our economic relationship from aid to trade and investment. We are working to help Pakistan attract more private sector investment. We hope to finalize a bilateral investment treaty soon. And we've created a Pakistan private investment initiative to help more of Pakistan's small and medium sized companies get access to capital.

Over the past few years, we have seen Pakistan's civilian government begin to put down stronger roots. And if elections proceed as planned next year, it will mark the first time in Pakistan's history that a civilian-led government has served its full term. The United States supports Pakistan's economic development, and we have said many times that we want to see democracy succeed in Pakistan.

We also support Pakistan's sovereignty, but we are clear that all sovereign nations carry certain obligations to protect the human rights of their citizens, to control their territory, to prevent threats to their neighbors and the international community.

So we know that there is still much to be done, but I can assure the people of Pakistan that the United States remains committed to this important relationship and we are confident we can continue to move forward together one step at a time to reach our shared strategic objectives.

Thank you very much.

**Remarks With Tunisian Foreign Minister Rafik Abdesslem Before Their Meeting
 September 21, 2012**

SECRETARY CLINTON: Good morning. I am pleased to welcome the Foreign Minister from Tunisia. I'm looking forward to our meeting. We obviously have a great deal to discuss, and I want to thank the Foreign Minister and the Government of Tunisia for their efforts over the last week to help secure our Embassy and the American Cooperative School of Tunis following the violent assaults of last Friday.

We are monitoring events closely today. There is no higher priority for President Obama and myself than the safety of our people. We've taken a number of steps around the world to augment security and to protect our personnel at diplomatic posts. And we are working closely with host governments in this effort.

As I have said before and as is embodied in the Vienna Convention and other international agreements, all governments have the duty, the solemn duty, to defend diplomatic missions. They must be safe and protected places so that governments can exchange views and work on many important issues, and leaders across the world must stand up and be counted in rejecting violence and holding violent actors accountable.

We are working closely with the Government of Tunisia. They have assisted us in enhancing the security of our facilities. We've also discussed with them the imperative of bringing to justice those responsible for these violent attacks. And we have offered and will continue to look for ways that we can assist the new Government of Tunisia in ensuring the rule of law throughout their country, first and foremost for the people of Tunisia themselves. We look forward to continuing to build our new partnership with the Tunisian Government and people. Our relationship is built around the shared principles of all democracies – a commitment to nonviolence, to tolerance, and inclusivity for all people, and to upholding the rule of law.

The Tunisian people have bravely put themselves on the road to democracy. They were the first of the Arab revolutions and they have made important progress in a very short period of time. They have worked too hard and sacrificed too much over too many years to see their progress hijacked or derailed by extremists with their own agenda. And those extremists, not only in

UNCLASSIFIED
U.S. Department of State
Case No. F-2015-04841
Doc No. C05739812
Date: 05/13/2015

STATE DEPT. - PRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMM.
SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT ON SENSITIVE INFORMATION & REDACTIONS. NO FOIA WAIVER.

Tunisia but in too many places around the world, look for opportunities to exploit this current situation or other situations, and all people and leaders must stand against them.

So as the Tunisian Government takes steps to strengthen security and protect the Tunisian people and economy from extremism and violent agendas, the United States stands ready to help. We also are working closely with Tunisia on the broader shared threat of terrorism, including from groups like al-Qaida and its affiliates.

So Minister, please know the United States remains committed to supporting Tunisia as you deal with this current situation, as you continue your democratic transition, and we want to be with you as you confront challenges and help seize opportunities together for the betterment of the future of Tunisia.

UNCLASSIFIED
U.S. Department of State
Case No. F-2015-04841
Doc No. C05739812
Date: 05/13/2015

STATE DEPT. - PRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMM.
SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT ON SENSITIVE INFORMATION & REDACTIONS. NO FOIA WAIVER.

STATE-SCB0046498

INTERVIEW OF HUMA ABEDIN

BEFORE THE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, OCTOBER 16, 2015

APPEARANCES

FOR THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI

DANA CHIPMAN, *Chief Counsel*
SHARON JACKSON, *Deputy Chief Counsel*
CARLTON DAVIS, *Counsel*
SARA BARRINEAU, *Investigator*
SHERIA CLARKE, *Counsel*
KIM BETZ, *Member Liaison and Counsel*
PHIL KIKO, *Staff Director and General Counsel*
HEATHER SAWYER, *Minority Chief Counsel*
PETER KENNY, *Minority Senior Counsel*
KRISTA BOYD, *Minority General Counsel*

FOR HUMA ABEDIN

MIGUEL E. RODRIGUEZ,
Bryan Cave LLP
KAREN DUNN,
MARTHA L. GOODMAN,
Boies, Schiller & Flexner, LLP

Ms. Jackson. This is a transcribed interview of Huma Abedin conducted by the House Select Committee on Benghazi.

This interview is being conducted voluntarily as part of the committee's investigation into the attacks on the U.S. diplomatic facilities in Benghazi, Libya, and related matters pursuant to House Resolution 567 of the 113th Congress and House Resolution 5 of the 114th Congress.

Could we have the witness state her name, please?

Ms. Abedin. Huma Abedin.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. We appreciate your appearance today. We understand, as I just said, that it's voluntary, and we appreciate, again, you coming in and sharing the information that you have.

Again, good morning. I am Sharon Jackson. I am one of the counsel from the majority staff. And for the reporter to make an official record of this proceeding, I'm going to have everyone go around and introduce themselves, and I'll start with Mr. Pompeo to my right.

Mr. Pompeo. I'm Congressman Mike Pompeo from the 4th District of Kansas.

Mr. Westmoreland. Lynn Westmoreland from Georgia.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. And we'll go to your counsel then.

Ms. Goodman. Martha Goodman, counsel for Ms. Abedin.

Mr. Rodriguez. Miguel Rodriguez, counsel for Ms. Abedin.

Ms. Dunn. Karen Dunn, counsel for Ms. Abedin.

Ms. Jackson. How about back to the minority staff in the back row.

Ms. Boyd. Krista Boyd with the select committee minority staff.

Ms. Sawyer. Heather Sawyer with the minority staff.

Mr. Kenny. Peter Kenny with the minority staff.

Ms. Clarke. Sheria Clarke, majority staff.

Mr. Kiko. Phil Kiko with the committee.

Ms. Betz. Kim Betz with the majority staff.

Mr. Davis. Carlton Davis, counsel for Mr. Gowdy.

Mr. Chipman. I'm Dana Chipman with the committee.

Ms. Barrineau. Sara Barrineau with the majority staff.

Ms. Jackson. Okay.

With that, I understand that both the witness and her counsel have something to say, so we'll allow you to add to the record at this point.

Ms. Dunn. Thank you, Sharon. Thanks for the opportunity to be here.

So the first thing we just want to say is Ms. Abedin will be testifying today to the best of her recollection. She has not had the benefit of review of all documents that are at the State Department or even all documents that have been produced to this committee by the State Department.

So we have agreed with committee staff that if there is a document that you want to show Ms. Abedin that she has not seen before -- some documents, we understand, were produced yesterday; we obviously have not seen those -- that we would take a break and allow for her to review the document.

The other concern we shared with majority staff is about leaking.

We received some assurances in this regard, and we just want to make sure everyone is sensitive to that.

Ms. Jackson. Okay.

Ms. Abedin. Ms. Jackson, I just want to say very briefly that I'm glad to have the opportunity to answer your questions today. You know, I've spent most of my adult life in government service, including in this complex for many years, and I want to do everything I can to be helpful to your committee. And I will do the best that I can to answer your questions as best as I can remember.

And the last thing I'll say: If it's not already painfully obvious, I've never testified before a congressional committee before, and I'm extremely nervous. And so I appreciate your bearing with me.

Ms. Jackson. All right.

As with anything, we have some ground rules that we follow, some procedures that we have in place that govern a transcribed interview like this. So I'd just like to take a couple minutes and go over those with you.

Ms. Abedin. Of course.

Ms. Jackson. Generally, the way that questioning proceeds is that a Member of Congress or a member of the staff, of the majority staff, will ask questions for up to an hour.

Ms. Abedin. Okay.

Ms. Jackson. And then you'll stay there, we'll switch seats and allow the minority staff or minority members of the committee to have the next hour of questioning. And we rotate back and forth in that

manner until each side has exhausted the questions that they have. And then, once we're out of questions, the interview will conclude for today.

Ms. Abedin. Okay.

Ms. Jackson. I realize that you've not testified before, but unlike testimony in a Federal court or a State court or a deposition in litigation, the committee format is not bound by rules of evidence. You and your counsel may raise objections for privilege subject to, then, review by the chairman of the committee. If those objections cannot be resolved in the interview, we can require you to return to answer those questions in a deposition or a hearing.

Members or their staff, however, are not permitted to raise objections to the questions that are posed when either side is asking questions. This has not been an issue that we've had, but it is one of our processes that we observe.

The setting that we're in today is an unclassified setting, so if any question that we pose to you you believe calls for a classified answer, please just let us know. We have a classified setting reserved for this afternoon, and we can move to that, or we can hold the question or withdraw the question until we're in a classified setting.

Ms. Abedin. Okay.

Ms. Jackson. So, again, just to the best of your ability, alert us if you think an answer might go into classified information, and we'll reserve it for the appropriate setting.

I believe your counsel has told you this, but I just wanted to

reiterate it. You are very welcome to confer with your counsel whenever you wish to do so. And you can do that throughout the interview before you answer any question and, obviously, during the breaks that we will take.

But if it's a simple matter of you need something clarified or repeated, just ask us to do so. I have a habit of asking complex questions, and sometimes they need to be broken down. So if there's too many parts to it, just let me know. I'll be happy to restate it or rephrase it in a way that enables you to answer it to the best of your ability.

But, again, if you want to discuss anything with your counsel, just let us know. We'll, you know, stop the clock, take a break, allow you a private area to confer with your counsel and give you as much time as you need to do that.

Ms. Abedin. Thank you.

Ms. Jackson. We will also take a break whenever is convenient for you. We typically do this at the end of every hour of questioning, so we take a break every hour. But if you need a break in between, if you need another cup of coffee or if you need water or anything like that, please just let us know. We're going to try and make you as comfortable as possible, given the circumstances that we're all in today.

As you can see, we have an official reporter taking down everything that is asked and your responses today. So one of the things that is important is that you give verbal responses to the questions

that are posed. We have a habit in conversation of nodding and shaking our head, but the reporter needs to take everything down. And so I give the reporter permission, if we get into that habit of not answering verbally, that the reporter can interject and say, "I need a verbal answer."

Along those same lines, sometimes people talk over each other, start giving an answer, or I might start a question before you've finished your answer. I will try my best not to do that. Again, I give the reporter full rein to interject and say "one at a time" or "slow down" or things like that.

I have been told, when I used to appear in Federal court, that I can talk really fast. Anytime a judge would say to me, "You have 5 minutes left in your closing," and I had 15 minutes of words yet to speak, I could talk really fast. And I will try not to do that today.

We don't want to keep you here any longer than possible, but we do want to make sure we get a good record of everything that's said and that you feel that you understand the questions that are posed to you to give us your best recollection.

And, again, that is what we're asking for today. We know that there has been a passage of time since these events that we're going to ask you about. And we realize that everyone's memory is not as crystal-clear as it was, say, yesterday, although I will admit that my short-term memory is the worst these days. My long-term memory is a little better.

But we are asking that you give us the most complete answer that

you can to our questions and to the best of your recollection. If you can honestly not remember something, please just say so. That's all we ask.

If it's a matter of you don't know the information but you know someone else does, we would ask that you give us that information. So, again, as I've often said, we weren't there at the time, we were not in the room, and so we can only get the information from the people who were there at the time. And that's why you're here today.

So I think that's pretty much it, except for the last part, but it's a very important part. Do you understand that you are required to answer questions from Congress truthfully?

Ms. Abedin. Yes.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. Do you understand that this also applies to questions asked by staff members of a congressional committee?

Ms. Abedin. Yes.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. Do you understand that witnesses that knowingly provide false testimony could be subject to criminal prosecution for perjury or making false statements?

Ms. Abedin. Yes.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. Is there any reason that you would be unable to provide truthful answers to today's questions?

Ms. Abedin. No.

Ms. Jackson. Okay.

That is the end of my preamble. I am going to ask the minority staff if they have anything that they would like to add.

Ms. Sawyer. We'd just like to welcome you here. We appreciate you being here. The ranking member, Mr. Cummings from Maryland, will be joining us shortly, and I'm sure that he will also express his appreciation for you joining us today.

Ms. Abedin. Thank you, Heather. Appreciate it.

Ms. Jackson. Ms. Abedin or your counsel, do you have anything else that you would like to add before we start the first round of questioning?

Ms. Dunn. No.

Ms. Abedin. No.

Ms. Jackson. Okay.

And, with that, we will start the first round of questioning. I'll say it's 10:19, sort of in between that, but we will start the first round of questioning.

EXAMINATION

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Ms. Abedin, we understand that you worked at the State Department between the years of 2009 and 2013. Is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q Could you describe for us your duties, responsibilities, and positions at the State Department?

A I was Secretary Clinton's Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations. And, in that capacity, I was responsible for the day-to-day operations of her office as it related to her schedule, her daily schedule, her long-term schedule. So it was everything from

planning, coordinating, and implementing her travel, whether it was in the building, domestically, or on foreign trips.

Q And you said your role was limited to her office and her schedule. Is that correct? You were not in charge of operations for the State Department writ large?

A That is correct.

Q Okay.

And can you give us the -- were you there during her entire tenure?

A I was.

Q Okay. Did you stay after her tenure?

A I did not.

Q Okay.

Ms. Abedin, how did you first learn that the U.S. diplomatic facility in Benghazi had been attacked or was being attacked?

A I remember receiving an alert on my BlackBerry. It was either a news alert or an alert from our operations center that there had been an attack.

Q Where were you at the time?

A I was in New York.

Q Okay. So you were not at State Department buildings here in Washington, D.C.

A I was not.

Q Okay.

What, if anything, did you do when you received that alert?

A I called one of the assistants in the Secretary's office

to check in.

Q Okay. And do you recall who that was?

A It was either [REDACTED] or [REDACTED], one of her two personal assistants there.

Q Could I get the first name again, please?

A [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

Q Okay. And what, if anything, did you want to do or inquire about, or what was the purpose of your call?

A I just wanted to check in. I'd heard about this -- I'd heard about the attack and just wanted to check in to the office and see what was happening.

Q Do you recall approximately when that was?

A You know, I honestly don't remember the time, but I was out to dinner with friends in New York, so it was sometime in the early evening.

Q Would you say it was after 6 p.m. and before 8 p.m. or was it earlier than that?

A I don't recall.

Q Okay.

You said that one of the ways that you might have been alerted was through an alert from the operations center?

A Correct.

Q Okay.

[Abedin Exhibit No. 1

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q I'm going to hand you what I've marked as Deposition Exhibit No. 1 or exhibit No. 1, which is a series of updates from the operations center at the State Department. It bears -- oh, man, the copying is bad -- bears document number 58670, and it is a multipage document.

But I would ask that you take a look at this exhibit, and then I'm going to ask you a few questions from it.

A Okay.

Q Okay. Are you ready?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay. Is this the nature of an ops alert that you described as being the type of information that you might have received? Or would an ops alert come to you in a different format?

A Looking at this, the document that you're showing me, I'm not sure I would have received these particular messages. Often, the special assistants -- [REDACTED], for example, is noted up here -- would forward alerts that they got, that the special assistants got, that they then forwarded to some of the members of the Secretary's staff.

I don't recall receiving updates to this detail that evening. But, yes, an ops alert typically would give you an update on a situation around the world at one of our facilities.

Q And when information would be forwarded to you, would it be forwarded in the form that the special assistants received it?

A I can't speak specifically, but this would not be atypical, for the special assistant to then forward it to some members of the

Secretary's staff, as is reflected in this particular document.

Q So I want to understand how the information flow would go. So if it wouldn't come in this form, how would it come to --

A No, it would. It would've been forwarded -- I mean, this is not atypical is what I'm saying.

Q Oh, not atypical.

A This is not atypical --

Q Okay.

A -- for the special assistant to have forwarded something to members of the Secretary's staff.

Q Okay.

Going back to, sort of, the end of this document, when the first alert came out, which would be, sort of, the bottom of the second-to-last page into the last page, it is sent Tuesday, September 11, 2012, at 4:05 p.m. And it lists a variety of what I would call distribution lists.

A Uh-huh.

Q Is that how you would describe who it is sent to?

A I'm not sure I can speak to who, you know, the ops alert would send emails to. But, yes, it was a selection of people throughout the Department. Yes.

Q Were you part of any of these email addresses here? For example, in the "to" line, I see, S_SpecialAssistants@state.gov.

A Correct.

Q Correct. Would you be a recipient of that, or would that

have been someone else who then would have perhaps forwarded the information to you?

A I would not have been a recipient of that. That would go to the S_SpecialAssistants.

Q Okay.

As you look through this list of email addresses, do you see any email address that you would have been a part of?

A There isn't an email address here that I recognize as part of a distribution group I would have been on.

Q In the middle of that distribution list, I see an email address that is called "BenghaziUpdate@state.gov." Do you recognize that email address?

A It does not sound familiar to me.

Q Okay. So you don't know who would have been a part of that email address.

A I am not certain.

Q Okay.

Throughout this document, exhibit 1, there are periodic updates that have come in, which culminates on the first page with what is in the subject line, "Update 8: Second Evacuee Flight is Wheels-Down in Tripoli."

Do you recall whether you received these updates periodically through this evening and into the next day, September 12?

A I do not recall.

Q Did you receive periodic updates that night from any other

source?

A You know, Ms. Jackson, the best that I remember, I received a notice on my BlackBerry. I'm not certain if it was an ops alert or if it was, you know, a CNN breaking news story. I was out to dinner with my husband and with some friends. I looked at it with some alarm.

I got up. I remember I was in a noisy restaurant. I called the office. "What's happening?" And it was clear they had a lot going on and said, yes, the Secretary is here, senior staff is here, and a lot's happening. And, basically, I can't -- I don't remember it being more than a few-minute phone call. I certainly don't think I appreciated how serious the situation was in that moment, because, you know, I just went back to what I was doing.

And so I do not recall having received -- and now that I've read this document -- you know, some obviously very serious updates that were being sent. I don't recall seeing those.

Q Did you have any further communications with anyone back at what I will describe as "Main State" either that evening or the next morning?

A I went to bed not, you know, having much, frankly, of an update. I don't recall hearing from any of my colleagues that evening. And then I woke to a department-wide email informing us that we'd lost Chris Stevens.

Q Okay. Do you recall if you had talked to the Secretary that evening?

A I didn't talk to her.

Q Okay. Did you talk to her the next morning?

A I did.

Q Okay. And we'll come back to that in a moment.

One last question about exhibit No. 1. At the very top of this document, on Tuesday, October 23, 2012, this document is being sent to Philippe Reines, Cheryl Mills, and Jake Sullivan and then to an address called "Coordination@state.gov."

Do you know what the Coordination@state.gov represented?

A I don't.

Q Is it an email address that you recall ever using?

A I never heard of it before.

Q Okay.

Was there any type of coordination group that was put together in response to the Benghazi incident?

A If there was, I'm not aware of the specifics.

Q Okay. All right.

A Shall I return this to you, ma'am?

Q We'll just set them over there for the reporter.

A Okay.

Q Set them to the side.

You stated that you talked to the Secretary the next morning?

A I did.

Q Okay. And do you recall approximately when that was?

A I do not.

Q Before noon? Or before 10?

A I think it may have been in the afternoon.

Q Okay. And did she relate to you what she knew about the attacks in Benghazi?

A Honestly, in that moment, I think everyone was just in shock and immediately trying to figure out how we brought the bodies home.

And, you know, for me, for my purposes, the purpose of our communication that day would have been how we addressed her existing schedule, which was quite full, and how we accommodated the schedule to have an appropriate service to honor, you know, those that we lost, and, you know, how that affected her schedule, and what do we cancel, what do we keep, who are we calling, and just, you know, coordinating that.

I mean, it was pretty -- we had moved pretty quickly into how do we operationalize, what are we supposed to be doing. I just remember everyone, you know, being in a little bit of -- our building was in mourning.

Q Uh-huh.

Do you recall any conversation with the Secretary regarding the details of the attack as part of that conversation?

A Oh, absolutely not. Those were -- no.

Q Okay.

Did you have conversations, telephone conversations, with any of the other senior leaders from the State Department that day?

A I did.

Q Okay. And who did you speak with?

A I couldn't tell you specifically, but I probably spoke to a lot of them. I was in the building the next day. I returned to Washington; I was in the building the next day. I saw many of my colleagues.

Q Okay. That was going to be my next question. Were you doing this from New York or Washington?

A I was in Washington.

Q So you returned that morning of the 12th?

A I returned, if I remember correctly, late morning -- I returned late morning. It was after the President had visited the Department.

Q Okay.

And so, then, once you returned, you were handling the Secretary's schedule and rearranging things and --

A You know, honestly, at that point, I was more serving in an advisory capacity -- how can I help, you know, what needed to be done. You know, many of my colleagues in the Department knew Chris quite well. And so it was just, you know -- part of it was, you know, we were just wondering around, you know, we were hugging people and checking in on them. But, yes, I did reengage.

Q Okay.

When did you first get any details regarding the attack, or attacks?

A I don't recall anything specific. There was obviously -- there were news reports coming out immediately. If there

were reports about the attack that were coming up in the Department, those were not meetings I would have typically been in.

Q Was it discussed, though?

A I --

Q And by that, I mean in your presence.

A I don't remember conversations. I was more in -- it wasn't my purview to be, sort of, listening to those conversations or being part of those conversations. I don't recall anything specific, aside from just talking about the loss of life.

Q Okay.

Do you know if the Secretary had reached out to either any of the survivors of the attack or the employees in Tripoli or other Americans that were in Libya?

A Could you be more specific into what time? When?

Q Either the night of the attack or the 12th.

A I know that -- I think it's public record that she spoke with the embassy that evening. And beyond that, I wasn't privy to the conversations or meetings that she had that evening.

Q Okay. And when you say "the embassy," you're talking about Tripoli as opposed to Benghazi?

A Yes. That's my recollection.

Q Okay.

There is an interagency group known as the FEST, which is the Foreign Emergency Support Team. Are you aware of the FEST?

A I'm not, really. I've read about them in news reports, but

no.

Q At the time.

A No.

Q At the time of the --

A At the time, I would not.

Q Okay.

Ms. Dunn. Sharon, I think also it would help, just to clarify, because I think there are some things that Ms. Abedin will know because she saw the news, and there are things that she will know because they're her firsthand knowledge.

Ms. Jackson. Right.

Ms. Dunn. And I suppose what you're interested in is what she actually remembers based on her firsthand knowledge.

Ms. Jackson. That is correct.

Ms. Dunn. But it's sometimes very difficult because, sitting here today, she probably knows what she read in the news. So I think --

Ms. Jackson. I will try and preface my questions with "at the time." But that is what -- you know, at the time these events unfolded, you know, did any number of things happen. And I have a list of things that I want to go down.

Ms. Abedin. Okay.

Ms. Jackson. So, regardless of whether you subsequently learned about things, I want to focus on what you knew at the time, what was discussed at the time, the information flow within --

Ms. Abedin. Okay.

Ms. Jackson. -- the senior leadership of the Department.

And I understand that it's very likely you don't know a variety of things, but I want to explore that too, okay?

Ms. Abedin. Okay.

Ms. Jackson. All right.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q So, as to the FEST, at the time of the attacks in September of 2012, you did not know of that resource of the State Department?

A I did not.

Q Okay. Did it come up in any conversations that you were privy to in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, like, the 12th, 13th, 14th, that week?

A None that I recall.

Q Okay.

Subsequent to that time and notwithstanding anything that you may have read in the media or learned, but did you ever learn in your official capacity at the State Department that there was a decision not to employ the FEST that evening?

A No. I'm not aware.

Q Okay.

Moving ahead a couple of days, or in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, so the 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, was the Secretary asked to appear on any news shows?

A I recall conversations about potentially appearing on the Sunday shows.

Q Okay. And when do you recall that you first learned about that?

A I have no memory. It was within -- you know, it was within that span of days, but I couldn't tell you.

Q Would it have been before Friday?

A It's possible it wasn't. I don't know. I really don't know.

Q Okay. Do you recall that you had the return-of-remains ceremony on Friday afternoon?

A Absolutely.

Q Okay. Would it have been -- I'm just trying to focus on the time period as best we can.

A Okay.

Q Would it have -- you returned on Wednesday?

A Wednesday.

Q And you had the return of remains on Friday. Where did the Secretary go after the return of remains? Did she go to New York?

A She was in Washington, as I recollect.

Q That weekend?

A Not the entire weekend. She returned to New York that weekend.

Q Okay. Would it have been before she returned to New York that these conversations about the Sunday talk shows would have come up?

A I would be speculating, but likely -- I would be

speculating. I mean, I don't -- I honestly don't remember.

Q Okay. And that's why we have documents.

A Oh, thank you. Good.

Q I'm going to mark this document as exhibit No. 2.

[Abedin Exhibit No. 2

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q It's document 45306.

A Okay.

Q There's a front and back, double-sided, but there's very little on the back.

A Okay.

Q Have you had enough time to review this document?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay. This document, which has been marked 45306 and 45307, has a subject line of "Mini for Today -- Friday, September 14, 2012."

Can you explain to us what a "mini for today" is?

A Yes. So her assistants would typically print her schedule, shrink it down on an index card so that it was convenient for her to travel with, and we called it the mini.

Q Okay.

This was an email exchange sent by [REDACTED]. Who was he?

A He was one of her assistants in the office. He did all of her correspondence and printed documents for her.

Q Okay. So he worked on the seventh floor at the State Department?

A He did.

Q And he would have access to her calendar and schedule and things like that?

A He typically would -- he would've been sent this to format it, but the schedulers are the ones who accessed and maintained the schedule.

Q Okay.

And I notice that this was sent at 7:29 a.m. to you and others.

██████████ is a name that you --

A Yes.

Q -- previously mentioned. ██████████, I believe, is also a name you mentioned. And then there is one other name, and who is that person?

A ██████████ was her director of scheduling.

Q Okay.

So were all of these people, you yourself included, involved in setting up her schedule for that day?

A It would have been ██████████ who set up her schedule, and most of us would have been cc'd for our awareness, but yes.

Q Okay.

And I noticed that down at the bottom there are some TBDs, which I assume means "to be determined," but please correct me if I'm wrong.

A That is correct.

Q Okay. And it appears that there was some consideration that the Secretary would leave after the return-of-remains ceremony and go to New York. Was that under consideration at the time?

A It must have been, as is noted on the schedule, yes.

Q Okay. Do you have a recollection as to whether that occurred?

A I don't. I'm not sure. You know, I'm not sure that she would have left that night.

Q Okay. If she didn't leave Friday night, when did she leave?

A She either left Friday, Saturday, or Sunday. I just would have to check --

Q Okay.

A -- the records.

Q And what type of records would have that information?

A Her schedule. Her schedule for that day.

Q And the State Department should still have a record of that?

A You'd have to check with them.

Q Okay.

Mr. Westmoreland. Sharon, can I just get her to clarify?

Ms. Jackson. Yes.

Mr. Westmoreland. What kind of scheduling did you do for Mrs. Clinton?

Ms. Abedin. Well, I oversaw the scheduling operation. So it would be, sort of, long-term planning, where she goes, you know, when we're traveling overseas. I worked very closely with [REDACTED] we worked

hand-in-hand, but she actually typed out the schedule. She would be the one who then called the host organization and said, "The Secretary will be coming," and then worked out all the logistical details. But I oversaw [REDACTED]

Mr. Westmoreland. So you oversaw all the scheduling, but there was people that worked under you that scheduled different things?

Ms. Abedin. They would schedule those things, sir. They did the actual logistics. They called. They, you know, talked about what her arrival point would be, where would she depart from, what would the order of the program be. So they reported -- she reported to me.

Mr. Westmoreland. So you would say, "She is going to New York," and they would do all the other stuff, whether it's getting a flight or whatever. If you said, "She's going to New York Friday afternoon" --

Ms. Abedin. Yes, sir.

Mr. Westmoreland. -- then it would be up to them to --

Ms. Abedin. Yes, sir. Yes, sir. [REDACTED] would --

Mr. Westmoreland. -- coordinate that?

Ms. Abedin. Yes, sir.

Mr. Westmoreland. But you don't remember if you told them that she was going to New York that afternoon or not?

Ms. Abedin. When she was in -- I don't. There was some conversation about her leaving that evening, as is reflected in this document. I'm not certain she did, sir. She went back --

Mr. Westmoreland. But you had her scheduled to go back to New

York.

Ms. Abedin. We had put it as a tentative option for her to go, but she -- it's possible she left later in the weekend. But I don't -- I didn't travel back with her, so I don't have on the top of my head when her wheels-up time was.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Okay. Just a couple other things on her schedule that day.

I see at 9:30 a.m. she had a weekly meeting with U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice. Do you see that on the schedule, on exhibit 2?

A I do see that, yes.

Q Do you know if that meeting occurred that day? Do you recall?

A I don't specifically recall for Friday. They did have a standing Friday meeting, so it was, you know -- typically, Ambassador Rice was there. As to that particular Friday, I don't remember if I saw her or not.

Q Okay. And one of the reasons I was just wondering is if Ambassador Rice then stayed and traveled with the Secretary to the ceremony in the afternoon or if you have a recollection of seeing her on this particular day.

A The senior officials I remember seeing that day were at Andrews Air Force Base. I just -- I don't remember if Ambassador Rice was there. I don't -- I really -- I'm sorry. I'm sorry I can't be more helpful.

Q Okay. Well, let me ask it this way. Once the Secretary

concluded her meetings for a day, was there a document that was written up that would summarize what actually happened on her schedule? Is there another document that may be out there that would confirm what she did or did not do?

A There typically was, yes, maintained at the State Department by [REDACTED], who was her executive assistant and did the final -- you know, updated what actually ended up happening.

Q Okay. And do you know where that final schedule was kept?

A Somewhere in the Department.

Q Okay. But [REDACTED] was the person who was responsible for that at the time?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

A When she was in the office, it was [REDACTED], yes.

Q Okay.

Moving up to the schedule, I see at 8:45 a.m. there's a daily senior staff meeting in the Secretary's conference room. Do you recall if that meeting occurred?

A It's a meeting that took place every day when she was in Washington. I'd be speculating, but I would imagine it happened. I have no reason to believe it wouldn't happen.

Q Okay. And who would attend the daily senior staff meeting?

A It was leadership -- it was leadership from --

Ms. Jackson. Oh, let me just interrupt for a second. We've been joined -- interrupt you to say we've been joined by Representative

Cummings.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q I believe the question was, who would attend the daily senior staff meeting?

A It was leadership from throughout the Department, the deputy secretaries and then the heads of various departments throughout the building.

Q So the under secretaries?

A No, not the under secretaries, specifically. It was the deputy secretaries of state and then representatives from -- you know, the executive secretary, for example, would be there, the executive assistant would be there, the head of H&L, and our counselor and chief of staff would be there. It was a smaller group.

Q Okay. And would you typically attend those when they were held at the State Department?

A Sometimes I did, but not always.

Q Okay.

And when the Secretary was traveling, did she have an alternative to this meeting? Was there a daily conference call as opposed to a meeting in her conference room? Did she maintain a daily briefing with her senior staff when she was out of the office?

A She received a PDB on a daily basis.

Q And would that be the Presidential Daily Brief?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay.

A But on travel, there wasn't typically a standing meeting or phone call that took place with the Department. But, you know, we were all regularly talking on the road, and several members of people traveling would be in communication with the State Department, including the Secretary.

Q Okay.

And at this daily senior staff meeting, for the ones that you attended, what were the topics of conversation, just generally? What type of things were being discussed?

A It was any news and updates that each individual department wanted to say that they are working on. The Legal Advisor would, for example, tell the Secretary what they were working on. The people representing H would tell her what was happening on the Hill. The executive secretary would give an update about what was happening at embassies around the world. It was sort of a, you know, daily update, daily report.

Q Okay.

A And then she would share anything that she wanted to.

Q Okay.

And did she have other standing meetings throughout the week with other either departments or sections of the Department?

A She did. Every Monday morning, we had a senior leadership meeting, which was very large, that did include the under secretaries, and it included the assistant secretaries from just about every bureau in the building. And all the envoys were included. So that was a

standing meeting that was every Monday.

She also had a standing meeting with the regional assistant secretaries. So the assistant secretaries that reported to the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, they would update her on the activities of their bureau.

Q Okay. That would include the Under Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, the regional bureau?

A That's correct.

Q Okay.

A Yes.

Q And when you say "regional bureaus," just help me understand the hierarchy in the State Department. Was that a level below the assistant secretary? Were they people different than the assistant secretaries, or was it the assistant secretaries?

A It was either the assistant secretary or, you know, the principal deputy assistant secretary in the office. It was whoever the assistant secretary for that particular bureau, you know, deemed appropriate to attend. They either came themselves; often, if they were traveling, it wasn't atypical for a deputy to show up.

Q Okay. And how often were these meetings held?

A The regionals were once a week or once every other week. But, again, it depended on her travel schedule. We tried to do it once a week. And I think it was every Thursday.

Q Okay. And how many people would be attending this particular meeting? How voluminous was the attendees?

A For the regional?

Q Let's start there, yeah.

A It would be just the number of assistant secretaries as there were for regional bureaus. So 10, 11? I'm guessing.

Q Okay.

A It was -- you know, it would fill this table.

Q I just want to make -- let's take Near East Affairs. Do you know how many regional bureaus were within the Near East Affairs --

A Well, that was a --

Q -- region?

A That was a regional bureau.

Q Okay.

A That was one.

Q Okay. So they'd have one person there.

A Correct.

Q Oh, okay.

A Yes.

Q I understand now.

A Yes.

Q And the other meeting that you described that was the larger meeting, how many people would be at that?

A That was quite large. That could have been, you know, anywhere from 30 to 40 people. Again, I'm guessing, but that was a very broad cross-section of leadership throughout the Department was included.

Q Okay.

Now, you said the special envoys attended that meeting?

A If they were not traveling, yes.

Q Okay. So were there any telecommunications capabilities?

I mean, did people remote in? Was it is a SVTCS or a VTC or anything like that? Or would it be an in-person meeting?

A That was an in-person meeting.

Q Okay. So if you had an envoy that was in the Middle East or some other country, that person would not be participating?

A I don't recall that ever happening.

Q Okay.

I veered off a little bit. We had been talking about the Secretary was asked to appear on the Sunday talk shows following the attacks in Benghazi. And I believe you stated that she had been requested to do them. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And do you recall who requested?

A Actually, I just want to clarify something, Ms. Jackson. There was conversation about her going on the Sunday shows that was raised with me, but -- yes, there was conversation.

Q And did you have those conversations with the Secretary?

A If I'm recalling, yes.

Q Okay. And who else participated in those conversations?

A Our press secretary, Philippe Reines.

Q Okay. Anyone else?

A I'm sure our deputy chief of staff, Jake Sullivan, and our chief of staff, Cheryl Mills.

Q Okay. Did Victoria Nuland participate in the conversations, if you recall?

A I'm sure she did. Philippe reported to Victoria, so I'm sure she did.

Q Okay. Anyone else that you recall being a part of that?

A No.

Q Okay.

What do you recall about how the topic came to be? Had the news organizations reached out to the Secretary or to Philippe Reines or Victoria Nuland requesting her? Was she asked by the White House? Was it something that she volunteered to do? What can you tell us about the origin of that?

A And you're asking me what I knew at the time --

Q Yes.

A -- not what I know now.

What I remember -- I don't remember being on any email exchanges about this. I remember getting a call. And it wouldn't have been atypical for Philippe, our press secretary, to call me and say, hey, what do you think about the idea of -- you know, can we have the Secretary -- or should we talk about the Secretary being on the Sunday shows? And we had a discussion about it. It might have been a conference call with some of these, you know, other individuals I mentioned. It might have just been me and Philippe. But it was pretty

quickly determined that she would not.

Q Okay. And tell us about how that decision was reached. What was discussed? Who discussed it? What were the pros and cons being discussed?

A Well, I can tell you from my perspective, because that's what I remember, which was we had a pretty full set of particularly phone calls that we needed and that the Secretary wanted to -- both responsive and proactive phone calls that she needed to make throughout the weekend. And we were much more focused -- I was much more focused on just getting done what she needed to have done. And if I remember correctly, she was on the phone pretty much all weekend, certainly all day Saturday and maybe some part of Sunday too.

But it seemed to me, as somebody who had to determine what to, you know, put on her schedule, that we had other priorities, other things that she needed to be doing. I did also anticipate that she was going to go back to New York that weekend. And, lastly, it was a pretty rare occurrence that she would have done Sunday shows. I mean, it wasn't anything that was ever seen, really, as a priority by any of us, frankly.

Q Was there any part of this discussion that centered on the fact that when she had in the rare instances done Sunday talk shows before it had been about Libya?

A Are you telling me that?

Q Well, let me ask you that. Did you know that she had previously done the Sunday talk show circuit, if you will, regarding

Libya? Do you recall?

A You know, we had done the Sunday shows that year, I know that, and maybe one or two, but I don't remember the topic. I do remember that we went, yes, earlier in the year.

Q Do you recall that she did the Sunday talk shows right around the time of the U.N. resolution and when the President was going to make an address to the Nation regarding Libya?

A It could have been.

Q Could have been?

A Yeah. Yeah.

Q Okay.

Do you recall whether there was any -- back to September --

A Yeah.

Q -- of 2012. Do you recall there being any part of the discussion of whether she should do the shows being the fact that she had done Sunday talk shows regarding Libya before? Do you remember that being discussed as a factor?

A Not at all.

Q Okay.

And, again, do you recall when the decision was made that she was not going to do them?

A I don't recall specifically when. But I do know that when it was raised with me, from my perspective, I immediately said, this will be very challenging to do, given everything else we're trying to do, in terms of these priority calls that needed to be done.

Q Do you know when the decision was made to have Ambassador Rice do the Sunday talk shows? Were you part of any of those discussions?

A I was not. And I typically wouldn't have been.

Q Okay.

In the days following that, did you learn anything -- so in the rest of the month of September into October, did you learn anything about how the decision was made to have Ambassador Rice go on the talk shows?

A I don't recall any conversations.

Q Okay. None at all?

A No. And, I mean, those typically wouldn't be conversations I would have been involved in. But I specifically. I don't specifically.

Q Do you know if anyone else was involved in those conversations, regardless of the specifics of the conversation?

A I can't speak to what other people were involved with. I don't know. I honestly don't know.

Q Did the Secretary weigh in as to whether she wanted to do the Sunday talk shows?

A I remember discussing it -- you know, we discussing it with her very briefly, and the answer was "no" almost immediately, from my memory.

Q Okay.

Now, you've stated that the Secretary made a variety of calls that

weekend. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what were the nature of those calls? I mean, to whom? What were -- yeah.

A Wow, you're really -- you're really, like, testing my memory here.

Q I'm looking for more generally.

A You know, there would have been regional calls to other leaders in the Middle East. She may have called -- in fact, I'm sure she called the Libyan leadership and other, sort of, regional Arab leaders.

I recall there being some conversations with African leaders, as well. There was something going on in the region, and those calls needed to be addressed. And that, I think, might have even been prior to knowing about the attack, but it was.

I remember, that weekend, there just being so many calls that she had to make. I think she called the King of Morocco, for example, as a specific, I mean, just something that sticks out in my head. But those are the ones that I can recall.

Ms. Dunn. Do you have a document or something?

Ms. Jackson. Yeah.

Ms. Dunn. Okay. Given that, you know --

Ms. Jackson. We may circle back around to that.

Ms. Dunn. Okay.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q I know you answered this, but let me ask it again because --

A Yeah.

Q -- I'm not exactly sure I remembered your answer. Did you stay in Washington that weekend, or did you travel -- I know you said you didn't travel back with the Secretary.

A Yes.

Q But did you travel back to New York?

A I did.

Q You did?

A I did.

Q Okay. Did you work with her at her New York residence that weekend on these calls?

A I don't think I was with her that -- I wasn't always with her. So I don't think I was there that weekend, no.

Q Okay.

I want to switch gears here for a moment because I have a few more questions. Or --

Mr. Pompeo. You keep going. You keep going.

Ms. Jackson. Are you sure?

Mr. Pompeo. Yes, of course.

Ms. Jackson. Okay.

Ms. Dunn. I'm also just wondering, do you do breaks on the hour, or do you them on the 19s, when we started?

Ms. Jackson. I usually go for a full 60 minutes, but if you would like a break, we'll be happy to take one now.

Ms. Abedin. Oh, no, I'm fine.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. Then I will go to, like, 19 after, and then I'd be done with my hour, and we would take a break and switch.

Ms. Dunn. Got it. Thank you.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. Is that fine?

Ms. Dunn. Yeah, no, that's fine.

Ms. Jackson. Okay.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q I want to step back to much earlier, in February and March of 2011, when the Arab Spring erupted --

A Okay.

Q -- and ask you what you recall about the discussions of the U.S. intervention in Libya.

A Well, anything related to the policy elements, I would not be able to be helpful in providing because I wasn't involved in those conversations. But in terms of her travel and her schedule, I can tell you what I remember. Is that what you're asking me?

Q We wanted to know what you knew and what you didn't know and then -- yes. And now we want to go into what you do know. Okay?

A Okay.

Q I just wanted to make clear what you would have been involved in and not involved in.

A Yes. In that time period or, frankly, any time period, any meetings as it related to policy would not have been my purview and would not have been what I was included in. But I certainly was

included in conversations about where she would go. I was part of those discussions about her travel.

Q And as to policy and as to Libya, in particular, who would have been the person that she discussed Libyan policy with?

A That would have been our -- well, it would have been a combination of leadership of the Department. It would have been our Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, Jeff Feltman, and, you know, our Deputy Secretary of State, Bill Burns, and Jake Sullivan, who was my co-Deputy Chief of Staff, and he did policy. I was operations, and he was policy.

Q Okay.

Now, the Department had a second Deputy Secretary; I believe at that time it was Thomas Nides. Or, at least, he changed --

A Was it Jack Lew or Tom? I think it would have been Tom, yes.

Q Okay. Regardless of who was in the position, did they have a policy role?

A I'm not sure how to answer that question. I mean, they certainly -- I mean, I experienced the person in that role as much more of a management deputy. Like, I certainly saw, you know, Bill Burns or Jim Steinberg as the Deputy Secretary of State who did policy, and the other was more of a management capacity.

Q Okay. And not to say that they didn't delve into policy --

A Yeah, no, yes. I just -- yeah, I'm not -- I'm not sure that -- I'm not sure that I saw that.

Q In the spring of 2011 and throughout 2011, we see a lot of documents where you are forwarding to Secretary Clinton information regarding Libya and what's happening in Libya, both in general news articles and in more specific substance from within the State Department. Do you recall that?

A Yes. Absolutely.

Q Okay. Tell us how you chose or you knew to forward things to the Secretary. Were you given direction to do so? Did you just know what was going on and did it of your own volition? We're just trying to understand why the information flowed in the way it did.

A You're talking about electronic?

Q Yes.

A Okay. So when she was in the office and when she was on the road, you know, most information that she got was on paper that was, you know, handed to her and that she handed back. And the same thing happened on the road. We had our line officers, whose responsibility was to create the paper, print it, and give it to her.

In instances where she might be at home for the evening or it was the weekend, I often did send her news alerts or just updates through the Department. She generally wanted to know what was going on, and it was my attempt to help keep her informed.

Q Okay. Would she communicate to you what areas of the world she was concerned about or wanted updates on?

A No. You know, I generally erred on sending her more rather than less. It wasn't specific. You know, for example, if it was a

news update, I would send it to her, regardless of the region in the world.

Q Okay. And how did you know to send her information on Libya? What was your thought process in deciding to send her information on Libya?

A I would have send her, if it was information on Somalia or London or the U.K., I mean, anywhere, I would have forwarded -- I would have likely forwarded it to her.

Q Okay.

Do you have any sense or recall as to whether the volume of information you sent her regarding Libya stayed constant, whether it ebbed and flowed? Was there a time where it tapered off? And, specifically, I'm looking at the period of 2011 and 2012.

A I remember -- I recall receiving just throughout her tenure lots of, you know, email updates about the status of, you know, countries around the world, and I sent them to her.

Certainly, in 2011, I mean, we were very heavily engaged in all aspects of what was happening in Libya. I mean, I can speak from my own perspective. The amount of time she spent at these international conferences and with the contact groups -- I mean, I think we had, I don't know, eight or nine trips in 2011 alone that were somehow related to Libya, I mean, starting in February, I think, of that year when she went to the U.N. Human Rights Council in Switzerland.

So, between that and then going to Paris and then going to London and then going back to Paris and then being in Istanbul and Rome and

the Emirates and then finally back in Paris and then ending up in Tripoli in October of that year, yes, I mean, it was a constant, you know, physical presence that she had in these meetings. And there was a lot of work done, you know, around that remotely. And so, sure, was I sending her updates on Libya? Absolutely.

As to the number and the volume, I couldn't guess, but it was probably -- I would speculate that there was probably a lot of updates that were coming in that I would be sending.

Q Okay.

And all of those cities that you just talked about, Paris three times and Rome --

A Yes, ma'am.

Q -- and Istanbul, were those all Libya-related meetings --

A Yes, ma'am.

Q -- that she attended?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay.

In February-March of 2011, were you aware that Chris Stevens was going to be selected to be the Envoy to -- and be sent to Benghazi and Envoy to Libya?

A I was not.

Q Okay. When did you first learn that?

A When I met him -- and if I'm remembering correctly, I think that was the first time I actually met Chris. When he attended a meeting with Mahmoud Jibril in Paris was the first time that the

Secretary was meeting with the opposition leader. And this would have been probably mid-March of 2011, and it's the first time I met Chris.

Q Okay. And that was before he went into Benghazi as the Envoy?

A I don't know at that point what his formal title was. But, at that point, it was, at least to me, clear -- that's why he was in the meeting -- that he was our representative to the TNC.

Q Okay.

Do you recall whether Ambassador Cretz was at that meeting?

A I think he was. I think he was, yes.

Q Okay.

And tell us what you know of why Chris Stevens was selected to go and be the representative to the rebels or the revolutionaries.

A I have absolutely no idea.

Q Okay. Do you know who made that decision?

A I would be speculating.

Q Okay.

Ms. Jackson. I see that I only have about 5 or 6 minutes left, and I believe Mr. Westmoreland has a couple of question. So he may want to jump back a little bit.

Mr. Westmoreland. I just want to go back to the scheduling for a minute.

Ms. Abedin. Yes, sir.

Mr. Westmoreland. You talked to the Secretary, I guess, late in the afternoon of the 12th?

Ms. Abedin. Yes, sir.

Mr. Westmoreland. Did she give you any scheduling request of what she felt like she needed to do for you to put on the calendar?

Ms. Abedin. From my recollection, sir, that first meeting that we had was to address what to do about the next few days in the immediate.

For example, we had the Foreign Minister of Morocco who had come in with an entire delegation, and we were doing a strategic dialogue meeting. And this had been a long-planned summit, if you will, that was taking place actually the next day, that Thursday, the 13th.

And we also had had a long-scheduled and delayed Eid reception, which was, you know, the end of the month of Ramadan, sort of, celebration.

And that purpose of that first meeting was what should we do about the next few days. And, you know, again, from my recollection, we pretty quickly decided that --

Mr. Westmoreland. Let me just --

Ms. Abedin. Yes, sir.

Mr. Westmoreland. But would not the attack on a mission and the killing of the Ambassador and three other Americans, would not that have been a priority over -- I mean, this had just happened the day before.

Ms. Abedin. Yes, sir.

Mr. Westmoreland. And if something like that had happened, you know, in my district, you know, I would have called scheduling and said, hey, look, I want to talk to the county commissioner where this

happened, I want to talk to the city council members, I'd like to make a phone call to the governor. I mean, you know, there are just --

Ms. Abedin. Yes, sir.

Mr. Westmoreland. -- those things that I would think that she would have relayed to you, but she just basically wanted to continue with the schedule?

Ms. Abedin. Oh, no, sir. By the time I saw her, she had already done many of those things.

Mr. Westmoreland. Okay.

Ms. Abedin. Earlier in the day, she --

Mr. Westmoreland. So she'd have made all these high-priority contacts?

Ms. Abedin. She'd already made a -- she'd already made phone calls, as I understand. She had gone to the White House, met with the President. You know, they had a meeting about what was happening. The President returned to the State Department with her and spoke to State Department employees.

I apologize if I was mischaracterizing what her priority was. When the attack happened, I was not there. She consulted with the staff that was immediately in her presence, and they were the ones who executed -- I do not hold up executing anything, sir, as it related --

Mr. Westmoreland. No, I wasn't inferring that.

Ms. Abedin. No, no, I meant, like, as a matter of practice. You know, if it was --

Mr. Westmoreland. So when called you, she did give you -- or,

at some point, late afternoon --

Ms. Abedin. Yes, sir.

Mr. Westmoreland. -- did she talk to you about rearranging anything on the schedule or prioritizing anything or --

Ms. Abedin. Well, Friday changed dramatically. I mean, really, you know, the -- she had spent the morning -- she had also spoken with family members that morning.

So it really was -- and, also, if I'm remembering correctly, you know, shortly after we met with her, she met to talk about the ceremony at Andrews, because our chief of protocol had to take the lead on organizing that, you know, amongst the other agencies. So, in the moment, it was: how do we properly honor; you know, reach out to the families; spoke at the Department.

But, yes, sir, there was this question: What should I do? We had obviously canceled whatever else she'd had on Friday. There were, as you can see, a few things that we kept. We did decide to move forward the next day with the meeting with the Moroccans and with the Eid reception, but --

Mr. Westmoreland. Did -- go ahead.

Ms. Abedin. No, that's okay. That's okay. I'll take your questioning.

Mr. Westmoreland. Well, You know, if I'm trying to get in touch with Mike --

Ms. Abedin. Yeah.

Mr. Westmoreland. -- and sometimes it's hard getting contact

Member to Member, I'll call my scheduler and say, can you call Mike's scheduler and set up a time where we can talk?

Ms. Abedin. Yes, sir.

Mr. Westmoreland. And I can't imagine trying to get in touch with another ambassador or the President of a country or opposition leaders or whoever it is without, you know, scheduling a phone call.

Did you schedule any phone calls to these people that she was going to call either at the end of that week or over the weekend?

Ms. Abedin. So I would be overseeing -- typically, what I had done in the past was I was overseeing that operation. So, if I wasn't there, she would have just had the scheduler do that who was sitting in the building in addition to, you know, our deputy chief of staff, our chief of staff, all the staff that was with her, and said, you know, I need to call the family members, I need to call the leadership of Libya, which, you know, I think I --

Mr. Westmoreland. So she didn't call you and say you need to contact somebody. She was contacting other --

Ms. Abedin. Oh, no, sir. No, sir. Yeah, if she was in the office -- and I've mentioned [REDACTED] a few times -- she would pick up the phone -- it didn't matter if I was in the office or not. She would pick up the phone, and she would say, I would like to call, you know --

Mr. Westmoreland. But would you have been the one to say she's going home and I'm going to schedule phone -- you know, on Saturday and Sunday, we're scheduling phone calls?

Ms. Abedin. Ultimately, when she was going home, she would direct us. So, if I was with her, she'd tell me. If somebody else was with her, she'd tell them. I happened, in that particular time period, not to be there, so none of these directives were directed to me.

Ms. Abedin. So the press secretary got the request -- because I know, you know, if we say something or, you know, something happens, you know, we have all the press people that calls our press girl, and, you know, she talks to my scheduler and to me about what's, you know, going on.

So they call this press person. And did he call and ask you, hey, does she have time to do these things?

Ms. Jackson. And you're talking about the Sunday talk shows?

Mr. Westmoreland. Yes, I'm talking about the -- I'm sorry. I'm talking about the Sunday talk shows.

Did he say, does she have time to do this? Or was it, do you want to talk to some of the policy people about her doing this? Would you have been his first phone call once he got those press things?

Ms. Abedin. Probably not.

Mr. Westmoreland. Okay.

Ms. Abedin. No. He would've probably consulted -- typically, he would've consulted with the policy team first.

Mr. Westmoreland. Well, how did you get in the loop, then?

Ms. Abedin. He'd probably call to say, we want to schedule, you know, what do you think, what else is happening.

Mr. Westmoreland. I know, but after he talked to the policy people, it seems pretty evident that the answer was, no, we're not going to do that.

Ms. Abedin. Yeah, we could have -- and it's possible that we were all on the same call. I just -- it wasn't something we spent a lot of time talking about. So, you know, could I have been on that same call with Jake? That wouldn't have been atypical, sir. It wouldn't have been atypical for the chief of staff, the deputy chief, and myself, for all to be on one phone call.

Mr. Westmoreland. So, just to be perfectly straight, in your opinion --

Ms. Abedin. Yes, sir.

Mr. Westmoreland. -- these phone calls that weekend --

Ms. Abedin. Yes, sir.

Mr. Westmoreland. -- that she had already made these priority calls, you said, you know, that night and the next morning, she had been on the phone talking to these different people. So the priority phone calls that she made on Saturday and Sunday were a lower priority than what the first calls were, I'm assuming, or either she couldn't get in touch with them.

And so did you all say, hey, this needs to be our priority rather than informing the American people of what happened in Benghazi that killed four Americans? And I guess that's my question to you. How did that -- you know, you said that these other phone calls were prioritized over doing the Sunday talk shows, right?

Ms. Abedin. That is correct, sir. But I also -- I think the Secretary has been pretty public about saying that she did not see the Sunday shows, as a matter of practice, to be a priority. But she had taken the opportunity --

Mr. Westmoreland. Well, seeing them, I can see them not be a priority. They're not a priority -- I don't get up on Sundays to go on a talk show.

Ms. Dunn. We should also clarify, because your initial testimony, just to be clear, was about your perception.

Ms. Abedin. Yes.

Ms. Dunn. And so I think, if you're -- if you want to clarify --

Ms. Abedin. Yeah, no. I mean, yes, I can only speak to what I knew. And, you know -- and I think the only thing that I was going to add is she had made several public statements prior to Sunday on a number of occasions, the day after the attack, including on Friday at Andrews Air Force Base. And I think she communicated to the American people on a number of occasions.

And, again, I'm saying this from my perspective. I don't know that the Sunday shows are the only place where you can communicate to the American people. But I say that very respectfully, and that's just -- that's my opinion, sir.

Mr. Westmoreland. Thank you.

Ms. Abedin. Thank you, sir.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. I see that our first hour is up.

Ms. Dunn. Great.

Ms. Jackson. And so we will go off the record and take a break.

Ms. Dunn. Thank you.

Ms. Jackson. And we'll resume in hopefully -- let's shoot for 10 minutes.

[Recess.]

Ms. Sawyer. Okay. We'll go back on the record.

Good morning, Ms. Abedin. Again, I'm Heather Sawyer. I'm with the Democratic members of the select committee. We, again, appreciate your willingness to be here, your willingness to be here voluntarily, and all of your efforts to make sure that this committee has information from you, including your documents, that will help our investigation.

The ranking member, Mr. Cummings, is here with us. I know he has some questions for you and wanted to also welcome you, so I'm going to turn it over to him.

Ms. Abedin. Thank you.

Mr. Cummings. Good morning.

Ms. Abedin. Good morning, sir.

Mr. Cummings. Ms. Abedin, I came here out of respect for you. I am going to be here for a while, and hopefully I'll get a chance to come back. I've got to run back to Baltimore and do some things in our district and prepare for next Thursday. But I do thank you for being here. And we appreciate your continued cooperation with the committee and your willingness to appear voluntarily to answer our questions.

And I want to be clear. We have voiced our objections to the chairman for calling you in based on our firm belief that you are being

targeted because of your relationship with Secretary Clinton, not because you can provide information about the Benghazi attacks, the subject that this committee is supposed to be investigating.

Our concerns are based on our understanding from previous witnesses brought before the committee and our review of the documents, that you are not a policy advisor on Libya or Benghazi and did not have a role in security for overseas posts, including the temporary mission facility in Benghazi.

I wanted to confirm that understanding and make sure the record is clear on your possible role, if any, with respect to legitimate questions that fall within the scope of the committee's jurisdiction.

Your title, Ms. Abedin, Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations, might lead some to believe that you did have an operational role in overseeing security for overseas posts. Was that the case?

Ms. Abedin. That is not the case, sir.

Mr. Cummings. So you had no role with regard to operations?

Ms. Abedin. None at all.

Mr. Cummings. So you were never personally reviewing or responsible for assessing and managing security needs and assets for the temporary mission facility in Benghazi?

Ms. Abedin. That's correct, sir.

Mr. Cummings. Which division within the State Department is responsible for security at diplomatic posts?

Ms. Abedin. It was our Under Secretary for Management, along with the head of the DS bureau.

Mr. Cummings. So it is personnel with the diplomatic security who serve as the experts, I take it, for assessing and managing security needs and resources for the Department as opposed to the rest.

Ms. Abedin. That's correct, sir.

Mr. Cummings. I wanted also to ask you some questions about your involvement, if any, in policy decisions with regard to the State Department's presence in Benghazi.

In December 2011, a recommendation was sent to the Under Secretary for Management, Patrick Kennedy, to Main State Department presence in Benghazi. Did you participate in drafting that recommendation?

Ms. Abedin. I did not, sir.

Mr. Cummings. Were you someone who needed to sign off on the

recommendation before it went to the Under Secretary?

Ms. Abedin. No, I did not.

Mr. Cummings. Did you take part in his decision to approve that recommendation?

Ms. Abedin. I did not.

Mr. Cummings. The Accountability Review Board that investigated the attacks in Benghazi found that there were several troubling security incidents in Benghazi in the months before the September 11, 2012, attacks, including incidents at the temporary mission facility. Emergency action committees were convened to assess the security environment and make recommendations.

We understand that the emergency action committees are the main tool used by post to review the security environment and make necessary adjustments to security posture. In our investigation, we have not seen any recommendation to depart from Benghazi. Are you aware of any emergency action committee recommendation that personnel in Benghazi should depart post?

Ms. Abedin. In that time, sir?

Mr. Cummings. Yes.

Ms. Abedin. I don't believe I was. It didn't mean that there wasn't a memo that may have crossed my desk or an email that I may have received, but those were not action items for me, so I would not have done anything about it.

Mr. Cummings. Some members have questioned why Ambassador Stevens was visiting Benghazi from Tripoli during the anniversary of

9/11, 2001, and the terrorist -- of the terrorist attacks. Do you know why Ambassador Stevens was there at that time? Do you know?

Ms. Abedin. I do not, sir.

Mr. Cummings. Do you have any reason to believe that Secretary Clinton sent him there at that time? Would you have knowledge of that?

Ms. Abedin. I wouldn't have knowledge. You'd have to ask her.

Mr. Cummings. Do you have any reason to believe that before she learned of the attacks, Secretary Clinton even knew that he was there?

Ms. Abedin. I wouldn't know how to answer that question, sir.

Mr. Cummings. So you -- why do you say that? I'm sorry.

Ms. Abedin. I don't -- I don't even -- or could you repeat the question, sir?

Mr. Cummings. Yeah. I said, do you have any reason to believe that before she learned of the attacks, and if you can't answer this, that's fine, just -- do you have any reason to believe that before she learned of the attacks, Secretary Clinton even knew that Ambassador Stevens was there?

Ms. Abedin. I don't know what she would have known and what she wouldn't have known.

Mr. Cummings. All right. Now, you were not with the Secretary on the night of the attacks, I understand, but you spoke with her the next morning. Is that correct?

Ms. Abedin. I spoke to her some time the next day, that is correct, yes, sir.

Mr. Cummings. One thing that is often overlooked is the fact that

Secretary Clinton, like others in the Department, lost members of her team, individuals who were a part of the State Department family, and I understand it's a very close family. Can you share with us on a personal level what that meant to her and what it meant to you and others?

Ms. Abedin. Well, I think, you know, I -- I'm not even sure I mentioned this yesterday -- earlier, rather, but I wasn't even aware that we'd lost Chris Stevens until I got the Department-wide email when I woke up to it the next morning. And I was stunned. I'd never experienced anything like that in all of my years in government service, and I just never had -- I never dealt with anything like that before, and, you know -- I'm really sorry.

Mr. Cummings. Take your time.

Ms. Jackson. Take your time.

Ms. Abedin. And when I came to the Department the next day, I think -- the general feeling, as I had mentioned earlier to Ms. Jackson, was I think everybody was just in shock, you know, [REDACTED], who I was very close to, I sat right next to her and had known, of course, for a very long time, and it was just hard to -- it was just hard to believe. These are people you're in meetings with every day, and you don't actually have --

Mr. Cummings. And --

Ms. Abedin. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Mr. Cummings. Let me ask you this: You had a chance to talk to Secretary Clinton. Is that right?

Ms. Abedin. I did.

Mr. Cummings. And what can you share about what you got from her? Did you have an impression of her feelings --

Ms. Abedin. As I --

Mr. Cummings. -- with regard to this tragedy?

Ms. Abedin. As I mentioned -- as I mentioned, I mean, I think we were all just trying to come to terms with what had happened. It was clear that the President's visit to the Department meant a lot to people there and people were talking about that. I know she was just -- I mean, I remember seeing people who were upset or crying. I think it had been a long time since, I think, even people in the building had remembered losing -- actually losing an Ambassador, but she was very -- she was very -- you know, she was upset and she was moved, but she was also very determined to find out what happened, and really, it was bringing the bodies home and doing it appropriately.

And I remember, and I was saying to Congressman Westmoreland, when we had a meeting after the scheduling meeting with our chief of protocol, or at least Pat Kennedy, I don't remember who, but it was how do we do the ceremony appropriately, how is it done in the best way, how do we take care of the families. It was -- that was our primary focus, was that ceremony, that was the single, you know, thing that I remember driving my mind, but she was -- I remember her being extremely affected, and I'm sure -- you know, I don't want to speak for her, but it was -- you know, this was one of her ambassadors. And so, it was a -- it was a hard few days where you were trying to reconcile what had happened and also just, you know, the Department, things were happening, things that

needed to get done.

Mr. Cummings. Did you believe that her feelings were genuine?

Ms. Abedin. Yes, sir, I did.

Mr. Cummings. And sincere?

Ms. Abedin. Yes.

Mr. Cummings. Secretary Clinton is sometimes accused of caring only about her public image, of doing things only to make herself look good to the American people. Did you feel that was true with how she responded to the attacks in Benghazi? And you know her. You've been with her a long time.

Ms. Abedin. From what I know about my boss, absolutely not. In fact, I feel it's the opposite with her. She focuses more on just getting the job done and making the choices that need to be made, and less about how it reflects on her. That is how I've experienced it in all the years I've worked for her.

Mr. Cummings. Now, Ms. Abedin, it's my understanding that the press was informed that you were being interviewed by the committee and given the time and the place of this interview.

Ms. Abedin. Yes, sir.

Mr. Cummings. I had previously expressed my concern to the chairman that the select committee is unfairly targeting witnesses with ties to Secretary Clinton for negative publicity and selective release of information. I raised similar concerns with regard to the chairman's treatment of Mr. Blumenthal, who was served with a unilateral subpoena despite being willing to appear voluntarily. There were numerous leaks

about his interview to the press, which resulted in inaccurate reporting by the press. The same thing happened again when Cheryl Mills was brought before the committee.

I suspect that you may share in that -- and I wasn't here when we opened up today. I suspect that you and your counsel may share some of these concerns, and I wanted to give you an opportunity to comment on that, particularly as you shared with us already that you were nervous about even being here.

Ms. Abedin. I --

Mr. Cummings. Let me ask it another way: Do you have any concern that following this interview, your testimony will be portrayed accurately by members of the committee, and that it will be fair?

Ms. Abedin. I can only hope that it will be. And as I said when I first arrived, I really do -- I really do want to be helpful if I can be, and if there are questions that I can answer, I want to be helpful to the committee, but -- and I do hope that it is represented accurately after I leave today.

Mr. Cummings. You had expressed --

Ms. Dunn. Yes. So --

Mr. Cummings. -- early on -- and I'm sorry I wasn't here.

Ms. Dunn. No. That's okay. So I had expressed concern about leaks of the testimony today. I conveyed these concerns yesterday to majority staff counsel, to Mr. Chipman. He gave me assurances in this regard. And I think I also speak for Mr. Rodriguez when I say that it is our fervent hope that there are no leaks of Ms. Abedin's testimony

today. It is -- she has made very clear, and I think is very obvious from her testimony thus far, how much she wants to be as helpful as possible, and I think it would undermine her effort were there to be selective leaks, or leaks at all about her testimony today.

Mr. Cummings. Very well.

Again, I want to thank you for being here. And I -- like I said, I came here out of respect for you. And as I said, I hope to get back. If I don't, thank you again for being here.

Ms. Abedin. Thank you, sir. I'm honored by your presence.

Ms. Sawyer. So why don't we go off the record.

[Discussion off the record.]

Ms. Sawyer. We're back on the record.

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q I just wanted to pick up with some of the conversation you had in the prior round. I couldn't recall. I think you've already told us, but what day -- you were in New York. And then did you return physically to D.C. during that week?

A I did. I -- the next day.

Q Okay. You know, and a lot of the conversation thus far has focused pretty exclusively on Benghazi and kind of the attack in Benghazi, but do you have a recollection, do you recall hearing about protests elsewhere in the region?

A Yes, I did.

Q And to the best that you can recall, what did you hear, when did you hear it?

A I don't -- I don't remember the specific time, but it was in the days prior, we had heard about a trailer for a movie that was an anti-Muhammad movie that, I believe, had actually aired in Egypt, I think the trailer had aired in Egypt and the movie was -- was going to be coming out shortly thereafter, and that there had been a protest, some protests, but at least a specific protest in our embassy in Cairo, and that some of the perpetrators of that protest had said they were there because they were, you know, outraged, offended by the potential content of the movie based on the trailer that they'd seen.

So, yes, it -- and there may have been protests in other parts of the region. I remember Cairo specifically because that's where we had our embassy protest. And that was -- in the days around that time was prior to the attack, for sure.

Q Do you recall whether or not -- well, you said that some of the individuals at Cairo had indicated they were there over -- because of anger over the film.

A Yes.

Q Was that something that this government, the U.S. Government, had seen before, had experience with when something was deemed to be insulting to the Prophet Muhammad, that there would be unrest in other places in the world?

A Yes, yes. There were the -- there were the cartoon depictions, I can't remember where in Europe. I believe -- again, I don't want to make it up, because I don't remember, some were elsewhere in Europe, and that had caused some unrest. So, yes, it had been heard

of before.

Q And did you have an awareness at any point in time? You said that you knew about the protests in Cairo. Were you aware, at any point in time, that protesters there had also breached the wall of the embassy in Cairo?

A I obviously know now, or remember, you know. A lot of this I read afterwards. In the moment, I may have actual -- I may have, Heather, it may have been something that was an update that was presented at a morning meeting. It's possible I did, yes.

Q And, again, I under --

A I think, in fact, I remember that it was on the front page of The New York Times or something, or The Washington Post the next day, and it was this very arresting photo of the wall being breached or something like that. That's my memory.

Q So certainly for you, one of the ways you would hear about information was through just reading news reports?

A Oh, absolutely, and our news clips. We got a very robust set of press clips early every morning, which I would read, yes.

Q And certainly, while you would read them and you would see them, it was not your responsibility on behalf of the Secretary to be tracking those reports or collecting those reports. Is that accurate?

A That is accurate.

Q And that would be accurate about the news reports. I think my sense from even the ops alerts was it certainly wasn't -- it doesn't sound like you were necessarily on an initial distribution list, and

it certainly was not your responsibility, and in your role for the Secretary to be tracking ops alerts and making sure she was seeing the ops alerts?

A That's correct.

Q And the same would be true of intelligence briefings. It wouldn't be your responsibility to make sure that she was seeing all of the intelligence briefings, or even discussing the contents of the intelligence briefings with her. Is that accurate?

A That's 100 percent accurate.

Q But you certainly sometimes, it sounds like, would be certainly seeing, reading, tracking, and would have an understanding of the general context as to what was going on in the office?

A Exactly.

Ms. Dunn. Can we just take a brief pause for one second before you do --

Ms. Sawyer. Sure.

Ms. Dunn. I just wanted to mention something to Huma. If we can off the record, that would be great.

Ms. Sawyer. Yes. Sure.

[Discussion off the record.]

Ms. Dunn. Back on the record. I think Huma had one thing that we wanted to make sure we mentioned before --

Ms. Sawyer. Yeah, sure. Please.

Ms. Abedin. Yes, Ms. Sawyer, I wanted to go back and note something Ms. Jackson asked me about earlier about the schedules in

the aftermath of the attack and suggest, you know, I do believe that they are probably available at the State Department. You know, I don't know how or where, but that it might be a resource or a place that you could go to find out, find the actual schedules.

Ms. Sawyer. Okay. Thank you.

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q So in terms of you mentioned there would be a compilation of news clips, you were shown kind of ops alerts. And I just want to go back for a moment to exhibit 1 just -- I think you might have a copy of it there.

A Oh, yes.

Q You were shown exhibit 1, which looked like operational alerts, which are providing an update as to what's happening. I just wanted to make sure it was clear for the record that there is a list, two lists there, you are not on that list. Is that -- at the top of this, the top line is dated October 23, 2012.

A Yes.

Q It's not apparently contemporaneous with the attacks, and it's sent to a group of folks that does not include you, correct?

A That's correct.

Q And so this piece that was -- I just assume you wouldn't know if this was a compilation of alerts, that it -- it doesn't appear to me that it's possible that as of the night of 9/11, this came out, given the date, but you wouldn't have been aware -- involved in any way of compiling these ops alerts or any involvement in compiling this

email?

A It would not be something in my purview, that's correct.

Q And then in addition to sending out kind of these types of reports from the operational center, we've also seen ops news tickers. Is that another function that the operations center provides, that they also send out news alerts through the operations center?

A Yes, that's correct.

Q And so it's possible that at the same time that they're sending out situational alerts, they're also sending out, you know, op ticker news alerts? Would that be accurate?

A That is accurate.

Q So we were talking about certainly some awareness of protests in Cairo. And you had said that was not, you know, the first time that the U.S. Government certainly had experience with unrest following activity that was deemed to offend the Prophet Muhammad or be offensive. Was the -- do you recall just there being generalized concerns about what might happen in the region?

A I don't recall any general concerns, aside from my own perspective, receiving or hearing about the news, but I think those conversations would have happened outside of my presence.

Q And from your perspective, were there concerns? Were there concerns that there might be unrest that happened in the region, certainly once you had heard about Cairo?

A I mean, in the moment, it may have -- I can't speak to what other people were concerned about, but it may have been top of mind,

particularly, as I mentioned to Ms. Jackson, with the Eid reception on Friday, Fridays typically being Friday prayer, so it's possible there was. I can't -- I just -- I don't remember, like, in the moment what we were thinking.

Q I'm going to show you what I'm going to mark as exhibit 3 for identification purposes.

A Okay.

[Abedin Exhibit No. 3

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q I'm going to give you a moment to take a look at it.

A Okay.

Q And I'll just -- while you're looking at it, I'm just going to identify it for the record. It's a document that has a number down in the right-hand corner that just reads SCB0045311. It's a three-page document. It's an -- at the top it's an email that is from you, Ms. Abedin, it's addressed to H. It's dated September 14th, 2012 at 9:21 in the morning, and it -- and we'll talk about the contents. I want to give you a chance to take a look.

A Okay.

Q Okay? You set?

A Yes.

Q So at the very top, there's just an email from you, and we'll talk about the contents of that, but down below it appears, it's -- again, there's a line and then it says from ops alert, subject,

situation report, and then it has a number. And I assume that you were -- I mean, can you -- I guess you could explain for us, but my assumption was you were forwarding to the Secretary that ops alert.

A Yes, correct.

Q And then there's a brief comment from you at the top, and again, I'll have you explain that, but I did want to -- what was your sense of kind of what -- it's a situation report - the role that a situation report served?

A You're asking me what the role -- what role the situation report --

Q Just in general, before we -- we'll talk a little bit about the contents, but --

A I'm not sure I ever focused on the title of the updates. As you said, there were some that said ops alerts, some that said ops news ticker, some clearly that said situation report, but they were generally updates about things that were happening around the world. It didn't -- I don't know that I processed them necessarily differently, but this clearly was a report, as is reflected, of what was happening in the world.

Q And then under the line situation report number one, there's a Middle East protest monitoring group.

A Uh-huh.

Q Were you -- I assume you were not a part of that Middle East protest monitoring group?

A No.

Q So there's a number of -- down beneath it there's one, two -- 10, it looks like, countries that are identified, and then there's various updates.

A Yeah.

Q One is an update on Libya; one is an update on Egypt; there's an update on Yemen; Kuwait; Pakistan; Indonesia; Malaysia; Sudan; India; Iran. Some of those are reports of demonstrations and protests where they indicate that the gatherings were peaceful. So, for example, Malaysia, it talks about around 30 people gathered peacefully. Do you see --

A Yes.

Q -- that one there?

A Yes.

Q And then underneath Sudan, references a peaceful mass protest at the embassies in Khartoum. Some of them report the deployment of riot police to consulate. That seems to have happened in Pakistan. Do you see that reporting up at the top?

A Yes.

Q And then there's a note in the international reaction, which is down at the bottom of page 2, and the second bullet says, "The Arab League condemned the Benghazi attack and called on the U.S. Government to take a serious position against the film producers." So there's certainly some condemnation of what was a very violent attack, the attack in Benghazi. So that's included as well, correct?

A Correct.

Q So you forwarded this on to the Secretary, and you have a short note at the top, and I'll just read it for the record, it says, I'm giving you credit for inspiring the, quote, "peaceful," end quote, protests.

Do you have a recollection of kind of what you meant by that and why you said that?

A Yes, I do. I can -- I can speak to what I remembered at the time. This was a day after the Eid reception that we had at the State Department. And from a scheduling perspective, we weren't sure if we were going to move forward with that particular event, the event I was telling Ms. Jackson about earlier. And I know what was top of mind for me is that the Secretary had already, on a number of occasions, publicly said that there was -- you know, encouraged people to not protest, but regardless, saying that there was no -- that there was, you know, nothing that justified violence, just there was -- no matter what the source or the cause was, nothing justified violence, and that if people were to protest, and I'm not quoting her here, that's what was in my head is the message that she was sending was that if there are protests, they should be peaceful.

And in this particular instance, what I'm guessing is I was -- I had read this particular report and had seen all the places in the world where there were peaceful protests, and because she'd been calling for them, I was giving her credit for that.

Q And so from your perspective, did it seem that one of the goals in her public statements was certainly to lower the temperature

throughout the region with regard to the anger over this film?

A That was my experience of it. I -- I recognize that she was dealing with a whole host of issues, including that, but that was -- yes, that was certainly how I experienced it.

Q And one of the other things you specifically mentioned was the counterpart, that she certainly, from your perspective, was expressing that, nonetheless, nothing does justify violence. And so did -- was it your sense that was another part of an important goal for the Secretary?

A That's how I -- that's how I experienced it, based on what I had heard her -- heard her say in the several instances in the days leading up to, you know, this particular email.

Q And her concern there, her concern for helping prevent violence, further violence, did you feel that that was out of her concern for her personnel and other people, non-Americans as well, presumably, on the ground in these places?

A From what I know about my boss, that was one of her foremost concerns, yes, the security of her personnel in -- overseas, absolutely.

Q Did you ever get the sense that she actually was making those statements because she wanted to minimize or portray what happened in Benghazi as -- inaccurately?

A I can't speak to what she had in her mind or her intention, but, again, knowing her, absolutely not.

Q And with regard to the focus, this is dated September 14th,

that Friday.

A Yes.

Q We -- I think I counted them before, but there's a number of places here. So statements she was making and steps she was taking and things she was scheduling that week would not have only been focused on Benghazi. Is that fair to say?

A From my recollection of what she was doing, yes, ma'am, that's fair to say.

Q So I was going to just shift and show you another exhibit. So I'm going to show you another exhibit, which I will mark as exhibit 4 for identification purposes. And this one I will, again, just identify for the record while I give you guys an opportunity to take a look.

[Abedin Exhibit No. 4

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q So while you're taking a look, down in the right-hand corner are the -- is the number SCB0045332. This is a two-page document. It is from [REDACTED] to Secretary Clinton, and it is dated September 15th, 2012, at 10:52 in the morning. You are not cc'd on that top line message. You are included earlier, however, in the chain earlier that day, 9:35 a.m.

So with regard to that top part, I understand you're not on it, but I think you had mentioned Ms. [REDACTED] before as someone you worked closely with on scheduling?

A Yes.

Q And that you would oversee some of the kind of longer term, broader --

A Yes.

Q -- but she would often kind of get into the actual logistics of setting up a daily, this is going to happen at 9:15 versus 9:30. Is that accurate?

A Yes. [REDACTED] -- yes. [REDACTED] was her primary personal assistant who traveled with her.

Q So at the top of this email is a message that goes from [REDACTED] to the -- I presume to the Secretary, it says to H, and I understand that to be Secretary Clinton's email?

A I would -- that's a fair assumption, given the content of the email.

Q Great. And that looks to me as if it blocks out -- in the middle of it, it has a block of time that runs from 12:00 to 3:00, starting at 12:00 with a U.K. FM Hague, and then it ends at 3:00 with Somali President Mohamoud. And it looked to me a schedule of calls that the Secretary was planning to do that day, Saturday, September 15th. Is that accurate?

A Yes.

Q And do you recall -- this might help. It has been 3-1/2 years, so I was hoping this would just help refresh your recollection as to whether these were the types of calls that were being scheduled, what relation, if any, they had to what was going on throughout that

region there. They indicate calls with the Libyan prime minister, the Turkish foreign minister, the Somali former transitional president, the Saudi foreign minister, the Israeli prime minister, the Egyptian foreign minister. And does that refresh your recollection as to whether or not these were related to what we saw in exhibit 3 about what was going on throughout that region?

A I don't remember the -- I wouldn't have remembered the content of the call sheets, but it is fair to suggest that, yeah, these calls were connected to the aftermath of the attacks, and also what was happening regionally.

Q So would it be fair to say that this is something -- this is a Saturday, it's a weekend -- that actually wasn't low priority, but seemed potentially high priority for her to be engaged in these types of calls with high ranking officials from other countries?

A I -- I do remember -- my recollection was actually -- doesn't entirely match this. I actually thought it was throughout a longer period of time. And she typically didn't have calls that short, but I -- that's just my recollection. I'm not going to challenge what's in this document. But, yes, that that weekend was focused on making phone calls to leaders around the world here.

Q And it indicates underneath one of the little ticklers there, that there's also a call still pending. Do you have any recollection of whether they were able to schedule it on Saturday, whether that call had to go forward on Sunday?

A That is the one call, as I mentioned to Ms. Jackson, that

I did remember potentially taking place that weekend. I -- my memory is it did take place. I don't know if it took place on Saturday or Sunday, but I do believe she did calls on both days, on both Saturday and Sunday.

Q And then the bullet beneath it indicates that King Juan Carlos of Spain called. There's then a note saying that there was a call inquiring after the status of embassies in the Middle East. We are working on a call sheet. So my impression from that would be that there was an ongoing effort, that you are correct in saying it may not have been -- this was not the sum total of the calls that the Secretary was involved in, either that weekend or maybe through the week. Is that a fair reading of what that says there?

A That is consistent with my memory. That's a fair reading, yes.

Q Up above the schedule, there's a reference to a pouch, and a few read items, and an action memo authorizing war powers resolution for Tunisia. So in addition to -- you know, we talked a little bit, and I think we'll talk a little bit more, just about the Secretary's work style and how she received information.

A Okay.

Q But you had mentioned that one way when she was not physically in the office would be that papers would be delivered to her. Is this an example of papers being delivered to her?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q And one of the things they mention is the war -- a potential

war powers resolution. So to the extent sensitive information had to come to the Secretary, was there a way to get her that sensitive information when she was not physically in the office?

A Yes, ma'am. In the -- if she was in Washington at home, a pouch was typically -- and actually, as is reflected in one of these exchanges, there was a locked pouch that was delivered to her residence by a courier from the operations center.

Q And that -- to the extent it included sensitive material, to the extent it included classified material, that would be how she would obtain and receive classified material while she was not in the office. Is that accurate?

A Yes, unless it was going to be conveyed to her verbally. And, in fact, this exchange notes [REDACTED] will be at the residence with the PDB. So that was also not atypical. So it was either in person, verbally, or in the pouch with paper from the courier.

Q And when you said sometimes it could be verbally, did she both have -- did she have a secure line? If she had to talk to someone, if the person who had the information that they needed to convey was not going to be face to face with her, did she have a secure line in her home to be able to do secure phone calls?

A Yes, she did.

Q So to the -- you know, one of the calls on this list at 12:15 says it's a call with the Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr.

A Yes.

Q And then just turning your attention back to exhibit 3,

there's a mention, the top line mention of the country that they discuss first is Egypt, and then there's -- in the second bullet there, it says there is a call for nationwide demonstrations.

And do you recall that even in Cairo you had said -- you know, you had heard about the unrest there, that in Cairo there were continued concerns about continuing protests throughout the week?

A Based on what I'm looking at, yes, that confirms what, and I believe my general sense was, as I said earlier, yes.

Q And did you have any particular sense of, you know, kind of where -- you know, this indicates nationwide demonstrations, but supported symbolic demonstrations at Tahrir Square. Did you get any sense of the scale of the problems in Egypt, in particular?

A In September of 2012, I -- you know, I -- to that specific time frame, I -- I don't know what my awareness would have been. I mean, the Arab Spring started a year and a half before, and so at any given -- I don't know what my level of awareness would have been in that moment.

Q And I wanted to just return to the conversation that was in the last hour of decisions being made about scheduling and certainly --

A Yes.

Q -- about whether the Ambass- -- whether the Secretary would appear on the Sunday talk shows.

A Yes.

Q And you had indicated in talking about how to convey

information to the American people that it certainly wasn't the only way to speak to the American people, and she had done so through the week. But in terms of figuring out priorities, would these concerns and considerations about some of the stuff we've been talking about, scheduling, would those have come into play in determining whether she had the time to appear on the Sunday talk shows?

A I am not -- you know, I wouldn't -- I want to be thoughtful about how I answer this, because it's not -- it's not that the only reason we weren't doing the Sunday shows, from my perspective, was she had other things to do. That was my primary concern. She has many calls that she has to make around the world, many of these people who -- I'm not certain, but I'm pretty sure she didn't reach most of these people earlier in the week, I'm not sure, but separate from that, in the brief conversation we at the staff level had about Sunday shows, I don't know that it was a, "This is a priority over this." I think the consideration of the shows was -- you know, was considered, not considered necessary for her to do or a priority for us, and by the way, we have all these other things to do.

From my perspective, this was the priority, was getting all these, you know, calls on her schedule, and -- and the Sunday shows, as I recollect, pretty quickly came up and went away.

Q So we -- we've talked a little bit about what was going on in your role in that. And just to be -- to make it clear, I think it has been clear, you know, there's -- in the investigations of the events in Benghazi, there has been, you know, a focus both on kind of what

was happening before in the run-up, and then what happened that night and then how the attacks there were talked about. And we've already talked, I think, and made perfectly clear kind of your limited role on the policy and the security, and I just want to make clear for the record. In terms of crafting statements, both drafting them, helping the Secretary finalize her statements, you were not involved in that as part of your work with the Secretary. Is that accurate?

A It wouldn't be unusual for draft statements of hers or speeches to also be in my inbox, you know, as one of the members of her senior staff in that office. It is likely I would have received drafts, but it was more for my informational purposes. Sometimes I read them, sometimes I didn't, but it, you know, really wasn't my job to edit them or finalize them. It was, frankly, more for a practical reason. So as the person who was with her the most, you know, her being able to check in and say, what's the status of this speech, and I'll say it's still in draft form. So I would have received them, but not necessarily done anything about them.

Q Yeah. And I certainly don't mean to suggest that it would be inappropriate if you read something and you thought, wow, that's really beautifully written or stay far away from that, you wouldn't comment, I presume you would feel free to comment if you saw something even though it wasn't your primary. Is that fair?

A That's fair. And I've -- yes, that's fair. I probably did.

Q And I just wanted to make clear that it was not really your

primary responsibility, your job, your role to be the primary drafter of statements, to be clearing on statements, to be coordinating with the Secretary as to the in-depth content of her statements. Is that fair?

A That's fair.

Q So shifting gears a little bit, just to get a sense of, based on your experience working with the Secretary at the State Department, if you could talk to us a little bit of how was it that she generally received information? Some people are very reliant on technology, emails, reading things on the computer, other people prefer paper. Where does the Secretary fall in that spectrum?

A She received information through a variety of ways, both on paper, verbally, and electronically. When she was in the office, it was a combination of in-person briefings for meetings; simultaneous to that, when she walked into the office every day, there was often a stack of folders on her desk with action items for her, things for her to sign, and those were hand in hand. She often had meetings throughout the day. That's when she was in the office.

When we were traveling, the paper documents continued by the executive assistant who was traveling with us, or the line officers, they would have folders in her room every night. She still had verbal, you know, in-person meetings with the staff traveling, and she often called back to the Department to speak with the -- with the leadership there, and she also, when she was traveling, would often receive information on her email, on her BlackBerry.

Q So she sounds like someone who's a pretty voracious reader of information. Is that accurate?

A That would be fair -- that would be fair to say, yes, ma'am.

Q So that would be one way, certainly, reading materials, either paper form, sometimes electronic form, that would be one way she would obtain information?

A That's -- that's correct.

Q And you indicated another way would be through face-to-face meetings, obviously often with staff, both when she's traveling and in the office, I presume.

A Yes.

Q Is that accurate?

A Yes.

Q And that stuff you talked a fair amount, I think in the last hour, about the range of meetings and the range of individuals certainly within the Department that she had access to and would meet with, it sounds like, both routinely. Is that fair and accurate to say?

A That's correct.

Q And certainly we talked some about some of those routine meetings with regional bureaus, with some of her policy team. In addition to kind of routine meetings, presumably, I mean, she's the boss, she is the Secretary of State. She could, at any point, call a meeting, convene a meeting around a particular issue that she wanted to take a deeper dive or get more information on. Is that accurate?

A Absolutely.

Q And you talked about travel and you talked -- because the specific discussion was around travel, I think, in the spring, including February in the spring.

A Of 20 --

Q 2011.

A Of 2011, yes.

Q And you said a lot of that travel was around meetings, discussions about Libya. So presumably, that travel and those meetings would be another source of both information and potential conversation with foreign leaders and others. Is that the purpose of those kinds of travel?

A Yes.

Q So all of those individuals would be sources of information as well as potentially people who were giving her advice. Is that true?

A Yes.

Q Some lobbying her pretty strongly to take a position one way or the other, or trying to advocate or negotiate in the normal course of, you know, what the Secretary does in making policy decisions?

A I would -- I would imagine so, yes.

Q Now, again, you were not -- I just want to, you know, be clear. I appreciate the operational insights you're giving us, not -- and understanding that your role wasn't kind of in being in those meetings or discussions for the deep dive on the policy. So we do appreciate the kind of operational oversight.

How would you describe in that context the Secretary's use of

email? We've seen some of her emails. Oftentimes she'll get an email and she'll forward it and say, please print, giving me the impression that oftentimes, even when she got something electronically, she preferred to read it in paper. So could you give us a sense of how she used email in the course of her doing business?

A I think it was mostly to -- so I just want to back up by saying I didn't actually -- I never really was privy to the email exchanges that she had, so as for my -- I can tell you about, you know, my email exchanges with her. It's hard to talk, I think, generally about how she used it, but my experience was she wasn't doing on a day-to-day basis, when we were traveling, a heavy amount of work on her email, because so much of it was verbal or on paper, but were we -- were we sending -- you know, I experienced it as sort of the day-to-day tasks, the, you know, what time am I starting tomorrow, just like the -- almost like general housekeeping that one would conduct, it's 2 o'clock in the morning, what time do I leave in the morning? Do you know where this is? So it was usually sort of, you know, after hours when we weren't physically -- physically with her. And then she did have people who had emailed her documents as like -- as you had suggested, and sometimes we'd print those so she could review those in paper form.

Q So trying to kind of assess what the -- what any given day was like for the Secretary or the information she actually looked at in the course of that day and the meetings she might have had and who she might have talked to, would I be able to get an accurate picture

of that simply by reviewing her email usage over the course of a day?

A Not being privy to what her inbox was, and -- but from my perspective, I would say not particularly when she was in Washington. You know, she didn't have access to her email when we were in the Department. Our office was a SCIF and so we didn't have our devices with us. So unless you had a computer at your desk, you really weren't -- and she did not -- you weren't emailing. So from my perspective, it is unlikely.

Q So on those days, certainly her email might have been sporadic, it wouldn't have been continuous, it wouldn't have been --

A Correct.

Q -- and it, in any event, might not reflect the volume of information that we talked about that was coming to her in person or through meetings, or in face-to-face conversations about particular policy issues facing her. Is that accurate?

A That is accurate.

Ms. Sawyer. I know that I'm hitting up on my time and that you guys deserve a break, so we should go off the record and we can talk about some of the logistics about how much more and whatnot.

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Let's go back on the record. I have 1:33, and we will start our next hour of questioning.

Ms. Abedin, welcome back.

A Thank you.

Q I want to follow up on some things you were asked about in the last hour, and also to follow up on some of the things we talked about in my first hour.

A Okay.

Q You had stated earlier that you met Chris Stevens for the first time in Paris. I believe that was in March of 2011. Is that timeframe about right?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And did you come across him again in your travels with the Secretary?

A I don't remember having seen Chris after that first encounter in Paris.

Q Okay. Did you ever see him at Main State back here in Washington, D.C.?

A He may have attended meetings, but I don't remember any specific meetings.

Q Okay. So that would have been the one and only time that you can recall meeting with him, or seeing him, meeting him?

A Yes. I mean, I'd have to check the schedules to see if in any of the, you know, the meetings we were having throughout, you know, in different countries, the Libya contact group meetings, if it was Chris Stevens or Ambassador Gene Cretz there. From my recollection, it was the Ambassador, Ambassador Cretz, but I don't know that definitively.

Q Okay. Did you ever email or have a phone conversation with Chris Stevens?

A I don't believe so, no.

Q Okay. To your knowledge, did the Secretary email with him or have phone conversations with him?

A Well, you'd have to ask her about whether he emailed her. There were no instances that I recall where I would have seen an email exchange. Phone conversations, I would imagine yes. But, you know, again, I'd want to check our schedules to see when, et cetera, but I don't remember.

Q Okay. Are those records kept by the State Department of the Secretary's calls with ambassadors and others?

A I would presume so. Those were documents that were housed at the State Department, yes.

Q Okay. And what type of documents would those be?

A You know, what I saw in my screen, you know, it was just in the -- it was like an Outlook calendar, and her assistant in the office would just update them on the computer.

Q Okay. And then if the call for whatever reason didn't go

through, would it be taken off or noted in some way that the call didn't go through?

A Yes. There was usually a revised schedule at the end of the day, so there was, you know, the schedule as it was finalized the night before. In some instances there were things that were left tentative, as it was in one of those days that we discussed. And [REDACTED] job was to reflect what actually took place in the course of the day.

Q Okay. It is my understanding that the Secretary traveled to Libya in October of 2011?

A Correct.

Q Do you recall that trip?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Did you accompany the Secretary on that trip?

A Yes, I did.

Q Okay. Do you recall whether Chris Stevens was in Tripoli during your visit there, your and the Secretary's visit there?

A I don't recall seeing Chris Stevens on that trip. I recall Gene Cretz.

Q Because our Embassy in Tripoli had reopened by then?

A Yes. If I remember correctly, it was the -- yes, it was the makeshift embassy that was the residence or the compound. But yes, we visited it, yes.

Q Okay.

A I remember that.

Q All right. And was that the only trip that the Secretary took to Libya during her tenure?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Were any other trips planned or discussed?

A Yes. We had talked about returning to Libya. As I had mentioned earlier, one of the things that we did at the State Department was have meetings with our senior leadership to talk about travel for the year.

Usually we met, you know, once or twice a year to do long term, what should we do this year, and the next 6 months, and certainly Libya had been on the list of countries to potentially visit.

Q Okay. And do you recall approximately when that was going to be, that second trip to Libya?

A It would have been in 2012.

Q Okay. Do you recall that the elections in Libya were in July of 2012?

A I remember that they were in the first half of the year, correct. Yes.

Q Okay. Was the trip to be before or after the elections?

A Oh, I, in fact, remember us talking about potentially going, having the conversations probably that summer. So, and usually, as I mentioned, we met twice a year to talk long term, so probably we would have met in December or January to like focus on the next 6 months. And then we probably regrouped in June, July, to talk about the rest of the year.

And, you know, from what I remember from my planning, I really had Libya as a potential for the fall, when we were likely to go back to the Middle East. We typically -- we'd been to the Middle East in the fall the first few years she was there, if I remember correctly, in 2009, and 2010, so it wouldn't have been atypical.

Q Okay. And do you recall what the purpose of the trip was, why Libya was on the schedule of places to visit?

A Well, I think, you know, it was obvious that the United States had, you know, played a very large role in trying to shepherd this transition to democracy, which was the will of the Libyan people. And the Secretary of State and the administration was quite involved. And so, as we did in 2011, it was showing her support for the transitional government at the time.

And, you know, from my perspective at that point the conversation we would've had is they've just had a successful Democratic election, we should go back and visit and, you know, check in, show our support for the new government.

Q When you were traveling with the Secretary in October of 2011 -- and I apologize for skipping back and forth between the 2 years -- were you in the meetings she had in Tripoli that day?

A No.

Q Okay. Would you typically attend the meetings when she would be traveling internationally?

A Not typically. Sometimes I did, sometimes I didn't.

Q Okay. We talked in the first hour about a lot of different

countries that she went to for the Libya contact group and other meetings that she attended where Libya was either the topic of conversation or one of many. Were you in those meetings typically with her?

A In the contact group meetings with the other ministers?

Q Yes.

A No, I typically would not be.

Q What type of meetings would you attend?

A In the Department or when we were traveling overseas?

Q When you were traveling. And again, looking at 2011 and 2012, that timeframe.

A It honestly varied. Generally, you know, protocols called for very often to match sides when you were in meetings with a foreign government. So they would say, you know, we're coming to the meeting and we're bringing nine people and your side should bring nine people. And we'd often -- a lot of times it was for parity, and members of the senior staff that were traveling on the plane were manifested in those meetings.

Typically a deputy chief of staff to the Secretary would have been manifested. That primarily was always -- was Jake Sullivan. Sometimes it was me. There was no -- you know, I was not necessary to the bilateral meeting, so I didn't necessarily sit in, but it didn't mean that sometimes I did.

Q You didn't have a role as even a note taker or recorder of due-outs or anything like that from the meetings?

A Not at all.

Q Okay. Did you know any of the members of the new Transitional National Council in Libya? Did you know any of the leaders? Had you met them before the revolution?

A I'm sorry, did I know any of the Libyans?

Q Yes.

A No.

Q Okay.

A Yeah.

Q Through schooling. You've lived overseas.

A Oh, oh, yes.

Q I didn't know if you had --

A No, I did not. I did not know any of the Libyans, no.

Q Okay. Some of them had been in the United States before. I just wondered if your paths had ever crossed before.

A Oh, yes. No, ma'am. No, ma'am.

Q Okay. What about the Secretary? Did she know any of them, to your knowledge?

A Not to my knowledge she did not.

Q Okay. If you could pick up -- I'll just do them in order -- number four, which is the Saturday, September 15, 2012, I would call it a call schedule. Is that a fair way to depict what this email chain is about?

A Sure. Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay. I just have a couple follow-up questions regarding

this. You talked about a pouch being delivered. Would a pouch be delivered to both her D.C. home and her New York home? Was there any distinction between a pouch being delivered?

A You're referring to when [REDACTED] emailed her?

Q Yes. At the top of the page it says, "A pouch with all of your call sheets and the schedule is En route to you."

A Oh, I see. The note from [REDACTED] to the Secretary?

Q Yes.

A Yes, it was typical when she was in Washington for a pouch to be delivered to her residence. It was less frequent at her residence in New York. Yes, it was less frequent.

Q Okay. I was just wondering if there was any way to tell whether she was in Washington or New York on Saturday the 15th.

A Well, from this and, you know, my attorney and I, this is when we looked at each other, it's very clear from this email that she was indeed in Washington. It refers to her residence in Washington on the second page.

Q So on the second page?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And who was [REDACTED]? It says [REDACTED] --

A [REDACTED] was the PDB briefer.

Q Presidential daily brief, briefer?

A Yes.

Q Was he a member of the national security staff, if you know?

I mean, was he a State Department official or --

A I think he was -- you know, I don't know.

Q Okay.

A [REDACTED]

Q Okay. What types of intelligence products did the Secretary read or get briefed on other than the presidential daily brief, if you know?

A I'm sorry. Can you ask me that question again?

Q What type of intelligence products, CIA cables, or finished intel products, or things like that did the Secretary routinely look at to know what was going on in the world from the intelligence standpoint other than the presidential daily brief?

A She received, both when we were in Washington and when we were traveling, regular folders and we always knew what the folders were because they were red. But they went directly to her from our executive assistant, who was both in the office -- and this is the senior, you know, the senior member in our office. So he and I actually shared a wall. And he would, throughout the day, frankly, take in the red folder, had documents in there for her to review, and he would take them back or she would bring them back to him. That's when we were in the office.

When we were traveling, typically it would be similar, usually at the beginning of the day and the end of the day. When she was in a foreign country and between meetings, she wasn't really getting documents like that. It was specific to when we were in a SCIF.

Q And you may not know, but if you do, do you know what type of intelligence products those were? Would they be from the agency? Would they be from the Department of Defense? Were they only State Department intelligence products, if you know?

A I was not privy to those documents. Those went directly to her and from her. And it was regular practice for those not to go, you know, through me or through any other staff member.

Q Even her senior policy adviser, like Mr. Sullivan?

A I don't know what documents Jake looked at. I would be speculating. But, you know, I'm sure he saw documents related to policy, but as to the specifics, I wouldn't know.

Q Okay. And if we could go back for a moment to exhibit number 3, the situation report from, I believe it's the 14th, Friday the 14th.

A Yes.

Q As I reviewed this document, I don't see any indication that any of the protests occurred -- or any of the protests that are described in here occurred prior to September 13. And perhaps I've missed it. But did you -- we had talked earlier about protests around the time of the attacks.

A Yes.

Q And the attacks were on the 11th. And I'm just trying to figure out if, from your recollection, the protests followed the Benghazi attack or predated it or preceded it.

A From my recollection, and I noted this when I was speaking

with you and also with Ms. Sawyer, we were planning the Eid reception. That was something that had been on the calendar prior to the attacks. And there were going to be a lot of Muslim leaders from around the country flying in to attend that.

So, you know, that's part of my, frankly, the trigger that I have to remember that the protests, as far as I remember, and the movie trailer, all of that occurred prior to the Benghazi attack. I don't think it was a long period of time, but that is my recollection, that we were aware of that. I was aware of the trailer. I had seen the news about the protests, specifically in Cairo. That's my memory.

Q Was that a protest in Cairo or multiple days worth of protests? To the best of your recollection, what do you recall?

A As I said to Ms. Sawyer, what stuck out in my mind was the protest in Cairo, and that image in the paper is what I do remember. Beyond that, you know, I don't -- you know, even that morning I couldn't tell you the morning of the attack that I was necessarily aware of where else there may have been a protest.

Q Okay. So you don't have any recollection that the first Cairo protest was the day of the attack in Benghazi?

A Are you telling me it was?

Q I'm asking if you have any recollection of that being true?

A I don't know if it was that day, but I feel like it was before the attack. That's the only thing I -- having had that knowledge.

Q Okay. We talked a little bit about the fact that the Secretary was planning another trip to Libya in the fall of 2012. Who

would you typically coordinate with for the Secretary to take a trip overseas?

A The planning process always started with our Deputy Secretary of State.

Q You had two. Which one?

A As I say, the you know, one for management and the other for policy, so that would either be Bill Burns or Jim Steinberg prior to Bill Burns. So we typically met with the Deputy Secretary of State, the Under Secretary for Political Affairs was Bill Burns originally and then thereafter it was Wendy Sherman. And then the leadership, you know, within our office, our chief of staff, my co-deputy, Jake Sullivan, the executive secretary, the executive assistant, and our scheduler.

And we would map out priorities for the year and sort of have a loose calendar which, you know, we would follow. But it was typical that I would check in with them, I would either email them. I saw all of them when we were in Washington. I saw them on a daily basis. So check in, any changes, any issues, but that's how we implemented the planning process.

Q Okay. From the documents that we've reviewed, we've seen a lot of emails back and forth between you and the Secretary regarding Libya in 2011. And then not so many in 2012. Is that your recollection of how it was?

A I can't explain why there wouldn't be in 2012. What I remember in 2011 is certainly we spent so much of our time traveling

around the world on behalf of -- you know, to go to these Libya meetings. So it wouldn't be atypical that I would have had a lot of emails. I shared with her, as it related to Libya. I can't explain why there wouldn't be any in -- or did you say there were any? There were very few in 2012.

Q A lesser number.

A A lesser number.

Q Yeah, okay. What were the hot spots as you recall in 2012 around the world?

A Well, there were Syria meetings starting, I think, in the first half of that year or first few months of that year, if I'm remembering correctly. I think I was on maternity leave. But we had -- I mean, Syria certainly comes to mind. And -- sorry, I'm really just trying to like place my years in my head.

It was Myanmar, now Burma, her engagement there. You know, I recall that. We were spending a lot of time -- she was spending a lot of time working on that. We were coordinating with the White House about a trip. I mean that's what comes to mind just off the top of my head.

Q Okay. What awareness or involvement -- let me just say, what awareness did you have about any discussions as to how long we were going to keep the mission open in Benghazi, Libya?

A None.

Q Did you know that we still had a presence in Benghazi?

A I'm sorry, at what point?

Q At the time of the attacks. Or was it a surprise to you that there was an attack in Benghazi? Were you aware we still had people there, given the reopening of the Embassy in Tripoli?

A You know, I'm sure I had a general awareness. You know, as you've probably seen in the documents, there were often emails sent to me with updates for the Secretary. You know, I had a top line focus like in the time, you know, what I needed to prioritize and send to her and -- but I didn't always read everything that was sent to me for her.

In the time of the attacks, was I aware? I'm sure I had a general awareness. I mean, we were talking about the trip. I'm sure I did. I mean, if I had to put myself back in that time, I'm sure I did, yes.

Q Okay. You said you had a top line focus of what was going on in the world to send things to the Secretary. Was that throughout your entire tenure with her when she was Secretary of State?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay. So things that were hot and bubbling up you made sure she got the information on?

A If it was emailed to me, yes.

Q Yes. Okay. So you were sort of, I don't want to say -- not the filter -- but you were sort of the funnel to make sure that the top line information got to her?

A Only when she wasn't in the office or she wasn't on the road, I mean, you know, after hours, weekends when she might be at home in Washington or at home in New York. I would say it was a small number

of what she actually got because, as we discussed earlier, I think the vast majority of what she absorbed in terms of content and material on any matter, including something like Libya, she would have absorbed in the form of a printed document or a verbal briefing.

Q Okay. Were you personally aware of any of the security incidents that occurred in Benghazi in the summer of 2012, for instance when there was a hole blown in the wall of the compound there, or an RPG attack against the British Ambassador who was in Benghazi? Were you aware of those incidents as they occurred?

A I likely was. And, I mean, you're jogging my memory a little bit about the British Ambassador. It's very likely that I was, yes.

Q Okay. But as you sit here today you don't have a specific recollection of learning that information or passing it on or doing anything with that information?

A I don't have a specific recollection.

Q Okay. Was there anything that you would typically do with information that pertained to a significant security event at one of our embassies or posts around the world?

A No, ma'am. I mean, I think, you know, the daily life that we had we were constantly getting updates about what was happening at our embassy facilities frankly around the world, whether it was the Middle East or it was Asia or it was Pakistan or India. I mean, on a daily basis there were updates that were coming in.

It wasn't my responsibility or my purview to -- I didn't see those

as action items for me. And as I mentioned, if we were off campus, if she was, rather, off campus at home, I would ensure that she had that information. But I don't believe that was her primary source of information.

Q Okay. And what were her primary sources of information regarding security incidents around the world against our people or at our posts?

A You'd have to ask her that. I wasn't privy to a lot of what she saw.

Q Okay. Did the operations center -- I mean, we talked about the operations center alerts and things like that.

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Was that a mechanism that was used to push out information in urgent situations?

A To us as staff?

Q To the seventh floor principals of the organization.

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay. Was there any other type of documents? Did the Diplomatic Security put out a daily, weekly, or a monthly briefing of any kind that you saw?

A I'm not aware of any regular document that the department of security would have put out. I'd be speculating if I said they did.

Q Okay. Did the assistant secretary for Diplomatic Security have regular meetings with the Secretary?

A They were present, yes, present at the weekly -- as I think

I discussed with you or Ms. Sawyer earlier -- our weekly Monday meeting with the senior leadership in the building, yes.

Q With the senior leaders or with the --

A And the Secretary was present, yes.

Q And that went down to the assistant secretary level?

A Yes.

Q We've talked about a couple of meetings. I want to make sure --

A Yes, Deputy Secretaries, Under Secretaries, and Assistant Secretaries, yes, ma'am.

Q Okay. And so the assistant secretary for Diplomatic Security was one of all the assistant secretaries that attended that meeting?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay. Do you recall if the assistant secretary for Diplomatic Security attended the regional meetings?

A I don't remember.

Q Would there be some record of who attended those meetings? Were there agendas? Were there sign-in sheets? Were there --

A Yes, it is very likely on the Secretary's calendar. I don't recall there being agendas. The purpose was really for every assistant secretary to give the Secretary a verbal update on what was happening in their region. I don't remember the assistant secretary of the Diplomatic Security being in those meetings, but --

Q And those were also weekly meetings?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay. Now, we know the Secretary was -- I think she still is -- the most traveled Secretary of State. Given that, how often or on average in a month how often would those weekly meetings occur, given her travel schedule?

A How many times in a month?

Q Right. Would it be -- you know, did she make sure that she made them every week or, you know, once a month? Every other week? Do you have a sense of how often they actually occurred?

A If she was in Washington, it was a given that she was present. If she was traveling -- I mean, we often traveled in sort of in spurts. So she was gone for, you know -- it's one of the ways we tried to create her schedule so that she had time in the building to do the meetings that she needed to do. So it would be a week away but then we were there a week and then 3 days here. I mean, a lot of our trips were short trips and we came back. But, you know, they happened on a fairly regular basis.

Q Were there days of the week that she tried to be in the office as opposed to other days of the week? When you say she tried to --

A Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt you. I apologize. I'm sorry.

We didn't entirely own her schedule in that a lot of the responsibilities she had when she was traveling was preexisting meetings. So if it was, you know, a regular meeting of ministers in Asia, the APEC meeting, for example, these were fixed meetings in

certain parts of the year. So we were really being reactive, and we would build, you know, stops in other countries around those trips that she had to be on.

But, you know, when she came into the building, one of the things that she conveyed to those of us who were helping her manage her schedule is she really wanted to be present as much as she possibly could be at the Department. And so we would do, you know, heavy travel but then also be in Washington for days at a time. And she was -- very often she'd come in and be in a meeting starting at 8:30 and then just go the entire day in meetings.

Q Did those standing meetings ever get pushed off to another day or rescheduled, or did they just -- did they stay standing?

A Rarely. Yeah. I mean, they were almost a -- you know, they were pretty regular.

And sorry, I'm just going to volunteer this, but I think they may have also happened whether she was there or not, like the Monday meeting, the big Monday meeting I was telling you about. I think the Deputy Secretary of State would run it when we were on the road.

Q Okay. And again, approximately how many people would be in that big Monday meeting?

A As I think I mentioned to Ms. Sawyer, I think there were anywhere between 30 or 40 people.

Q And approximately how long would that meeting last?

A An hour.

Q There was a lot of paperwork that flowed through the

department. Every Federal governmental agency has its own bureaucracy. We have seen things called information memorandums to the Secretary, and, in fact, I've got a copy of one. And I want to ask you a few questions about -- I'm going to mark it as Exhibit 5. It is a memo dated August 17th.

[Abedin Exhibit No. 5

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q And I will note that it has been marked now unclassified and reproduced to this committee as redacted -- well, it says released in full but it also says at the bottom "reproduced to the Benghazi Select Committee redacted by State Department for public release by Congress." So if you would take a look at this. I have some questions about what some of the markings mean and the process.

I will also say for the record, this document bears document number C05390124.

Have you had an opportunity to review that document?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay. Just generally, how would an information memo like this come to the Secretary? What's the flow of paperwork within the State Department for something to get to the Secretary?

A A document like this would -- if it was approved by -- let's see, it was sent by Beth Jones, so it would've been sent likely to our Deputy Secretary of State and then to the executive assistant in our office, you know, who oversaw the special assistants. Again, this is

the trio of people who managed all the paper.

Q And who was the executive secretary at the time?

A It was two people. It was Joe Macmanus and Alice Wells. I mean, they shifted -- Joe started and then he left and then it was Alice and then Joe came back.

Q Okay. So I won't ask you which one was in place on this particular day.

A I wouldn't remember.

Q Okay. So it would then flow through the executive assistant for the Secretary's review? Is that correct?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Now, I see on the top middle of the front page there's a circle with the letters "HRC" in there. Does that signify anything of importance? Is that a symbol to say that she's seen it and reviewed it?

A You'd have to ask Joe or the specials. I'm not sure what system they used. I mean, the information like this that went to her wouldn't have passed through me, so I don't know what HRC stands for, aside from it's my boss' initials.

Q Okay. Do you recall seeing that symbol on other documents that pass over her desk?

A If I did, I don't know that I would have paid much attention to it. So it's possible, yeah.

Q Was there another way that the Secretary indicated that she had reviewed information?

A Usually, you know, I'm used to documents, but I think for me I was more familiar handling the action memos that came up requesting that she do an event. And there was usually a cover sheet on top saying "approve, disapprove," and you'd pick it.

Q Right. But for information that just came to her, was --

A That's not something that went through me. I didn't oversee this, so I don't know.

Q And, again, Joe Macmanus or Alice Wells would be the people that we would need to talk to regarding the flow of this type of information?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay. In the summer of 2012, were you aware of a declining or deteriorating security situation in Libya?

A I think it was likely -- yes, it was part of my general awareness. As we discussed earlier, we were talking about visiting Libya later that year.

Q In your discussions with others regarding that trip, was the security of Libya a concern?

A You know, from what I recall, in an instance like this, I would have consulted with the senior leadership in the Department. And they -- you know, it's unlikely they would say we're worried about security. They would just say, you know, we're not sure yet or it's too soon to tell whether we can plan the trip or we'll get back to you. We're still talking about, you know, whether we do want to really recommend that she do this. I mean, that's the kind of information

I would probably -- you know, that's how I remember experiencing it.

Q And do you recall any of those types of conversations with regard to Libya in the summer of 2012?

A Just that we talked about going but that we weren't -- you know, we weren't sure. It was an evolving situation. This was a country that was going through a fairly significant transition, and we'd have to wait and see if we were going to confirm the trip in the fall.

But it was still early. I mean, we were talking about this probably in the middle of the summer, and we weren't talking about going until, I don't know, later in the fall.

Q Okay.

A Yeah.

Q So Libya was in the category of "wait and see"?

A Yes. It was a country listed as a potential to visit but not one that I experienced as, you know, definitely we're going, but we should consider going.

Q Okay. Do you recall whether the Secretary received any -- in her normal course would receive requests for additional security at embassies or posts overseas? Was that the type of information that would come to her?

A I don't know. You'd have to ask her.

Q Okay. Those are not documents that you would see, action memos or things like that?

A Not typically. I mean, the documents that were

specifically sent to me were documents that said we want to go speak in Morocco next week at the Forum for the Future, yes or no. I mean, those were the kinds of documents that -- the paper that I received for my action.

Q Okay. Did the Secretary review cables written by ambassadors or sent in by ambassadors?

A I believe she did, yes.

Q Okay. All of them?

A I think she read what was given to her.

Q And who would make that choice as to what she should read?

A There was a whole process, a protocol at the Department. There was a lot of paper. There was a lot of paper. Even what it did come through, there was a lot of paper.

Q And that's my question.

A But, you know, I only know what was approved to go in there. You know, I can't say this particular person said yes or no. I know there was a chain of command at the Department, the Deputy Secretary, other people who would weigh in on whether a cable should go into her or not, you know, maybe the regional assistant secretary.

But by the time it reached us in the S office, I think the paper that went into her was paper that had been cleared elsewhere.

Q Okay. But would it -- I guess what I'm looking at is you've described a hierarchy, and I'd like to understand that hierarchy. Is everything that went to the Secretary from an overseas post, did it flow through a deputy secretary? And did it always flow through one

or could it be either one, and did it have to come through an Under Secretary? I'm just trying to understand to the best that you know what all those levels of review would be before it reached the Secretary.

A That wasn't a process that, certainly anybody in my position was privy to. What came into our office was the cleared documents for the Secretary to see. How many people and who they were that had to say, "yes, this goes to her," I don't know.

Q Do you at least know who the last person would be to clear it for the Secretary? Was it Deputy Secretary Burns, for instance?

A I think that would have happened before it came to our office, so I'd be guessing if I said it was Deputy Secretary Burns. I would imagine a lot of paper went to him, but I don't know if everything went to him either.

Q Okay. I'm going to jump around a little bit. I have a few -- well, I have one more topic and then I'm going to let you have some.

Mr. Pompeo. That's fine.

Ms. Jackson. I shouldn't say this, but because I have to.

I'm actually going to show you two documents that I'm going to mark exhibits 6 and 7.

[Abedin Exhibits Nos. 6 and 7

Were marked for identification.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q And as you're reviewing that, for the record, exhibit 6 is

document number SCB0058547. It's an email chain at the top dated Tuesday, October 30, 2012.

And Exhibit 7 is document number 0045765, and it's an email dated Monday, October 29, 2012.

A Okay.

Q Have you had an opportunity?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Let me first go to Exhibit 7. Exhibit 7 dated Monday, October 29, 2012, from you to H., which I assume is Secretary Clinton; is that correct?

A That is correct.

Q Okay. And I would like to go to what I think is the third paragraph, but I want to read it into the record. It says, "Had a long visit with my friend who was in Benghazi. Will download in person but think very important for you to call [REDACTED], the injured DS officer. He is now well enough to talk."

First of all, was [REDACTED] one of the agents who was on the ground in Benghazi the night of the attack?

A Yes.

Q And he was significantly injured during the attack? Is that correct?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay. In fact, he spent over a year at Walter Reed Hospital, if you know? Do you know?

A I know it was a significant period of time.

Q Okay. It also says here, "Had a long visit with my friend who was in Benghazi." Who was that?

A I had a friend from college who was in Benghazi that night.

Q On the night of the attack? The night of the attack?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay. And was that -- was your friend a witness in any way to the attacks?

Ms. Abedin. I am not able to discuss that.

Ms. Dunn. Sharon, we should go off the record.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. We can.

[Discussion off the record.]

Ms. Jackson. Let's go back on the record and pose --

Ms. Dunn. I'm sorry. Also -- I don't know if you do this -- do you want to strike your last question or --

Ms. Jackson. We don't follow the rules of evidence that closely.

Ms. Dunn. Got it.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q The question that we're going to pose to you is, in this email exchange, you're requesting or suggesting that the Secretary call the agent who was injured; is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And to your knowledge, had the Secretary talked to Agent [REDACTED] up until this point?

A She had not.

Q She had not, okay.

Had she talked to any of the surviving agents of the attack?

A Before this --

Q Before this time.

A I don't believe she had.

Q Okay. And then going to Exhibit 6, which is a series of emails between -- starting on October 25 through October 30, it essentially discusses the same thing, a call to Agent [REDACTED]; is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q And so what is Exhibit 7, would have been your communication to her in the middle of all of this other communication. Is that a fair reading of these emails?

A That's a fair reading, yes.

Q Okay. Do you know when the Secretary talked to Agent [REDACTED], or did she?

A What I remember about the call to [REDACTED] is that there was an interest in calling him to see how he was doing, and the information that we were getting from Assistant Secretary Boswell prior to this date, was that he wasn't well enough to speak. And so it was something that we, you know, some of my colleagues were staying in touch with Assistant Secretary Boswell about to see when he was well enough to actually take a call from her.

I'm pretty certain she talked to him shortly after this email exchange. I don't remember the exact date, but I'm pretty certain she did.

Q Okay. And had she talked to the other agents by the end of October?

A Any of the other injured agents?

Q Surviving agents.

A Surviving agents, I don't believe so. I don't believe so, ma'am.

Q Okay. Did she talk to them, to your knowledge, at all during 2012?

A Not to my knowledge.

Ms. Jackson. I have about 10 minutes left so I'm cutting you a little short, but I will turn it over to you at this point because I'm ready to turn to a different topic.

Mr. Pompeo. Okay. We can do that. Great. Thank you.

First, Mr. Cummings spoke and indicated he had no idea why you were here. And I just want to assure you, we think there's a perfectly appropriate reason for you to be here consistent with our mission. He may or may not know, we have had a heck of a time getting documents from the State Department for this committee, and we have had a heck of a time identifying where all these documents are and who's got them and what emails were used.

And you were very close to the Secretary, and you were very involved in her daily life, both her official life and, as people are who are close, involved in things personal. And so I just want you -- we think you can help us identify how to complete this record so that we have a full and complete understanding of what took place.

So, Mr. Cummings is obviously entitled to his view, but I just thought it was appropriate for you to know that I view your time here as deeply appreciated but also necessary and highly relevant to what it is we're seeking to accomplish on behalf of the American people.

Ms. Abedin. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Pompeo. Thank you. Thank you for being here today too.

The two email addresses -- and just coincidentally, in these two last documents that you just had a chance to review, a personal one the @clintonemail.com and then official State.Gov email. Were there any other email addresses under which you conducted business that was related to either Libya or Benghazi or the matters that we have discussed so far today?

Ms. Abedin. During my time at the State Department in that period?

Mr. Pompeo. Well, I guess more broadly. Any time.

Ms. Abedin. I had a personal Yahoo.com --

Mr. Pompeo. Let me stop. If it's an email that you used strictly for personal business, for nothing that's related to this, I am uninterested in that email address.

Ms. Abedin. You don't want my email? I'm offended, sir.

Mr. Pompeo. Duly noted.

Ms. Abedin. I did have, in addition to those two email addresses, I did have a Yahoo.com address that I occasionally used to forward some documents to print and also that I forwarded news clips to and those could've included news clips regarding Libya, so yes, there was an

additional one.

Mr. Pompeo. Okay. Great. Thank you.

Ms. Jackson. May I ask one follow up?

Mr. Pompeo. Of course, yeah.

Ms. Jackson. And during your search of your personal records to turn over to the State Department, did you search that account?

Ms. Abedin. I instructed my attorneys to go through all of my email records and documents and to do as thorough a search as possible for any potentially Federal records and to turn them over to the State Department. And to my knowledge, they did that.

Ms. Jackson. And including that Yahoo account?

Ms. Abedin. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Pompeo. Did you have a security clearance while you were working at the State Department?

Ms. Abedin. Yes, sir.

Mr. Pompeo. And do you have that security clearance now?

Ms. Abedin. I do not.

Mr. Pompeo. You do not. Was it withdrawn at the time you departed the State Department coincidental with that, or did you continue it sometime after your continued service? Or do you know exactly?

Ms. Abedin. I'm not sure when I ceased to have security clearance. To the best of my recollection, it didn't end the day she walked out but sometime thereafter.

Mr. Pompeo. Sometime thereafter. And what was that security clearance that you held? What level of security clearance? Was it secret? Top secret? Do you recall?

Ms. Abedin. I am fairly certain it was top secret as was the practice for anybody working within the S office because we worked in a SCIF.

Mr. Pompeo. Great. Thanks. Makes sense to me.

Were you interviewed by the ARB?

Ms. Abedin. I was not, sir.

Mr. Pompeo. Have you, in the lead up to today, have you had conversations with any of the other individuals that we have interviewed where you discussed the matters that either they discussed with us or you thought you might be discussing today?

Ms. Abedin. Yes, I have talked to some of my former colleagues and current colleagues, and it was to acknowledge that they were coming in or I was coming in. We wished each other good luck. But, you know, particularly since Jake Sullivan and I continue to work together on a daily basis, we determined early on that we would not discuss our appearances here.

Mr. Pompeo. So any of the conversations that you had were pro forma, good luck, not substantive with relative to their testimony or the testimony that you were contemplating providing us with today?

Ms. Abedin. Yes, sir.

Mr. Pompeo. And I guess the same question with respect to Mr. Blumenthal. Have you had a conversation with Mr. Blumenthal about

his testimony? Maybe you can tell us if you even know Mr. Blumenthal or have ever had a conversation with him? Maybe give us a little background.

Ms. Dunn. Before we enter Mr. Blumenthal, just because I think the record is now like a tiny bit unclear. I think you helped her address this a little bit, but your original question was have you discussed any of the substance?

Mr. Pompeo. Yes, of course.

Ms. Dunn. And you answered, "Yes, we talked to wish each other good luck and didn't discuss the substance." But because Ms. Abedin answered yes to your original question, I just want to make sure --

Mr. Pompeo. The correct answer would be no.

Ms. Dunn. -- that it's clear from her subsequent testimony that what she really meant was no.

Mr. Pompeo. I'm going to run outside and tell them she said yes.

Ms. Dunn. I appreciate you assisting her with that subsequently.

Mr. Pompeo. No worries.

Ms. Dunn. Okay. Go ahead. Sorry.

Mr. Pompeo. So same question. Maybe you can talk about your interactions with Mr. Blumenthal during your time at the State Department and then maybe subsequent to that as well. Would you break it down?

Ms. Abedin. I had really very few interactions. I've known Sid for a long time. I worked for Secretary Clinton for 19 years now, and I met Mr. Blumenthal at the White House when I was working there. He

was at the Clinton White House and the Clinton administration at the same time. So I've known him since then.

While I was at the State Department, in terms of physical interaction, it was very minimal. I'm struggling to think of when I actually physically saw him. I don't believe I had any phone conversations with him in that period. It's possible that there were periodic email exchanges, but from my recollection, those were mostly in the form of emails from Sid being forwarded to me to print.

Mr. Pompeo. Were you aware of the -- I want to say this in a way that doesn't -- Mr. Blumenthal wrote to the Secretary frequently. We've now seen those documents during this relevant time period. That's my characterization. I think there were a lot. They were directly related to intelligence prospects in Libya.

Ms. Abedin. Yes, sir.

Mr. Pompeo. Were you aware that those communications were taking place? Were you ever copied on them, or did you know that Secretary Clinton was receiving that information from Mr. Blumenthal related to Libya in particular?

Ms. Abedin. I don't recall being copied on them, but I certainly do remember printing documents that were emails from Sid, yes.

Mr. Pompeo. In a similar way, were you aware of any communications that occurred prior to the departure of Mr. Qadhafi from power with respect to post-Qadhafi planning? That is, if we're successful, tell me what next steps -- were you involved in that at all? You might not have been in your role. But were you aware of

post-regime change planning that was taking place prior to the time that the regime was removed?

Ms. Abedin. I don't know. Certainly those were not conversations that I would have been involved in, but it's possible I had a top line awareness that there were some meetings going on. But I don't know.

Mr. Pompeo. I think that's all that I have, Sharon. Thank you.

Ms. Abedin. Thank you, sir.

Ms. Jackson. Well, and I think we're essentially out of time. We may have like 2 minutes, but it's not enough to start the next series of questions that I have, which are going to focus on the completeness of the record that we got from the State Department, which is a long area but it is my last area.

Ms. Abedin. Okay.

Ms. Jackson. So with that, I think we'll go off the record.

[Recess.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Let's go back on the record. It's 2:45. The minority staff have graciously conceded their next hour, so I'm going to continue with my questioning and hopefully this will make the day shorter than it could have been.

When Mr. Pompeo was here, he asked if you were interviewed by the ARB that was impaneled following the Benghazi attacks, and you said no. Did you provide any documents to the ARB?

A I was not asked to provide any, no.

Q Okay. Was there a memo that went out to all staff from Under Secretary Kennedy requesting that anybody who had information to provide it to the ARB? Do you recall that?

A I don't. If there was one, I don't remember receiving it.

Q Do you recall if the Secretary provided any documents to the ARB?

A I'm not aware of what she provided.

Q Okay. Who would have played a role in that if she were to provide documents to the ARB?

A It would have been our chief of staff, Cheryl Mills.

Q Okay. During the time that you worked with the Secretary, were you ever part of or privy to a conversation regarding complying with FOIA requests that particularly involved the Secretary's records?

A No, I wasn't aware that had ever happened. No.

Q Okay. So you were unaware that there had ever been a FOIA request regarding records of the Secretary individually?

A While we were at State or post State?

Q Let's start with while you were at the State Department.

A Not at all that I remember.

Q Okay. What about after you left the State Department?

A That was not something -- no, that wasn't something that happened outside her attorneys.

Q Okay. During the time that you were at the State Department, you were aware that the Secretary was using a personal email address; is that correct?

A I was, ma'am.

Q Were you aware that it was her exclusive means of electronic mail communications?

A Yes, I was.

Q Okay. And were you aware that that personal email account was maintained on a private server?

A I know it was an email address that was provided by the IT person in President Clinton's office. I'm not certain that I was aware of what server it was on or not on.

Q But it was not on a State Department server?

A That's correct.

Q So you were aware at least of that fact?

A Absolutely, yes.

Q Okay. I'm sorry, but I'm going to jump back just a minute. In September of 2012, following the attacks, there was the first congressional inquiry into documents relating to the Benghazi attack. Were you aware of that letter from a subcommittee of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee?

A No. And it wouldn't have likely gone to me anyway, so I wasn't aware. You're reminding me of something I didn't remember.

Q Okay. So there were no discussions among the senior staff regarding complying with congressional requests for information regarding the Benghazi attacks?

A I want to be thoughtful about how I answer that. I think -- I know mostly in the context of the ARB I remember both the

Secretary and Cheryl saying that they wanted everybody to be very responsive to the committee. But in regards to any other inquiry, I have no specific recollections.

Q Okay. Do you have any generalized recollection that there was discussion of congressional inquiries into the Benghazi attacks?

A Yes. Yes, I'm sure I was aware at the time. But I think what was more top of mind for me was the ARB. I believe that that inquiry started fairly quickly.

Q Okay. And in the ARB, was there any discussion of the Secretary or others in senior leadership providing documents to the ARB?

A Not any discussions that they included me in. And I certainly -- I wasn't asked for any documents.

Q Okay. Have you subsequently been aware that there were conversations ongoing at that time regarding producing documents to the senior leadership to the ARB?

A I don't think it's something that we've talked about since then. It doesn't jog anything in my memory even post her time at the State Department related to a congressional inquiry.

Q Or the ARB?

A The ARB, yes. As I mentioned, I do remember there being this encouragement from our chief of staff and the Secretary that they wanted people who were asked to participate to be responsive and cooperative.

Q And did that responsiveness include their own records?

A I don't know.

Q Okay. Do you recall that in December of 2012, Chairman Darrell Issa of the Oversight and Government Reform sent a letter to the State Department requesting information as to whether the Secretary used a personal email account? Do you recall the Department receiving that inquiry?

A No.

Q Okay. Do you recall any discussions that were had within the senior leadership of the State Department at that time of receipt of that request?

A Definitely not.

Q Okay. Do you recall anything about that letter coming in?

A Reading about it in the press, some months or a year thereafter.

Q Okay. But nothing at the time when you were still at the State Department?

A Definitely not.

Q Okay. You were asked by our minority colleagues about the Secretary's ability to conduct business at her residence. And I believe you said that she had a secure telephone there; is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q Did she have other equipment in one or both of residences?

A Yes, she did.

Q Okay. Let me just ask this, was the equipment the same in both of the residences?

A It was pretty similar, yes.

Q Okay. If you could just describe what did she have in her D.C. residence and what did she have in her New York residence.

A Certainly. In both residences, they basically established [REDACTED] in the present offices, the existing offices in the residence. So they took the door down and they replaced it with a door with a special lock in both houses. They installed fax machines, secure fax machines. If I recall, there were two phones; there was a white phone and then a yellow Cisco phone that had the two different levels of security.

Q So one up to the secret level and one to the top secret level?

A Correct. Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay.

A And she had the same setup in her New York residence as well, a secure fax machine as well as two different types of phones.

Q Okay. Did she have a safe?

A She did, yes.

Q At each residence?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And you said they made it into [REDACTED] Do you know whether it was accredited to hold up to top secret information?

A I wouldn't know the accreditation level, but I do know that they installed doors that had locks on them.

Q Were there windows in those rooms?

A Yes.

Q Did they do anything to the windows?

A I don't recall.

Q And I'm assuming that the State Department underwrote the cost for those upgrades for her?

A I don't know.

Q Do those rooms still exist today the way they did at the time?

A No, ma'am. They brought her existing doors out of storage and replaced them, and they took all the equipment.

Q Okay. Did she have a regular fax machine at one or both of the residences?

A If I remember -- and I think they still exist -- she had one unit that was a printer, copier, and fax machine in both residences.

Q Did she have a computer in either of those rooms?

A She did.

Q Okay. Did she have a computer capable of processing classified information?

A She did not.

Q Okay. So it was a regular computer in there?

A Correct.

Q Okay.

A But I should clarify that these were computers that she did not use. They existed before she became Secretary of State and they for the most part were dormant and --

Q So they were her personal computers?

A They were her personal computers, yes.

Q Okay.

A And, Ms. Jackson, I apologize, I forgot to mention, they did install in her Washington residence the ability to do, you know, VTC. I don't know how to --

Mr. Rodriguez. SVTCS, the secure video.

Ms. Abedin. Yes, the video. I don't know if it was secure, but the video capability.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Video teleconferences?

A Yes. We didn't use it, but it did exist. It was there. I forgot to mention that.

Q You have no knowledge as to whether that could go to the classified level?

A I have no recollection of having used it, but it was there.

Q Okay. And in these rooms they sort of built out for her use?

A Correct.

Q Okay. Did she use those pieces of equipment to receive information, the secure phones, the secure faxes. You've told us about not using the VTC, but were the other modes of communication used?

A She absolutely used the secure phones. You know, she was often home in either residence over the weekends and she made calls and received calls on those phones, yes. The secure fax was deployed very little, mostly because we often had technical challenges receiving the faxes. She sometimes struggled with the equipment and --

Q I believe I've seen an email where you have said, "Don't ever use the fax machine."

A Yes. It was so maddening to try and execute it without there being some challenge, so, you know, secure faxes, we pretty quickly gave up on. And when she was in Washington, it was very convenient to have a pouch delivered. She often had a pouch delivered anyway. She lived in very close proximity to the State Department so we would just ask those documents to be included in the pouch.

Q Okay. And was there a way to deliver documents to her in New York?

A Yes, there was a courier from the U.S./U.N. facility was able to do it there, but sometimes we, you know, had to struggle with the secure fax machine to get her document.

Q When she traveled, did a secure phone -- I assume that there was a secure phone and fax and other things on the plane when she traveled, but when she would be in hotels, were there secure communications available to her?

A On most occasions that I remember, yes. It's very common for there to be a phone installed, a black phone in the suite. And then they would have secure equipment in our -- I apologize. I'm losing the word -- in our staff office, you know, the control room as well.

Q Did they have like a command center or something like that?

A Yes. Yes. We called it a control room.

Q Control room?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Did she have a classified email account assigned to her by the State Department?

A She did not.

Q At any level, secret or top secret?

A No.

Q Was there someone who had an account on her behalf on those systems?

A Not that I'm aware of, no.

Q Okay. Did she have a secure Blackberry?

A She did not.

Q Did anyone carry one on her behalf?

A No.

Q Okay. Did she have a secure cell phone?

A Oh, interesting question. There may have been a secure cell phone that -- yes, on occasion. Yes.

Q That would travel with her?

A That would be with whoever, you know, whatever special assistant or, you know -- yes. Yes. I forgot about that.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q And did that routinely travel with her?

A We didn't need to use it very often because she was always within close enough proximity with an actual hard line secure phone, but now that you've asked me, I actually do remember that on occasion there was a secure cell phone. I travel -- it was a little box. A couple of times I traveled with it or assistant traveled with it, yes.

Q So is it accurate to say or to summarize that it probably -- that it generally travelled with her but it was not used much?

A Yes.

Q Okay. I would assume that it was in the checklist of things that got packed when you traveled overseas.

Okay. Let's go back to the personal email account and the non-State Department server. When did you first learn that the Secretary was going to use a personal email account as Secretary of State?

A Well, we -- you know, she'd had an email account that she used prior to arriving at the State Department, and obviously, I was aware of that. I communicated with her on that device, and that continued through her time at State.

Q So during the time that she was a Senator, she only used a personal email account?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay. When did you first learn that it was going to change from the prior personal account to the clintonemail.com account?

A So once the President asked Secretary Clinton to serve as Secretary of State, it was at the conclusion of 2008, the presidential campaign was over, and her Senate office was transitioning. So for my purposes, I'm talking about my transition at this point, I reached out to the IT, the person that did IT in President Clinton's office. I'd always had an email account that was provided to me by the Clintons and so I said I'm losing my hillaryclinton.com email, what can I use?

Q Let me just stop you right there. The hillaryclinton.com, was that the one that you had been using?

A Yes, ma'am. That was prior to arriving at the State Department. That was provided to me by the political entity associated with the Secretary.

Q Okay. And how long had you had that email address?

A Since we left the White -- well, I probably had -- first it was called @friendsofhillary.com, that transitioned -- that was right when we left the White House, and then that transitioned to hillaryclinton.com once she opened her presidential committee.

Q Okay. And the William Jefferson Clinton office maintained that email address, that domain name, hillaryclinton.com, or did her political campaign?

A Her political campaign, yes.

Q Okay.

A Yeah.

Q So to your knowledge, there was a server associated with her political campaign?

A I would have -- yes. I mean, I would have assumed so. It wouldn't have been something I paid attention to, but yes, ma'am.

Q But when there was a problem, you didn't call the William Jefferson Clinton office?

A I usually called Justin. He was our go-to guy. He always was, you know, I'm having a problem, can you help me fix it, and he always did, so that wasn't --

Q And who is Justin?

A Justin Cooper worked in President Clinton's office, and he handled a lot of IT issues that would arise from time to time.

Q And you used him even when you had the political campaign for Mrs. Clinton running for President?

A I was on the road a lot. I used -- you know, Justin was an easy go-to call. I certainly called him when the then Senator was having challenges with her email, yes. When in need, he was my point of contact.

Q Okay. And just to be clear, she never had a senate.gov account, email account when she was Senator?

A That's correct.

Q Okay. So moving forward to the end of 2008 to early 2009 when you were aware that she was going to become Secretary of State, take us through those steps.

A So as I was saying earlier, I reached out and said I'm losing these two email addresses. You know, what can I use to continue doing emails as it related to Clinton family matters, and he suggested that I use that clintonemail.com address, and so that's what I did.

Q Was that something that Just -- and by he, you're talking about Justin Cooper, right?

A I am referring to Justin, correct. That's my recollection, but yes.

Q Was that something that he was setting up as something new, or did it exist?

A I'm not certain if it existed or not, but around the same time, that's when, you know, obviously, she went from her AT&T Blackberry email to Clinton email. It all happened around the same period of time.

Q Okay. Did Secretary Clinton have a email address under the domain name hillaryclinton. -- it's hard to say hillaryclinton@hillaryclinton.com, but do you understand what I mean?

A Yes, ma'am. She did not.

Q She did not. She just had her AT&T account?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q So it was something@at&t.net, or something like that?

A Exactly.

Q And do you recall approximately when this was that you were having these conversations with Justin Cooper and the setup or the transfer to clintonemail.com?

A I don't remember the exact timeframe, but it was once I knew that I was about to lose two email addresses and trying to figure out what I was going to do.

Q And I guess my question is, why were you going to lose them? Could they not continue or who made the decision that they were not going --

A Well, she was no longer -- sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt you, Ms. Jackson. I apologize. But she was no longer going to be Senator, so obviously our Senate email accounts were going to be defunct, and her campaign committee was essentially shutting down. We were all going to lose our hillaryclinton.com email addresses within a short period of time.

Q So that leaves me to infer, but please correct me if I'm wrong, that those email addresses, the hillaryclinton.com addresses were not associated with their family foundation and business and things like that?

A Well, the foundation was a whole separate -- and I, you know, and I you know, I never had a foundation email account, but I used my hillaryclinton.com account for anything as it related to the family, in addition to anything related to the campaign at that time.

Q Okay. And did you say you had two accounts there?

A I'm sorry --

Q With her campaign?

A It was friendsofhillary that sort of morphed into hillaryclinton.com.

Q But they were not simultaneous?

A I think what happened is, when she went from being senator with having a political action committee and then went to deciding she's running for President, the friendsofhillary.com emails just sort morphed into -- or I don't know how to really explain it, but I guess they were -- anyone who emailed me at friendsofhillary.com I would get on the hillaryclinton.com email address. Does that make sense?

Q Actually it does, but I don't know why.

Do you know who came up with the name of clintonemail.com?

A I do not recall, no.

Q Okay. Just came to you as that?

A Yes. I'm not the most tech savvy person, so yes, in my recollection is I got a brand new Blackberry in the mail and it had a working phone number and an email address, and I was very happy.

Q Did it come with a contact list?

A I don't know.

Q I'm asking if some of the other --

A I would suppose that the contacts they had in my hillaryclinton.com Blackberry were transposed to the clintonemail.com. That's a safe -- yeah, that's safe to assume. I would have probably been frustrated if not.

Q And for those people who had an email address at hillaryclinton.com, did they get new email addresses at clintonemail.com? I think I said that right.

A No, no.

Q They did not?

A No.

Q Do you know how many did? How many people did? Obviously the Secretary did and you did.

A I think the only additional person was Chelsea.

Q What if any discussions did you have with the Secretary regarding the use of this new email address as her exclusive means of electronic communication as Secretary of State?

A I don't recall having many conversations. It was a natural progression from what she was doing previously, and she continued to do so.

Q And I just want to be precise here. You said you don't remember many conversations. Were there any conversations?

A I don't remember any conversations. I think those of us who were part of her senior leadership at the State Department all regret that we didn't think about it more, but we really didn't.

Q When she went in as Secretary of State, had they set up a state.gov account for her in anticipation of her arrival?

A Not that I'm aware of.

Q Did you or did anyone, to your knowledge, communicate with the State Department that she would not be using -- did you or others tell the IT department or the executive secretary or the executive assistant that she did not want one?

A I don't remember anyone discussing it with us. You know, we were coming into a bureaucracy. I don't know that they

necessarily -- I don't know that they necessarily assumed or approached us, assuming that the Secretary of State would have a state.gov email address. I'm not sure that the former Secretary had a state.gov email address. I don't know that it was the normal course of business for the Department, but I'm supposing on their behalf. I don't think it was automatic. I certainly don't remember anyone approaching me about giving her a state.gov email.

Q Okay. At any time prior to her becoming Secretary of State, did you have any conversation with her about using personal email versus official email as First Lady or as Senator or at any time in your past tenure with her?

A Certainly not as First Lady. You know, even as Senator, I don't recall. It doesn't mean it's out of the realm of possibility, but I don't recall any specific conversations with her.

Q Do you recall when she came in as Senator, whether they had set up an email account for her at a senate.gov address?

A No.

Q No recollection, or no, they did not?

A No, they did not.

Q Okay. Were you involved at all in the server being relocated to the New York -- well, first of all, let me ask you this. Was a server relocated to the New York residence?

A I have subsequently learned that's the case, but I wasn't aware at the time, no.

Q When did you learn?

A I think in the last year or so or the last -- I don't want to put a timeframe on it, but as all of this has become public, learning -- it wasn't something that was discussed with me before it's become public.

Q Okay. When problems arose during the time that she was Secretary of State, and I can't imagine that there's an electronic system out there that didn't have a problem or two, during this tenure, who did you call?

A When problems arose for myself?

Q For yourself or on behalf of the Secretary with the clintonemail.com account?

A If it was related to clintonemail.com, I would called Justin.

Q Justin Cooper?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay. If it wasn't related to clintonemail.com, under what sort of problems would you encounter?

A If it was the state.gov email, it would just be that it wasn't working, which happened from time to time that the state.gov system was down.

Q Okay. Did you ever call anybody other than Justin Cooper when problems arose?

A Outside of Clinton email?

Q Yeah.

A For state.gov, I would ask one of the assistants in the

office, I would say my Blackberry isn't working, can you help me get it fixed, and they would go to somebody in our IT department.

Q Good. And then back to the clintonemail.com address, did you call anyone other than Justin when problems arose?

A I think there was a period, and it may have been -- my memory is fuzzy on this, so I apologize, but at one point we -- I would call Bryan Pagliano, but I don't remember if that was pre or post, but I mean, Justin was my primary person.

Q Okay. And did Justin work at the State Department?

A He did not.

Q Okay. And where did he work?

A He worked in President Clinton's office.

Q In New York?

A In New York.

Q The Harlem office?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay. So you had no involvement in the redirection of the campaign server to the New York home?

A No.

Q Okay. Do you now understand that it was in the New York home?

A Yes.

Q Okay. It wasn't in some other building. It was in their residence in Chappaqua, New York?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Have you subsequently learned who was involved in the relocation of the server to the Chappaqua, New York residence?

A I actually don't know that I do.

Q Okay. Was it Bryan Pagliano?

A It may have been Bryan, but I would -- I'm guessing.

Q Okay. And why would he be in the realm of possible persons to have done that? What was his role? How did you know him?

A I knew him previously from the campaign, the presidential campaign. He worked on her 2008 presidential campaign, so I knew Bryan from there.

Q And did he run the IT systems for that campaign?

A I don't know if he ran the IT systems, but he was one of the people who worked on IT systems in 2008.

Q Was he like the head person, or where did he fall in the hierarchy of IT folks?

A I don't know. We had a lot of people in 2008, and I was never really at headquarters, so for me it was a name and email address, and I would say I need help.

Q Okay. And he was in New York?

A That would have been -- he would have been in Washington, actually. Our headquarters were in Virginia specifically in 2008.

Q Okay. Do you know how the personal email account and the private server were funded?

A I don't.

Q No information on who paid the registration fees for the

domain name or paid for the relocation of the server to the Chappaqua, New York home?

A No.

Ms. Sawyer. Yeah, I certainly appreciate the witness' willingness to answer every single question put before her, but I am -- and I certainly will give you the latitude to finish, particularly because both she and her counsel are obviously being cooperative, but I just would caution you that we have gotten very far afield in completing the record when we are talking about how it was financed.

Ms. Jackson. I understand that that's your position, and we have a different one, and I will continue asking questions in my hour.

Ms. Sawyer. Could you at least give us some foundational sense as how that's related to the investigation into the attacks in Benghazi?

Ms. Jackson. I will continue asking questions in my hour.

Ms. Sawyer. Okay. And I just want the record to very clearly reflect, since we did see a letter in the public domain indicating that we have never objected in the context as to how the investigation is being run, that I am clearly objecting, and I appreciate the willingness to answer on behalf of Democratic Members to the questions that are going far beyond determining whether or not we have a complete record as to the documents that are in the -- Ms. Abedin's custody and control related to Benghazi and the attacks in Benghazi.

And we also don't agree with the scope of how far back, but I understand as was said in the last hour already that to the best of her knowledge and ability, any documents that were in her custody or

control related to Libya or Benghazi have been now turned over to the State Department. I mean, can I just clarify if that is accurate?

Ms. Abedin. That is accurate, yes, ma'am.

Ms. Sawyer. Okay. That's fine.

Ms. Jackson. And I would also note for the record, we had no objection from the witness or the counsel to that, and those are the only objections that are allowed in a transcribed interview, and we have not objected to any question posed by minority counsel.

Ms. Sawyer. That's fine. And I just want to read from the letter sent from the chairman to the ranking member the following sentence.

Ms. Jackson. Ms. Sawyer, you will have the opportunity to ask questions during your hour.

Ms. Sawyer. That's fine. I appreciate that. Thank you.

Ms. Dunn. Since we have interruption in the questioning, in any event, there's at least one thing that I think the witness should probably make clear about her email use, so I don't know how much more questioning we're going to do about that, but -- so Huma, if there's anything that you want to make clear, you should do that.

Ms. Abedin. I think the only thing I wanted to clarify is I myself did the vast majority, the vast, vast majority of my work as it related to the State Department on my state.gov email, I think, and I think my documents would reflect that work that was conducted on Clinton email was minimal compared to the amount of work I did.

I just generally want to say, like I always try to do the right thing, I always try to do things the way I was told I had to do them

and listen to the instructions, so that's the only other point I wanted to make about my email use.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q We've talked about a Yahoo account you had and the clintonemail.com account. Were there any other domain names maintained on that server, to your knowledge?

A I'm not sure my Yahoo account was maintained on any server.

Q I'm sorry. I didn't mean to imply that it was. I'm trying to identify the scope of email accounts and then, as a corollary to that, were they maintained on the server that the clintonemail.com was maintained? It's kind of a two-part.

You know what, let me just withdraw it and start all over because I think I just complicated it by putting two things together.

A Okay.

Q You've identified for us two personal email accounts, a Yahoo account and a clintonemail.com account; is that correct?

A I had one personal account, which was my Yahoo account, and I had a Clinton email account that was provided to me by the Clintons that I used for their personal emails about their personal matters, but that was the distinction.

Q Okay. Were you aware that the Secretary used -- well, let me ask this. How many different email addresses are you aware of that the Secretary used?

A I am aware of two, the one that she used when she first arrived at the State Department and then after the subsequent incident

where her email address was made public while she was Secretary of State, that email address has changed.

Q Okay. The first one was `hdr22@clintonemail.com`?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q That was the one she used during the duration of being Secretary of State?

A That's what she used until that was made public, and then that was changed.

Q And how was that made public?

A I think somebody -- oh, gosh, I'm sorry. You're testing my memory, but it was -- I believe it was somebody else's emails that became public, and it had identified her email address, and her email address was then made public.

Q Recognition is often better than recall, so do you recall that it was Sid Blumental's email address that was hacked?

A Yes. Yes. Yes.

Q Okay. And at that time she changed to a different email address?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Had there been any other email addresses used by the Secretary from 2009 forward, to your knowledge?

A In that time period --

Q From 2009 forward.

A Yes, it was those two, yes.

Q And as of today, is she still using one of those two?

Ms. Dunn. Can we go off the record?

Ms. Jackson. Sure.

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q We've talked about the hdr22@clintonemail.com, and then after the Sid Blumenthal hack, a different email address has been used. From 2009 forward, have there been any other email addresses used by the Secretary?

A While she was at State?

Q Well, let's start there, while she was at State?

A So there was those two at State, so she transitioned from the AT&T Blackberry that happened around the same time as she started at State. She had the [hdr22](mailto:hdr22@clintonemail.com), she used that, solely that address until the hacking incident, and then we changed the address to another [@clintonemail.com](mailto:clintonemail.com), and --

Q And then, more recently, has there been yet another one? Not what it is, just has there been?

Ms. Dunn. So I'd be more comfortable if we went off the record and talked about this.

Ms. Jackson. Sure.

[Discussion off the record.]

Ms. Jackson. All right. Let's go back on the record.

Mr. Westmoreland. Can I ask a couple before you go on?

Ms. Jackson. Yes, you may.

Mr. Westmoreland. If I get out of bounds, somebody pull a flag.

But you said the IT person -- and this is going back a little bit, and I think you identified he was Justin, but was he from Mr. Clinton's office? I mean, did he work for Mr. Clinton?

Ms. Abedin. Yes.

Mr. Westmoreland. And you said the [REDACTED].

Ms. Abedin. Yes.

Mr. Westmoreland. And I think you mentioned that that was actually the President's office that they [REDACTED].

Ms. Abedin. No, sir. No, sir. Actually, the President had a separate office in the New York -- actually, he had separate offices in both residences. These were offices that were specific to the Secretary at both residences --

Mr. Westmoreland. Okay.

Ms. Abedin. And those were [REDACTED].

Mr. Westmoreland. So it was not his office. It was just a office that was [REDACTED]?

Ms. Abedin. They were her offices, and they were her offices prior to her becoming Secretary of State, but in both residences, they each had their own --

Mr. Westmoreland. Sure.

Ms. Abedin. -- their own offices.

Mr. Westmoreland. But the server wasn't in [REDACTED], that you know of?

Ms. Abedin. I don't -- I actually, sir, even till today, don't know physically where that server was.

Mr. Westmoreland. That's all.

Ms. Abedin. I don't know.

Mr. Westmoreland. Now, when you were talking about [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], and you said you don't know who paid for it, if it was the
State Department or private or whatever?

Ms. Abedin. Yes, sir.

Mr. Westmoreland. But the upgrades included a secure phone and
a secure fax and some of the other things that you mentioned.

Ms. Abedin. Yes, sir.

Mr. Westmoreland. But those would have had to have come from the
State Department, right?

Ms. Abedin. Yes, they did, sir.

Mr. Westmoreland. Okay. And do you know if it was ever restored
back to the -- I mean, you said they took down a door, you know.

Ms. Abedin. Yes.

Mr. Westmoreland. I'm sure they added some stuff.

Ms. Abedin. Yes.

Mr. Westmoreland. But did the contractor or the State come in and
put it back to this original condition?

Ms. Abedin. They did, sir.

Mr. Westmoreland. And you said that she had a personal email while
she was a Senator?

Ms. Abedin. Yes, sir.

Mr. Westmoreland. And, was it on the same server that was used
when she got the clinton.com, or do you know?

Ms. Abedin. I don't know. I don't know if that email address was housed on that server already.

Mr. Westmoreland. So it could have been two different servers. I mean, they wouldn't have wiped one clean and then say, okay, we got all the Senate stuff out of the way and now we're going to use it for this, but you --

Ms. Abedin. I really don't -- I really don't know.

Mr. Westmoreland. Now, the other thing is, you said when you got your Blackberry, that it had a phone number and an email address, and you think possibly, probably so, it had your contact list?

Ms. Abedin. Yes.

Mr. Westmoreland. Was that the Blackberry that came from the Clintons or was that the Blackberry that came from the State Department?

Ms. Abedin. It was the Blackberry that came from the Clinton office. I had two. I operated on two Blackberries when I was at the State Department.

Mr. Westmoreland. Yeah. So, but the one you're talking about that already had the --

Ms. Abedin. Yes, yes, that would have been the personal one.

Mr. Westmoreland. Okay. And you said that Yahoo, clinton.com, and .gov was the three emails that you had, your personal and the Clinton one, and you said you used it for personal, right?

Ms. Abedin. Yes, sir.

Mr. Westmoreland. Now, did you do personal work? I mean, if you are only doing it for personal, were you doing personal work for Ms.

Clinton while you were at the State Department, or was this just to say, hey, how you doing or how's Chelsea and what did you all have dinner, or let's get together or something like that? I mean, was it work related or just -- I mean, kind of explain that.

Ms. Abedin. Of course. It was work related for me, but it was more often than not personal for them, just given my job responsibilities, you know, especially planning her schedule, knowing when to coordinate, knowing, you know, where her husband was or her daughter was. It wasn't atypical for them to say FYI, you know, is the Secretary scheduled to be in Washington tomorrow because the President's going to be there and will they be spending the night together. I mean, they, you know, both traveled a lot. It was coordinating for those purposes.

And absolutely, it would not have been atypical, sir, for somebody from the President's office to email and say, you know, does her schedule end in time tomorrow for her to have dinner with the President in New York when she lands, so yes, it was related to coordinating all three of their schedules.

Mr. Westmoreland. Now, the President didn't email, correct?

Ms. Abedin. That's correct.

Mr. Westmoreland. Okay. So who would have been emailing you for the President to find out where you all were going -- when they were going to have dinner? I mean, I'm confused, I guess.

Ms. Abedin. He had a staff, sir. He has a scheduler.

Mr. Westmoreland. Oh, so his so staff emailed.

Ms. Abedin. Yes. Yes, yes, yes. I apologize if I wasn't clear. I was not emailing --

Mr. Westmoreland. No, that's okay. But would his staff not have had your State Department address or they didn't think it was appropriate to ask you do what you were doing over at the State Department address?

Ms. Abedin. They absolutely did have my state.gov address, and on occasion, I was emailed there as well. But I think for, frankly, it seemed more appropriate to have those kinds of exchanges on the systems that we'd always used, and like I said, it was primarily to coordinate, and it was not communications with the President directly. It was with his staff.

Mr. Westmoreland. Well, I've got to leave, and it's certainly nice to meet you. Thank you.

Ms. Abedin. Thank you. It was nice to meet you as well.

Ms. Dunn. Thank you.

Mr. Westmoreland. I appreciate it. Thank you.

Ms. Jackson. Thank you, sir.

Ms. Dunn. Do you know when we started this?

Ms. Jackson. Quarter till.

Ms. Dunn. Great. Thank you.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q All right. Let's return to Mr. Pagliano. When did you first meet him?

A Sometime probably -- sometime around the beginning of her presidential campaign in 2007, 2008. I don't remember -- I don't

remember the first time I met him.

Q Okay. Did Mr. Pagliano become an employee of the State Department?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And where did he work and what did he do?

A I don't know.

Q Okay. Did he do IT related services for the State Department?

A I don't know.

Q Okay. Did you have any involvement -- did you know he was coming to the State Department?

A I'm not sure I did, but he was there. I do know he was there.

Q Okay. Did he also perform work for the Clintons during the time that you were at the State Department?

A I don't know.

Q Okay. Well, I guess I want to go back to you said you would call Justin Cooper, or there was a period of time when you called Bryan Pagliano. So can you explain to me what you called him about and what was he to do?

A I'm not clear on the timing. It's very fuzzy in my head. There was a period of time, that I would have called Bryan for the same thing I would have called Justin for, it's not working, can you help me, but I'm very fuzzy on what that time period is.

Q But obviously you were at the State Department because before then he was working for the campaign. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And at what --

A It's not necessarily -- actually, I want to revise that, or at least clarify that. I'm not sure if it was when we were at State, and I guess I really should probably think about it. Justin was my main point of contact over the years. Bryan, at some point, was -- I just am not fuzzy -- I'm just fuzzy on when.

Q Okay.

A I mean, it may have been after we left the State Department when I say I'm fuzzy. It may have actually been after we left the State Department.

Q And how would you communicate with him?

A Probably through [REDACTED], through her assistant, or I would have emailed him.

Q Okay.

A If it was a problem with her email.

Q With the Secretary's email?

A Yes.

Q You would have emailed him to fix it?

A Possibly, yes.

Q Did he have an email -- clintonemail.com account?

A Not that I'm aware of.

Q Okay. And what account did you have in your Blackberry, your contacts for him?

A I don't remember. I don't remember.

Q Do you still have those contacts?

A I probably do.

Q Is he still in your contacts?

A He may be. I haven't been in touch with him for a long time.

Q Okay. Would you be willing to provide that information to the committee as to what email address is in your contacts for him?

A I am happy to provide whatever contact information I have, yes.

Q Okay. Were there ever times when the system went down, the clintonemail.com address went down and during the time you were at the State Department?

A Yes.

Q And do you recall how often that occurred?

A Oh, I don't recall it happening often. In fact, I feel like it was a big deal when it did happen. I specifically remember one instance one summer, I don't remember which year specifically, when it went down. There was a big storm.

Q Was that Hurricane Sandy?

A Yeah.

Q Okay. Does it refresh your recollection to know that that happened in 2012?

A I'm sorry, what do you mean?

Q Well, when Hurricane Sandy occurred.

A Okay.

Q You said one summer.

A Oh, okay.

Q In fact, if you would go back to exhibit 7 and take a look at that and see if that refreshes your recollection.

A Yeah. Yes.

Q Okay. Is that when you're talking about that the system went down?

A I'm not sure it was.

Q Okay. And when was the date in that again?

A This is October 29, 2012. I'm not sure it was. It was the summer.

Q Okay. Do you recall the system going down at the time of Hurricane Sandy?

A I don't.

Q You don't recall that Bryan Pagliano had to go out and do some repairs to the system in New York?

A Are you telling me that?

Q I'm asking you if you recall that.

A I'm not aware that that happened.

Q Okay. At any time while you were at the State Department and Secretary Clinton was the Secretary of State, do you recall any intrusion or breach of data or the system otherwise going down and having the loss of data on the system?

A In the state.gov system?

Q No, where the clintonemail.com account was housed.

A No, I'm not.

Q Okay. Were you aware of any cyber threats to the system that housed the clintonemail.com?

A I am not.

Q Do you know whether that system, the system that housed the clintonemail.com, had encryption capabilities?

A I am not.

Q Did you ever encrypt information that would go onto that system, encrypt a document that was attached to an email, or anything like that?

A Not that I'm aware of.

Q Have you ever encrypted a document?

A I don't know what that means.

Q Like password protect it in some way or anything like that?

A No, not that -- no.

Q Okay. Do you know who provided the physical security for the server and related equipment in the New York home?

A I don't.

Q Who, among the senior staff at the State Department, was aware that former Secretary Clinton used a personal email address?

A It was pretty common knowledge amongst senior staff.

Q Okay. And when you say senior staff, how far down the organizational chart are you going? Deputy secretaries?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Under secretaries?

A Yes.

Q All of the under secretaries have her personal email account?

A I am not sure if all of them did but certainly many did.

Q Okay. And can you recall which ones did?

A No.

Q Did Wendy Sherman?

A She would have, yes. That makes sense.

Q Did Patrick Kennedy?

A I don't know.

Q Okay. Would the Under -- I can't remember them all. They had letters. R, N.

A I still refer to them by their letters.

Q Okay. Was there an R, Under Secretary for R?

A Yes.

Q Was that like press, public affairs, public something like that?

A Yes, that was Judith McHale.

Q Yes. Do you recall if she had the --

A I'm fairly certain she did.

Q Okay. What are some other letters that you recall? We can back into this.

A Well, let's see. So the deputy secretary certainly would have, the Under Secretary for Political Affairs would have likely had it, pretty certain did. The Under Secretary for, you know, Public Affairs is, as you relayed, did. I know some of the assistant

secretaries had her email.

Q Which ones do you recall had her?

A You know, the ones I remember were the Under Secretary -- I'm sorry, the assistant secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, Jeff Feltman, but beyond that, maybe Phil Gordon did, you know, European Affairs Assistant Secretary, but now I'm just guessing and assuming, but there were certainly -- there were certainly leadership in our department that had her email, and then obviously everyone within the Secretary's office had her email.

Q Okay. Who, among the other heads of the executive branch, had her personal email account, like Secretary Gates, then Secretary Panetta, Director Petraeus, people from the White House, were there other leaders in the executive branch that had her personal email address?

A I know she communicated with leadership at the White House.

Q By email?

A By email, yes, ma'am. I really did not, you know, have the capacity -- I didn't read who was sending her emails, but I do know in some instances people asked for her email and we provided it. I don't know about General Petraeus or Secretary Gates. I honestly don't. She saw many of these people on a regular basis in meetings at the White House, so I'm not sure that they actually emailed each other.

Q Okay. Who, among the White House staff, requested her email address?

A From what I recollect, the chief of staff and --

Q And at what times, which chief of staff?

A Ron Emanuel, shortly after we arrived, and I know David Axelrod communicated on -- or at least had requested, you know, had asked for her email address.

Q And were those given -- was the email address given to those two individuals?

A Yes, anyone who asked for her email address, for the most part, received it.

Q Do you recall anyone who was denied it?

A No, I don't.

Q Okay. Were ambassadors given her email address?

A I don't know. I don't believe so. I think it was -- it wouldn't probably have been protocol either for an ambassador to email the Secretary of State directly. They typically went through, you know, the chain of command and reported in to the relevant assistant secretary.

Q Do you recall whether the general counsel or the legal advisor to the State Department had her personal email account?

A Harold Koh, I suspect, did.

Q You don't recall precisely whether he did or not?

A I don't, but I -- I mean, I'm sure he did.

Q Do you know whether he was consulted by the Secretary before she exclusively used her personal email account at the State Department?

A Do I know if he was consulted?

Q Uh-huh.

A I don't.

Q At any time, did he raise any concerns about her use of a personal email account?

A Not to me, that I remember.

Q Of all of the people that we've talked about, the deputy secretaries, the select under secretaries, a few assistant secretaries, at any time did anyone raise any type of concern about the Secretary exclusively use -- let me state that differently.

At any time did any of these individuals voice any type of concern over the secretary's use of a personal email account?

A No.

Q Okay. Did any of these individuals know that the Secretary was exclusively using a personal email account?

A Not that I'm aware of.

Q Okay. Do you know whether the Secretary or anyone on her behalf consulted with the National Archives and Record Administration regarding the exclusive use of a personal email?

A I don't believe so.

Q Do you believe that did not happen?

A I certainly did not do it on her behalf.

Q Okay. Do you know whether she told officials at the White House that it was going to be her exclusive means of electronic communication?

A I can't speak to what she told the White House.

Q Were you ever present when she denied or deflected any inquiry in that regard?

A No.

Q Was the Secretary, what is known as an original classification authority with respect to classified information?

A I don't know.

Q When did you first become aware that the Department was requesting or notified Secretary Clinton that they were going to ask for the return of her records or knew that they didn't have her universe of records?

A You know, I've thought about this a lot because there has been so much news about this recently, and I've tried to fix in my head when I first became aware, I think, I had full awareness about what the Department had requested and what the committee had requested earlier this year when our campaign team was being, you know, informed about what transpired in the last year. But prior to that, it was something that was being handled by her attorneys, so I didn't really have much awareness.

Q Okay. And specifically when you say her attorneys, who are you referring to?

A David Kendall.

Q Okay. Were you talking with Cheryl Mills at all?

A Was I talking to Cheryl about?

Q The State Department's request for Secretary Clinton's --

A No.

Q What about a Heather Samuelson?

A Of course I know Heather, but no.

Q Is she currently working on the campaign?

A No.

Q Okay. Do you know where she is currently?

A Physically?

Q Yes. I mean what city, what state?

A I think she's still in Washington.

Q Not New York?

A She's not in New York, no. She's not in New York.

Q Do you know if she played any role in the return of the Secretary's records to the State Department?

A I'm not aware of what role Heather played.

Q To your knowledge?

A To my knowledge, yes.

Q Do you know what if any role Cheryl Mills played?

A I don't know specifically. I don't know what role Cheryl would have played. I know Cheryl was one of the Secretary's attorneys.

Q Okay. I do want to try and nail down the timing of when you knew that the Secretary's records were not with the State Department. I know I'm running out of time, but it's also my last topic.

Mr. Rodriguez. How much longer do you think you'll be?

Ms. Dunn. Do you want a break?

Mr. Rodriguez. Do you know how much longer you'll be?

Ms. Jackson. 5 minutes maybe.

Mr. Rodriguez. You have about 5 minutes in you?

Ms. Abedin. No, I do, but I'm not sure I'm going to be able to satisfy your answers here.

Ms. Jackson. You know what, let's go off the record. Let's take a break and --

Ms. Dunn. Yeah.

[Recess.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Okay. Let's go back on the record. It is 4 minutes after 4:00. I am going to continue with my questioning to wrap up this session, then we're going to turn it over to my minority colleagues, and then we're going to transfer down to a short, very, very short classified setting for just a few questions.

So right when we broke, I was talking to you about the request for the review and return of records of the Secretary to the State Department, and I believe I was asking you as to when that was. Do you have any idea of like what season it was, was it spring, was it summer, was it fall, can you connect it to any other event and try and give me a better sense of when you first learned?

A Yeah. I've really been trying to rack my brain about what I knew in the time and what I've known subsequently, but in the period where that request had gone to her, it had really been handled by her attorneys.

It wasn't something that was certainly discussed with me or shared with me, and I wasn't involved in the process of retrieving anything, so I'm not sure that I knew the full extent until earlier this year when, you know, as part of the campaign staff we were being briefed on what the attorneys were going to make public about what had transpired in the last year.

Q Okay. So you first learned, for, sure earlier this year, is that correct, so early --

A Definitely about what had happened and the period of time when a letter was sent by the State Department and these FOIA requests, like all these things that have now become very obvious --

Q Uh-huh.

A -- I don't think was on my radar until it really had to meet for the purposes of the campaign really.

Q Okay. And was that then before or after the New York Times ran the article? I'm just still trying to get a sense of when.

A Which -- I'm sorry, which article --

Q About her exclusive use of a personal email address during her tenure as Secretary of State, which I recall being on March 2nd?

A Was that the first time it was reported?

Q That is my recollection, but --

Ms. Dunn. Do you have the article?

Ms. Jackson. Not with me.

Ms. Abedin. Well, obviously I knew that she had used only that email account, so that wouldn't have been news to me. So are you asking

me when I knew --

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q About the request for the return of records, the review and return of records, was it before or after it became public knowledge that she had exclusively used her personal email account during her tenure as Secretary of State?

A From my recollection, it was once -- and frankly, the only reason that anybody from the campaign needed to know anything about this is because there were press requests asking a whole series of questions. I actually do not recall that it was the New York Times that had written that first article, but I know there were news reports earlier this year, and then subsequently there were questions being asked. We were planning events for her as it related to the campaign, and then all of a sudden we now had to deal with a new set of questions from the press about what had transpired in the last year, and that's why her lawyers were consulted.

They then relayed the relevant information to the communications team at the campaign, and those were the talking points that -- then the talking points were put together by our communications team, and so at that point, yes, yes, ma'am, absolutely, I was aware it was listed there when she got the request and what her lawyers did and that the documents had been provided.

Q But I guess from your long history with the Secretary, I see you in sort of a different role, and you had essentially the family email account, the clintonemail.com?

A Sure, yeah.

Q And so I understand that the campaign officials were told, but weren't you told before then?

A Who would have told me?

Q The Secretary herself.

A Absolutely not.

Q Okay. Cheryl Mills?

A I don't ever recall Cheryl mentioning that to me.

Q Okay. Philippe Reines?

A I don't recall Philippe Reines mentioning it to me.

Q No one asked you about your own clintonemail.com account in connection with the Secretary's return of records?

A No.

Q Okay. So the first time you knew that anybody knew you had a clintonemail.com account was when they requested you to look at your records, or did you know before then?

A I'm sorry, can you ask me that question again --

Q Yeah, it was a little complicated. At some point you were asked to return your own records, to go through your own personal records and return them to the State Department.

A That's correct, yes.

Q Okay. How did you get your clintonemail.com account records? Were you able to still access that account?

A I didn't do it myself. I asked my attorneys. I gave them my devices and my documents and I asked them to make the review and

collect everything that I had and to turn over any potential Federal records.

Q So that account was still active in the sense that it could be accessed without going to a server or an Internet service provider?

A I'm not sure that the account was still active, but -- because I had transitioned to a new email, but I certainly, you know, clearly did have emails on my devices that were relevant, and as I understand, they were all turned over, yes.

Q All right. Prior to you being contacted, did you know ahead of time that you were going to be -- well, let me ask this. How did you first become aware that you personally were going to be requested to review your records?

A To review and return?

Q Yes.

A I read a news article.

Q Okay. That was before the letter arrived?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay.

A I read a news article that said that my records and other members of the senior team identified by name, had been asked to review and return their Federal records. I had not received any such request. I contacted my lawyers and said there's a news article saying that I have been asked to do this, but no one has actually asked me to do this.

They inquired on my behalf, and sure enough, it turns out that a request had been sent in March of this year for the review and return

of records in my personal possession.

It never made it to me because the requests were sent to an old mailing address and to old email addresses, so my attorneys were able to reach out to the Department, and I did officially receive the request in May of this year.

Q Okay. Do you have any knowledge or awareness of the methodology that was used by Secretary Clinton's representatives in how they reviewed her records for return to the State Department?

A I don't. They did not consult with me. You'd have to ask them.

Q Do you know how many people worked on that project?

A I have no idea.

Q There have been various media accounts about the server being maintained by a company known as Platte River. Have you read those accounts?

A Yes, I have.

Q Prior to reading those accounts, did you have any awareness of Platte River as a company involved with the server maintaining those emails?

A Yes, ma'am, I did.

Q Okay. Tell us what your involvement was and your awareness was of that.

A I was informed, I believe it was, after we left State Department or around that time, I don't remember a date specifically, that Platte River Networks was going to take over responsibility for

the IT needs of the family.

Q Okay. And who was it being transferred from to Platte River?

A That's a good question. I would imagine from the system that was, you know, an internal -- I guess an internal system that was managed by the President's personal office to a company, an outside company.

Q Did Bryan Pagliano have any involvement in that?

A He may have, yes, that's possible.

Q Okay. In maintaining the server prior to its being transferred to Platte River?

A I don't remember the Bryan period. I want to check. I mean, I feel like this is knowable. I just don't remember. I apologize. I didn't prepare for that, so I don't know. I know Bryan. I know there's a period where he was in and out of our universe. I really wouldn't be doing service till I've given you accurate information by saying yes.

Q Okay. And what records would you have available to you that you could access? Would that be emails or telephone calls, call logs?

A I think I would call somebody and say, hey, when did Bryan do this? I don't even know who. I'd probably call somebody in the President's office. I don't -- you know.

Ms. Dunn. I think it's pretty clear it's not within her recollection. Thank you.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Who was involved in the selection of Platte River?

A I wasn't part of the process, so I was informed after they had been selected.

Q Okay. And do you know who made that decision?

A I don't know who made the decision. I know I was informed by the President's office and by Chelsea's office.

Q Do you know if there was any vetting done of the company before it was chosen?

A You'd have to ask their offices.

Q Okay. Do you know who in their offices was involved in that? Who was the person who informed you?

A It was the President's chief of staff and Chelsea's chief of staff.

Q And who are those individuals?

A Tina Flournoy and Bari Lurie.

Q Do you know whether the server was physically shipped to Platte River, or was the information electronically transmitted?

A I don't know.

Q Okay. Do you know where the data is from that server today?

A I don't.

Q Okay. Do you know whether the Secretary has retained any copies of -- either electronic or hard copy of the information that was taken from the server?

A I think you'd have to ask David Kendall. I really don't know.

Q You don't know. You've not had any conversations with the Secretary or anyone about that?

A I will tell you one thing for certain, Ms. Jackson, she does not have these conversations with me.

Ms. Jackson. That's it. I think that might be all my questions, and I will turn it over to the minority staff.

Ms. Abedin. Thank you.

Ms. Sawyer. Go off the record just for a second while we shift.

[Recess.]

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q We'll go back on the record. It's 4:20. And thank you for your incredible patience with us today and all the answers to our many questions.

You know, during the last round, and I just need to take just a moment, you know, I had voiced a concern, an objection to the line of questioning that you were being asked. You probably recall from very early in the day, there was a preamble that indicated that we were not deemed to be able to object. We've been very judicious in our objections, not only in this interview, but certainly in other interviews.

You know, nonetheless, with regard to this and to make sure that the record is perfectly clear, and particularly in light of public statements, and I'm just going to, in the record, read the letter sent to the ranking member on October 8th, it's dated October 7th, we received it the 8th, that says, quote -- from Chairman Gowdy, quote, "And because your staff has participated fully in each transcribed interview and deposition, you know we have done exactly that." The "exactly that" is run the committee in a fair and bipartisan manner and followed the facts wherever they may lead. "Not once in any of these conversations have you ever questioned the motivations of the committee's work or questioned our mission to uncover the facts surrounding the Benghazi terrorist attacks."

So I just need to make clear for the record, we lodged an objection, certainly during the course of the questioning. We understand fully and appreciate your desire to answer every single question put before you. Thank you for that. That does not mean that by being in the room, being here that we agree that that is within the legitimate scope of this committee's jurisdiction. I feel like the questions that you were asked during almost the entirety the last round fell outside the scope of our legitimate jurisdiction. We do thank you for answering them. We understand the desire to be able to say you've answered every question that Congress has put to you, so thank you for that. And I'll now just proceed to some --

A Thank you. Thank you so much.

Q I'll just proceed to just mostly following up on some of the conversation you've already had today.

A Okay.

Q And I'll try to be efficient. We certainly, again, want to be respectful of your time.

So during the last hour, there was some conversation about certain outages that might have occurred on the email that the Secretary was using during her time as Secretary of State, the personal email account. You know, just taking a step back for a second, would you characterize yourself as someone who is kind of tech savvy, technology knowledgeable, or not?

A I would say very definitively not.

Q So overall and generally, and not getting into the technical

details, did you feel that your ability to just communicate in terms of the reliability was reasonably good on the account that the Secretary was using on her personal email account?

A From -- you know, from my memory, it was -- it was fairly reliable. There -- it was -- you know, there were instances where it wasn't working for a period; there was a delay by a couple of hours or something. I'm not saying there was never any technical issues at all in the 4 years, but it felt like we had just as many, if not many more instances, with State.gov going down for a period. So it wasn't exclusive to one email or another.

Q Right. I mean, I recall you talking a little bit about a particular problem and difficulty you had had with a fax machine --

A Yes.

Q -- and that --

A Yes.

Q -- seemed to me that that was a State Department fax setup, because it sounded like it was the secure fax.

A That's correct.

Q It's not that the State system would have been perfect either. Is that fair to say?

A That is fair to say, in my opinion, yes.

Q And in either case, if you encountered a problem, you were not going to be the technology person to solve the problem. Is that fair?

A That's fair.

Q So you were also asked about a particular potential outage of a server or of the account during Hurricane Sandy, and you said you didn't -- I'm not sure -- I'm not sure if you said you didn't recall if it happened or if you think it didn't happen, but is it possible that there was an outage that you would not recall, either during that instance or at some other time?

A It is possible. I was not aware until Ms. Jackson mentioned what had happened in October of 2012. That was not top of mind to me. I -- in my recollection, actually had been a summer and I thought it was a year earlier. I wasn't aware of that one, or I didn't remember that one.

Q When you say a summer or a year earlier, are you referring to Hurricane Sandy or a problem with the server?

A Well, this was Hurricane Sandy, so there was an August, either the year before or 2 years prior that -- and I -- it must have been 2000 -- let me think about this for a second. So it would have been 2011, by my recollection. The only instance that I remember that we had an issue with Clinton email going down, I had thought was in 2011, in August 2011, for a period. I certainly didn't remember this, and maybe --

Q And either way, Hurricane Sandy, I had to ask my colleague, was fall of 2012. So that one itself was 3 years ago.

A Yeah.

Q And then the other one, to the extent you had a recollection, would have been more than 4 --

A Yes.

Q -- years ago?

A Yes.

Q So understandably, to the extent that you have done your best throughout the day to recall specifics of 3, or potentially longer ago, certainly you have done your best to answer our questions to the best of your knowledge, I assume.

A As best as I can -- as best as I can remember, and as I said, it's just -- it's very -- it's very fuzzy, and I'm not sure that it was her BlackBerry that wasn't working or her Clinton email. I can't even pinpoint it to that if it was a period in August her BlackBerry wasn't working or that Clinton email wasn't working, if that makes sense.

Q Now, shifting gears a little bit, there was some discussion about the process for the Accountability Review Board.

A Yes.

Q Just to be clear, you weren't, in any formal way, responsible for helping coordinate any kind of interaction with the Accountability Review Board, were you?

A No, ma'am.

Q So to the extent there was a process for both seeking documents broadly throughout the State Department and obtaining those documents, you would not have been involved in that process?

A No, ma'am.

Q Just briefly returning to exhibit 5, which was a document

that -- it's probably in your stack. Give me a moment. You spoke with my colleague about that document. It's titled, "Information Memo for the Secretary." Do you -- I have heard the term "information memo" and also the term "action memo" used. I think you mentioned very briefly, not in relation to anything substantive, but the word "action memo" came up earlier in the day.

A Yes.

Q Can you explain for us what the difference would be between an information memo and an action memo?

A From my recollection, the action memos actually required a response from the Secretary or whoever that particular memo was directed to, and there was usually a cover sheet that said action memo for, you know, Huma Abedin, and then it would have a summary of what the request was. In my case, it was very often -- almost always it was signing off on an event or a request for a phone call, whatever it was, and then there was a line that said "approve" and there was a line that said "disapprove."

For the Secretary, I know there were definitely memos I saw that were of a -- you know, a different level. She wasn't getting action memos that related to, you know, scheduling events, but it was a decision that a department needed, and would say "approve," "disapprove."

That's how I experienced action memos, it required a response from whoever received it.

Information memos, you know, like the one I have in front of me

often was to give an update about something happening from whoever the email, in this case, the acting Assistant Secretary.

Q And so an information memo would not, in the same way that an action memo would, require a response or action from the Secretary. Is that fair, one fair distinction?

A Yes.

Q And certainly, the way you describe an action memo, if one were seeking to get a response or action taken by the Secretary herself, an action memo would certainly be one formal mechanism for doing that and ensuring that happened. Is that fair?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q So you were asked a few questions about Sidney Blumenthal. Did -- in the course of -- did Mr. Blumenthal ever email you directly?

A Yes, yes. He had in the past; not recently, but certainly in years prior to being at the State Department, he certainly did, yes.

Q Did he email you at all while you were at the State Department, to the best of your recollection?

A I don't -- I don't recall, once we were at State, him emailing me, but I think that's mostly because he was -- he had the ability to email the Secretary directly. Whenever he emailed me in the past, it was to pass a message to the Secretary.

Q Did the Secretary ever talk to you about the emails that she was receiving from Mr. Blumenthal?

A No.

Q Did she ever indicate to you that she was asking him to send

her information in particular?

A No, not that I recall.

Q Did she ever ask you to take any action on Mr. Blumenthal's behalf?

A I've -- I'm --

Q And by asking that, I'm not -- like, if she said, can you get Sid on the phone, I'm not talking about that. I mean, more, did she ask you to reach out to anyone on his behalf and make a connection for him? Did she ask you to schedule a meeting for him that was not with her, that was with anyone within the State Department or anyone outside the State Department?

A She did not.

Q Is there anything inherently wrong or inappropriate with someone who is not inside the State Department sending the Secretary or any other Department official information?

A In my opinion, not. And it was, you know, as I think has been now publicly disclosed in the Secretary's email, she had -- he wasn't the only person outside the State Department who was emailing her.

Q Well, one person that I saw who did email her, at least sometimes, was Anne-Marie Slaughter.

A Yes.

Q Do you know Anne-Marie Slaughter?

A Yes, I do.

Q Did your -- can you just briefly explain kind of who she

is?

A Yes. She and I actually started at the State Department at the same time. She was our director of policy planning for the first -- I believe she was there for the first 2 years, maybe 2-1/2, before Jake Sullivan replaced her, and so I saw her on a -- on a daily basis. The policy planning director was very present in all of our senior staff meetings.

Q Would there have been -- did she also sometimes email you as well as the Secretary, or --

A She did. In fact, I -- as I recall, she cc'd me fairly often when she emailed the Secretary.

Q And was there anything inappropriate when she would email the Secretary about her emailing the Secretary?

A Certainly I didn't experience that. That wasn't my experience either when she was at State or after she left State, but I know she continued to email her after she left.

Q Did you have any sense, either from being included on threads or talking or emailing with Ms. Slaughter yourself as to what her purpose was in sending emails and information to the Secretary?

A You know, from the way I experienced it, it was just sending information, thoughts, ideas. I'm -- you know, suspect Ms. Slaughter knew the Secretary welcomed information, and so she thought it would be helpful.

Q Did you ever get the sense, or do you have any reason to believe that the Secretary was relying heavily on Ms. Slaughter's

opinion above and beyond anyone else's when she was making particular policy decisions?

A I have no specific reason to believe that.

Q Would you have -- do you have any evidence or reason to believe that the Secretary was relying heavily on Mr. Blumenthal's information or advice that he might send her?

A No, ma'am, I don't. I had no reason to believe that.

Q So I wanted to -- all right. In the same letter that I referenced moments ago when I was making clear for the record our concerns about some of the questions you had been asked, in that same letter, Chairman Gowdy states the following, quote, "The fact that former Secretary Clinton relied so heavily on an individual for the Libyan intervention, her quintessential foreign policy initiative, whom the White House explicitly prohibited from working at the State Department is mind-boggling," end quote. The individual he is referring to in that letter is Mr. Blumenthal.

So just as a starting place, is it, from your perspective, accurate to claim that it was a fact that the Secretary relied heavily on Mr. Blumenthal for the Libyan intervention?

A Not from my perspective, no, ma'am.

Q And that he relied -- we talked I think at great length in several of the prior rounds about the number of people and the number of meetings and the extensive travel meeting with people outside the United States that the Secretary undertook with regard particularly to Libya, I assume for other policy decisions as well. Do you have

any reason to believe that she relied on him as a substitute, or to the exclusion of all those other people she was meeting and talking with?

A You know, Ms. Sawyer, I will just tell you, from my perspective, what I saw, which is that she was physically very present and engaged in meetings, both in the interagency process, both at State, the interagency process, and abroad with her foreign counterparts on all matters related to Libya. She received so much paper on a regular basis that she consumed and returned both on the high side and the low side, and I know that related to documents, you know, related to Libya.

In the time, honestly what Sid sent seemed to be, and I was not on all those emails, it seemed to me, as one other person on the outside, who was sending her updates. He certainly wasn't -- or suggestions or ideas, or whatever was in the content of those emails. It didn't appear to me that he was the only person doing that, and I certainly didn't witness the Secretary in the time asking -- she certainly did not ask me to act on anything that Sid had sent. Obviously, I have learned since then that she had shared with other people in the Department some parts of emails that he had sent.

Q In that same letter, there's the kind of further allegation that the reason that Mr. Blumenthal was sending information with particular regard to Libya and, quote, "pushing Secretary Clinton to war in Libya," end quote, was because Mr. Blumenthal stood to benefit personally from contracts with, quote, "a government that would exist only after a successful U.S. intervention in Libya that deposed

Qadhafi," end quote.

Did you see any evidence whatsoever that the Secretary took action on Mr. Blumenthal's behalf in order to try to further -- and not taking as a given the validity of the allegation about a business interest, but to further business interests in Libya?

A So I'm not comfortable speaking on behalf of the Secretary, but from what I know about her, she would absolutely not do that.

Q Just one final question on this. You know, Chairman Gowdy has publicly said and publicly said after Mr. Blumenthal's deposition, he raised the question and he stated it as, quote, "You have an intelligence apparatus at your disposal. We have a CIA. Why would you not rely on your own vetted sourced intelligence agency?" End quote. The "you" there is the Secretary, in this instance, Secretary Clinton.

Do you have any evidence or reason to believe that Secretary Clinton did not actually rely on her vetted sourced intelligence that was available to her?

A I have no reason to believe that. As somebody who was familiar with her schedule and saw how much time she spent in meetings at the White House and in high-level meetings at the State Department and on these, you know, confidential phone calls, I have no reason not to believe that.

Q You likely have seen reported in the news the issue -- one issue that has come up is this, something I was not familiar with, which is in the FOIA process, the potential retroactive upgrading of

information in documents or emails to being classified that was not previously handled or marked as classified. I just wanted to ask you a couple of questions about that.

While you were at the State Department, and regardless of what system you were using or whose email you were sending it to, to the best of your knowledge, did you ever send on an unclassified network materials that were clearly marked as classified?

A I did not do that.

Q Now, some time -- you know, through the course of the day, you've explained that you would often forward on to the Secretary information other people had asked you to forward, sometimes things that you were collecting and tasked with forwarding, and that at times, you did not read in depth the substance of what you were sending on. Is that kind of a fair characterization of your role for the Secretary?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q So in those instances, would you be relying -- if you were certainly forwarding on something to someone else, would you be relying on the sender to have determined and to have marked something as classified if it was, indeed, classified?

A Yes. I always -- I did. I relied on them.

Q And to have used the classified system, if indeed it was classified, material that they had deemed and judged at the time to be classified?

A I didn't have the capability to forward those messages to her, so that -- I'm sorry. Maybe I didn't understand your question.

I'm sorry.

Q Well, that -- that is helpful, because I may not -- so to the extent someone did need or want to send the Secretary something that was clearly marked, designated at the time classified, that would not have come to you. Is that accurate?

A It -- it could have come to me on the classified on the high side, but I would have had no way to forward that to the Secretary, because you couldn't forward on the high side to an unclassified email account.

Q And so to the extent someone sent something to you to be forwarded on the low side --

A Yes.

Q -- obviously it seems unlikely that they would have then sent it if it was clearly marked classified. Is that just a fair --

A That's a --

Q -- presumption?

A Yes, that's fair.

Q And you did say you were relying on the sender --

A Yes.

Q -- to make the determination. And presumably, sometimes those senders were people who did have classification authority, and certainly, also people who had a fair amount of experience within the State Department handling information that obviously must have dealt with communications with foreign officials and other type of information that the State Department routinely deals with. Is that

fair?

A Yes, that is. I mean, it was one of the things that we were really struck by when we joined the State Department, is that, you know, it was a group of, you know, very dedicated professionals to ensuring that sensitive information was treated and handled properly, which is why I think, number one, we had so many people, but also that there was a very clear line of authority about who was able to give her that paper, and that it was returned to them and that they were responsible for every document that went into her and that came out that was -- that was on the high side.

So going back to your question about what I would have been emailed on the high side, just to -- anybody in the Department would know that if they were trying to communicate something on the high side to the Secretary, it was likely being done on paper and going up through the -- you know, the protocol channels of how she got paper on a regular basis, not by email.

Q And you've certainly explained some of the process. Based on your experience, interactions with her and the way she was handling both receiving the information by paper and how she used her email, did you feel that the Secretary herself took seriously her obligation to safeguard classified information, information that was clearly deemed, marked, and designated as classified when in her possession or when she received it?

A From what I viewed of her practices, yes.

Q During -- when you were explaining to us a little bit of

your own email practices and usage, you had indicated that you used the account that the State Department had provided for you when you were there.

A Yes.

Q And you said that, I think in just explaining to us, you said, you know, I do try always to do the right thing. And I just wanted to explore that with you a little bit, because I think that some could read that as you having then said that you believed that at the time she did it and made the decisions, that the Secretary wasn't trying to do the right thing, and I just wanted to get a sense as to whether or not that's what you were trying to convey.

A Oh, no. I mean, not at all. I was only speaking on -- I was only speaking on my own behalf in terms of my own practices. I think, you know, she has said it, you know, I will repeat it again, I know other members of our senior team probably feel the same way, we all regret that we didn't -- we weren't more conscious about her email practices or the device or the account that she used when she joined the State Department. It just wasn't anything that we gave much thought to. She has publicly said she did it as a matter of convenience. In hindsight, none of us would have made the same choice, but it was -- you know, it was a mistake, she's clearly said it. And I -- I wasn't comparing that to my own -- my own email practices.

Q And certainly, you were not conveying your belief that what she did was in any way against the law or unlawful to have used personal email for work-related purposes?

A When we were at the State Department, it was not out of the ordinary for people to be using their Gmail accounts. I certainly understood that I was allowed to use personal email. I was not aware of any rules that I was not allowed to. In fact, I recall times when the State.gov email was not working and we would get emails saying you need to use your -- you know, your personal email for this period of time. But for my own work and -- you know, I'm not sure I have actually mentioned this to you or Ms. Jackson. When we traveled, which was a large percentage of the time, I really -- my primary device for work was my State Department BlackBerry. I emailed on that, I did my calls on that, I was on the go constantly, and so I did the vast majority of my work on State.gov, but I certainly did not understand that I couldn't use Clinton email, and people were absolutely emailing me at that address.

Q And so to the extent that the Department might prefer or encourage or ask employees to use the State.gov account when feasible, when possible, and understanding there might be times when that just wasn't --

A Right.

Q -- it certainly was not something that you were ever told was completely prohibited and not allowed?

A That is correct.

Q You know, I think -- you know, the other thing that I think your counselor mentioned at the outset about both the events in Benghazi, which I think you've indicated is somewhat true also about

how you were communicating with the Secretary over the time, the emails, et cetera, in terms of figuring out exactly when you knew, what you knew, contemporaneous versus what you've read in the press, you know, I just want to give you the opportunity in the same way that I did to have you assure us that, to the extent we have asked you to search your memory without the benefit potentially of documents before you that might refresh your recollection, to the extent you've received something 3 years ago or 2 years ago or 1 year ago, from me a week ago, that you might not recall, that you have certainly done your best to be as accurate as you can with regard to your answers?

A Yes, ma'am. I have done the best I can to the best of my recollection to answer your questions, particularly as it relates to that period of time at the State Department.

Q Great. I'm going to shift gears a little bit.

A Okay.

Q I'm going to ask you some questions that -- you know, we're now at least the eighth congressional investigation since the attacks. You know, I think all members of the committee want to ensure that this is the last investigation into the Benghazi attacks. And we, therefore, are asking every witness a series of allegations that have been made publicly since the attacks.

We have called before the committee a number of witnesses who have firsthand information about some aspects of what happened in Benghazi, so not all of these questions will fall within your purview. We are asking everyone in part, because we want to make sure that we have left

no stone unturned. We're also asking about these allegations because we have asked for them to be put to rest and taken off the table. We have talked with our majority colleagues. They have still indicated they're investigating all of them and that none of them are off the table.

So I will ask you a series of questions. To the extent you have firsthand information, we'll explore that. So I'll just proceed. I just ask you to bear with me a little bit. I don't want to read too quickly for the court reporter, and I -- there's about a dozen of these or so.

A Okay.

Q It has been alleged that Secretary of State Clinton intentionally blocked military action on the night of the attacks. One Congressman has speculated that, quote, "Secretary Clinton told Leon Panetta to stand down, and this resulted in the Defense Department not sending more assets to help in Benghazi."

Do you have any evidence that Secretary of State Clinton ordered Secretary of Defense Panetta to stand down on the night of the attacks?

A No, ma'am.

Q Do you have any evidence that Secretary of State Clinton issued any kind of order to Secretary of Defense Panetta on the night of the attacks?

A Can you ask that question again? I'm sorry.

Q Do you have any evidence that Secretary of State Clinton issued any kind of order to Secretary of Defense Panetta on the night

of the attacks?

A Not that I'm aware.

Q It has been alleged that Secretary Clinton personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security to Libya. The Washington Post fact-checker evaluated this claim and gave it four Pinocchios, its highest award for false claims.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security resources to Libya?

A No, ma'am.

Q Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton was personally involved in providing specific instruction on day-to-day security resources in Benghazi?

A No, ma'am.

Q It has been alleged that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risks posed by Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for military operations in Libya in spring 2011.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risks posed by Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for military operations in Libya in spring of 2011?

A No, I do not.

Q It has been alleged that the U.S. Mission in Benghazi included transferring weapons to Syrian rebels or to other countries. A bipartisan report issued by the House Permanent Select Committee on

Intelligence found that, quote, "The CIA was not collecting and shipping arms from Libya to Syria," end quote, and they found no support for this allegation.

Do you have any evidence to contradict the House Intelligence Committee's bipartisan report finding that the CIA was not shipping arms from Libya to Syria?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that the U.S. facilities in Benghazi were being used to facilitate weapons transfers from Libya to Syria or to any other foreign country?

A No.

Q A team of CIA security personnel was temporarily delayed from departing the annex to assist the Special Mission Compound, and there have been a number of allegations about the cause of and appropriateness of that delay. The House Intelligence Committee issued a bipartisan report concluding that the team was not ordered to, quote, "stand down," but that instead, there were tactical disagreements on the ground over how quickly to depart.

Do you have any evidence that would contradict the House Intelligence Committee's finding that there was no stand-down order to CIA personnel?

A I do not.

Q Putting aside whether you personally agree with the decision to delay temporarily or think it was the right decision, do you have any evidence that there was a bad or improper reason behind

the temporary delay of the CIA's security personnel who departed the annex to assist the Special Mission Compound?

A No.

Q A concern has been raised by one individual that in the course of producing documents to the Accountability Review Board, damaging documents may have been removed or scrubbed out of that production.

Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department removed or scrubbed damaging documents from the materials that were provided to the Accountability Review Board?

A Absolutely not.

Q Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department directed anyone else at the State Department to remove or scrub damaging documents from the materials that were provided to the Accountability Review Board?

A No.

Q Let me ask these questions also for documents that were provided to Congress.

A Okay.

Q Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department removed or scrubbed damaging documents from the materials that were provided to Congress?

A No, I do not.

Q It has been alleged that CIA Deputy Director Michael Morell altered unclassified talking points about the Benghazi attacks for

political reasons, and that he then misrepresented his actions when he told Congress that the CIA, quote, "faithfully performed our duties in accordance with the highest standards of objectivity and non-partisanship."

Do you have any evidence that CIA Deputy Director Mike Morell gave false or intentionally misleading testimony to Congress about the Benghazi talking points?

A No, I do not.

Q Do you have any evidence that CIA Deputy Director Morell altered the talking points provided to Congress for political reasons?

A No, I do not.

Q It has been alleged that Ambassador Susan Rice made a, quote, "intentional misrepresentation," end quote, when she spoke on the Sunday talk shows about the Benghazi attacks.

Do you have any evidence that Ambassador Rice intentionally misrepresented the facts about the Benghazi attacks on the Sunday talk shows?

A No, I do not.

Q It has been alleged that the President of the United States was, quote, "virtually AWOL as Commander in Chief," end quote, on the night of the attacks and that he was missing in action.

Do you have any evidence to support the allegation that the President was virtually AWOL as Commander in Chief or missing in action on the night of the attacks?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that a team of four military personnel at Embassy Tripoli on the night of the attacks who were considering flying on the second plane to Benghazi were ordered by their superiors, to, quote, "stand down," meaning to cease all operations. Military officials have stated that those four individuals were instead ordered, quote, to remain in place in Tripoli to provide security and medical assistance in their current location. A Republican staff report issued by the House Armed Services Committee found that, quote, "there was no stand-down order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi," end quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict the conclusion of the House Armed Services Committee that there was no stand-down order issued to U.S. personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi?

A No, I do not.

Q It has been alleged that the military failed to deploy assets on the night of the attack that would have saved lives. Former Republican Congressman Howard "Buck" McKeon, the former chair of the House Armed Services Committee, conducted a review of the attacks, after which he stated, quote, "Given where the troops were, how quickly the thing all happened and how quickly it dissipated, we probably couldn't have done more than we did," end quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict Congressman McKeon's conclusion?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that the Pentagon had military

assets available to them on the night of the attacks that could have saved lives but that the Pentagon leadership intentionally decided not to deploy?

A No, I do not.

Q I think that concludes our questioning. Again, we do appreciate your appearance here today, your willingness to answer all the questions.

I also want to make perfectly clear, I think you had mentioned at the outset your years of public service, I know that certainly I think all of the Members truly appreciate that service in the name of our country, and we thank you for that as well.

A Thank you, Ms. Sawyer.

Can I just say one -- is there -- is it possible for me to say one quick thing to both of you -- to both of you before this ends? Is that okay?

Ms. Jackson. Uh-huh.

Ms. Sawyer. Yes.

Ms. Abedin. I -- you know, I have worked for Secretary Clinton for a long time, it's almost 20 years, and I -- I recognize that I was asked a lot of questions about her today, about her practices and her intentions and the work that she did. And as somebody who knows her really well, the one thing I do feel really compelled to say is I really do have a tremendous amount of respect, not just for her personally, but professionally, for the -- for her work ethic, for the work that she's done on behalf of this country, and with how proudly she served

at the State Department and -- and really wanted to advance the interests of this country in her capacity as Secretary of State. And I was really proud to work for her and with all the other, you know, foreign service officers and diplomats at the State Department.

And I really hope I was able to provide some assistance to you today. And -- and thank you for -- thank you for taking the time that you took with me today. Appreciate that.

Ms. Sawyer. You're welcome. We're off the record.

[Whereupon, at 5:01 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

EXAMINATION

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q This is going to be the final session that we have. We have moved to a classified setting. Everyone in this room is cleared up to the TS level. And we just have a few questions for you that we started earlier with regard to exhibit 7 that is now before you.

And, again, exhibit 7 bears document number 45765, it is an email from you to Secretary Clinton in October of 2012, and about half to two-thirds of the way down there, there's a sentence that says, "had a long visit with one" -- oops. I wrote something. Could you just read that sentence to us, had a long -- that starts with, had a long visit?

A Had a long visit with [REDACTED].

Q Okay. And then I think you followed by saying, will download in person?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Was -- you had a friend [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]?

A Yes.

Q Okay. [REDACTED]?

A [REDACTED]

Q Yeah. [REDACTED]

A Yes.

Q [REDACTED].

A Yes.

Q Okay. And how long did you know this person?

A [REDACTED].

Q Okay. [REDACTED]?

A Oh, I don't know.

Q Okay. [REDACTED]?

A Yes, [REDACTED].

Q Okay. [REDACTED]?

A [REDACTED], so I would -- I would imagine so,
yes.

Q Okay. [REDACTED]?

A I have to answer that --

Ms. Dunn. Well, I --

Ms. Abedin. Yes.

Ms. Dunn. I think -- if we could go off the record for a second.

Ms. Jackson. Sure.

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Back on the record. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

A Yes. That's my understanding.

Q Okay. To your knowledge, has this friend been interviewed
by any congressional committee?

A Not that I'm aware.

Q Was this friend of yours interviewed by the ARB?

A Not that I'm aware.

Ms. Jackson. I think that's all the questions I would have regarding this issue.

EXAMINATION

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q Just a couple of questions.

A Yes.

Q In the context of this exhibit, and this is exhibit --

Ms. Jackson. 7.

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q -- 7, it seems like the conversation you're talking about is with regard to the Secretary potentially connecting with one of the surviving DS agents who was injured. Is that fair?

A That's correct. [REDACTED].

Q And was -- when you said you had a long visit with your friend, will download in person, what -- was the information that you were downloading and sharing [REDACTED]

A No, ma'am, it wasn't. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], and as I -- we had discussed in the unclassified setting, there had been conversations about having -- the Secretary wanted to call [REDACTED]. We had been told by Assistant Secretary Boswell that

he wasn't well enough to take a phone call.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Okay. Thank you.

A I'm sorry. I'm doing this again. I'm sorry.

Q You know, one of the things that's true in a transcribed interview setting is that obviously emotion does not reflect on the record. And we understand and appreciate that some of the things you've talked about today hit -- come very close to home, and we appreciate your -- as with your willingness to answer all of our questions, your willingness to even answer the ones that are not easy, personally not easy. So, again, we appreciate that.

I have nothing further. And, you know, with that, we thank you for your time today and hope that you have a wonderful weekend.

A Thank you.

Ms. Jackson. The only thing that I would add just to clarify the record is that we will handle this portion of the transcript at the TS level pending review for classification matters.

And for that, again, we join in thanking you for today. You've been very patient with us, you've been very gracious in --

Ms. Abedin. Thank you.

Ms. Jackson. -- answering our questions, and we appreciate your being here today, so we echo. Have a good weekend. Put us out of mind.

Ms. Abedin. Thank you. And I appreciate all of your patience with me today. Thank you.

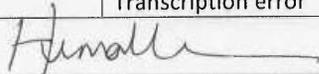
[Whereupon, at 5:15 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

Select Committee on Benghazi
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Interview of: Huma Abedin
Friday, October 16, 2015
Washington, D.C.

Errata

Page and Line	Change	Reason
20:19	Change "wondering" to "wandering"	Transcription error
31:10	Change "H&L" to "H and L"	Transcription error
32:11	Change "Advisor" to "Adviser"	Spelling error
35:24	Insert "and" after "secretary,"	Transcription error
37:5	Change "particularly" to "priority"	Transcription error
45:6	Change "send" to "sent"	Transcription error
52:6	Change "Ms. Abedin" to "Mr. Westmoreland"	Transcription error
140:12	Change "called" to "call"	Transcription error
154:7	Delete "not"	Transcription error
160:3	Change "Ron" to "Rahm"	Transcription error
160:19	Change "advisor" to "adviser"	Spelling error
165:13	Change "meet" to "be"	Transcription error
180:16	Change "not" to "no"	Transcription error
184:21	Delete "not"	Transcription error



Huma Abedin

3/31/2016

Date

EXHIBIT 1

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: [REDACTED] </O=SBUSTATE/OU=NCC
 AG/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=ABBASZADEHN>
Sent: Tuesday, October 23, 2012 10:20 PM
To: Reines, Philippe I <reinesp@state.gov>; Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>;
 Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>; Coordination
 <Coordination@state.gov>
Subject: Fw: Update 8: Second Evacuee Flight Is Wheels-Down In Tripoli (SBU)

From: OpsAlert@state.gov [mailto:OpsAlert@state.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, September 12, 2012 05:43 AM
To: [REDACTED]; SES_DutyDeputies; S_SpecialAssistants; D(B); D(N); P; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_R_DL; PA FO
 Group; Operations Center; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_S_ES-O_DL; SES-Line Only; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_DS_DL;
 #whsr [REDACTED] <#whsr [REDACTED]>
 Benghazi Update; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_CA_DL; C; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_CSO_DL; CT_FrontOffice; D(B)/MET;
 MDGHR Front Office; DRL-FO-DL; [REDACTED]; H_SeniorStaff;
 Ops_Targeted_Alerts_INL_DL; INR-STAFFER; INR-Watch; Legal-Ops-Alert-DL; M_Staff;
 Ops_Targeted_Alerts_NEA_DL; OBO-Special Assistants-DL; PM-Alerts-DL; NEA-SEMPEP-DL; A Front Office
Cc: Ops_Targeted_Alerts_DS_DL; #whsr [REDACTED]
Subject: Update 8: Second Evacuee Flight Is Wheels-Down In Tripoli (SBU)

(SBU) Embassy Tripoli reports the second group of evacuees arrived in Tripoli from Benghazi. No
 COM personnel remain in Benghazi.

From: OpsAlert@state.gov
Sent: Wednesday, September 12, 2012 4:04 AM
To: [REDACTED]@state.gov; SES_DutyDeputies@State.gov; S_SpecialAssistants@state.gov; D-
 B@State.gov; D-N@State.gov; Poffice@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_R_DL@state.gov;
 PAFOGroup@State.gov; OperationsCenter@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_S_ES-O_DL@state.gov;
 SES-Line_Only@state.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_DS_DL@State.gov; #whsr [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] BenghaziUpdate@state.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_CA_DL@state.gov;
 COffice@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_CSO_DL@State.gov; CT_FrontOffice@State.gov;
 DB_MET@state.gov; MDGHRFrontOffice@State.gov; (DNI-ROC-Watch [REDACTED] DNI-ROC-
 Watch [REDACTED]); DRL-FO-DL@State.gov; [REDACTED] H_SeniorStaff@state.gov;
 Ops_Targeted_Alerts_INL_DL@state.gov; INR-STAFFER@State.gov; INR-Watch@State.gov; Legal-
 Ops-Alert-DL@State.gov; M_Staff@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_NEA_DL@state.gov; OBO-
 SpecialAssistants-DL@State.gov; PM-Alerts@State.gov; NEA-SEMPEP-DL@State.gov;
 Afront@State.gov
CC: Ops_Targeted_Alerts_DS_DL@State.gov; #whsr [REDACTED]
Subject: Update 7: All Remaining Evacuees Departing Benghazi ERT Tripoli (SBU)

(SBU) DS Command reports all remaining COM personnel, including the deceased, have been loaded
 into a Libyan Air Force flight in Benghazi and are en route to the airport in Tripoli.

From: OpsAlert@state.gov**Sent:** Wednesday, September 12, 2012 3:33 AM**To:** ██████████@state.gov; SES_DutyDeputies@State.gov; S_SpecialAssistants@state.gov; D-B@State.gov; D-N@State.gov; Poffice@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_R_DL@state.gov; PAFOGroup@State.gov; OperationsCenter@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_S_ES-O_DL@state.gov; SES-Line_Only@state.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_DS_DL@State.gov; #whsr ██████████ ██████████ BenghaziUpdate@state.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_CA_DL@state.gov; COffice@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_CSO_DL@State.gov; CT_FrontOffice@State.gov; DB_MET@state.gov; MDGHRFrontOffice@State.gov; (DNI-ROC-Watch ██████████) DNI-ROC-Watch ██████████ DRL-FO-DL@State.gov; ██████████ H_SeniorStaff@state.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_INL_DL@state.gov; INR-STAFFER@State.gov; INR-Watch@State.gov; Legal-Ops-Alert-DL@State.gov; M_Staff@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_NEA_DL@state.gov; OBO-SpecialAssistants-DL@State.gov; PM-Alerts@State.gov; NEA-SEMEP-DL@State.gov; Afront@State.gov**CC:** Ops_Targeted_Alerts_DS_DL@State.gov; #whsr ██████████**Subject:** Update 6: First group of evacuees is wheels-down in Tripoli (SBU)

(SBU) Embassy Tripoli reports the first group of evacuees (██████ passengers) is wheels-down in Tripoli from Benghazi. The wounded are being taken to the hospital for treatment.

From: OpsAlert@state.gov**Sent:** Wednesday, September 12, 2012 1:39 AM**To:** ██████████@state.gov; SES_DutyDeputies@State.gov; S_SpecialAssistants@state.gov; D-B@State.gov; D-N@State.gov; Poffice@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_R_DL@state.gov; PAFOGroup@State.gov; OperationsCenter@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_S_ES-O_DL@state.gov; SES-Line_Only@state.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_DS_DL@State.gov; #whsr ██████████ ██████████ BenghaziUpdate@state.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_CA_DL@state.gov; COffice@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_CSO_DL@State.gov; CT_FrontOffice@State.gov; DB_MET@state.gov; MDGHRFrontOffice@State.gov; (DNI-ROC-Watch ██████████) DNI-ROC-Watch ██████████ DRL-FO-DL@State.gov; ██████████ H_SeniorStaff@state.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_INL_DL@state.gov; INR-STAFFER@State.gov; INR-Watch@State.gov; Legal-Ops-Alert-DL@State.gov; M_Staff@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_NEA_DL@state.gov; OBO-SpecialAssistants-DL@State.gov; PM-Alerts@State.gov; NEA-SEMEP-DL@State.gov; Afront@State.gov**CC:** Ops_Targeted_Alerts_DS_DL@State.gov; #whsr ██████████**Subject:** Update 5: First group of evacuees is wheels-up from Benghazi (SBU)

(SBU) DS Command reports the first group of evacuees (██████ passengers) is wheels-up from Benghazi to Tripoli. The remaining ████████ evacuees are sheltering at the airport in Benghazi.

From: OpsAlert@state.gov**Sent:** Wednesday, September 12, 2012 1:33 AM

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

To: ██████████@state.gov; SES_DutyDeputies@State.gov; S_SpecialAssistants@state.gov; D-B@State.gov; D-N@State.gov; Poffice@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_R_DL@state.gov; PAFOGroup@State.gov; OperationsCenter@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_S_ES-O_DL@state.gov; SES-Line_Only@state.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_DS_DL@State.gov; #whsr ██████████ ██████████ BenghaziUpdate@state.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_CA_DL@state.gov; COffice@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_CSO_DL@State.gov; CT_FrontOffice@State.gov; DB_MET@state.gov; MDGHRFrontOffice@State.gov; (DNI-ROC-Watch ██████████ DNI-ROC-Watch ██████████); DRL-FO-DL@State.gov; ██████████ H_SeniorStaff@state.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_INL_DL@state.gov; INR-STAFFER@State.gov; INR-Watch@State.gov; Legal-Ops-Alert-DL@State.gov; M_Staff@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_NEA_DL@state.gov; OBO-SpecialAssistants-DL@State.gov; PM-Alerts@State.gov; NEA-SEMEP-DL@State.gov; Afront@State.gov
CC: Ops_Targeted_Alerts_DS_DL@State.gov; #whsr ██████████ ██████████
Subject: Update 4: Benghazi COM Personnel ERT Airport (SBU)

(SBU) Embassy Tripoli reports ██████████ remaining COM personnel, including three wounded, are en route to the airport in Benghazi.

From: OpsAlert@state.gov
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 11:57 PM
To: ██████████@state.gov; SES_DutyDeputies@State.gov; S_SpecialAssistants@state.gov; D-B@State.gov; D-N@State.gov; Poffice@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_R_DL@state.gov; PAFOGroup@State.gov; OperationsCenter@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_S_ES-O_DL@state.gov; SES-Line_Only@state.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_DS_DL@State.gov; #whsr ██████████ ██████████ BenghaziUpdate@state.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_CA_DL@state.gov; COffice@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_CSO_DL@State.gov; CT_FrontOffice@State.gov; DB_MET@state.gov; MDGHRFrontOffice@State.gov; (DNI-ROC-Watch ██████████ DNI-ROC-Watch ██████████); DRL-FO-DL@State.gov; ██████████ H_SeniorStaff@state.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_INL_DL@state.gov; INR-STAFFER@State.gov; INR-Watch@State.gov; Legal-Ops-Alert-DL@State.gov; M_Staff@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_NEA_DL@state.gov; OBO-SpecialAssistants-DL@State.gov; PM-Alerts@State.gov; NEA-SEMEP-DL@State.gov; Afront@State.gov
CC: Ops_Targeted_Alerts_DS_DL@State.gov; #whsr ██████████ ██████████
Subject: Update 3: Benghazi Shelter Location Also Under Attack (SBU)

(SBU) DS Command reports the current shelter location for COM personnel in Benghazi is under attack by mortar fire. There are reports of injuries to COM staff.

From: OpsAlert@state.gov
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 6:06 PM
To: ██████████@state.gov; SES_DutyDeputies@State.gov; S_SpecialAssistants@state.gov; D-B@State.gov; D-N@State.gov; Poffice@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_R_DL@state.gov; PAFOGroup@State.gov; OperationsCenter@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_S_ES-O_DL@state.gov; SES-Line_Only@state.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_DS_DL@State.gov; #whsr ██████████ ██████████ BenghaziUpdate@state.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_CA_DL@state.gov;

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

COffice@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_CSO_DL@State.gov; CT_FrontOffice@State.gov;
 DB_MET@state.gov; MDGHRFrontOffice@State.gov; (DNI-ROC-Watch [REDACTED] DNI-ROC-
 Watch [REDACTED] DRL-FO-DL@State.gov; [REDACTED] H_SeniorStaff@state.gov;
 Ops_Targeted_Alerts_INL_DL@state.gov; INR-STAFFER@State.gov; INR-Watch@State.gov; Legal-
 Ops-Alert-DL@State.gov; M_Staff@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_NEA_DL@state.gov; OBO-
 SpecialAssistants-DL@State.gov; PM-Alerts@State.gov; NEA-SEMEP-DL@State.gov;
 Afront@State.gov
 CC: Ops_Targeted_Alerts_DS_DL@State.gov; #whsr [REDACTED]
Subject: Update 2: Ansar al-Sharia Claims Responsibility for Benghazi Attack (SBU)

(SBU) Embassy Tripoli reports the group claimed responsibility on Facebook and Twitter and has called for an attack on Embassy Tripoli.

From: OpsAlert@state.gov
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 4:54 PM
To: [REDACTED]@state.gov; SES_DutyDeputies@State.gov; S_SpecialAssistants@state.gov; D-
 B@State.gov; D-N@State.gov; Poffice@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_R_DL@state.gov;
 PAFOGroup@State.gov; OperationsCenter@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_S_ES-O_DL@state.gov;
 SES-Line_Only@state.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_DS_DL@State.gov; #whsr [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] BenghaziUpdate@state.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_CA_DL@state.gov;
 COffice@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_CSO_DL@State.gov; CT_FrontOffice@State.gov;
 DB_MET@state.gov; MDGHRFrontOffice@State.gov; (DNI-ROC-Watch [REDACTED] DNI-ROC-
 Watch [REDACTED]); DRL-FO-DL@State.gov; [REDACTED] H_SeniorStaff@state.gov;
 Ops_Targeted_Alerts_INL_DL@state.gov; INR-STAFFER@State.gov; INR-Watch@State.gov; Legal-
 Ops-Alert-DL@State.gov; M_Staff@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_NEA_DL@state.gov; OBO-
 SpecialAssistants-DL@State.gov; PM-Alerts@State.gov; NEA-SEMEP-DL@State.gov;
 Afront@State.gov
 CC: Ops_Targeted_Alerts_DS_DL@State.gov; #whsr [REDACTED]
Subject: Update 1: U.S. Diplomatic Mission in Benghazi (SBU)

(SBU) Embassy Tripoli reports the firing at the U.S. Diplomatic Mission in Benghazi has stopped and the compound has been cleared. A response team is on site attempting to locate COM personnel.

From: OpsAlert@state.gov
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 4:05 PM
To: [REDACTED]@state.gov; SES_DutyDeputies@State.gov; S_SpecialAssistants@state.gov; D-
 B@State.gov; D-N@State.gov; Poffice@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_R_DL@state.gov;
 PAFOGroup@State.gov; OperationsCenter@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_S_ES-O_DL@state.gov;
 SES-Line_Only@state.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_DS_DL@State.gov; #whsr [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] BenghaziUpdate@state.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_CA_DL@state.gov;
 COffice@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_CSO_DL@State.gov; CT_FrontOffice@State.gov;
 DB_MET@state.gov; MDGHRFrontOffice@State.gov; (DNI-ROC-Watch [REDACTED] DNI-ROC-
 Watch [REDACTED]); DRL-FO-DL@State.gov; [REDACTED] H_SeniorStaff@state.gov;
 Ops_Targeted_Alerts_INL_DL@state.gov; INR-STAFFER@State.gov; INR-Watch@State.gov; Legal-
 Ops-Alert-DL@State.gov; M_Staff@State.gov; Ops_Targeted_Alerts_NEA_DL@state.gov; OBO-

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

SpecialAssistants-DL@State.gov; PM-Alerts@State.gov; NEA-SEMEP-DL@State.gov;
Afront@State.gov

CC: Ops_Targeted_Alerts_DS_DL@State.gov; #whsr [REDACTED]

Subject: U.S. Diplomatic Mission in Benghazi Under Attack (SBU)

(SBU) The Regional Security Officer reports the diplomatic mission is under attack. Embassy Tripoli reports approximately 20 armed people fired shots; explosions have been heard as well. Ambassador Stevens, who is currently in Benghazi, and four COM personnel are in the compound safe haven. The 17th of February militia is providing security support.

The Operations Center will provide updates as available.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

EXHIBIT 2

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: [REDACTED]@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 7:29 AM
To: H
Cc: Huma Abedin; Abedin, Huma [REDACTED]
Subject: Mini for Today - Friday, September 14, 2012

8:25 am **DEPART** Private Residence * En route State Department

8:35 am **ARRIVE** State Department

8:35 am **PRESIDENTIAL DAILY BRIEFING**
 8:40 am Secretary's Office

8:45 am **DAILY SENIOR STAFF MEETING**
 9:15 am Secretary's Conference Room

9:20 am **GROUP PHOTO w/FEMALE MILITARY OFFICERS FROM AFRICA**
 9:25 am Treaty Room, 7th Floor
 Closed Press (Official Photographer Only), Staff: [REDACTED] A/S Carson will greet and escort to the Treaty Room

-Approx. 25-30 people attending; consecutive French and Portuguese interpretation

9:30 am **WEEKLY MEETING w/UN AMBASSADOR SUSAN RICE**
 10:00 am Secretary's Office

10:05 am **AWARD PRESENTATION TO DEPUTY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**
 10:10 am **PAM QUANRUD**
 Secretary's Outer Office
 Closed Press (Official Photographer only), Staff: [REDACTED]

-15 people expected, YOU present the Superior Honor Award to Pam

10:15 am **MEETING w/ASSISTANT SECRETARY MIKE POSNER AND CHERYL**
 10:45 am Secretary's Outer Office

10:45 am **PRE-BRIEF w/WENDY AND JAKE FOR WH MEETING**
 11:15 am Secretary's Outer Office

11:20 am **DEPART** State Department * En Route White House

11:25 am **ARRIVE** White House

11:30 am **MEETING**
 1:00 pm White House Situation Room

1:00 pm **DEPART** White House * En Route Andrews Air Force Base

1:30 pm **ARRIVE** Andrews Air Force Base

2:15 pm **CEREMONY FOR RETURN OF THE REMAINS OF DEPARTMENT**
 2:45 pm **COLLEAGUES FROM BENGHAZI, LIBYA**
 Andrews Air Force Base
 Press TBD, Scenario TBD, Staff: [REDACTED]

3:00 pm (t)**DEPART** Andrews Air Force Base * En Route State Department

3:30 pm(t)**ARRIVE** State Department

3:30 pm **OFFICE TIME**
 TBD Secretary's Office

TBD **DEPART** State Department *En Route Andrews Air Force Base

TBD **ARRIVE** Andrews Air Force Base

TBD **DEPART** Andrews Air Force Base via Air Force Aircraft Tail #60204
 En route White Plains, NY

TBD **ARRIVE** Westchester County Airport

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

TBD **DEPART** Westchester County Airport * En route Private Residence

TBD **ARRIVE** Private Residence

###

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

EXHIBIT 3

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 9:21 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: SITUATION REPORT No. 1 09/14/1 (SBU)

I'm giving you credit for inspiring the "peaceful" protests.

From: OpsAlert
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 06:53 AM
Subject: SITUATION REPORT No. 1 09/14/1 (SBU)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED



EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
Operations Center

SITUATION REPORT No. 1
Middle East Protests Monitoring Group MGMEP01
Friday, September 14, 2012
0600 EDT

EGYPT

- (U) Riot police used tear gas in an attempt to disperse demonstrators. Egyptian authorities erected large concrete barriers to block the route to the embassy and deployed approximately 4000 security personnel to the area. (*Ops/DS Command Center telcon, Reuters*)
- (U) Embassy Cairo reported the Muslim Brotherhood cancelled earlier calls for nationwide demonstrations at major mosques, but supported symbolic demonstrations at Tahrir Square. (*MGMEP01/Embassy Cairo telcon*)

LIBYA

(U) Air traffic in Benghazi was suspended September 13 due to security reasons. (*AFP*)

YEMEN

- (SBU) Embassy Sana'a reported increased security presence but no apparent protests at the Sheraton hotel. (*Ops/Embassy Sana'a telcon*)
- (U) Yemeni security forces blocked streets surrounding the U.S. Embassy, where approximately 30 protesters gathered. (*Reuters*)

KUWAIT

- (SBU) Around 400 protesters, including parliament members and prominent Sunni Islamists, congregated peacefully for nearly two hours in front of the Embassy September 13. Police arrested several youth who tried to jump the compounds outermost perimeter. (*GMEP01/Embassy Kuwait City e-mail*)
- (SBU) Embassy Kuwait City reported another demonstration is planned for 1200 EDT/1900 Kuwait City. The embassy and the government added extra security around the compound and received security reinforcements from the government. (*MGMEP01/Embassy Kuwait City telcon*)

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

PAKISTAN

- (SBU) Consulate General Lahore reported calls for nationwide protests, including large demonstrations at the consulate's press club. Authorities deployed riot police to the consulate and limited access to the road. Consulate General Lahore dismissed all employees at 0300 EDT/1200 Lahore. *(MGMEP01/Consulate General Lahore e-mail)*
- (SBU) Embassy Islamabad reported police are preparing to prevent demonstrators from approaching diplomatic enclaves and police reserves are on stand-by. Embassy Islamabad dismissed non-emergency personnel. *(MGMEP01/Embassy Islamabad e-mail)*
- (SBU) Consulate General Peshawar reported two protests were scheduled to take place approximately four kilometers from the consulate. Additional police was assigned to reinforce security. *(MGMEP01/Consulate General Peshawar e-mail)*
- (SBU) Consulate General Karachi reported riot police were deployed to the compound, with more on standby. *(MGMEP01/Consulate General Karachi e-mail)*

INDONESIA

- (SBU) Embassy Jakarta reported a peaceful demonstration of approximately 300 people. *(Embassy Jakarta Emergency Message)*
- (U) Over 250 riot police were put on alert ahead of the demonstrations. Indonesian leaders urged calm. *(AP)*

MALAYSIA

- (SBU) Police said they are prepared for demonstrations near the U.S. Embassy and mosques in various cities. *(Embassy Kuala Lumpur Emergency Message)*
- (U) Around 30 people gathered peacefully outside the Embassy and submitted a memorandum demanding an apology and action from the U.S. government against the filmmakers. *(The Star)*

SUDAN

(U) Islamic scholars called for the expulsion of the U.S. and German Ambassadors and for peaceful mass protests at their embassies in Khartoum. *(Reuters)*

INDIA

(U) A small group of protesters gathered peacefully September 13 in Kashmir. The most senior Islamic cleric in Kashmir told U.S. citizens to "immediately leave" the region. *(AFP)*

IRAN

(SBU) The Swiss Embassy in Tehran will be closed in anticipation of planned demonstrations. *(MGMEP01/Iran desk e-mail)*

INTERNATIONAL REACTION

- (U) Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov said the Benghazi attack confirms "the need for the joint efforts of our countries, as well as the global community in combating the evil of terrorism." *(Russia Today)*
- (U) The Arab League condemned the Benghazi attack and called on the U.S. government to take a serious position against the film producers. *(MENA)*
- (SBU) The Bahamas, Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Panama, Peru, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela have also issued condemnations and condolences, bringing to 26 the number of countries in the western hemisphere condemning the attacks in Benghazi. *(MGMEP01/Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs Office of Policy Planning and Coordination e-mail)*
- (U) Libyan Prime Minister Abu Shagour said he will work "vigorously" to improve security by boosting the national police force and army as well as implementing programs to collect and regulate weapons. *(Reuters)*

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

- (U) Yemeni President Hadi apologized for the attack September 13, and ordered an expeditious and thorough investigation. (*Embassy of Yemen Statement*)

Additional updates on events in LIBYA are available through our classified website
at <http://ses.state.sgov.gov>

Drafted: [REDACTED]

Approved: [REDACTED]

Dist: State (all bureaus), NSS, OSD, NMCC, JCS, CIA, OSC, NCTC, DHS, DNI

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

EXHIBIT 4

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: [REDACTED]@state.gov>
Sent: Saturday, September 15, 2012 10:52 AM
To: H
Subject: Re: PDB

A pouch with all of your call sheets and the schedule in en route to you. Here it is below as well.

Also in the pouch are a few read items, and an action memo authorizing the War Powers resolution for Tunisia that the office would like you to approve today. Ops can send a courier over to pick up the action memo later today.

12:00 UK FM Hague
 12:15 Egyptian FM Amr
 12:30 Israeli PM Netanyahu
 1:15 French FM Fabius
 1:30 Saudi FM Saud al-Faisal
 2:00 Somali Former Transitional President Sharif
 2:15 Libyan PM-elect Abu-Shakour
 2:30 Turkish FM Davutoglu
 3:00 Somali President Mohamoud (T)

- Moroccan King is still pending.

- NEW CALL: King Juan Carlos of Spain called today and offered anytime today or tomorrow. His office relayed that it is a personal call inquiring after the status of the Embassies in the Middle East. We are working on a call sheet

----- Original Message -----

From: H [mailto:HDR22@clintonemail.com]
Sent: Saturday, September 15, 2012 10:43 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: PDB

I just woke up so I missed Dan. Could he come back after I finish my calls? But I don't have the call schedule yet so I don't know when that would be. Do you?

----- Original Message -----

From: [REDACTED]@state.gov]
Sent: Saturday, September 15, 2012 09:35 AM
To: H
Cc: Huma Abedin
Subject: Re: PDB

He will be ready closer to 10am.

----- Original Message -----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, September 15, 2012 09:17 AM
To: 'HDR22@clintonemail.com' <HDR22@clintonemail.com>
Cc: 'huma@clintonemail.com' <huma@clintonemail.com>
Subject: PDB

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

Dan will be at Whitehaven with the PDB at 9:30am this morning.

He has some sensitive items that he would like to personally show you when he arrives.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

EXHIBIT 5

UNCLASSIFIED U.S. Department of State Case No. O-2015-15055 Doc No. C05390124 Date: 10/13/2015

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.201214940 Rev. 1
United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

CONFIDENTIAL
DECL: 08/16/2022

RELEASE IN FULL August 17, 2012

INFORMATION MEMO FOR THE SECRETARY

FROM: NEA – Beth Jones, Acting

SUBJECT: (C) Security Situation in Libya: A Spike in Violence or a New Normal?

Overall Security Situation

(C) Libya has experienced an upward trend in violence – primarily but not exclusively in the east – since May. It is not yet clear if this trend will reverse itself as earlier ones have over the past year or if, in eastern Libya at least, it constitutes a new normal. The ongoing presence of militias is a complicating factor, both providing security in many areas where the national government cannot, and undercutting it in others. Militias were seen as a constructive force during the July 7 elections for the General National Congress. The central security services are still being reconstituted and do not have the capacity to force the militias under a national authority. While unpredictable security conditions restrict the movement of U.S. government personnel, they have not limited our assistance work. The violence has not targeted the oil and gas infrastructure.

Uptick in Violence, Primarily in Eastern Libya

(SBU) Since May, there has been a spike in violent incidents, including bombings, abductions, assassinations, and car-jackings. The attachment lists the major events, which include a June 6 bombing at the U.S. Mission in Benghazi and an August 6 attempted car-jacking of embassy personnel in Tripoli. Recently, foreign residents of Benghazi have expressed concern about the risks of living and working there. In response to five attacks since May, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) withdrew its personnel from Benghazi and Misrata in early August, but continued work in the rest of Libya. The ICRC country director believes international organizations in Libya have underestimated the recent rise in violence out of a shared sense of optimism.

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Charles Daris, Senior Reviewer

CONFIDENTIALClassified by: NEA Assistant Secretary Beth Jones, Acting
E.O. 13526, Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

UNCLASSIFIED U.S. Department of State Case No. O-2015-15055 Doc No. C05390124 Date: 10/13/2015

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

Emboldened but Random

(C) The variety of the violence points to the overall lack of effective security institutions, particularly in the east. Local contacts blame pro-Qadhafi element efforts to destabilize the government, militia vigilante action, extremist Islamist groups settling scores, and criminally motivated thugs for most of the incidents. The distance from the already weak central security services, feelings of marginalization from the central government, and a history of Islamist extremism in some eastern towns all seem to contribute to a permissive environment where disparate motivations for violence have found fertile ground in which to germinate. The national Supreme Security Council – a post-revolutionary coalition of militia elements cobbled into a single force and designed to provide interim security in Benghazi – has had limited success as a stabilizing force.

(C) The government seems largely unable to gather intelligence in advance of attacks and central security services appear intimidated by the local militias, in some cases tacitly ceding their authority to them. Some actors see the weak response from the government and feel they can act with increasing impunity. The sense of lawlessness encourages spoilers, predators, and other disruptive players to escalate their actions.

The Transition Requires Security

(C) Benghazi was once palpably safer than Tripoli, but in the absence of a national political consensus on fundamental issues, lawlessness is increasing. The newly seated General National Congress should address the security situation directly to reassert control. Despite the urgency, however, the government's response is likely to continue to be hesitant and tentative, as it focuses on maintaining momentum and cohesion for the challenging political transition it is undertaking. Efforts to rebuild the national military and police forces (including the incorporation of some militias into the national forces) will need to proceed in step with efforts to create the right package of educational, vocational, and monetary incentives to demobilize, disarm, and reintegrate the revolutionary fighters into civilian life. We are working to assist the Libyans through advice on disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration and reconstituting elements of their national security forces through capacity building for counterterrorism and border security activities through classroom and field training.

(C) Despite the worrisome aspects of this increase in violence, there is no coordinated organization behind the incidents. Ethnic, sectarian, and tribal differences have not been major factors in causing or exacerbating the violence; in fact, there is some evidence that traditional tribal structures are helping to contain

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 3 -

it. Nonetheless, the likelihood of more widespread violence is strong if Libya's political leaders are unable to demobilize militias and strengthen the government's security institutions.

Attachment:

List of Recent Violence in Libya

CONFIDENTIAL

EXHIBIT 6

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: [REDACTED]
 </O=SBUSTATE/OU=SES/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, October 30, 2012 4:13 PM
To: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>; Reines, Philippe I <reinesp@state.gov>;
 [REDACTED]@state.gov
Cc: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>; Sullivan, Jacob J
 <SullivanJJ@state.gov>; [REDACTED]@state.gov
Subject: Re: HRC Call: [REDACTED]

I wonder if he got the VM she left for him.
 Ok will see if she can do tonight.

From: Abedin, Huma
Sent: Monday, October 29, 2012 03:00 PM
To: Reines, Philippe I; [REDACTED]
Cc: Mills, Cheryl D; Sullivan, Jacob J; [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: HRC Call: [REDACTED]

I was just about to email the same message. My friend visited him last week and he mentioned to hrc was supposed to be calling him. So esp since there is an expectation, she needs to call soon. Ideally if she can do from the road. Otherwise, friday would also be fine.

From: Reines, Philippe I
Sent: Monday, October 29, 2012 12:26 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Mills, Cheryl D; Abedin, Huma; Sullivan, Jacob J; [REDACTED]
Subject: HRC Call: [REDACTED]

Since returning to the US [REDACTED] Seems like he's now in good enough shape to take a call, so we should knock this out in the next couple of days.

Let me know if you need me to remind her that this is something we had talked to her about several weeks back.

From: Boswell, Eric J
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 09:00 PM
To: Reines, Philippe I
Subject: Fw: [REDACTED]

Philippe,

I think any day before 1100 would worm. [REDACTED] likely to be there for a couple more weeks.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 07:37 PM
To: Boswell, Eric J
Cc: Bultrowicz, Scott P

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

Subject: Re: [REDACTED]

Good Evening,

[REDACTED] reply is that his personal number [REDACTED] would work fine. He asked that the call be before his [REDACTED] which starts at 11.

Best,

[REDACTED], VRAP Coordinator

From: Boswell, Eric J
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 05:51 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: [REDACTED]

Be sure to get me his current phone number.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 5:38 PM
To: Boswell, Eric J
Cc: Bultrowicz, Scott P
Subject: Re: [REDACTED]

Hello,

My apologies. I see my email failed. [REDACTED] emailed me today [REDACTED] I asked him about a call today and tomorrow. I will call him again in the morning if the call is still possible.

Best,

[REDACTED], VRAP Coordinator

From: Boswell, Eric J
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 12:40 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Bultrowicz, Scott P
Subject: FW: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

This would be a call from the Secretary. Is [REDACTED] in shape to receive it? And please give me current contact info for him.

EB

From: Reines, Philippe I
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 10:35 AM
To: Boswell, Eric J; Kennedy, Patrick F
Cc: Mills, Cheryl D; [REDACTED] Abedin, Huma
Subject: Re: [REDACTED]

Eric - how is [REDACTED]? Well enough to take a call?

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

EXHIBIT 7

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: Huma Abedin <Huma@clintonemail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 29, 2012 3:35 PM
To: H

we are preparing for sandy here. parts of the city are crazy already. there is a crane on top of a high building on 57th street that they think is about to fall which is pretty crazy. everything is shut down but its been a good conference call day!

i talked to chris this morning and she is gathering things for you based on all the the things we discussed. there is a possibility of 3 nice gowns and a lot of blouses and jackets. i think we should find a day in ny sometime soon so you can try things on.

Had a long visit with my friend who was in benghazi. will download in person but think very important for you to call [REDACTED] the injured DS officer. he is now well enough to talk. he doesnt want a visit but a check in call and asking him if he needs anything would be good. monica will remind you of this.

Also heard from both the bush and reagan libraries over the last few days. neither wants to host the oscar exhibit after it leaves little rock so i think we will focus on making that exhibit amazing and i will explain situation to odr.
more later

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

**INTERVIEW OF DIRECTOR,
OFFICE OF TERRORISM ANALYSIS**

BEFORE THE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, NOVEMBER 13, 2015

Excerpts of the foregoing interview were cited in the Report of the Select Committee on Benghazi. The Central Intelligence Agency declined the Committee's request to declassify the interview transcript.

**INTERVIEW OF
SENIOR LIBYAN DESK OFFICER**

BEFORE THE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, NOVEMBER 18, 2015

APPEARANCES

FOR THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI

PHILIP G. KIKO, *Staff Director and General Counsel*
SHARON JACKSON, *Deputy Chief Counsel*
SARA BARRINEAU, *Investigator*
SHERIA CLARKE, *Counsel*
KIM BETZ, *Member Outreach Liaison and Counsel*
HEATHER SAWYER, *Minority Chief Counsel*
PETER KENNY, *Minority Senior Counsel*

FOR SENIOR LIBYAN DESK OFFICER

RAEKA SAFAI

FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AUSTIN EVERS, *Senior Advisor*
LAURA E. DECK, *Attorney-Adviser*
ERIC SNYDER

Ms. Jackson. Ms. [REDACTED], I think we have everyone in the room. And good evening to you. We appreciate your accommodating us in your evening hours and in this forum.

How are you today?

Ms. [REDACTED] I'm good. Thank you.

Ms. Jackson. Good.

My name is Sharon Jackson. I am one of the counsels on the majority staff. And what we're going to do is start with just a brief overview of the process that we're going to follow today, do introductions of the people in the room, and then we'll get started with the questioning.

Ms. [REDACTED] Okay. Great.

Ms. Jackson. And it's my understanding that you've been previously provided with some documents. Have you had the opportunity to review those documents?

Ms. [REDACTED] I have reviewed them but not in great detail. I do have them printed out with me as well.

Ms. Jackson. And for the stuff that you got from the majority staff, do you have the top sort of index of the documents?

Ms. [REDACTED] I do, with the 21 unclassified and then a total of 26 total.

Ms. Jackson. Correct. Then we'll get started.

This is a transcribed interview of [REDACTED] conducted by the House Select Committee on Benghazi. This interview is being conducted voluntarily as part of the committee's investigation into the attacks on the U.S. diplomatic facilities in Benghazi, Libya, and matters related to it pursuant to House Resolution

567 of the 113th Congress and House Resolution 5 of the 114th Congress.

Ms. [REDACTED], could you give us your name for the record, please?

Ms. [REDACTED] Sure. My name is [REDACTED]

Ms. Jackson. We appreciate your appearance here today, and especially given the long time change and your willingness to appear and provide information to this committee.

Again, my name is Sharon Jackson. I am with the committee's majority staff. We will go around the room. You're not going to be able to see everyone in the room, but we would like a record of all who is present. And we'll start with your counsel here today from AFSA.

Ms. Safai. Sure. Raeka Safai from AFSA.

Ms. Deck. Laura Deck, of the Legal Adviser, State Department.

Mr. Snyder. Eric Snyder, State Department, SES.

Mr. Evers. Austin Evers, State Department.

Ms. Betz. Kim Betz with the majority staff.

Mr. Kenny. Peter Kenny with the minority.

Ms. Sawyer. Heather Sawyer with the minority.

Ms. Jackson. And then outside your purview to my left is.

Ms. Clarke. Sheria Clark with the majority.

Ms. Barrineau. Sara Barrineau with the majority.

Mr. Kiko. Phil Kiko with the committee.

Ms. Jackson. Before we begin, I'd like to just review the process that we're going to follow today. Given the distance that you are from us and the fact that we're doing this by videoconference, we have agreed that each side, the majority and the minority, will have 90 minutes to ask you questions regarding the attacks

in Benghazi and matters related to that. So what we're going to do is I, on behalf of the majority, will ask questions for up to an hour. Then we'll switch and allow the minority to ask questions for up to an hour, and then each side will have an additional 30 minutes to ask additional questions or follow-up questions.

Ms. Deck. Sharon, I'm sorry to interject. I just want to make it clear that the highest level of classification that can be discussed during this interview is secret.

Ms. Jackson. And that was my next point I was going to make. We are doing this by secure video teleconference and that is that this session will allow for the discussion of classified information and as we have all agreed, that we are going up to the secret level. If for any reason any question that is posed to you makes you believe that you have to go higher than that, please just let us know, and we'll have to reserve that for another time and place to get an answer to that question.

Many of our questions are going to be in the unclassified realm, and so to the best of our ability if we can highlight when we're going into classified information, that will help the review of the transcript down the road, but there will be a review of the transcript in this case.

You have counsel from AFSA here today. If at any time throughout the interview you would like the opportunity to consult with your counsel, please just let us know. We will all depart the room and allow you the opportunity to consult with counsel before we continue with any answer or any question that is posed to you.

As you may be able to see, we have an official reporter here that is taking down everything so that we can have a written record of today's events. Also,

given that it's a video teleconference, it's going to be important that you give verbal answers to everything as opposed to nods of the head, shakes of the head, and things like that. I'm going to ask the reporter to interrupt if for any reason she does not get a verbal answer. We actually have two reporters here today. They will be switching off during the proceedings.

Again, because we are trying to get a written record, and given the delay that there is in this video teleconference, it's going to be important that we try and not talk at the same time as each other, but given the delay, I don't think that's going to be a problem.

We are asking that you give us the best recollection of events. We do understand that these happened about 3 years ago. But if there are things that you do not remember or can't remember, please just say so, and if you could, inform us to the best of your ability who might be able to provide information for our questions.

And then, do you understand that you are required to answer questions from Congress truthfully?

Ms. [REDACTED] I do.

Ms. Jackson. Do you understand that this also applies to questions that are posed to you by a congressional committee and its staff?

Ms. [REDACTED] I do.

Ms. Jackson. Do you understand that witnesses who knowingly provide false testimony could be subject to criminal prosecution for perjury or making false statements?

Ms. [REDACTED] I do.

Ms. Jackson. Is there any reason that you are unable to provide truthful

answers to today's questions?

Ms. [REDACTED]. No.

Ms. Jackson. Okay.

Well, that is the end of my questions for the process and the procedures that govern our interview today. I would ask if the minority has anything that they would like to add at this time.

Ms. Sawyer. No, we don't. Thank you for making the time for us this evening. We really do appreciate it. And we'll try to be as efficient as we can in our questions.

Ms. Jackson. By my watch, it is 8:12 D.C. time, and I will begin the first hour of questioning.

EXAMINATION

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Ms. [REDACTED], how long have you been with the State Department?

A I joined in January 2005.

Q If we could just go back for the last 5 years, can you walk us through the various assignments that you've had since 2010 forward?

A Sure. In 2010, I transferred from Embassy Caracas in Venezuela to Washington, D.C. Then I spent 5 years in D.C. before moving here [REDACTED] [REDACTED] this past summer. In D.C. I spent 1 year at the Operations Center. I then joined the Libya desk and worked in the Office of Maghreb Affairs for 2 years. I then served at the National Security Council for a year and then did a year of language training at our Foreign Service Institute.

Q Ms. [REDACTED], one of the reasons that we have asked to interview you today is because from the review of documents that we have received it appears

that you had an integral role with respect to the reaction and response on the night of the attacks and in the days after for both the State Department and the interagency. And because you were there and we weren't, we need to talk to the people who have that firsthand knowledge.

Can you just walk us through how you first became aware of the Benghazi attacks on September 11th, 2012, what you did, how you got information, what you did with that information, what you were directed to do? If you could just walk us through that night.

A Sure. So in the late afternoon I was giving a briefing to a group of people who were heading out to Libya, and someone interrupted the briefing. This was in a separate building at the State Department across the street from the main building. Someone interrupted the building to say that there was a news ticker that there was some sort of attack or problem or fire -- I don't recollect the details -- at our mission in Benghazi.

I then ran back over to my office. It was quickly clear that there was something very serious going on. So my deputy director and I agreed that I would go upstairs to the Operations Center on the seventh floor to see if I could be more valuable up there. So I remember running through the halls of the State Department to get up to the Operations Center, and I spent the rest of the evening there until I went home.

In terms of what we were trying to do, we were trying to do everything we possibly could. We were trying to get information from everywhere we possibly could. We were trying to reach every resource we could think of. I was trying to share every information I thought with whoever I thought might be able to help us. And that was definitely the tone of everyone on the operations floor and also

everyone that I worked with within the State Department.

Q Explain to us how the flow of information occurs in the Operations Center. Who is in the Operations Center? Are people tasked with certain agencies to reach out to or collection of information from either foreign partners, from Libya? Just walk us through that and help us understand how that worked.

A The Operations Center has its own system for trying to gather information. I wasn't trying to interfere within that. I was just trying to be value-added because I would have the substantive knowledge related to Libya and be right there on the floor with them so I could provide that really quickly.

Separately the assistant secretary for NEA was also gathering information from her side. You know, we called people we thought might be able to provide information. We tried to reach our people in Benghazi. We were in contact with our people in Tripoli. And we shared it as quickly as we could.

Q Was Assistant Secretary Jones in the Operations Center with you?

A She was not. She was in her office.

Q Was there other individuals from NEA in the Operations Center?

A I don't think so. I think it was just me. But I, you know, I quickly would relay any information I had from my NEA world and my NEA email to the people on the floor. And similarly for the people within the Operations Center, if they had any information that I felt anyone in NEA needed, I would immediately transfer that.

Q Who were the people in the Operations Center?

A They were the people who were -- who were on -- the Operations Center is staffed 24 hours a day, so they were the people who were on shift until 11. And then they swapped out, and I was there for a little bit of the next shift. I

don't remember their names. I didn't know them personally.

Q Would any of the senior leadership come to the Operations Center to monitor what was ongoing?

A Senior leadership sometimes would come to the Operations Center as a way to thank people for the work they were doing, but it wasn't actually a useful thing to us to have them on the floor with us because we were set up to provide support for them in their offices or wherever they happened to be in fact.

Q So in the Operations Center is there a person who is tasked to coordinate with the military and another person tasked to coordinate with the intelligence community? I'm still not understanding exactly how it works.

A Sure. There are different roles within the -- within the -- I think it's usually five people on shift. There's the watch officer, who is first on answering phones and keeping a log of the phone calls coming in. There is an emergency action officer who would be the person who would normally reach out to the interagency, to reach out to DOD contacts.

During the working day there's also a separate DS agent who's part of watch order, and that person worked there so she would be tapped into the DS watch center as well. Then there is an operations specialist who helps particularly with interagency documents, particularly the ones that are highly classified, but also is helping on the phones, since primarily phones are a lot of the work that's up there.

Then there's the person who writes the briefs, because there are briefs that go out regularly, and so there is one person who is working on producing that brief that goes to the seventh floor and the Secretary and other principals. And then there's the senior watch officer who's really in charge of making sure everything is

working well.

So, for instance, when there was a phone call, there was a phone call that night, which means the Secretary and the President of Libya, you know, one person was tasked with connecting that call. Somebody else was tasked with making sure they were taking notes during the call. Because I was up there, I also sat in on the call and took notes as a backup note taker.

But there's a standard process that happens there, and in situations like September, that day in September, it can be helpful to have a substantive person right there at the floor. Both I and my direct supervisor in the Office of Maghreb Affairs, [REDACTED], had both worked in the Operations Center the year before, so we were very familiar with what they could do and what value it would be to have one of us up there during this time.

Q And so your deputy director, Ms. [REDACTED], and others in NEA, such as Assistant Secretary Jones, where were they physically located? Where is NEA in relation to the Ops Center?

A NEA is spread out in different offices in the Main State building of the State Department. The Office of Maghreb Affairs at the time was on the first floor. The assistant secretary's office was on the sixth floor. I believe that over the course of the evening our director, [REDACTED], went up to Assistant Secretary Jones' office and was there for some of the work that he was doing. Other people from my office might have been doing that as well. I wasn't tracking their movements that night.

Q Did you personally make any outreach to interagency partners, such as the intelligence community or DOD, the National Security Council, National Security staff? Did you undertake any of those actions yourself?

A I'm sure I was sharing information with them and was in constant communication with them. I don't have any particular memory of deciding at what point I needed to contact them. As soon as there was this type of crisis, we all were just focused on trying to get any help we could possibly get. So, yes, I was in touch with them to see what we could do.

Q Okay. Do you recall who you contacted?

A So I would have been in regular touch with our -- the National Security Council director for Libya, Ben Fishman. I also was in touch with someone with -- I actually think that he contacted me, and it's in the documents about someone [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I had a counterpart at OSD Policy, and I would have been in regular touch with him as well.

Q And I'm sorry, what was that office that you just mentioned?

A OSD Policy. So the Department of Defense, the Office of the Secretary of Defense Policy.

Q And who was that individual?

A The names escape me, and they're blocked out in these documents, so I apologize for not remembering. But he would be my counterpart, the desk officer for Libya in OSD Policy.

Q And so it's whoever's name is redacted on those documents?

A Right.

Q You said you were in contact with Ben Fishman from the National Security Staff. Did you have a prior professional relationship with Mr. Fishman on

Libya issues?

A Certainly. There is a lot of work that we did within the interagency, and Ben Fishman was involved with that, and I worked closely with him in coordinating that.

Q And just taking a step back prior to the night of the attacks, can you describe for us some of the issues that you would have worked directly with Mr. Fishman on?

A It would have been the range of policy issues related to Libya. So what were our policy priorities there, what were the preparations for the elections that happened there, what happened during the transfer of power from the Transitional National Council to the newly elected government. Really the range of issues related to Libya. You know, we were in close coordination with many different parts of the U.S. Government and therefore with the National Security Council.

Q And did you personally play that role in the interagency process? When you mentioned working with other interagency partners, did you personally undertake working with, you know, DOD or members of the intelligence community in developing the policy with regard to Libya?

A So the Office of Maghreb Affairs would host weekly meetings where we invited people from around the interagency to both brief them and to hear from them on the programs they had in place or they had planned or concerns they had. So we were regularly coordinating with a wide range of people given the complicated nature and changing nature of our work in Libya.

Q And those were meetings that you attended as part of the Office of Maghreb Affairs.

A So those are meetings, I'm thinking of the meetings that we actually would host in the State Department, and I would attend them, and my office director normally would chair them.

Q Okay. Are there other meetings that you participated in in the interagency?

A There may have been other meetings from time to time on particular issues. It would have been very low-level, working level if I were the person participating in them. But we tried to communicate really well so that we could all know what each other was doing and make sure we were doing things in a coordinated way.

Q Returning to the night of the attacks, you've described your role as being in the Operations Center to be fully aware of the information flow through the Ops Center and be a subject matter resource to them. Who were you communicating information to outside of the Ops Center, within the State Department, who within NEA or senior leadership or Diplomatic Security? What was your role with regard to pushing information out within the State Department?

A So within the State Department, I was primarily making sure that all the information on the ops floor was available to my assistant secretary in NEA, my office director in NEA, and my colleagues working on Libya within NEA. That was my primary focus. But I believe I also was in touch with the task force representative who was at the State Department that night, and I would have probably been responding to other queries as they happened because people knew that I would be working on this issue, so as they heard about it they were contacting me.

Q Okay.

A And then the Operations Center is sent up to then brief other parts of the State Department that would need to know that kind of information.

Q And did they do that through primarily email communications?

A They could do it through email alerts. They could do it through phone calls. So they could use either one, whichever one they felt was more efficient.

Q You described that the Ops Center had contact with Embassy Tripoli. Is that correct?

A That's right.

Q Would you describe for us those communications that the Ops Center had with Tripoli?

A So I think as soon as it happened I would imagine -- and this would have been before I got up to the ops floor but knowing the practice of the Operations Center, and I think I saw this when I got up there -- usually what happened, they would have reached out to the deputy chief of mission in Tripoli to get the latest information to him. So they were doing that and getting updates from him on what was happening, and at one point I believe the assistant secretary from NEA said, I am going to start being the point of contact with him. We can't keep having people who don't know enough, don't have the same kind of background reaching out to him at this time. There are too many people reaching out to him basically. So she made sure it then became a phone call that originated from her to him. So then it shifted away from the ops reaching out to her, reaching out, which is something that is pretty standard practice because otherwise the people in the crisis are being hampered by the number of calls that are going out to them.

Q And were you a participant or listener/observer to those conversations between Assistant Secretary Jones and the deputy chief of mission?

A I don't recall. I might have been. But once it became something that she was calling from her office, I would not have been because I was up in the Operations Center.

Q Okay. And after her conversations with the deputy chief of mission, did she memorialize those conversations and send out the information?

A I don't know. If there was something specific that he said that she felt she needed to relay, I'm sure she did that, but I don't know that there was the kind of note taking that we would have done on a, you know, on a call with a foreign national that was where we were actually taking notes of everything that they're saying.

Q You stated earlier that you attempted to reach the mission in Benghazi. Did the Ops Center ever reach anyone at the mission that evening?

A I don't recall. I don't think so. We certainly, certainly by the time that I got up there, we never reached Ambassador Stevens.

Q It's my understanding that the DS Command Center had communication with the agents who were on the ground in Benghazi. Was there ever a live feed of those communications into the Ops Center?

A What do you mean by live feed?

Q Where you -- where the people in Ops Center were -- like a three-way call or some sort of way conferencing in so that people in the Ops Center were listeners to the conversations between the agents and the DS Command Center?

A I don't think so. I don't recall that.

Q Would the DS Command Center send information to the Ops Center?

A They certainly should, and there is communication between the DS Command Center and the Operations Center, although they are not located in the same building. I don't recall the exact mechanisms of that night.

Q Do you recall, was there any issues, problems, or concerns with the flow of information between the Command Center and the Ops Center?

A No, I don't. I don't recall any issues or concerns about it.

Q Based on your understanding of the events that were occurring in Benghazi that evening, can you describe for us what you understood was occurring over there and had occurred, how the attack occurred?

A It's a little hard for me to think back to what I knew at the time since it's been so long since then and so much more information has come out. But we knew there had been a fire. We knew there were people there attacking. And then we knew that Ambassador Stevens was missing. We knew that one body had been found and that it wasn't Ambassador Stevens. We were at the time trying to identify that person and then notify his next of kin. There was some confusion about that.

There had been lots of information that Ambassador Stevens was okay, that he was over in this place, that he had been sighted somewhere else. There was a lot of information that clearly was wrong. But it was clear that something very bad had happened. And, you know, I knew quickly that once Ambassador Stevens had been missing, we never found him until it was quite clear that he had been killed.

Q In all of the information that came in that night, was there any information that there had been a protest prior to the attack or crowds gathering to protest anything prior to the attack?

A I have no information about that other than to say that there were press reports -- I don't remember if it was that night or the next day -- that said there were protests, but otherwise there was no information suggesting that there was a protest.

Q So no information that came in from your Embassy in Tripoli or through the Command Center said that there was a protest prior to the assault on the compound?

A I at no time during that evening thought that there had been a protest because I thought that if there had been a protest Ambassador Stevens would have told us, and so we would have known that there was a protest. If there had been something happening prior to the very significant thing that was clearly leading to a very tragic and sad result, we would have known about it. So I at no time during that evening thought there had been a protest.

Q So Ambassador Stevens was someone who was in regular communication with you and others in NEA regarding what was happening within Libya, whether it was Tripoli or Benghazi?

A He was in regular communication with us, yes.

Q At any time of the day of the attack or in the days preceding the attack, did he or anyone else within Libya communicate to you or others that there was any call for any type of protest in Benghazi, such as through social media, the regular media, or just picking up the word on the street?

A No.

Q Is that something that Ambassador Stevens would have communicated to you and others in NEA had that been the state of events?

A The protests against the U.S. facilities would have been something that was very rare, and if Ambassador Stevens had thought that was in the works, I'm sure he would have shared it with us.

Q And would you have been a person who would have known that if it had been shared with anyone in NEA?

A It would have depended on whether it was primarily a security issue that was being flagged or if it was something that was a more general issue. So probably I would have. If it was something that Ambassador Stevens thought was important, I probably would have known about it. But there was a division in our work between the kind of policy work and then the security work. So DS channels, for instance, had their own information streams, and I wasn't aware of those.

Q Did you, though, at times learn of security incidents that occurred within Libya?

A Yes.

Q And how would you gather that information? How would you learn that information?

A We would hear it from Embassy Tripoli.

Q Would you ever get any reporting from your counterpart in DS, the individual who headed the Libya issues for DS here at Main State?

A No.

Q Were you aware of an individual by the name of [REDACTED]?

A Certainly.

Q And what, if any, interaction did you have with him?

A So I was in email contact with him from time to time. The primary reason was generally that a DS agent would need a visa, and so they would need to come to the Libya desk to get that visa. That was our primary purpose for communicating.

Q Returning to the night of the attack, were you aware that there was an interagency SVTC about 7 p.m. that evening?

A I was not aware of that, to the best of my recollection.

Q So you did not participate or attend that SVTC?

A I did not.

Q At any time during the evening, did Assistant Secretary Jones or Mr. [REDACTED] or anybody else update you on what the interagency plans were for responding to the attack in Benghazi?

A I don't recall an update like that.

Q Do you recall whether you learned of what, if any, military response was being contemplated as a result of the attacks in Benghazi?

A So I knew that there was some use of resources for collecting information that were in use, and I knew that there was support from the other agency that was on the ground, or that they were trying to be that kind of support. I knew that there was a plane that went to Benghazi to save them later, to evacuate the people who were on the ground. But I was not part of the conversations about any other sort of military response, to the best of my recollection.

Q Were you aware of whether there was any discussion, either within the Ops Center or within the larger State Department, about deploying the FEST?

A I was unaware of the FEST discussion.

Q Do you know a Mark Thompson?

A I do know Mark Thompson. We worked on occasion together, and I understood that he testified to Congress or spoke to Congress later where he focused a lot on this FEST issue.

Q On the night of the attack or in the days following, did you ever have a conversation with Mark Thompson about his feelings on whether or not the FEST should have been deployed?

A I don't recall one, but there could have been one. It was a really difficult, difficult time for all of us, and we had many people, many issues that we were working on very intensely.

Q At some point the personnel, the State Department personnel, leave the mission and they go to the Annex facility nearby. Do you recall approximately when that was? Was that fairly early in the evening or was it later on?

A As I recall, it was later on in our evening, but I don't recall the exact time line.

Q Okay. If I could, if you could go to what was No. 15 on the list of documents that we sent you, the list of 21 unclassified. It is an --

Ms. Sawyer. I'm just going to interrupt for a second. We don't have copies of those documents here in the room.

Ms. Jackson. Yes, you do.

Ms. Sawyer. Can we get copies?

Ms. Jackson. Yes, I have copies, just like we do with any others.

Ms. Sawyer. Well, great. Before we ask questions of the witness, I think it would be helpful if the people in the room also get a chance to look at it.

Ms. Jackson. Yes. I was just going to identify it so she could find it. I'm going to mark it as exhibit 1, and it is document No. C05580494?

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 1

Was marked for identification.]

Mr. Snyder. I'm sorry. Can you read that again? I have it. I apologize.

Ms. Jackson. It is an email from a [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] on September 11 at 6:08 p.m.

Ms. [REDACTED]. I have that document.

Ms. Jackson. And then I would also ask if you would pull out the document that was item No. 16, which I'm going to mark as exhibit No. 2, which is another email exchange to you and others.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 2

Was marked for identification.]

Ms. Jackson. It's document No. C05580512, from a [REDACTED] to you and others on September 11 at 7:57.

And then I would also ask if you would pull the document at what was tab 17, or item No. 17, which I'm going to mark as exhibit 3, which is a document that was produced to us by the White House.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 3

Was marked for identification.]

Ms. Jackson. It bears document No. SCB 000029. It's an email from, at the top, [REDACTED] to Ben Fishman on September 11 at 10:32. I'm going to ask you some questions about these three documents.

A Okay.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q I'm actually going to Exhibit 2 first, the September 11 email at 7:57 p.m. The subject line says, "RE: The (redacted) compound in Benghazi is under fire." There is a redacted word in there. Did you take that to be the CIA Annex facility? Did you understand that to mean that?

A When I wrote that, I believe that's right.

Q So at the bottom of the page, you started this email exchange from you to -- it appears to be a distribution list and a Mr. Maxwell. And you wrote -- and you meant at that time the Annex is under fire. Is that correct?

A That's right.

Q And you also wrote at the bottom, "That is where everyone is now." And by everyone, what did you mean by that?

A I would have meant everyone that we -- everyone that was -- all the survivors. I don't think at that moment we had confirmation that Ambassador Stevens had been killed, but everyone that we were in touch with were there.

Q So the State Department personnel had relocated to the Annex facility?

A So I'm looking at these emails now and remembering it back from then, but based on this, that would be my understanding, yes, that everyone that we were in touch with was over at that other compound.

Q You also write in this first email that this is through intel channels. How is it that you acquired this information?

A So I would think that -- I don't recall, but my guess based on where I was at the time was that that came through intel channels in the operations floor, which does have access to people in INR Watch, who sit right off of the operations floor and would have access to the intel channels.

Q And then if you could go to exhibit 3, which is an email exchange between Ben Fishman and [REDACTED]. The top line of that email, or the last exchange at 10:32 p.m., it says that -- they talk about you being in Ops and that Jeff is on the phone with Beth to pass along some info that he has gleaned. Is Jeff referring to Jeff Feltman?

A I would think so. I couldn't say for sure at this point, but I would think so.

Q And did you have an opportunity to review this document before?

A I did look at it. I just got it today, so, you know, I reviewed it quickly.

Q I'd like to go to the exchange at the bottom of page 1 and the top of page 2 where it's Ben Fishman to [REDACTED] at 9:19 p.m., where Mr. Fishman writes, "You don't have anything further on Chris, right? I was sitting in that meeting for 2 hours. I don't know why Pat Kennedy is so concerned about what extra security folks are wearing. Does that come from Greg? The time for being overly sensitive to Libyan concerns about military appearances seems to be over."

In your interactions that evening, can you glean anything from this exchange between Mr. Fishman and Ms. [REDACTED] about Mr. Kennedy being upset over or concerned about military going in in uniform?

A I don't have any recollection about there being a huge concern about military going in in uniform.

Q And then going to exhibit 1 that I asked you to look at, an email exchange between [REDACTED] and yourself at 6:08 p.m., you first write to her, and the subject line is, "points per NEA that are being drafted now for Magariaf and," then I think you go on to main points of the call. What are you trying to

accomplish in this -- what are you trying to communicate that you're doing in this email -- by this email?

A So per the best of my recollection, and I certainly wouldn't remember much of this if I didn't have the document to look at, my guess is that [REDACTED] [REDACTED], who is an operations specialist and was working on the floor, was assigned to note take for the call between the Secretary and Magariaf. And in advance of note taking for a call, it is standard practice that you would have the call sheet so that you could review the information that was being proposed to the Secretary to discuss because that would facilitate your ability to be able to quickly and accurately take notes on the call.

So I was helping staff prepare for the phone call by letting her know what the points were. In this case, of course, the call sheet would have come up right before the call started if we even got it, because it was such an urgent situation. So I was letting her know this is what we are going to ask the Secretary to discuss with Magariaf.

Q Do you recall if there was a call sheet for that call that the Secretary made, if one formally got pulled together?

A I don't recall.

Q Okay. Now, you stated earlier, I believe -- correct me if I'm wrong -- that you were a note taker on that call between the Secretary and President Magariaf?

A So I wasn't an official note taker. There is an official one -- official -- there is a primary note taker who is then responsible for writing up the record of a call. This is true for all phone calls with foreign officials. And then there is a secondary person who really acts as a backup. And then because I

was on the floor and because it was helpful for us in our work for me to know immediately what was said, I sat in as a third note taker where I took notes of the call and shared it with people on the floor and shared it with my colleagues in NEA.

Q Okay. And how did you share that information? Did you email your recollection of that call to others in NEA so that it could reach more than one person at a time -- at the time?

A I believe I did. I don't recall. It would have been outside of standard practice to do so. The Operations Center standard practice would not be to have people emailing this kind of information around. They'd prefer that it go through the standard formal review process where they can make sure everything is accurate before any of it is shared. However, in these circumstances, I expect that I decided that I would share it with everyone I thought needed to see it if in any way could help us help our people who were under attack in Benghazi.

Q Okay. During that phone call between the Secretary and President Magariaf, did the Secretary describe the events in Benghazi as an attack or as a protest gone bad?

A I don't recall specifically. I believe it would have been our people are under attack and we need help. That would have been, to the best of my recollection, what she said.

Q Do you recall whether the Secretary talked to the Libyan President about U.S. military going into Libya to assist in the evacuation or exfil of the U.S. Government personnel on the ground in Libya?

A I don't recall. I believe the main point was we need your help to stop

this. And, unfortunately, the President didn't have the capabilities to help us.

Q Given the fact that Libya as the host nation didn't have the capacity to assist, was there any, though, any conversation about other assets going into Libya to assist outside of the U.S. military, such as FBI or agency or anything of that nature?

A You know what, I really don't recall, but I -- in some ways I'm -- it's difficult to answer because nobody thought that any outside -- or I certainly didn't think that there were any outside resources that could help us. This was an attack that was happening. Our Ambassador was already missing. We needed something immediately, and there was nothing that could be immediately available on the ground except for our colleagues at the agency. That was our only hope.

Q And I believe you described before that there were some from Tripoli who then went to Benghazi?

A Yeah. I understand that there were. I know that people were evacuated, and I know there was a plane that evacuated them. I don't know exactly the mechanisms of how that happened.

Q Were you involved in the discussions or decisionmaking process on the evacuation of personnel out of Benghazi?

A I don't recall. I don't recall that.

Q Other than the State Department personnel and the Annex personnel, are you aware of whether there were any other American citizens that were evacuated with the State Department and CIA personnel?

A I'm not aware of others.

Q Were you aware of whether any Libyans were evacuated from that country, either the night of the attack or in the days following the attack?

A I don't recall that being an issue.

Q Did you know of an individual by the name of [REDACTED] ?

A [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Q [REDACTED]

A [REDACTED]

Q [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] ?

A [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Q Were you still with NEA at the time?

A I don't recall.

Q After the DS agents were evacuated from Benghazi, were in Tripoli and then went to Germany, were you given any additional information regarding their version of the attacks? Were they debriefed in any way? Was that information shared with you and others in NEA as to what happened that night? Did you learn that in the days immediately following the attacks?

A So I think that the only way in which I heard a story that came from them was that my deputy director, [REDACTED], and I spoke with the polycon chief from Embassy Tripoli the following day or the next day after the attacks, and he, based on his conversations with the DS agents, gave us a very detailed account of what had happened.

Q And who was that individual? Was that Mr. [REDACTED] ?

A That's right.

Q And what did Mr. [REDACTED] tell that you he had learned from the agents?

A Well, this was actually very detailed about how the attacks started, how there was a fire -- or how the DS agent brought the Ambassador and his colleague to a safe haven place and then left, and then a fire broke out, and then he wasn't able to get back in, and then the details of how that happened.

Q In any of the information that Mr. [REDACTED] related to you and Ms. [REDACTED], was there any mention of any type of demonstration or protest preceding the attack?

A No.

Q In the days after the attack, what, if any, awareness did you have or any role, any review role that you may have had, in what has become known as the talking points? Did you play any role in the development of any talking points?

Mr. Kenny. Please be clear as to which talking points you're referring to.

Ms. Jackson. I would just ask the witness if she knows of any talking points, and then I'll ask her which talking points she's referring to.

Mr. Snyder. All right. So the question she has -- do you want to repeat the question so it's clear?

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Did you plan a review or review of any type of talking points regarding the attacks?

A I likely was part of efforts to produce many talking points related to Libya during that period.

Q And who would you be interacting with on these talking points?

Was it within NEA or was it within the larger interagency?

A So if I could just be specific, are we talking about the talking points that were used on the Sunday after the attack, or are we talking about talking points in general that I would be producing for a variety of reasons?

Q That's exactly what I'm trying to get at. You know, what were you involved in? Were you involved at all in the talking points that were used by Ambassador Rice or were you involved in different talking points or both?

A So I don't recall all the engagements that happened over the course of that week, but I regularly was involved with developing talking points related to things in Libya. For the specific talking points that Ambassador Rice used on Sunday, I was not involved in the development of those talking points.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Okay. You had not -- Mr. Fishman or no one else from the national security staff had forwarded you a copy of those over the weekend?

A I had no information about those talking points.

Q Okay. If you could pull out the documents that were marked at tab 20 and 21, I'm going to mark them as exhibits 5 and 6. Number 5 --

[REDACTED] Exhibit Nos. 4 and 5

Were marked for identification.]

Ms. Sawyer. And I'm just going to interrupt for a second because your time is about -- you've got about 2 minutes in your first hour.

Ms. Jackson. Twelve after.

Ms. Sawyer. Oh, this is 5 minutes fast. I'm sorry. I'm looking at Peter's.

Ms. Jackson. If have like 7 minutes.

Ms. Sawyer. I understand. But if it goes over that, we're more than happy to let you finish with these exhibits, but we would just then ask since we both have 90 minutes we just subtract it. That's all I'm saying. I didn't want to have to stop you once you got started.

Ms. Jackson. Now, can I have an extra 30 seconds now?

Ms. Sawyer. You absolutely can have an extra 30 seconds.

Mr. Evers. Which one is number 5?

Ms. Jackson. Number 5 is an email exchange, it's document number C05580617; and exhibit 6 is C05580618.

Number 5 is an email exchange that at the top of the page between [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] to [REDACTED], and [REDACTED]. And actually, it

appears that exhibit 6 is a continuation of that exchange, but it bears a different document for whatever reason.

Ms. Betz. Just so I'm clear, this is what everybody has.

Ms. Jackson. The multiple-page one is exhibit 5 and the single page one is exhibit 6.

Ms. Betz. We're trying to figure out where exhibit where exhibit 4 is. I think we jumped.

Ms. Jackson. Oh, that would be -- then let's change the numbers. I marked a 4 and evidently didn't use it. All right. We'll change these numbers to 4 and 5.

Ms. Betz. So your multipage document is exhibit 4, and your single-page document is exhibit 5.

Ms. Jackson. And that's why you're here, keep me on the straight and narrow.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Ms. [REDACTED], do you have those documents in front of you?

A I do have those documents.

Q Okay. And were you able to review them prior to talking with us today?

A I did review them.

Q Okay.

A I have reviewed them.

Q Going to exhibit 4, you talked about you were involved in drafting talking points, and at the back of this document, there appears to be -- it's entitled, the very last page, "NEA Press Guidance, September 17," and then, "Key Points."

Are these the type of talking points that you would have been involved in review, editing, commenting, or drafting?

A So it's interesting nomenclature, I suppose. This would be, from my perspective, press guidance, which in my world, would have been a little bit different than talking points. But, yes, I regularly provided press guidance to our press folks in advance of briefings with the press where they thought something that I covered might come up in the press briefing and therefore wanted my input on the guidance.

Q Okay. When you received these -- this press guidance, what was your reaction when you saw them?

A So my concern with this guidance was that it made our definitive declaration on the nature of the attack, and I felt that the information that we had at that time wasn't sufficient to make that determination. And so I thought that they should be -- you know, we shouldn't go on the record with saying something like that because we just didn't have the information at the time to warrant it.

Q And what in particular concerns you? Was it the phrase that the demonstrations in Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by the protests at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and involved into a direct assault against the U.S. Mission?

Ms. Safai. Can you tell us what page you're on.

Ms. Jackson. It's the second page.

Ms. Sawyer. It's actually not. You had her on the last page. That's not the same point.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q If we go to the second page under the 12:36 p.m. exchange, under key points, the first bullet point.

A Right. I didn't think there had been demonstrations in Benghazi, and therefore, I thought we shouldn't say this to the press.

Q Okay.

A I think I might have known by that point, and I certainly found out in the meeting on Tuesday, that the IC did think that there had been demonstrations or parts of the IC did think that. I don't recollect exactly if I clearly knew that on the Monday, the 17th of September.

Q Okay. But you did not receive that information until Tuesday the 18th?

A Well, I just have a very distinct memory on Tuesday the 18th of being in an interagency meeting with the IC, that the IC arranged, where I said there were no demonstrations, and someone in the IC said that he had information that there were demonstrations, and we had an exchange where I, you know, continued to disagree with him about that issue. So I knew that -- I know now that at least, you know, as of the Tuesday following, there were still parts of the IC that believed that there had been demonstrations.

Q And who was the person in the IC that you would --

A But I was quite certain that there had not been.

Q I'm sorry. I interrupted you.

A Sorry.

Q Could you repeat your last comment:

A Sorry. Just to complete the sentence, I was quite certain that there had not been demonstrations, and so I was responding in this way to the press guidance.

Q Okay. And who was the individual in the interagency that you were

having this discussion or disagreement with on the 18th?

A You know, I honestly don't know his name and I wouldn't have even known his name at that time. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Who else from the State Department participated in that meeting?

A I think I was probably the only person from NEA, but there would have been people from our CT office that would have actually hosted and arranged the meeting.

Q Okay. And would there be a record of your and other persons' participation in that SVTC?

A I don't know that there would have been a written record of who attended. There may well have been, but it wasn't something that I was involved in putting together or tracking.

Q Is there at least a sign-in sheet for who's in the SVTC room?

A Not that I recall.

Q Okay. Going back --

A It was working level. It's not important -- not high-level people in the meeting.

Q Okay. Going back to exhibit 4, at 2:16 p.m., you write to [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], and [REDACTED] and I quote, "I think Rice was off the reservation on this one." Could you elaborate on that comment and why you wrote that?

A So I was just continuing to say that I didn't think that this was right. You know, my colleagues were responding that this had already been said, and so I was going back by saying, it's still not right. So I still don't think we should say it.

Q Okay. Were there other aspects of Ambassador Rice's comments on the Sunday talk shows that you disagreed with or that you thought did not fall within your understanding of what had happened in Benghazi?

Ms. Sawyer. Can we establish whether she saw them first --

Ms. Safai. Right.

Ms. Sawyer. -- her comments.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Then let me ask you this, did you either watch any of the Sunday talk shows or review transcripts of them afterwards?

A No.

Q Okay. Then on what basis did you make this comment that Ambassador Rice was off the reservation?

A Because my colleague in the press shop told me that she said this on five Sunday morning shows, and that's why I thought she was wrong about it.

Q Okay. And then if we could briefly go to what we marked as exhibit 5, which is the continuation of this email exchange where at 2:19 p.m. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] responds to you and others, "WH" -- which we understand to be White House -- "very worried about the politics. This was all their doing." Was that your understanding?

A I had no information about that.

Q At any time after this exchange, did you ever have a conversation with Ben Fishman or anyone else from the White House regarding what

Ambassador Rice had said or the narrative that the Benghazi attacks were a result of -- as a result of the Cairo protests?

A I don't recall any specific conversation about it. It wasn't something that I was focused on because we had our colleagues in Stuttgart who had just gone through a traumatic event. We had our colleagues in Tripoli who were really, really going through a difficult time. They abandoned one of their compounds. They were then moving into another compound. They had just lost Ambassador Stevens. We had just lost Ambassador Stevens and our other colleagues.

So this was not a big part of what I was spending my time on. But if someone had asked me, I would have immediately said there was no protest. And the real discussion that I remember about that was with the IC on the Tuesday following the attacks.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. And with that, I'm going to conclude my first hour. I see that, by my watch, I went over by 3 minutes. So my next session will be 27 minutes instead of 30.

And would you like a short 2- to 5-minute break just to maybe stretch, get some water, and then we can reconvene perhaps maybe --

Ms. Sawyer. Yeah. I would just suggest maybe if we can do it, take 10 minutes, that would give you at least 5. And then if you wanted or needed to talk to your lawyer, you could do so before we start up again.

Ms. Safai. Sure. And I have 9:17 as the time. So I have 5 minutes over. Are you going off of this or that?

Ms. Jackson. No, I've been going after my watch that I started at 12 after and then did a quarter after.

Ms. Sawyer. So we'll start up again about 9:30.

Ms. Jackson. So on the hour. We'll resume on the hour.

Ms. [REDACTED] Okay. Thank you.

[Recess.]

EXAMINATION

BY MR. KENNY:

Q So we'll go back on the record. The time is now 9:35 a.m., local Eastern Standard Time now. We are on standard time.

And, Ms. [REDACTED], again, thank you. Welcome. On behalf of the select committee minority staff, I want to thank you again for appearing today and thank you as well for your service to our country. We appreciate your willingness to speak with us, including during off duty hours in your location, so we hope to make this process, again, just as simple and as straightforward for you as possible.

At the outset, I also did just want to mention that we do understand that you lost -- you and your colleagues lost friends and fellow patriots on the night of the attack, so we want to be respectful of that fact and both of you and your time as well today. And again, just thank you for your service and being here.

I would hope to start by returning where we left off in the last round in the discussion of emails related to NEA press guidance on September 17. And I'd like to close out that discussion just while it's still fresh in everybody's mind. And in order to do so, I'm actually going to mark a new exhibit. It's a similar, related thread, and this will be exhibit number 6.

And this document, it has the Bates number C05580621. It's an email, the top email is September 17, 2012. The timestamp is 1:52.

Ms. Safai. Is this part of the list that the -- or is this part of your document?

BY MR. KENNY:

Q So this will be part of the minority staff documents that were submitted to you in advance, I believe. Is that correct?

A I have it. I have it.

Q Okay. Great.

A I have it in front of me, yeah.

Q And please, just let me know when you're ready for --

A I'm ready.

Q And again for the record, this is document ID C05580621. And this is a similar email thread to exhibits 4 and 5 that we were just discussing previously. You'll note that the third email in, in the middle of the first page, is an email that you were asked about in the last round where you wrote, quote, "I really hope this was revised. I don't think we should go on record with this," closed quote.

Do you see that?

A I do.

Q Okay. And you'll note that that is also the same email that appears in exhibit 4 at the top of the second page.

A Yep.

Q And so just to be clear for the record, this email then appears to take a different track from the other emails. The next two emails in this thread are new emails, and those are the ones that I'd like to ask you about here. Just bear with me one second.

And in the last round, the majority had asked about your concerns about specific talking points that appeared throughout this thread. We'll get into that in a

little bit. But what I just wanted to first start with is, and I'll read it into the record, the email above the one I just referred you to is from [REDACTED] at 1:47 p.m. And who is Mr. [REDACTED]?

A So he and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] all worked together in the NEA press shop. So he is one of the people we would be in touch with about press guidance.

Q Okay. Thank you. And it is Mr. [REDACTED]. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And at 1:47 p.m., Mr. [REDACTED] wrote to you, "This is what I think we should go with. There is an ongoing FBI investigation. We are looking to that investigation to give us the definitive word as to what transpired."

And then above that, at 1:52 in the top parent email, you wrote back, "Yes!", exclamation point, closed quote.

And the question I had for you, you had raised in the last round a concern about being too definitive about specific information that was included in some of the press guidance that you'd reviewed in this email thread. And I just want to ask whether this is also a reflection of that concern.

A Yes. I feel that the two email threads were -- reflected a consistent belief on my part.

Q Okay. And moving on. And just real briefly, again, to better understand or help us better understand what your concern was at that time, when you said that you had this concern about information being too definitive or statements or press guidance being too definitive, was that because at that point in time information was still being collected and analyses were still being performed on that data set in order to make a determination about what had

transpired?

A Absolutely, that was my concern.

Q Okay. And that applies even to this --

A We just didn't know what had happened.

Q No. Thank you. That's helpful.

And that applies even to this date, which is September 17, 6 days after the attacks. Is that correct?

A That is correct.

Q Okay. Thank you.

I think we'll move on, or move back rather. So we'll refer you back to exhibit 4.

A So my numbering is a little bit different. Is that --

Q Sure. So this is -- the top email is from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. The timestamp is 2:17 p.m.

A Oh, okay. Sure. Sure.

Q I'm sorry. 2:18 p.m. Do you see that there?

A I do. I do. Thank you.

Q And the email I'd like to refer you to in this thread is at the bottom of the page. It's, again, an [REDACTED] email. The timestamp is 2:02 p.m.

And you had indicated to us in the last hour that at this point in time, to the best of your recollection, you had not seen Ambassador Rice appear on the five Sunday talk shows. Is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q Okay. And at this point in time, had you seen transcripts? I believe I had in my notes that you didn't review the transcripts at this particular point in

time, but I just want to make sure that the record is clear on that.

A I have no recollection of reviewing the transcripts.

Q Okay.

A To the best of my recollection, I heard about these Sunday talk shows during this email chain.

Q Okay. And so when you say the first you heard that she was on the Sunday shows, would that have been at this 2:02 p.m. email from [REDACTED] ?

A To the best of my recollection, yes.

Q Okay. And moving up two emails in that thread, and this was the email you were asked about again in the last hour, where you write, quote, "I think Rice was off the reservation on this one," that comment, you were asked about the basis of what the reference was for that comment. And I guess what I was hoping to understand is, well, first, there seems to be a little bit of confusion in the last round as to which set of press guidance you were referring to when you made that specific comment?

A Well, I mean, I would have objected to a declaration one way or another about whether it was spontaneous or planned, because we didn't have enough information to make that determination. I also didn't think there had been demonstrations, and so I would have, again, objected to that characterization.

Q Okay. And just so that we can follow you with those comments, are you referring to the NEA press guidance, the draft that appears at the back of this exhibit, or are you referring to what's referred to as the, quote, "NSS language," unquote. Page two.

A So I'm right now referring to the email from [REDACTED] at 12:36 p.m. that says, this is the most recent. "Just saw NSS language, which I

used as the key points here. NEA press guidance." And then it lists these points.

Q Okay. And I guess part of the reason for my confusion is I heard you just a moment ago refer to planning or preplanning. And I'm not sure I see information as to preplanning in those particular points, but I do see those in the earlier press guidance, which is on the last page or page four.

Ms. Safai. Can you repeat your -- what's the question?

BY MR. KENNY:

Q So I'm just trying to isolate your concerns. So you said you think that the concerns that you expressed in the last round were in reference to [REDACTED] email at 12:36, the key points email. But I thought I heard you just a moment ago say that --

A That's right. I mean that -- I mean, I would -- I don't recall my exact thought process on that day, but normally I would not go and read the whole chain. If my press folks told me this is the most recent guidance, please review this, then the most efficient thing for me to do would be to review that most recent guidance and respond to that. So it was a very, very busy and intense day, and I'm sure that I would have done, you know, what I needed to do to be accurate, but I doubt that I would have gone through and read closely the long chain of press guidance below that.

Q Okay. Well, that's helpful.

And I believe you were asked also in the last round whether press guidance of this sort would be the sort of thing that you would be asked to weigh in on or provide comment or feedback on. Just to help contextualize this for us, can you recall in this time period some of the other activities you were undertaking within

NEA-MAG, perhaps a support post or otherwise, other activities that you were working on to support post.

A Sure. Sure. I mean, press guidance was often a daily action, but it was never the thing that I spent most of my time on. During this period, we had our colleagues who had been evacuated to Germany and they were going through a very difficult time there.

We had our colleagues who were still in Tripoli, and they were dealing with a lot of concerns there about whether there might be threats to them. They had to abandon one of their compounds, and they had lost Ambassador Stevens, of course, and so they were really dealing with very difficult circumstances.

Within NEA-MAG writ large, our Embassy in Tunis had been subject to an attack the previous week as well, and the American school right next to the embassy had been burned down, and so we had people who were evacuated from Tunis as well. They were also with our colleagues in Germany at that point.

It was a very, very difficult time in NEA writ large, and certainly for those of us who had worked very closely with Ambassador Stevens. It was also a time when we were all grieving for him.

Q Thank you. I think that's helpful for us to understand some of the other activities that you and your office were undertaking during this time period.

I think part of the other reason that I hope to ask that question is you had defined your role as the Libyan desk officer within NEA-MAG, and I was hoping that we could just take a step back and you could just explain for us what a desk officer does on a day-to-day basis at the State Department?

A Sure. So on the desk, you're really the focal point where all of the information related to the range in policies used with the post comes together

within the Department. So we would try to support post in whatever they needed, make sure that felt like their voice was part of meetings within Washington about the policy issues.

We relayed information back from the range of offices within the Department that would work on the small piece of our Libya policy, but it would be at our desk that those pieces all came together.

So, you know, we also would support our colleagues from post, particularly the ambassador, the deputy chief of mission, when they were back in Washington for consultations. We would brief people who were going out to serve at post. We were very involved in the confirmation process for Ambassador Stevens, so helping him prepare for his hearing.

So we really were where all the different information and the many aspects of our policy related to Libya would come together.

Q Okay. And was that a shared role? In other words, was there another Libya desk officer or a person who could have stepped in to help support if the portfolio became too much for one person to manage?

A So when I started on the desk, there was just one desk officer. We then found some temporary support and were up to three desk officers by the end of the first year and then we went down to two officers moving forward. I understand it is bigger now.

But it was a very, very busy desk. It required long hours, and it was, I think, one of those places where the workload had increased tremendously but our staffing hadn't increased rapidly enough to accommodate that increase in workload.

Q Sure. And you mentioned when you started, just as a bit of

housekeeping, when did you serve -- when did you become the Libya desk officer, and when did you move off that position?

A So I started in July 2011. I officially left the position in July of 2013. Starting from January 2013 until about July 2013, I was also acting deputy director for the Maghreb office when our office director went out to be charge d'affaires in Tripoli and our deputy director became acting director.

Q Okay. And returning to the discussion we were just having about how busy the portfolio was, can you just give us a sense of how that worked, I guess, explain for us at the working level how that portfolio would be carved out or how responsibilities would be shared among the various desk officers?

A So I don't really remember how we divvied up work between myself and the other desk officer, but, you know, we generally had so much work that whoever was not working on something urgent at a time would do the other task at hand. So whether it was writing info memos to the Secretary, whether it was preparing call sheets for people to engage with Libyan officials, whether we were, you know, briefing people who were heading out to post, whatever it was that needed to be done, we would find a way to do it.

Q Okay. That's helpful.

And you mentioned a few moments ago that -- some of the various folks or actors you'd have contact with, I thought. And I just wondered if you had a primary point of contact, either at Embassy Tripoli or the Special Mission?

A So I would have been in regular contact with the deputy chief of mission, with the polycom chief. Those would have been my two primary points of contact. I'd also been in very regular contact with Ambassador Stevens when he was a Special Representative out in Benghazi and certainly through his

confirmation process. But I tried to respect his role as ambassador and not email him often but try to get the work done at the more working level where possible.

Q Okay. And you were asked a little earlier about your interaction with ██████████ in DS/IP/NEA, and I'd just like to ask if on a routine basis or regular basis you would interact with other professionals in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, whether at post or back at Main State?

A So when overseas, in general, we interact with the regional security officer very, very frequently, depending on the circumstances. On the Libya desk, I did not interact with DS representatives often, and I think that ██████████ was the only -- my only regular contact in DS.

Q Okay. And how generally would you describe your working relationship with him or with the bureau, writ large?

A My relationship with him was good, but it was very much very specific questions that I would answer, specifically, as I mentioned earlier, about visas. So when DS agents needed visas, they would contact me for that. It was rare that we would work on other things, but it happened on occasion.

Q Okay. And how often did you work or interact with personnel in NEA-EX, NEA-SCA/EX?

A I worked regularly with personnel --

Q Okay.

A Sure. I worked regularly with personnel in NEA-EX as they were in charge of the resources and management operations.

Q Okay. And if we could just talk, because you have longevity in your position and at your post, but during your time as the Libya desk officer, how would you generally characterize the support that they provided to you?

A So they wouldn't have been providing support to me. They would be providing support to post. So we were -- you know, we were counterparts where I covered policy issues and are they would cover resource issues for the post. There would be areas where those would overlap, obviously, so we would work -- we would try to work closely together on those areas.

Q Okay. No, I appreciate the distinction.

Perhaps I could ask it, did you have an assessment of the support that they provided to post? How did you view the support that they provided to post?

A You know, I think that we were all working under very strange circumstances in that it was a post that was in constant flux. And so I know they worked very hard to provide the resources that were required, given that there were changing circumstances on the ground.

Most of the State Department's staffing patterns and resource patterns are all planned out far in advance of any particular date. So it really was very unusual that they would be having to staff up a place that hadn't had anybody previously or tried to send people back to reopen a mission.

And I would also note that NEA writ large was going through a time of a lot of change with the Arab Spring and related turmoil across the region. So our NEA-EX colleagues were really dealing with a whole range of very difficult issues at the same time.

Q Okay. And just, as a general matter, what is your understanding of NEA's role with respect to providing security resources at post?

A I would think that that was Diplomatic Security's role in providing security resources at post.

Q Okay.

A But it certainly wasn't something that I was directly involved with.

Q Okay. To your knowledge, does NEA have -- or at this time did they have specialized knowledge or expertise on securing and protecting facilities and personnel?

A NEA would not have had that expertise, no.

Q Okay. And where would that expertise have resided within the Department?

A That would have been with Diplomatic Security, and so we would rely on their expertise for those issues.

Q Okay. At this point, we're going to shift gears a little bit, and I'm going to introduce into the record what I'll mark as exhibit 7.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 7

Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q And this is an email that's dated February 9, 2012, from you to [REDACTED], and the document number is C05390170. Let me know if you have any luck finding that. And, again, it's February 9, 2012.

A If you can provide the date again.

Mr. Snyder. It's February 9, 2012.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q And we were just informed, it's also number six in, it looks like, the index that the majority provided to you.

A Oh. Okay.

Q I apologize in advance that we didn't also provide an index, but --

A No, I have the email. Thank you.

Q Okay. And I'll give you just a moment to review that. Let me know when you're ready.

A Okay.

Q Okay. And I'll direct you to the first chain in the email, which is the bottom of page one. This embedded email, it's also a February 9 email, in which [REDACTED] writes to [REDACTED], and she includes what appears to be a draft email. There's a cover and then some hashmarks and it appears to be some texts below that.

And I'd first just like to ask what your understanding of this email is?

A So, you know, as you can tell, this isn't my email. Reading through it and, you know, per a very vague recollection, this would have been something that [REDACTED] was drafting for [REDACTED] to send to our assistant secretary to use, to email to our under secretary for management. Because we were having difficulty getting the staffing levels up in some of our posts.

Q Okay. And our understanding, just based on our review of this document, is that the hashmarks, what appears below there is that draft note. Is that your understanding as well?

A That would be my understanding, yes.

Q Okay. So I'd like to just read into the record that first portion below the hashmarks. And it reads, quote, "We determined early on that it was important to us to maintain a presence in Benghazi to engage with the TNC and keep an eye on political and security developments in the east.

"The Mission in Benghazi has also allowed PM and USAID to conduct periodic TDYs in the east to further develop their contacts and monitor progress on our MANPADs, elections, and civil society assistance programs. The simmering

protests in Benghazi and the east against the TNC and local councils over the last few weeks, (along with the violent unrest in Bani Wali in the west), have shaken the interim government and illustrated the importance of maintaining a broad base of contacts and visibility outside of Tripoli," closed quote.

And I'll just preface this next set of questions by saying that there have been some lingering questions about the purpose of the U.S. Government's presence in Benghazi. So I just wanted to at this point take a little bit of time and walk through some of the reasons and the justifications that are listed here.

And I'd first just like to begin by asking if you could explain for us why it would've been important to maintain engagement with the TNC in Benghazi?

A Well, we at the time thought that what was happening in Benghazi was very important to what was happening in the country writ large, and so having a presence there meant that we could maintain these contacts with the Transitional National Council and with a variety of other actors there so that we could better understand and also effect developments in the country writ large.

Q Okay. And we understand that at some point the TNC may have moved its base of operations from Benghazi to Tripoli. Was it your understanding that some of those TNC members would have still resided or come from Eastern Libya?

A That's right. I mean, many of them would have moved as soon as they could when Tripoli, you know -- when Qadhafi was ousted from Tripoli. But some of them did reside in the east, and certainly our people in Libya thought that it was important that we have a presence there.

Q Okay. And just moving down to a next reference in the paragraph that I read to you, can you just explain for us why it would've been important to

keep an eye on political and security developments in the east?

A Well, there are a lot of things that were changing, and we knew that the government in Tripoli didn't have full control over the country such that the only real way to know what was happening in the east would be to have somebody there who could engage with the local communities, who could engage with people from a broad range of civil society and politicians to understand how things were developing there. And to be part of a process that, you know, led to support for general nationwide elections, which occurred later that year.

Q Okay. And so when you referred to the nationwide elections, would that have been one of the potential political developments that it would've been important for the U.S. to monitor?

A That's right.

Q Okay. And moving down through the email, can you explain for us why it may have been important for the State Department to monitor its Pol-Mil operations in Eastern Libya?

A Yes. Pol-Mil was actually present very early on when we were able to have a presence in Benghazi because they were very concerned about the possibility that MANPADs, so this is shoulder-operated missiles that can take down airplanes, which Qadhafi had very, very high stockpiles of, I think the highest in the world for a country that didn't actually produce them.

They were very concerned that these stockpiles would become available on the open and black market and available to people seeking to use them against -- basically for terrorist purposes, including against the U.S. national interests. So they had a program in place to try to identify stockpiles and disable stockpiles of MANPADs from very early on in our presence in Benghazi, following

the start of the uprising against Qadhafi. So they had a very active program.

Q Okay. And there's also a reference here to USAID programs. Can you just explain for us why it was important for the State Department to monitor those programs?

A Well, we felt those programs are very important in helping a society that had had basically no free expression and no civil society and no free press and no elections of any kind for decades, transition toward a more Democratic and free place.

So we had -- you know, it happened almost immediately as Qadhafi would be pushed out of an area -- or was forced to be pushed out of an area, these small civil society groups would start and USAID was very active in helping them and helping them understand what their role of civil society was, what the role of the press would be in a democracy dealing with very, very basic questions from people who had had literally no experience with that at all.

Q Okay. And just taking a step back from our discussion of some of these specific pieces, we've seen some discussion about maintaining a physical presence in Benghazi at one point in time versus what was referred to as a, quote, "virtual presence," which we understand to mean no physical presence in Benghazi but operating from Tripoli as a base of operations.

And in light of some of these specific programs that we discussed or projects, can you explain for us how a physical presence would have helped further those priorities?

A Well, with a visible presence you can maintain regular contact with a range of people that you need to contact. You can then more easily support visitors going into an environment because you have people on the ground who

understand what's going on there.

I really deferred to my colleagues who were in Libya on these issues. So, you know, we really took our direction from them, from Ambassador Stevens -- he wasn't ambassador yet at this time but he, you know, had recently been the Special Representative and had a lot of contacts in Benghazi -- and then also our colleagues, Ambassador Cretz, and our other colleagues who were in Tripoli at the time.

Q And do you recall what then-Special Envoy Stevens, later Ambassador Stevens, what his views were about maintaining a U.S. presence in Benghazi?

A Yes. Ambassador Stevens felt strongly that it was important to have a U.S. presence in Benghazi.

Q And what about Ambassador Cretz?

A I believe he also supported maintaining a presence there.

Q And you mentioned a moment ago that you may have deferred on some of the decisions, but I'd just like to ask whether you had a personal view on the importance of having a presence in Benghazi?

A My personal view is that the more engagement we can do, the better we're able to do to develop and implement good policy. So my personal view at the time, although it was not asked really, because we were very clear from people who had much more on the ground expertise was that it was a good idea to maintain a presence in Benghazi.

Q And when you say it was clear from people with on-the-ground expertise, can you just explain to us what you mean by that?

A I just mean Ambassador Stevens --

Q Okay.

A -- saying to us that he thought it was a good idea to maintain a presence there.

Q Sure. Okay.

We'd like to return just briefly to the draft email that we were discussing. This is in exhibit 7, the top of page 2. I'll just read the next paragraph. It begins, quote, "Unfortunately DS staffing is becoming a recurring problem in Benghazi. At the current security threat level, Benghazi needs a minimum of four agents to support moves out of town, three to accompany the principal officer, or TDY officer, and one to remain on compound with the IRM management person.

"Post needs a minimum of three agents to facilitate one movement at a time in town and one to remain on the compound. DS staffing has dropped to two agents several times over the last few months between rotations, which has prevented the PO from leaving the compound."

And I'd just first like to ask whether you agreed with this assessment that the staffing of DS agents in Benghazi had become a, quote, "recurring problem," closed quote.

A I did agree that we had difficulty adequately staffing DS agents based on what DS determined was required for security to support movements off compound.

Q Okay. And there is a mention of that. It refers to what is a PO, is the abbreviation. Is that principal officer?

A That's right.

Q Okay. And that person would have been the senior diplomat present at the facility?

A That's right. I believe at this time we would have just had two people apart from the DS agents, so a senior -- a principal officer and then the IRM management person.

Q And if Diplomatic Security wasn't able to support movements off compound or around town, why was that a concern?

A Because that limited our ability to make use of our officer who was out there serving as the diplomat. It limited our ability to engage with people effectively.

Q Okay. You'll see in the next discussion, if you continue on, that Ms. [REDACTED] in the draft includes a discussion about the minimum number of DS agents, or in what we just discussed. Did you have an understanding of where that recommendation came -- would have come from? Would that have been something that would have come from post, for instance?

A That would have come from Diplomatic Security. I don't know if it would've been from the RSO at post or from Diplomatic Security in Washington, but that would have been determined completely by DS security, as far as I know.

Q Okay. So you don't have any reason to believe that [REDACTED] [REDACTED], for instance, was generating the list of requirements of DS agents at the special mission?

A I'm certain that she was not generating a list of requirements for the DS agents.

Q Okay. And that's because that wouldn't have been the role of NEA-MAG to assess and come up with security requirements for a post?

A That would not have been the role of NEA-MAG to determine those requirements.

Q Okay. The email continues in that third paragraph on the second page, quote, "DS tells post it is unlikely they can fully staff Benghazi due to broader staffing challenges across NEA and has suggested we adjust our expectations about movements in outreach," closed quote.

We touched on it a little bit earlier, but what do you remember about these discussions about security staffing challenges at this point in time?

A So I actually don't recall where this information would have come from. It's also not something I wrote. It is consistent with my understanding that it was very difficult to get DS agents -- sufficient numbers of DS agents to post.

They couldn't find -- you know, normally, in a normal mission, [REDACTED], we have people who are permanently assigned for tours of 2 or 3 years, in some places 4 years. And because the Benghazi positions were all unexpected within our staffing patterns, DS was finding 4-week TDYers to fulfill those roles, which is why there would be gaps. She mentions that there are gaps between the TDYers. So that made it very difficult to have continuity over time with people there.

Q Okay. So was the issue a continuity issue, or was it one of never actually attaining the minimum required number of DS agents at post, for instance? The way I understand you is that --

A So from our perspective -- sure. From our perspective, it was that the people on the ground weren't able to do the outreach they wanted to do because the DS wasn't staffing the numbers that they had determined were required for people to move off compound.

Q Okay. And was your understanding that that was due to some sort of resource constraint on the part of DS?

A That was my understanding, but I didn't have any real insight into why that was or how, you know, Benghazi stacked up against other posts that had important security needs as well.

Q Okay. If I could direct your attention back to the first page of exhibit 7. In the email above the hashmarks from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED], she writes, quote, "[REDACTED] let me know if this works and whether you want to consult with [REDACTED] or EX before sending this to the FO," closed quote.

Does FO here refer to the NEA front office?

A That would be my understanding, yes.

Q Okay. And you mentioned earlier that that would have been the acting assistant secretary? I don't know if she was -- if it was Ambassador Jones at this point in time, or I believe it was still Jeff Feltman. Is that your recollection as well?

A I believe, in February 2012, it would've been Assistant Secretary Feltman.

Q Okay. Do you know whether this draft note was ever sent to Assistant Secretary Feltman?

[10:24 a.m.]

Ms. [REDACTED]. I honestly don't know.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Okay. Do you know if the NEA front office had discussions with the M Bureau about the matters discussed here?

A I have no information about that.

Q Okay. Do you recall any other steps that were undertaken in this timeframe to address some of the concerns in this email? For instance, whether Deputy Chief of Mission [REDACTED] may have had meetings, whether Chris Stevens would have had meetings, or whether Ambassador Cretz would have had meetings with anyone back at Main State?

A I'm sure that they had meetings, and I would imagine that they would have raised this, but I don't recollect anything specific.

Q Okay. And just to close out this piece, and I apologize for jumping around, but at the bottom of the second page there is a reference to -- the second-to-last sentence in the last paragraph, bottom of page 2 -- about if there being no recourse, some sort of reconsideration about whether they're keeping the mission going. And do you recall whether that conversation took place?

A I have no recollection of a serious conversation about closing the mission in Benghazi.

Q Okay. We'll stay in the same document, but shift a little bit and move up to the email that you wrote at the top of page 1. You wrote to [REDACTED], quote, "Also the Secretary asked last week if we still have a presence in Benghazi -- I think she would be upset to hear that yes we do but because we don't have enough security they are on lockdown," close quote.

First, I'd just like to ask, in that first sentence you refer to a question that the Secretary asked. Did you hear that directly from Secretary Clinton?

A I did not hear that directly from Secretary Clinton.

Q Okay. And how did you hear that she had asked this question?

A It was a secondhand or thirdhand comment forwarded or told to me, and I at this point can't remember how I heard it.

Q Okay. And when you heard or learned that the Secretary had asked if we have a, in your language here, "if we still have a presence in Benghazi," what did you understand that to mean? What did you understand her question to mean?

A There had been some discussion when we moved our -- many of our operations to Tripoli whether we should maintain a presence in Benghazi. Some of our international partners were moving everybody to Tripoli. Some were maintaining a presence. So there had been some discussion. So I -- and, again, I don't remember the details of how this was related to me. When I had heard that that might have -- that the Secretary might have asked about it, I would have thought that she was just confirming whether or not we had still maintained an active presence in Benghazi.

Q And in the second part, when you said that the Secretary would be upset to hear that due to inadequate security resources post was on lockdown, just when you refer to lockdown is that a reference similar to what we were discussing below about without the adequate number of DS agents that the principal officer would not be able to make off-compound movements?

A The lockdown is shorthand for being required to stay on compound. In most circumstances you would use it because of a security threat that made

people determine that it was safer to be on the compound than off the compound. In this case it was resulting from not having adequate DS agents on the ground that DS had determined was adequate to allow for movements off compound.

Q So a little while ago I had asked you why it was important to have a physical presence, why it was important for a principal officer to be able to report and travel around town. I'd just like to ask, what did you mean when you said that Secretary Clinton would be upset about this -- learning this particular fact?

A So I believe that Secretary Clinton thought that the work we were doing in Libya was important and that she would have not been pleased to hear that we didn't have the resources in place to do that work.

Q Okay. And when you say you thought that the Secretary thought that the work that was being done in Libya was important, what gave you that impression?

A I mean, she had been very active in Libya. She had visited there. She had done a lot of work on the policy. And I believed her when she said it was important for U.S. national interests.

Q Okay. But the reason I ask some of these questions is this email in particular has become a little bit of political fodder. Secretary Clinton was asked about it during the Select Committee's October 22 hearing as possible evidence that she didn't care about Libya, and in particular Benghazi, after Qadhafi fell.

To your knowledge, was Secretary Clinton engaged on Libya matters? And we'll start with the 2011 timeframe, from when you became the Libya desk officer?

A Yes, Secretary Clinton was engaged on Libya.

Q Okay. And did that, your sense of her engagement, her level of

engagement, did that continue through 2012?

A Yes. From my perspective she maintained engaged on the developments in Libya.

Q Okay. So then in your view would you agree with the characterization that Secretary Clinton checked out on Libya in 2012?

A I would not agree with that.

Q Did she turn a blind eye to Libya in 2012?

A I would not agree with that.

Q Okay. And did she turn a blind eye to Benghazi in 2012?

A I would not agree with that statement either.

Q Okay. And if you would, could you just explain to us the basis for why you gave those responses?

A I felt it was clear that Libya had -- that Libya was a high-profile portfolio, that there were people on the seventh floor that were actively watching it. They were actively interested. They wanted to visit regularly. And I didn't see any change in that level of interest over time.

Q Okay. Did the Secretary ever say or do anything to suggest to you that she did not care about the Department's personnel in Libya?

A No.

Q Did she ever say or do anything that suggested she didn't care about personnel who were assigned to Benghazi?

A No.

Q And to the extent that some may have pointed to this email as evidence that Secretary Clinton did not know or did not care about Benghazi, at least after Qadhafi fell, do you think that that is an accurate or fair reading of what

you said or what you meant?

A I do not.

Ms. Sawyer. The pause is just us figuring out a couple more questions to ask before we take our next break, so that's all that's going on over here.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q We just have a few more minutes, and we obviously want to try to be as respectful of your time as possible.

If I could quickly redirect your attention to exhibit 1?

A Could you remind me what that was?

Q Yes, sure. It's No. 15 in the majority's index. It's [REDACTED], September 11, 2012.

A All right.

Q And the email that you write at 6:06 p.m., which we understand to be about 12 o'clock local time in Libya, again these are some of the main points that you were prepping for a call between the Secretary and the Libyan President-elect or Libyan President Magariaf. And the second point of this call is that, quote, "We need help in Benghazi -- Ambassador Stevens is still missing," close quote.

And I just would like to ask for your understanding, since you were in the Operations Center on the night of the attacks, whether your sense was that Benghazi was somehow not a priority; in other words, that the priority was Tripoli and not Benghazi?

A My sense from working on this in the State Department during the attacks was that everyone was trying to get whatever resources we could get to help our people in Benghazi. It was absolutely a focus on Benghazi.

Q And just moving real briefly to exhibit 3, this is the email from

██████████ to Ben Fishman, No. 17 in the exhibit list.

A Yes.

Q And what I'd just like to ask for your understanding, again being in the Operations Center, and you had indicated earlier that you had some contact with Ben Fishman, a country director, at the NSS, here in this email it appears that Ben Fishman makes a recommendation for some outreach that could be done to help expedite some help in Libya. Is that your understanding as well?

A So this is a conversation that was mostly -- you know, I had very little recollection of this particular email when I reviewed it. But, yes, upon reviewing it I believe that Ben Fishman was also trying to figure out who we could contact who could get help as fast as possible to Benghazi. And so I believe that the idea would have been that the Qataris could have had some connection to groups within the Benghazi area that could have come to our assistance.

Q And so when you had mentioned earlier or characterized the response within the Operations Center as everybody trying to do everything possible, would that have extended as well to the partners in the interagency, to include the White House national security staff?

A That would absolutely have extended to anybody that I had ever worked with on Libya.

Q Okay.

A We had all worked really closely with Chris Stevens. You know, he was both a really valued colleague and a valued friend just because of the way that he interacted with anyone that he worked with. He made friends out of all of his colleagues. And everyone was trying to do everything that we could do to get help.

Mr. Kenny. And I see with that our time is up, and so we'll go off the record. Thank you.

[Recess.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Okay, Ms. [REDACTED], we are going to start with our next and final round with you for the next 25 minutes or so. I want to return to exhibit 7 and ask you a few more questions about that, and in particular the first line that you wrote where you say, and I quote, "Also, the Secretary asked last week if we still had a presence in Benghazi."

You said that you didn't have a specific recollection of who said that to you, but can you tell us anything about the context in which you received that? Because it's, quite frankly, a very declarative statement.

A I really don't recall who conveyed it to me.

Q Would it have been someone --

A I don't recall the context. But it was not conveyed to me in a sense of surprise. It was very matter of fact -- very matter of fact question.

Q And it came from someone who you believe they were accurately relaying information to you?

A I really apologize that I can't remember who told me it, but as far as I can recall it was someone who I thought would be relaying something accurate.

Q Because obviously you wouldn't further report it if you didn't think it was an accurate recitation of what the Secretary had said?

A I mean, we are always interested in what the boss' boss' boss' boss' et cetera thinks about things. So information like this is not always accurate, but I did believe it at the time when I wrote that.

Q Okay. So you believed it accurate at the time that you wrote it?

A Yes.

Q You were asked a lot of questions in the last hour about your belief that the Secretary maintained a high level of interest in Libya throughout 2012, but you weren't asked the basis for that knowledge, and so I want to take a few minutes and explore your personal basis for that assessment.

In the year 2012, how often would you personally be in a meeting with the Secretary?

A I don't think I was ever in a meeting -- that's not true. I don't recall exactly, but it would not have been very frequent.

Q Okay. And would that have been perhaps one, maybe two times throughout that entire period of 2012? Or I'm just trying to gauge what you mean by it would not be frequent.

A It's not frequent that desk officers are in meetings with the Secretary in general at the State Department. I should also note that in 2012 I was on leave from March 29 until late July, so I was not actually on the desk or working during that time.

Q So during that time period you would have no way of assessing at all the level of interest by the Secretary. Is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q Can you describe your personal involvement in either attending meetings or briefing the Secretary's senior staff regarding issues pertaining to Libya in 2012?

A So, again, given the hierarchy and the operations in the State Department, it would be rare that a desk officer would be in meetings like that.

Usually it would be more senior people who would be doing those kinds of briefings.

Q Okay. So you then don't have any firsthand personal knowledge of the level of involvement of the Secretary's senior staff in the period of 2012.

Would that be a fair assessment?

A So I don't recall specific incidences that I can point to you easily, but when you are working on an issue at the State Department you often have a pretty good sense for whether it's something that someone cares about on the seventh floor or not. And that's true in terms of what kinds of questions get down -- get reported down to you, what kind of briefings are asked, whether they make trips, whether they have senior -- other senior officials do trips.

There is a way to tell when the seventh floor is interested in an issue, and I had always felt from the moment I started on the desk that there was a high-level interest from senior people of the Department.

Q And who would you get that information from? Would that be something that you would learn through [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] or others?

A Questions? So there's also the SP staff, the Secretary's policy planning staff. They would ask questions. The P staff, so our under secretary for political affairs. Our deputy secretary's staff, they would ask questions. I would get those directly to me. And then I would also hear questions that were filtered through our assistant secretary, and they would be filtered down as well. And occasionally we would have -- you know, we always had a weekly all-hands meeting with the assistant secretary, and in those meetings it also seemed quite clear that our assistant secretary was asked a lot of regular questions about what

was happening in Libya and that there was a high level of interest.

Q Okay. Did you brief any of those, the under secretary for P or the policy people in the Secretary's staff, did you brief any of those individuals?

A I was in very, very regular contact with their staff. So they would have one person who would cover NEA, and I would be in very close contact with that person.

Q And who was that person on the policy side?

A So, for instance, for our deputy secretary, that would have been [REDACTED]. People changed over time. There's one person in each school year, I suppose would be the way to say it, but those people are all people that I worked with very closely.

Q And one last sort of area to explore on the February 9th email is the crux of that email is the problems with staffing on security measures in Benghazi. And what we're really trying to understand is, if Libya was so important within the State Department, why was security such a problem? And that's the crux of what this committee is looking for, is that if, as you've described, Libya was different, you know, why wasn't its security posture correspondingly different?

Mr. Kenny. And just to be clear, this email refers to Benghazi. And I think your question --

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Benghazi. Yeah.

A I guess I would have two responses to that question. The first is that this was not about whether or not we had adequate security per se, but whether we had adequate staffing per what the security professionals said was necessary to do off-compound movements. So this was not a discussion about

we don't have enough people to be safe there. It was a discussion about do we have the security, the Diplomatic Security, that was required in order for us to do off-compound movements which we think are important.

The second thing is, the problem with -- the staffing writ large is a really complicated issue, and unfortunately the State Department is not very flexible about how they move people around quickly. And this was a time of very high -- a lot of dangerous places within NEA. So I think that was what was related to having it be so difficult in getting the people that Diplomatic Security said was needed in order for us to do these movements.

Q I want to just go back to something that -- to the first part of your answer to that. Isn't having a sufficient number of Diplomatic Security agents to move with a principal officer off compound part of the security? I mean, doesn't security encompass both the physical security of the grounds and the personal security of the people who are there?

A So I would respond by saying that in response to that level, the people -- the personal security was provided by maintaining and by requiring those people to be on the compound. This is not something that I'm an expert in in any way, this is just what Diplomatic Security said was necessary. Which is to say that this was not a conversation about us not having enough security. It was a conversation about the Diplomatic Security saying that we shouldn't do the type of off-compound movements that we wanted to do.

Q So how were you going to achieve the political reporting if you couldn't move off compound?

A Well, that's certainly what we were saying in this or what [REDACTED] was proposing that [REDACTED] say. That was a frustration from the policy side.

Q I want to move to one last exhibit in my remaining minutes, and it's item No. 14 in the stack that we sent. It's an August 17 information memo to the Secretary. And we're going to mark this as exhibit 8.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 8

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q And I would note that the version that we sent to you, although marked confidential, has been reviewed by a classification authority, and it is now, the version that we're going to talk about, is redacted and releasable for public release. It bears document No. C05390124.

A Yes, I see it. I have it.

Q Okay. Let me first ask, Ms. [REDACTED], did you have any part in drafting this memo?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And would you describe your role in drafting this memo? Who tasked you with doing it, what information you used to draft it, and what was its purpose.

A I don't recall whether this was a memo where we were requested to do an info memo or whether it was something that we in NEA decided to do. Both would have been very, very possible in the circumstance.

So normally I would do the first draft. I would share it with some colleagues within the State Department for their input. And then it would be paired up through my chain of command to my deputy director, my office director, our deputy assistant secretary, our principal assistant secretary, and then from acting Assistant Secretary Beth Jones, to who it came from, it was sent from, to

the Secretary.

Q Okay. And do you recall who within NEA tasked you with drafting this memo?

A So I have a vague recollection, but I do recall discussing it with our -- with my office director, [REDACTED].

Q Okay. And do you recall what information you used to talk about, to write about the overall security situation and the uptick in violence? Were you relying on cables from post? Were you in contact with people on the ground in Benghazi? Where were you accumulating the information that you used as the basis of this memo?

A So I would have used a range of sources normally, and I would imagine with this as well. I would have used reporting from post, potentially conversations from post, open source reporting, you know, whatever sources there were in order to get the most accurate information into this memo.

Q And, again, I just want to clarify, what was the purpose of this memo? Why was there a need to write a memo like this?

A So when there is something happening that seems significant that we want to make sure our principals have a full picture of we would write an info memo about those to get past sort of the things that they might see in other smaller reports. So that would be the purpose, to provide information about a changing -- a change or something that was happening within Libya.

Q Just circling back a minute, you said earlier that you were on leave until July sometime of 2012. When was it in July that you returned?

A I believe it was the third week of July.

Q So you'd been back about 30 days at the time?

A I don't have the exact date with me.

Q So you would have been back approximately 3 to 4 weeks at the time you're drafting this memo and it goes up to the Secretary?

A That's right.

Q You've described before that it was your personal assessment that the Secretary was involved in and maintained her level of involvement in Libya, so it kind of begs the question as to why you would have to write a memo like this if the Secretary has maintained a high level of visibility and engagement in Libya.

A I guess I would disagree with the premise of that question. I think it is -- I think, in fact, it is when we think the Secretary is particularly interested in a topic that we tend to write these kinds of memos.

So it was a complicated situation. What was causing the increase in the violence? How important was it? Was it something that was going to lead to anything in general or not? So it was a topic that warranted this kind of more in-depth report than you might get if you're just looking at spot reports or one-off reports on information.

Q Do you recall whether or not you reviewed a particular cable that had been written on or about August 8 that was subtitled "The Guns of August"?

A I'm sure -- I do recall reviewing that cable.

Q And did you use the information in that cable in any way to form the basis for the information that was in here?

A I don't recall my exact process, but I certainly would expect that, yes, I did.

Q There was another cable, a Benghazi EAC, that was issued on August 16th of that day. Do you remember if you saw that cable?

A I don't remember if I saw that cable.

Q You recognize now the cable I'm referring to? You remember a cable on August 16th?

A I believe I reviewed it. I believe I reviewed it in the preparation for this meeting. I believe it was captioned HIPDA (phonetic), which might not have been something that would have gone to me.

Q So today you don't have a recollection of whether or not you saw that cable at the time it was issued?

A That's right. I don't think that I did, but I can't recall.

Q Was there any discussion within NEA in the drafting and issuing of this information memo for the Secretary, was there any discussion regarding closing or suspending operations in Benghazi?

A I don't recall any such discussion.

Q Were you aware of whether now Ambassador Stevens was considering closing Benghazi because of the uptick in violence?

A No, I don't. In fact, to the contrary, I think Ambassador Stevens was working with us to try to come up with a policy case for establishing a more permanent presence in Benghazi.

Q Was that the purpose of his trip?

A I don't think so, but it may have been something he was thinking about, but I don't recall that being stated as a reason for his trip there.

Q Were you aware that the Secretary was planning another trip to Libya in the fall of 2012?

A I don't think that I was aware of that, but I'm not surprised or I wouldn't have been surprised if she had been. I don't recall it specifically, though.

Q You've described that you would have conversations with Envoy Stevens and then later Ambassador Stevens. Did he ever express to you his concerns over security, particularly in Benghazi?

A He did not.

Q At no time did he discuss security with you?

A I do not recall him discussing concerns about security in Benghazi during this timeframe.

Q It seemed that you emphasized the word "concerns." Did he discuss security generally with you or did I just misread your answer?

A Well, I thought you had shifted the question to include, you know, general security. I mean, he may -- I don't recall during this time period a conversation with him about security in Benghazi. He was in Benghazi the previous year, and I don't have any specific recollection right now of something that was specifically about security then, but there may well have been discussions about various security issues.

Q Were you aware that Ambassador Stevens was going to travel to Benghazi in September of 2012?

A Yes.

Q And what did you understand was the purpose of his trip?

A Partly it was because we had a gap in coverage in Benghazi because we also were having difficulty getting permanent people there to cover the principal officer role. I knew that he wanted to go back there. He had spent a lot of time there in the previous year but hadn't been back since becoming Ambassador, as I recall. And so he was interested in reconnecting with a number of his contacts there as well. That's my understanding.

Q Did you know or have any understanding that he wanted to keep his trip low profile and not have it published or have publicity about it?

A That generally would have been something that the security professionals would be -- would recommend. So I'm not surprised to hear that, but I don't recall it being a particular issue that we discussed.

Q Is it your experience as a foreign service officer that when an ambassador travels, that he or she will have a higher level of security protection than, say, yourself as a foreign service officer or any other type of political econ reporting officer?

A It really depends from place to place, but I would say generally that would be more common than not certainly. So I would say more generally yes, an ambassador would likely have more security than a working-level person.

Q And then returning to the information memo that was sent to the Secretary, what happened after that? Were there any meetings convened? Was security discussed among NEA and DS or at higher levels in the State Department? What happened as a result of that memo?

A So we wrote this memo as a policy memo in the sense of we were talking about security with regards to our policy work rather than talking about security with regards to our specific missions there. I am not aware of conversations or I don't recall conversations that resulted immediately following this memo regarding security for our missions in Libya.

Q In my last minute or 2, can you describe when an information memo like this goes up to the Secretary, does it go -- does it also get disseminated to other members of her senior staff?

A I think so, but I don't know exactly as to how it's distributed.

Ms. Jackson. I'm out of time, right? Yeah, okay.

Well, I am out of time with my questions, Ms. [REDACTED]. Thank you very much for your patience with us today and answering our questions today. And hopefully we will have you out of here soon. And we'll go off the record for just a minute as we change seats.

[Discussion off the record.]

Ms. Sawyer. We're going to go back on the record. We're certainly hopeful that we will not need our full half hour and that we can finish up with just some few remaining questions and let you go home after a long day. But thank you again for your patience.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Could I make one more statement that's related to the last discussion we just had?

Mr. Kenny. Please.

Ms. Safai. [REDACTED], do you want to --

Ms. [REDACTED]. I'd just like to --

Ms. Safai. Go ahead.

Ms. [REDACTED]. That's okay. I'd just like to note that, you know, I had served in Iraq from 2006 to 2007, and I had also served in Saudi Arabia in our consulate in Dhahran soon after our consulate in Jeddah was attacked, where we had several local staff killed. When I was in Iraq, we were under regular threat of rocket fire. We slept in containers that didn't have hard cover, so we were really vulnerable to the rocket fire that was happening regularly the year I was there.

Which is just to say that people working in the State Department, and particularly in NEA at this time, just had a lot of experience with being in places that were clearly not very safe places, but thinking that it was important for U.S.

national interests and for our long-term security goals to do the work that we were doing. So we had a level of familiarity with being in very risky situations. That's all.

Mr. Kenny. Thank you. That is a helpful clarification.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Ms. [REDACTED], also returning to where the discussion left off in the last hour, I'm going to refer to you exhibit 8, which is the August 17th information memorandum. And you were asked just a few minutes ago about -- and I'll give you a second. Do you have the document ready?

A I do.

Q Okay. You were asked whether you had reviewed certain documents that had been disseminated in preparation of the drafting of this product. In particular you were asked about an August 15th Emergency Action Committee memorandum or cable. You were asked about a cable that was also written entitled "The Guns of August."

For those types of products, would those have been cleared in any way through post? So in other words, would Embassy Tripoli have had eyes on those particular documents, the August 15th EAC, "The Guns of August" memo, before they were reported back in?

A Yes, they would.

Q And I understand it's a bit circular question asking if Embassy Tripoli is aware of the fact that Embassy Tripoli or the Special Mission wrote in, but the reason I'm asking that question is we're trying to understand who at post would have had familiarity with the types of issues that would have been contained in

those documents. And I understand that you've reviewed some of those and we hadn't prepared or put any of those documents directly in front of you here today, but I did want to ask whether you recall that either of those two documents had been viewed or cleared by either the deputy of chief of mission in Tripoli or the Ambassador himself.

A I think that they certainly would have been reviewed by both the deputy chief of mission and the Ambassador, but I don't have any particular evidence that I'm thinking of. That would just be normal practice.

Q Okay. So to the extent that that applies in this situation, would your understanding then be that the Ambassador and the DCM had an awareness of the issues that were raised in those documents?

A Oh, yes, I would certainly think so.

Q Okay. And then moving to this particular document, it is an information memo. The "from" is NEA Acting Assistant Secretary Jones. Would this document have also been run through Embassy Tripoli to your knowledge?

A I just don't -- I don't remember. In theory, and this is something about the changing technology and how it affects our work, I think there's been a shift where in the past something like this would not have gone to Tripoli -- to the post, right. It would be a document produced in Washington for Washington. But since now so many things are so easily shared, we may well have shared it with post. And I would be -- I don't recall specifically, but I would expect that we had discussed it with post since we really considered them the experts on all this information.

Q Okay. And it's our understanding that the Emergency Action Committee process, that recommendations can come out of that process for

changes in the security posture at post or other types of security-related recommendations. Would the information memo that you see here in exhibit 8, would that also have been a similar vehicle whereby certain recommendations would have also been included?

A If there had been recommendations included we would have made it an action memo.

Q Okay. And perhaps you can help me understand.

A So as an information memo it only -- sorry.

Q No, please.

A As an information memo it would just be providing information. It is quite distinct from an Emergency Action Committee meeting, which is very deliberately about the security of the people in the mission and what steps need to be taken related to that.

Q Okay. And when you mentioned at the end of the last round that you viewed this document to be more of a policy document rather than a security-focused document on security resources, is that because the EAC, that cable, that process would have been the appropriate venue for those types of discussions?

A I don't know that there's causality there, but this is a document about the security issues -- or the security situation in the country rather than a document that talks about the security needs of our mission in the country. And I think of those as very distinct products, and I would be involved in the policy document, and I would be much less, if at all, involved in the other type of document.

Q And the reason I'm just trying to talk about those two pieces in

context is a memo like this, where you described it as a policy memo, wouldn't then mean that Main State was ignoring, for instance, security needs or security requests that might flow from an EAC. Is that correct?

A They would be -- could you perhaps just say the question again?

Q Sure. Yeah. Sure. And I apologize if I'm being a little obtuse here. What I'm trying to understand is you had characterized this document as a policy document focused on policy, and for those of us outside of the State Department, outside of the foreign service officer world, I'm just trying to understand that there are different processes or vehicles for raising certain types of concerns. And the policy dimension would have been appropriate for a document like this, whereas a different type of set of recommendations or discussions, especially if they emanated from post, would have been appropriate for another process, such as the Emergency Action Committee, at this time. Is that correct?

A Yes, I agree with that.

Q Okay.

Ms. Sawyer. And just to be clear, even setting aside that distinction, at face what I heard you saying was that at any point in time had there be a recommendation where you were seeking action at the Secretary's level, this would not have been just an information memo, but an action memo. Is that an accurate characterization?

Ms. [REDACTED] That is accurate, yes.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q And I guess just to -- maybe I'll try to summarize it a little bit better this time -- but this document doesn't show that NEA-MAG was ignoring security

concerns or security requests at the Special Mission. Is that a fair assessment?

A I'm sorry. I missed part of that sentence. Could you repeat it?

Q Sure. Again, I'm just trying, we have the EAC on the one hand, where a post makes specific recommendations about security concerns, security recommendations, and then we have a document such as this. And I'm just trying to understand, this document or any -- let's step back and not focus on this document. Let's just talk about NEA-MAG. NEA-MAG was not ignoring, somehow ignoring security concerns at the Special Mission Compound, or were they?

A We were not ignoring security concerns in Libya. If our colleagues in Libya had said that they wanted something, we would have done whatever we could to try to get it for them. And this memo is not -- was not trying to get -- the intent of this memo was not to get more security resources for our mission in Libya.

Q Okay. Thank you.

Just real briefly before we move on, you had mentioned -- you were asked about Ambassador Stevens' views about continuing the Special Mission or a mission in Benghazi in light of security incidents and the deteriorating security environment in this August-September 2012 timeframe. And you referred to his efforts perhaps to seek a more permanent status for the Benghazi mission. Could you just elaborate on what your understanding of those efforts were at that point in time?

Ms. [REDACTED] To the best of my recollection, it has been a few years. You know, we were working with our embassy in Tripoli, and specifically with Ambassador Stevens and DCM Hicks, on putting together the policy rationale for having a more permanent presence in Benghazi.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Okay. And so, do you recall, for instance, in the late August, early September timeframe that Deputy Chief of Mission Hicks or Ambassador Stevens may have sent back to NEA-MAG that proposal, a draft proposal?

A I believe that's right. I believe we then were, you know, working with that draft to provide, you know, our input to that to give to NEA-EX, which would be the place for that kind of resource request would most likely come from.

Q And was your sense that Ambassador Stevens was being instructed to move that process along, or was that something that he himself supported and took some initiative in moving himself?

A Oh, I understood it to be something that he believed was important.

Q Okay. And so it didn't surprise you then that he may have sent a proposal back to Washington to have a permanent presence there even after some of these products we were discussing earlier, the information memo, the Emergency Action Committee meeting?

A No, it didn't surprise me.

Q Okay. And we didn't touch on this in our discussion in the previous hour about the mission in Benghazi, but did you understand especially you had mentioned a task force in an earlier round, did you understand there to be a counterterrorism imperative or rationale for being in Benghazi?

A I certainly thought there was a broad counterterrorism reason to be there in the sense of there are a lot of -- I'm just trying to remember what I thought at the time rather than what I've thought subsequent to that time. So, I guess, at the time, as far as I can recall, I thought it was -- I understood that there was a counterterrorism interest there, but I wasn't aware of the specifics of it.

Q Okay. And I'll just follow up, one of the reasons I ask that question is, we have seen some reasons put forward or justifications on the counterterrorism front and, again, not being within the State Department FSO family, we're just trying to understand. It seems a little counterintuitive if you have the threat of extremism in a place that you'd also want to be there in order to address or counter that counterterrorism threat or the terrorism threat.

Is that something that you can help explain for us? If not, that's okay.

A I mean, I really think we find in the world that where we're able to engage and where we're able to be present, we're better able to counter threats of terrorism than when we aren't present and we aren't on the ground. So just as a general principle, I think our national security interests are best served when we're able to be where these kinds of groups are forming and operating so that we can best counter them.

Q Okay. And at this point, I'd like to shift gears and this will be the final portion of the minority's questions.

And at the outset here, we'll just let you know that this, ours, the select committee is the eighth congressional investigation into the attacks, and it's our hope that it will be the last and final investigation. And therefore, we've been asking every single witness a series of public allegations that have been made about the attacks.

And while folks can speculate about the attacks, there's only a handful of people who do have the actual knowledge of what happened, both before, during, and after the attacks. And so what I'm going to ask you here is a series of questions and not looking for your opinion or speculation, but really whether you have firsthand knowledge. And if you don't, we can simply move on to the next allegation. But there are a dozen, so please bear with me.

The first is, it has been alleged that Secretary of State Clinton intentionally blocked military action on the night of the attacks. One Congressman has speculated that Secretary Clinton told Leon Panetta to stand down, and this resulted in the Defense Department not sending more assets to help in Benghazi.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary of State Clinton ordered Secretary of Defense Panetta to stand down on the night of the attacks?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that Secretary of State Clinton issued any kind of order to Secretary of Defense Panetta on the night of the attacks?

A No.

Q Next, it has been alleged that Secretary Clinton personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security to Libya. The Washington Post Fact Checker evaluated this claim and gave it Four Pinocchio's, its highest award for false claims.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security resources to Libya?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton was personally involved in providing specific instruction on day-to-day security resources in

Benghazi?

A No.

Q Next, it has been alleged that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risk posed by Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for military operations in spring 2011.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risk posed by Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for military operations in Libya in spring 2011?

A No.

Q Next, it has been alleged that the U.S. Mission in Benghazi included transferring weapons to Syrian rebels or to other countries. Bipartisan report issued by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence found that, quote, "The CIA was not collecting and shipping arms from Libya to Syria," closed quote, and they found, quote, "no support for this allegation," closed quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict the House Intelligence Committee's bipartisan report finding that the CIA was not shipping arms from Libya to Syria?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that the U.S. facilities in Benghazi were being used to facilitate weapons transfers from Libya to Syria or to any other foreign country?

A No.

Q A team of CIA security personnel was temporarily delayed from departing the Annex on the night of the attacks to assist the Special Mission Compound, and there have been a number of allegations about the cause of and appropriateness of that delay. House Intelligence Committee issued a bipartisan

report concluding that the team was not ordered to, quote, "stand down," closed quote, but that instead there were tactical disagreements on the ground over how quickly to depart.

Do you have any evidence that would contradict the House Intelligence Committee's finding that there was no stand-down order to CIA personnel?

A No.

Q Putting aside whether you agree with the decision or think it may have been the right decision, do you have any evidence that there was a bad or improper reason behind the temporary delay of CIA security personnel who departed the Annex to assist the Special Mission Compound?

A No.

Q Next, a concern has been raised by one individual that in the course of producing documents to the Accountability Review Board damaging documents may have been removed or scrubbed out of that production.

Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department removed or scrubbed damaging documents from the materials that were provided to the ARB?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department directed anyone else at the State Department to remove or scrub damaging documents from materials that were provided to the ARB?

A No.

Q Let me ask these questions also for documents that were provided to Congress. Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department removed or scrubbed damaging documents from the materials that were provided to Congress?

A No.

Q Next, it has been alleged that CIA Deputy Director Michael Morell altered unclassified talking points about the Benghazi attacks for political reasons and that he then misrepresented his actions when he told Congress that the CIA, quote, "faithfully performed our duties in accordance with the highest standards of objectivity and nonpartisanship," closed quote.

Do you have any evidence that CIA Deputy Director Mike Morell gave false or intentionally misleading testimony to Congress about the Benghazi talking points?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that CIA Deputy Director Morell altered the talking points provided to Congress for political reasons?

A No.

Q Next, it has been alleged that Ambassador Susan Rice made a, quote, "intentional misrepresentation," closed quote, when she spoke on the Sunday talk shows about the Benghazi attacks.

Do you have any evidence that Ambassador Rice intentionally misrepresented facts about the Benghazi attacks on the Sunday talk shows?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that the President of the U.S. was, quote, "virtually AWOL as commander in chief," closed quote, on the night of the attacks and that he was missing in action.

Do you have any evidence to support the allegation that the President was virtually AWOL as commander in chief or missing in action on the night of the attacks?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that a team of four U.S. military personnel at Embassy Tripoli on the night of the attacks who were considering flying on a second plane to Benghazi were ordered by their superiors to, quote, "stand down," closed quote, meaning to cease all operations. Military officials have stated that those four individuals were instead ordered to, quote, "remain in place," closed quote, in Tripoli to provide security and medical assistance in their location.

Republican staff report issued by the House Armed Services Committee found that, quote, "There was no stand-down order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi," closed quote. Do you have any evidence to contradict the conclusion of the House Armed Services Committee that there was no stand-down order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi?

A No.

Q We are almost at the end. I know it's been a long day. This is actually the last one.

It has been alleged that the military failed to deploy assets on the night of the attack that would have saved lives. However, former Republican Congressman Howard Buck McKeon, the former chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, conducted a review of the attacks, after which he stated, quote, "Given where the troops were, how quickly the thing all happened, and how quickly it dissipated, we probably couldn't have done more than we did," closed quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict Congressman McKeon's conclusion?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that the Pentagon had military assets available to them on the night of the attacks that could have saved lives but that the Pentagon leadership intentionally decided not to deploy?

A No.

Mr. Kenny. And with that, we'll just take a quick moment to thank you once again.

Ms. Sawyer. Yeah. Thank you very much for your patience. We know it's late there, but I did want to just give you the opportunity now that you have patiently sat through and answered all of our questions if there's really anything you wanted to add before we go off the record.

Ms. [REDACTED] No. I think I'm all done. Thank you.

Ms. Sawyer. Great. Well, thank you again. Please be safe getting home, and thank you so much for your past and continued service to the country.

Ms. [REDACTED] Thank you.

Mr. Kenny. We'll go off the record.

[Whereupon, at 11:47 a.m., the interview was concluded.]

EXHIBIT 1

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 6:08 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: points per NEA that are being drafted now for Magariaf and

Thanks

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 6:06 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: points per NEA that are being drafted now for Magariaf and

Main points of the call:

- Get security to our Embassy in Tripoli as fast as possible. We understand there are threats being posted in social media now.
- We need help in Benghazi – Ambassador Stevens is still missing.

EXHIBIT 2

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 7:57 PM
To: [REDACTED] NEA-Staff-Assistants-DL; NEA-MAG-DL; Maxwell, Raymond D
Subject: RE: [REDACTED] compound in Benghazi is under fire

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
SensitivityCode: Sensitive
SMARTCategory: Working

Thanks – passed to PDAS. A/S still in SVTC.

[REDACTED]
NEA Staff Assistant
[REDACTED]@state.gov
[REDACTED]@state.sgov.gov
Office: 202-647-7216
Blackberry: [REDACTED]

Sensitive
This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 7:55 PM
To: NEA-Staff-Assistants-DL; NEA-MAG-DL; Maxwell, Raymond D
Subject: [REDACTED] compound in Benghazi is under fire

Through intel channels.
That is where everyone is now .

EXHIBIT 3

SCB 000029

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 10:32 PM
To: Fishman, Benjamin I.
Cc: [REDACTED]

Ops ([REDACTED] our mole in Ops) tells us Jeff is already on the phone with Beth to pass along some info he's gleaned. Qatar might be a good avenue.

From: Fishman, Benjamin I. [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 10:21 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: statement from the GNC

Our Turkey people will reach out and coordinate with EUR presumably.
Another thought. Has someone notified Jeff? Among other things, he could call the Qataris who I think are the only others in Benghazi with resources and potential information. Not sure that's the right channel but at least worth considering.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 9:45 PM
To: Fishman, Benjamin I.
Subject: RE: statement from the GNC

That's a good idea, I'll check in with Ops

From: Fishman, Benjamin I. [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 9:28 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: statement from the GNC

Has there been any thought to outreach to Turkey to see what they may have present in Benghazi? I can't think of any others who might be in a position to help if needed.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 9:26 PM
To: Fishman, Benjamin I.
Subject: RE: statement from the GNC

Nothing we're waiting for an update from the special folks.

I bet Kennedy is worried about further repercussions and attacks if US military is too obvious.

From: Fishman, Benjamin I. [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 9:19 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: statement from the GNC

You don't have anything further on Chris, right? I was sitting in that meeting for two hours.

I don't know why Pat Kennedy is so concerned about what extra security folks are wearing. Does that come from Greg? The time for being overly sensitive to Libyan concerns about military appearances seems to be over.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 9:17 PM
To: Fishman, Benjamin I.; [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: statement from the GNC

Thanks Ben....

From: Fishman, Benjamin I. [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 9:10 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: statement from the GNC

For what it's worth, [REDACTED] sent this to me.

I got a separate call from [REDACTED] the Congressman close to Magariaf, who claimed Feb 17 has Chris and he's alive, according to MOI. Clearly don't know reliability.

If you need anything from here, let me know.

EXHIBIT 4

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 2:18 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Libya PG

Off the reservation on five networks!

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 2:17 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Libya PG

Yup. Luckily there's enough in her language to fudge exactly what she said/meant.

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 2:16 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Libya PG

I think Rice was off the reservation on this one.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 2:05 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Libya PG

Toria planned on walking it back just a bit, though.

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 2:02 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Libya PG

The horse has left the barn on this, don't you think? Rice was on FIVE Sunday Morning shows yesterday saying this. Tough to walk back.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 01:59 PM

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Libya PG

[REDACTED] – per my call. Note sure we want to be so definitive – what does A/S Jones say?

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 1:41 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Libya PG

I really hope this was revised. I don't think we should go on the record on this.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 12:36 PM
To: [REDACTED]; NEA-LIBYADESK; CAPRESSREQUESTS; [REDACTED]
Cc: M_Clearance
Subject: Re: Libya PG

This is actually the most recent. Just saw NSS language, which I used as the key points here.

NEA Press Guidance

September 17, 2012

Libya: Update on Investigation on Attack in Benghazi

Key Points

- The currently available information suggests that the demonstrations in Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by the protests at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and evolved into a direct assault against the U.S. mission and subsequently its annex. There are indications that extremists participated in the violent demonstrations.
- This assessment may change as additional information is collected and analyzed and as currently available information continues to be evaluated.
- The investigation is ongoing, and the U.S. Government is working with Libyan authorities to bring to justice those responsible for the deaths of U.S. citizens.

Q: Do we have any confirmation of the names and condition of those injured in Benghazi yet?

- Due to privacy considerations, I have no comment.

Q: Can we confirm the authenticity of the cell-phone video of Amb. Stephens?

We cannot confirm the authenticity of the video.

Q: Do we have any adjustments in the time line, sequence of events in Benghazi?

As I said, there is an ongoing investigation and I am not going to comment any further at this time.

Q: Has the FBI provided any investigation updates? Has the FBI been able to even reach Benghazi yet?

I refer you to the Department of Justice for information on the ongoing investigation.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 12:34 PM
To: [REDACTED]; Meehan, Bernadette <[REDACTED]>; NEA-LIBYADESK; CAPRESSREQUESTS; [REDACTED]
Cc: M_Clearance
Subject: RE: Libya PG

Hi – I made some tweaks. I am not keen on the first point, even as I edited it, but don't have any better suggestions. Maybe was not "planned well in advance." ?

The rest of it looks good.

I added DS to this message also.

Thanks, [REDACTED] M/PRI

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 12:13 PM
To: Meehan, Bernadette; NEA-LIBYADESK; CAPRESSREQUESTS; [REDACTED]
Subject: Libya PG
Importance: High

Hi Everyone –

Please see the below PG on Libya. This is all I really have for today.

Thanks,
[REDACTED]

NEA Press Guidance**September 17, 2012****Libya: Update on Investigation on Attack in Benghazi****Key Points**

- We will continue to wait for the findings of the ongoing FBI investigation before reaching a final conclusion, but at this preliminary stage, ~~time~~, we have not yet seen any signs that the attack on our consulate in Benghazi was other than spontaneous. ~~premeditated. or coordinated.~~

- I have nothing more for you due to the ongoing FBI investigation.

Q: Do we have any confirmation of the names and condition of those injured in Benghazi yet?

- Due to privacy considerations, I have no comment.

Q: Can we confirm the authenticity of the cell-phone video of Amb. Stephens?

- We cannot confirm the authenticity of the video.

Q: Do we have any adjustments in the time line, sequence of events in Benghazi?

- As we have said, there is an ongoing investigation into the tragic events that occurred in Benghazi, and I am not going to comment any further at this time.

Q: Has the FBI provided any investigation updates? Has the FBI been able to even reach Benghazi yet?

- I refer you to the Department of Justice for information on the ongoing investigation.

██████████ Press Officer | Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs | U.S. Department of State

2201 C St, NW Rm 2234, Washington, DC 20520 | ☎: 202.647.4184 | ✉: ██████████@state.gov

EXHIBIT 5

C05580618

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 2:19 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Libya PG

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
SMARTCategory: Working

WH very worried about the politics. This was all their doing.

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 2:18 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Libya PG

Off the reservation on five networks!

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 2:17 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Libya PG

Yup. Luckily there's enough in her language to fudge exactly what she said/meant.

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 2:16 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Libya PG

I think Rice was off the reservation on this one.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 2:05 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Libya PG

Toria planned on walking it back just a bit, though.

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

C05580618

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 2:02 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Libya PG

The horse has left the barn on this, don't you think? Rice was on FIVE Sunday Morning shows yesterday saying this. Tough to walk back.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 01:59 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Libya PG

[REDACTED] -- per my call. Note sure we want to be so definitive -- what does A/S Jones say?

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 1:41 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Libya PG

I really hope this was revised. I don't think we should go on the record on this.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 12:36 PM
To: [REDACTED]; 'Bernadette_M_Meehan'; [REDACTED]; NEA-LIBYADESK; CAPRESSREQUESTS; [REDACTED]
Cc: M_Clearance
Subject: Re: Libya PG

This is actually the most recent. Just saw NSS language, which I used as the key points here.

NEA Press Guidance

September 17, 2012

Libya: Update on Investigation on Attack in Benghazi

Key Points

- The currently available information suggests that the demonstrations in Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by the protests at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and evolved into a direct assault against the U.S. mission and subsequently its annex. There are indications that extremists participated in the violent demonstrations.

- This assessment may change as additional information is collected and analyzed and as currently available

C05580618

information continues to be evaluated.

The investigation is ongoing, and the U.S. Government is working with Libyan authorities to bring to justice those responsible for the deaths of U.S. citizens.

Q: Do we have any confirmation of the names and condition of those injured in Benghazi yet?

Due to privacy considerations, I have no comment.

Q: Can we confirm the authenticity of the cell-phone video of Amb. Stephens?

We cannot confirm the authenticity of the video.

Q: Do we have any adjustments in the time line, sequence of events in Benghazi?

As I said, there is an ongoing investigation and I am not going to comment any further at this time.

Q: Has the FBI provided any investigation updates? Has the FBI been able to even reach Benghazi yet?

I refer you to the Department of Justice for information on the ongoing investigation.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 12:34 PM
To: [REDACTED]; Meehan, Bernadette <[REDACTED]>; NEA-LIBYADESK;
 CAPRESSREQUESTS; [REDACTED]
Cc: M_Clearance
Subject: RE: Libya PG

Hi – I made some tweaks. I am not keen on the first point, even as I edited it, but don't have any better suggestions. Maybe was not "planned well in advance." ?

The rest of it looks good.

I added DS to this message also.

Thanks, [REDACTED] M/PRI

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 12:13 PM

C05580618

To: Meehan, Bernadette; NEA-LIBYADESK; CAPRESSREQUESTS; [REDACTED]

Subject: Libya PG
 Importance: High

Hi Everyone –

Please see the below PG on Libya. This is all I really have for today.

Thanks,

NEA Press Guidance

September 17, 2012

Libya: Update on Investigation on Attack in Benghazi

Key Points

- We will continue to wait for the findings of the ongoing FBI investigation before reaching a final conclusion, but at this preliminary stage, ~~time~~, we have not yet seen any signs that the attack on our consulate in Benghazi was other than spontaneous. ~~premeditated. or coordinated.~~

- I have nothing more for you due to the ongoing FBI investigation.

Q: Do we have any confirmation of the names and condition of those injured in Benghazi yet?

- Due to privacy considerations, I have no comment.

Q: Can we confirm the authenticity of the cell-phone video of Amb. Stephens?

- We cannot confirm the authenticity of the video.

Q: Do we have any adjustments in the time line, sequence of events in Benghazi?

- As we have said, there is an ongoing investigation into the tragic events that occurred in Benghazi, and I am not going to comment any further at this time.

Q: Has the FBI provided any investigation updates? Has the FBI been able to even reach Benghazi yet?

C05580618

- I refer you to the Department of Justice for information on the ongoing investigation.

[REDACTED] Press Officer | Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs | U.S. Department of State

2201 C St, NW Rm 2234, Washington, DC 20520 | ☎: 202.647.4184 | ✉: [\[REDACTED\]@state.gov](mailto:[REDACTED]@state.gov)

EXHIBIT 6

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 1:52 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Libya PG

Yes!

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 1:47 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Libya PG

This is what I think we should go with.

There is an ongoing FBI investigation. We are looking to that investigation to give us the definitive word as to what transpired.

[REDACTED] | Press Officer | Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs | U.S. Department of State
 2201 C St, NW Rm 2234, Washington, DC 20520 | ☎: 202.647.4184 | ✉: [REDACTED]@state.gov

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 1:41 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Libya PG

I really hope this was revised. I don't think we should go on the record on this.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 12:36 PM
To: [REDACTED] 'Bernadette_M_Meehan'; [REDACTED] NEA-LIBYADESK; CAPRESSREQUESTS; [REDACTED]
Cc: M_Clearance
Subject: Re: Libya PG

This is actually the most recent. Just saw NSS language, which I used as the key points here.

NEA Press Guidance

September 17, 2012

Libya: Update on Investigation on Attack in Benghazi

Key Points

- The currently available information suggests that the demonstrations in Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by the protests at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and evolved into a direct assault against the U.S. mission and subsequently its annex. There are indications that extremists participated in the violent demonstrations.
- This assessment may change as additional information is collected and analyzed and as currently available information continues to be evaluated.
- The investigation is ongoing, and the U.S. Government is working with Libyan authorities to bring to justice those responsible for the deaths of U.S. citizens.

Q: Do we have any confirmation of the names and condition of those injured in Benghazi yet?

- Due to privacy considerations, I have no comment.

Q: Can we confirm the authenticity of the cell-phone video of Amb. Stephens?

- We cannot confirm the authenticity of the video.

Q: Do we have any adjustments in the time line, sequence of events in Benghazi?

- As I said, there is an ongoing investigation and I am not going to comment any further at this time.

Q: Has the FBI provided any investigation updates? Has the FBI been able to even reach Benghazi yet?

- I refer you to the Department of Justice for information on the ongoing investigation.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 12:34 PM
To: [REDACTED]; Meehan, Bernadette [REDACTED] NEA-LIBYADESK;
 CAPRESSREQUESTS [REDACTED]
Cc: M_Clearance
Subject: RE: Libya PG

HI – I made some tweaks. I am not keen on the first point, even as I edited it, but don't have any better suggestions. Maybe was not "planned well in advance." ?

The rest of it looks good.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

I added DS to this message also.

Thanks, [REDACTED], M/PRI

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 12:13 PM
To: Meehan, Bernadette; NEA-LIBYADESK; CAPRESSREQUESTS; [REDACTED]
Subject: Libya PG
Importance: High

Hi Everyone –

Please see the below PG on Libya. This is all I really have for today.

Thanks,

NEA Press Guidance

September 17, 2012

Libya: Update on Investigation on Attack in Benghazi

Key Points

- We will continue to wait for the findings of the ongoing FBI investigation before reaching a final conclusion, but at this preliminary stage, ~~time,~~ we have not yet seen any signs that the attack on our consulate in Benghazi was other than spontaneous. ~~premeditated. or coordinated.~~

- I have nothing more for you due to the ongoing FBI investigation.

Q: Do we have any confirmation of the names and condition of those injured in Benghazi yet?

- Due to privacy considerations, I have no comment.

Q: Can we confirm the authenticity of the cell-phone video of Amb. Stephens?

- We cannot confirm the authenticity of the video.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

Q: Do we have any adjustments in the time line, sequence of events in Benghazi?

- As we have said, there is an ongoing investigation into the tragic events that occurred in Benghazi, and I am not going to comment any further at this time.

Q: Has the FBI provided any investigation updates? Has the FBI been able to even reach Benghazi yet?

- I refer you to the Department of Justice for information on the ongoing investigation.

██████████ | Press Officer | Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs | U.S. Department of State

2201 C St, NW Rm 2234, Washington, DC 20520 | 📞: 202.647.4184 | ✉: ██████████@state.gov

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

EXHIBIT 7

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2012 4:19 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: draft email for your clearance: (SBU) Lack of Security Staffing at Benghazi undermining mission

Categories: Working
Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
SensitivityCode: Sensitive

Also, the Secretary asked last week if we still have a presence in Benghazi – I think she would be upset to hear that yes we do but because we don't have enough security they are on lockdown.

SBU
 This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2012 3:25 PM
To: NEA-MAG-LIBYA
Subject: FW: draft email for your clearance: (SBU) Lack of Security Staffing at Benghazi undermining mission

SBU
 This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2012 3:24 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: draft email for your clearance: (SBU) Lack of Security Staffing at Benghazi undermining mission

Let me know if this works and whether you want to consult with [REDACTED] or EX before sending this to the FO. Another issue to keep in mind is Embassy Tunis' longstanding request for an A/RSO. If we ask JDF to present this to M, we might get asked which would be our top priority within MAG. (That's not a fair question of course, because Tunis is asking for a permanent A/RSO FTE, whereas we are looking for a solid commitment of 4 TDY DS agents through the end of the year.)

Thanks.

We determined early on that it was important to us to maintain a presence in Benghazi to engage with the TNC and keep an eye on political and security developments in the east. The mission in Benghazi has also allowed PM and USAID to conduct periodic TDYs in the east to further develop their contacts and monitor progress on our MANPADS, elections

and civil society assistance programs. The simmering protests in Benghazi and the east against the TNC and local councils over the last few weeks (along with violent unrest in Bani Wali in the west) have shaken the interim government, and illustrated the importance of maintaining a broad base of contacts and visibility outside of Tripoli.

Unfortunately, DS staffing is becoming a recurring problem in Benghazi. At the current security threat level, Benghazi needs a minimum of four agents to support moves out of town (3 to accompany the Principal Officer or TDY officer, and 1 to remain on compound with the IRM/management person). Post needs a minimum of three agents to facilitate one movement at a time in town, and one to remain on compound.

DS staffing has dropped to two agents several times over the last few months between rotations, which has prevented the PO from leaving the compound. DS tells post it is unlikely they can fully staff Benghazi due to broader staffing challenges across NEA, and has suggested we adjust our expectations about movements and outreach.

The fluid security situation makes it unlikely that RSO and EAC will decide to significantly ease the security profile in the immediate future. If DS cannot or will not allocate the right resources for Benghazi, we may want to push back with M to force a discussion about DS's decision. If there is no recourse, we should reconsider whether we keep the mission going. There is very little reason to maintain the expense if our people are going to be trapped on the compound and unable to get around.

[REDACTED]
Deputy Director, Office of Maghreb Affairs
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
U.S. Department of State
(O) 202-647-4675 (F) 202-736-4460

SBU
This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

EXHIBIT 8

UNCLASSIFIED U.S. Department of State Case No. O-2015-15055 Doc No. C05390124 Date: 10/13/2015
 STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.



201214940 Rev. 1
 United States Department of State



Washington, D.C. 20520

CONFIDENTIAL
 DECL: 08/16/2022

RELEASE IN FULL August 17, 2012

INFORMATION MEMO FOR THE SECRETARY

FROM: NEA – Beth Jones, Acting

SUBJECT: (C) Security Situation in Libya: A Spike in Violence or a New Normal?

Overall Security Situation

(C) Libya has experienced an upward trend in violence – primarily but not exclusively in the east – since May. It is not yet clear if this trend will reverse itself as earlier ones have over the past year or if, in eastern Libya at least, it constitutes a new normal. The ongoing presence of militias is a complicating factor, both providing security in many areas where the national government cannot, and undercutting it in others. Militias were seen as a constructive force during the July 7 elections for the General National Congress. The central security services are still being reconstituted and do not have the capacity to force the militias under a national authority. While unpredictable security conditions restrict the movement of U.S. government personnel, they have not limited our assistance work. The violence has not targeted the oil and gas infrastructure.

Uptick in Violence, Primarily in Eastern Libya

(SBU) Since May, there has been a spike in violent incidents, including bombings, abductions, assassinations, and car-jackings. The attachment lists the major events, which include a June 6 bombing at the U.S. Mission in Benghazi and an August 6 attempted car-jacking of embassy personnel in Tripoli. Recently, foreign residents of Benghazi have expressed concern about the risks of living and working there. In response to five attacks since May, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) withdrew its personnel from Benghazi and Misrata in early August, but continued work in the rest of Libya. The ICRC country director believes international organizations in Libya have underestimated the recent rise in violence out of a shared sense of optimism.

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Charles Daris, Senior Reviewer

CONFIDENTIAL

Classified by: NEA Assistant Secretary Beth Jones, Acting
 E.O. 13526, Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

UNCLASSIFIED U.S. Department of State Case No. O-2015-15055 Doc No. C05390124 Date: 10/13/2015

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

Emboldened but Random

(C) The variety of the violence points to the overall lack of effective security institutions, particularly in the east. Local contacts blame pro-Qadhafi element efforts to destabilize the government, militia vigilante action, extremist Islamist groups settling scores, and criminally motivated thugs for most of the incidents. The distance from the already weak central security services, feelings of marginalization from the central government, and a history of Islamist extremism in some eastern towns all seem to contribute to a permissive environment where disparate motivations for violence have found fertile ground in which to germinate. The national Supreme Security Council – a post-revolutionary coalition of militia elements cobbled into a single force and designed to provide interim security in Benghazi – has had limited success as a stabilizing force.

(C) The government seems largely unable to gather intelligence in advance of attacks and central security services appear intimidated by the local militias, in some cases tacitly ceding their authority to them. Some actors see the weak response from the government and feel they can act with increasing impunity. The sense of lawlessness encourages spoilers, predators, and other disruptive players to escalate their actions.

The Transition Requires Security

(C) Benghazi was once palpably safer than Tripoli, but in the absence of a national political consensus on fundamental issues, lawlessness is increasing. The newly seated General National Congress should address the security situation directly to reassert control. Despite the urgency, however, the government's response is likely to continue to be hesitant and tentative, as it focuses on maintaining momentum and cohesion for the challenging political transition it is undertaking. Efforts to rebuild the national military and police forces (including the incorporation of some militias into the national forces) will need to proceed in step with efforts to create the right package of educational, vocational, and monetary incentives to demobilize, disarm, and reintegrate the revolutionary fighters into civilian life. We are working to assist the Libyans through advice on disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration and reconstituting elements of their national security forces through capacity building for counterterrorism and border security activities through classroom and field training.

(C) Despite the worrisome aspects of this increase in violence, there is no coordinated organization behind the incidents. Ethnic, sectarian, and tribal differences have not been major factors in causing or exacerbating the violence; in fact, there is some evidence that traditional tribal structures are helping to contain

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 3 -

it. Nonetheless, the likelihood of more widespread violence is strong if Libya's political leaders are unable to demobilize militias and strengthen the government's security institutions.

Attachment:

List of Recent Violence in Libya

CONFIDENTIAL

**INTERVIEW OF
CHIEF OF BASE**

BEFORE THE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, NOVEMBER 19, 2015

Excerpts of the foregoing interview were cited in the Report of the Select Committee on Benghazi. The Central Intelligence Agency declined the Committee's request to declassify the interview transcript.

**INTERVIEW OF
JEFFREY DAVID FELTMAN**

BEFORE THE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, DECEMBER 8, 2015

APPEARANCES

FOR THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI

SHARON JACKSON, *Deputy Chief Counsel*
KIM BETZ, *Member Outreach Liaison and Counsel*
SUSANNE SACHSMAN GROOMS, *Minority Staff Director/General Counsel*
PETER KENNY, *Minority Senior Counsel*
RONAK DESAI, *Minority Counsel*
ERIN O'BRIEN, *Minority Detailee*

FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ERIC SNYDER, *Senior Counsel*
LAURA E. DECK, *Attorney-Adviser*

Ms. Jackson. This is a transcribed interview of Ambassador Jeffrey Feltman conducted by the House Select Committee on Benghazi. This interview is being conducted voluntarily as part of the committee's investigation into the attacks on the U.S. diplomatic facilities in Benghazi, Libya, and matters related to it, pursuant to House Resolution 567 of the 113th Congress and House Resolution 5 of the 114th Congress.

Ambassador Feltman, could you give us your name, please, for the record.

Mr. Feltman. Jeffrey David Feltman.

Ms. Jackson. And, Ambassador Feltman, please accept our thanks for being here today and your appearance before this interview.

I've introduced myself before but, again, I'm Sharon Jackson, and I am with the committee's majority staff.

And then we'll have everyone go around the table and introduce themselves for the record. You are accompanied here today by --

Mr. Snyder. Eric Snyder, State Department.

Ms. Deck. Laura Deck, State Department.

Ms. O'Brien. Erin O'Brien, minority staff.

Mr. Desai. Ronak Desai, minority staff.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. I'm Susanne Sachsman Grooms with the minority.

Ms. Betz. Kim Betz with the majority staff.

Ms. Jackson. Before we begin -- we'll see who's knocking on the door. We just did the introductions, sir, could you introduce

yourself?

Mr. Kenny. Peter Kenny, minority staff.

Ms. Jackson. Before we begin, I'd like to go over the ground rules and explain how the interview will proceed. The way the questioning proceeds is that a member from the majority will ask questions for up to an hour, and then the minority staff will have an opportunity to ask questions for an equal period of time if they choose. We generally adhere to this 1-hour time limit to each side. We've made some adjustments in the past, but we generally go back and forth an hour at a time.

Questions may only be asked by a member of the committee or a designated staff member. And, again, we will rotate back and forth 1 hour per side until we are out of questions and the interview will be over.

Unlike a testimony or a deposition in Federal court, the committee format is not bound by the rules of evidence. The witness or their counsel may raise objections for privilege, which would be subject to review by the chairman of the committee. If these objections cannot be resolved in the interview, the witness can be required to return for a deposition or a hearing.

Members and staff of the committee, however, are not permitted to raise objections when the other side is asking questions. This is not an issue that we really encounter, but it is a rule that we are governed by.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. It's not actually a rule. Procedure.

Ms. Jackson. It's a procedure.

So this session is to begin as unclassified. So if any question calls for a classified answer, please let us know and we can reserve it until we move to a classified setting. And we have a classified setting reserved for this afternoon.

You are welcome to confer with counsel at any time throughout the interview, but if something just needs to be clarified, we ask that you make this known. If you need to discuss anything with counsel who has accompanied you today, we will go off the record and stop the clock and provide you that opportunity.

We will take a break whenever it's convenient for you. This can be -- we typically do this after every hour of questioning, but it can be whenever you prefer. If you need anything, such as a glass of water or the use of the facilities or to confer with counsel, please just let us know and we'll go off the record, stop the clock, and allow you to do that. We're trying to make this process as easy and as comfortable as possible.

As you can see, we have an official reporter who is taking down everything that you say and I say to make a written record, so we ask that you give verbal responses to all questions as opposed to nods of the head or shakes of the head. And I'm going to ask the reporter to please feel free to jump in in case you respond nonverbally.

Similarly, we should try and not talk over each other so it's easier to get a clear record. We want to make sure that your questions are the most complete and truthful and that we get them down in order.

So we'll take our time during this interview and repeat or clarify questions if necessary. If for any reason you don't hear all of the question or don't understand it or just need it clarified in some way, please just make it known. We'll be happy to clarify or repeat our questions.

We are trying to get the most complete and truthful answers to the questions that we have today. So if you honestly don't know an answer to a question or don't remember, it's best not to guess, but we do ask that you give us your best recollection. And if there are things that you do not know or can't remember, please, if you can, inform us as to who might have that information and be able to provide a more complete answer to the question.

And now, there are a few rules that do govern us. Do you understand that you're required to answer questions from Congress truthfully?

Mr. Feltman. Yes.

Ms. Jackson. Do you also understand that this applies to questions posed by congressional staff in an interview?

Mr. Feltman. Yes.

Ms. Jackson. Do you understand that witnesses that knowingly provide false testimony could be subject to criminal prosecution for perjury or making false statements?

Mr. Feltman. Yes.

Ms. Jackson. Is there any reason you'd be unable to provide truthful answers to today's questions?

Mr. Feltman. No.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. Well, that's the end of the preamble.

Does the minority have anything that they would like to add at this time?

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. I think we just wanted to thank you for coming in. I understand that you are at the U.N. now, not a U.S. Government employee, and that you were only in country for a couple of days, and so we've really taken a big chunk of that timeout of your December, so I really appreciate your taking the time to come in.

Mr. Feltman. Thank you. Yes, I am traveling to Central Asia tomorrow, and that's why I have a small suitcase. I start the trip today.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. I see that the clock says 8:36, and so I will begin the first hour of questioning.

EXAMINATION

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Ambassador Feltman, you are currently at the U.N. What is your position there?

A I'm Under Secretary General for Political Affairs.

Q And, generally, what does that entail?

A It would be akin to being sort of a foreign minister or Secretary of State if the U.N. were a country. So I'm the chief foreign policy adviser to the Secretary General. I oversee the diplomatic and political work of the United Nations globally. That's different from, say, development work or humanitarian work; it's the political and

diplomatic work that I oversee.

Q And you've been in that position since early July of 2012?

A July 2, 2012.

Q Okay. And you had been with the State Department for approximately 30 years before that?

A A little bit less, something like 27 years.

Q And what was your last position with the State Department?

A The Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs.

Q And how long did you have that position?

A I had that position from -- confirmed in, I believe, August 2009 up until my retirement from the State Department in May 2012.

Q Okay. And what were your duties and responsibilities as the Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs?

A To oversee the U.S. diplomatic relationships or U.S. political interests in the 19 countries that fell into that bureau's responsibility. That's the area of the world starting from Morocco stretching through Iran.

Q And that included Libya?

A And that included Libya.

Q Okay. Where had you been posted prior to becoming the -- or what positions did you have prior to becoming the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs within the State Department?

A I was acting in that position from December 2008 until my confirmation in August, so I was acting for several months. Before

that, I was Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, which is the number two in the Near East Bureau. That was from February 2008 until December 2008 when I became acting Assistant Secretary. Before that, I was the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Lebanon from 2004 to 2008. I've also served in Jerusalem; Tel Aviv; Baghdad; Amman, Jordan; Tunis, Tunisia. Those were my postings in those particular -- in that particular area.

Q Ambassador Feltman, I want to direct your attention to September 11, 2012. Where were you on that night? Were you at the U.N.? Were you in the United States, or were you traveling?

A I was in New York. I was at the United Nations during office hours and then at home in my apartment after office hours.

Q Okay. And how did you learn about the attacks in Benghazi?

A I had called the State Department on some other business, U.N. business, and I had talked to Liz Dibble, the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State at the time, on -- I don't remember what the issue was I called her about. And she said: By the way, there's an attack going on at the U.S. Mission -- the U.S. office in Benghazi.

And that was how I first heard about it was from a former colleague from the State Department.

Q And was that during business hours? Do you recall approximately when that was?

A It was in the business hours. It was in the afternoon. I don't remember what time it was, but it was some time in the afternoon.

Q Okay. But certainly before 5, 6 o'clock at night in the

evening?

A It may have been -- the U.N.'s business hours are until 7 p.m., and I don't remember what time.

Q All right. And what did Liz Dibble tell you, if anything, about her understanding of what was going on in Benghazi?

A She just said there's a big problem in Benghazi, and they're worried, and that was about it. She said, you know, we're worried about Chris, who's a friend of hers, a friend of mine, and that was all.

Q Did you know that the Ambassador -- that Ambassador Stevens was missing at the time --

A No.

Q -- or unaccounted for?

A No.

Q Approximately how long did this conversation last?

A I have no idea. That part of the conversation was very brief, but I simply don't remember the subject, why I called her.

Q Did you receive any further information the night of the attack from the State Department or from U.N. officials or -- and then I'll ask, my followup question is, what, if anything, did you do in response to learning that there was an attack going on in Benghazi?

A Ambassador Shalgham, who is the Libyan Perm Rep to New York, called me at several points throughout the evening with cell phone numbers of people he said who knew where Chris was, who claimed that Chris was alive. You know, so Ambassador Shalgham called me, which was appropriate, I was a U.N. official. He was working at the U.N.

He was the Representative to the U.N.

So I would try to call these cell phone numbers that Ambassador Shalgham gave me, because I was concerned about my friend, and none of them panned out. None of them led to anything.

I received a phone call from Libya sometime that evening. It was after I was -- I think I was getting ready to go to bed. I think it was like something, maybe 9, maybe 10 o'clock or something. And I recognized the number as being a Libyan number, and so I, of course, answered it. It was to my personal phone. I don't know how the person got the number.

The person did not identify himself except to say he was a friend of Chris Stevens and that he too had information that was sort of vague about Chris being alive, and at that point, I called Beth Jones, who was the Assistant Secretary of State, I think in an acting capacity, you know, my successor, via the ops center to say I had gotten this phone call, and, you know, here's the number if there's anything.

And I don't think it panned out because it simply wasn't true what the information was that the person said. But yes -- so I did have further conversations as just outlined.

Q Now, this the phone call that you received from a Libyan, did that person identify themselves?

A No. And I asked, and he did not identify himself, refused, and just said he was a friend of Ambassador Stevens.

Q And did he give any details as to where he was? Was he on the compound? Was he at a hospital? Was he in transit?

A It was vague. It was all in Arabic. I speak Arabic, but my Libyan Arabic is not so great. It's a different accent. So I questioned him several times, and he would say: He's at a hospital. He's outside. He's at a friend's. It, frankly, didn't make sense. And I don't think it was all just the linguistic issue, which is why I thought, well, this -- you know, I'm concerned about Chris being a friend of mine, but this is really an issue for the State Department, not for the U.N., which is why I used the ops center to call Beth Jones.

Q Okay. And, again, you recognized it as a Libyan number, but you did not recognize the incoming number?

A No.

Q Okay. But it came to your personal cell phone?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Did you, within the U.N., take any actions? For example, did you have any U.N. officials or personnel in Benghazi, Libya, at the time?

A I'm not sure I understand why this is relevant. But certainly, we had -- you know, we had staff in -- U.N. staff in Libya. And as would happen anywhere around the world, we had a -- you know, we had a security assessment meeting to decide what sorts of actions, if any, needed to be taken by the U.N. staff.

I, frankly, don't remember what we decided. We probably decided, you know, to hunker down and not move off of our -- out of our offices until there was more clarity. But I, frankly, don't remember. But, yes, we did meet to talk about what our own security posture should

be afterwards.

Q You've described for us phone calls with Liz Dibble and Beth Jones and calls to the ops center. Did you have communications with any other U.S. Government personnel regarding the Benghazi attacks that night, such as anyone from the National Security staff, anybody from the agency or DOD, any other U.S. Government personnel?

A No one like that, no one from the agency, no one from the NSC, no one from DOD, not even from U.S. Mission of the U.N. I do remember, and I maybe remember incorrectly, because it may have been the following day, but I do remember having phone calls with Liz Dibble but not official, just sort of like: This is terrible. You know, we feel awful.

Liz is a friend. Liz is a friend of Chris. I'm a friend of Chris. And so I had conversations with Liz about just how horrible this was, but I don't remember if they were that night or the following day. They were probably the following day because it wasn't clear to me until the following morning what had happened.

Q Okay. And when you had those subsequent phone calls with Liz Dibble, did she provide to you anymore clarity on what she understood had happened?

A No. It was all solidarity calls with a close friend was what it was.

Q Okay. So nothing about the nature of the attack --

A No.

Q -- how quickly it was, who they thought were the

perpetrators of the attack?

A No, we were talking about things like what do we say to Chris' family, you know, those sorts of things. We were talking about things that friends were talking about. We weren't talking about things that were official.

Q Okay. Do you recall if during any of these conversations you learned about the subsequent attack at the CIA Annex?

A I don't know when I learned about the subsequent attack. It may have been the news reportings the following day. I don't remember.

Q Okay. You don't recall -- you recall not getting any calls regarding --

A I got no calls regarding the attack.

Q Were you aware of the demonstration earlier in the day in Cairo?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And how did you learn of that?

A Through the news.

Q Okay. At any time, did you have any conversations with anyone regarding comparing and contrasting what happened in Cairo versus what happened in Benghazi?

A No.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. You mean someone from the U.S. Government?

Ms. Jackson. Anyone.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Well, I'm sorry. And I say that only

because at some point, my understanding was that you weren't going to go into like internal U.N. deliberations, seeing as he's not a member of the U.S. Government, and we're not asking the U.N.

Mr. Snyder. Also we haven't had a chance to talk to counsel at U.N. because we weren't aware that he'd be talking about U.N. business. It could be dicey for the witness and his current employment having not, you know, sorted that through. So if you want to ask about conversations -- and, by the way, there probably aren't any with U.N. officials -- but if you want to ask about conversations with U.S. personnel, that would be fair game. Otherwise, we're going to have to break and go and just make sure that he's not running afoul of some U.N. issue.

Ms. Jackson. Well, why don't we just ask the foundational questions of did you have any, who were they with, and then we can make the assessment.

Mr. Feltman. I really am not going to talk about any U.N. job here, and this is already very awkward for me in terms of my U.N. employment to be doing this. And I really do not want to speak about the conversations I had in the U.N. I did not talk about this with any U.S. Government official.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. Fine.

Mr. Snyder. That's good.

Ms. Jackson. Just want to close the loop.

Mr. Snyder. Thank you.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Did you have any conversations with Susan Rice regarding the attacks?

A The following day, I went -- on September 12, there was a Security Council session, I believe it was on the Middle East. I think it was, you know, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where I had to brief the Council. This was a public, you know, open -- they call it open briefing in the Chamber, which means it's televised and all that. And before that meeting started, Susan Rice came up to me and just gave me a big hug and said, I'm sorry.

Q Okay. And did you brief on the Benghazi attack?

A I made a reference to it at the beginning.

Q So no briefing as to --

A No briefing. The Security Council did not ask me to brief on Benghazi, but given the news, I thought it was important to acknowledge that it had happened at the beginning of this briefing. So I acknowledged it happened and then went on.

Q Did anyone brief on the Benghazi attack --

A No.

Q -- during that meeting? Okay.

Did you have any subsequent conversations with Ambassador Rice regarding her appearing on the Sunday talk shows?

A No.

Q So you were not a part of any prep sessions with her or consulted in any way regarding what she might say on those shows?

A No.

Q Okay. Ambassador Feltman, I want to move back in time to early 2011, when the Arab Spring occurred and the Embassy in Tripoli had closed and there was a decision made to send in Chris Stevens as the special representative or envoy. So I want to go back in time to that.

What can you tell us about how the decision was made to send someone -- that turned out to be Chris Stevens -- into Benghazi in the spring of 2011?

A I think it's worth keeping in context the fact that the U.S. Government's policy toward the uprising in Libya evolved over the course -- very quickly evolved but evolved because of the changing situation on the ground. As soon as Qadhafi very early on, in mid-February, started cracking down with extreme violence against the demonstrations, the U.S. position initially was to try to, you know, pressure Qadhafi to stop that.

Qadhafi was impervious to pressure from any corridor to stop cracking down on the demonstrations with violence. He was killing the people who were protesting for, you know, for liberty. It quickly evolved into trying to persuade Qadhafi it was time to step down. And it was in that context that the U.S. started engaging with the representatives of the uprising, you know, that later became known as the Transitional National Council.

You know, Benghazi had been long neglected by Qadhafi, in fact, oppressed by Qadhafi. It was a symbol to Qadhafi of the previous regime. The Libyan monarchy had its roots in the east. And so

Benghazi was basically ripe for this type of uprising, given the decades of repression under Qadhafi that suffered, even compared to the rest of Libya.

But in this attempt to try to convince Qadhafi that it was time to leave, that it was better for him, for his family, for his country to leave, you wanted to show the inevitability that he was going to go anyway. So part of that was to increase the representation, increase the engagement with the Transitional National Council as part of the leverage against Qadhafi, to show Qadhafi it's time for you to exit stage right.

And it was also important to show the people of Libya who were courageously standing up to this terrible violence that the U.S. was trying to be supportive of what their struggle stood for, you know, human rights, you know, freedom and all that. So it was in that context the decision was made to, first, start engaging more directly with the TNC -- and Hillary Clinton met with TNC officials on her travels in Europe -- and to send a representative to Benghazi.

Q Prior to her meetings with these people, can you describe for us the interagency process that occurred, if there was one? Or was this solely a State Department-driven initiative, or were there other players that were participating in the decision to intervene in Libya?

A You know, there were so many interagency discussions at the time. Remember, the entire region, the entire region was in turmoil, you know, Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, the Syria revolution was starting,

Bahrain. The entire region was in some kind of turmoil. So we're constantly having interagency meetings and interagency discussions. What the interagency discussion was in February, in March of 2011 about Libya per se, I simply don't remember.

Q Okay. Was the National Security staff involved?

A It's hard for me to imagine they weren't involved, but I can't remember specific meetings that we may have had about this.

Q Okay. Were there conversations between the State Department and the CIA about going into Libya?

A I did not have any conversation with the CIA about going into Libya, but that doesn't mean that others didn't.

Q Were you aware of any other discussions, even though you may not have personally participated in them?

A You know, a lot of this is -- was sort of the natural way of doing business between the various agencies. So, I mean, I don't remember specifically the conversations we may have had, and in terms of more details, probably we should talk about in the other setting.

Q Okay. Let me ask if you can answer this, and if not, we'll reserve it for the other setting: [REDACTED]

Mr. Snyder. I would think that would definitely be for another setting.

Mr. Feltman. I can't talk about that.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Okay. We'll go into another setting on that.

What was the Department of Defense participation in Libya in February, March 2011, if they had any?

A I don't remember the February, March period having an active DOD presence. Perhaps documentation that you've reviewed more recent than I have would show that they have, but I don't remember.

Q Do you recall at this point when the NATO airstrikes occurred?

A Well, they couldn't occur before mid-March because mid-March was the adoption of Resolution 1973 by the Security Council. And so the NATO -- the French had the first strikes just after the Security Council resolution was passed, so the NATO airstrikes would have begun soon after that March 20 resolution was adopted.

Q [REDACTED] --

A [REDACTED]

Q [REDACTED]

Ms. Betz. We'll go into the other setting.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Actually, this part has been a little unclear. Who actually appointed Chris Stevens to go into Benghazi? Was it a Presidential appointment, or was it an appointment by the Secretary of State?

A I believe it was by the Secretary of State.

Q Okay. Is there a difference between a special envoy and a special representative in --

A You'll have to ask the lawyers. I don't know.

Q Okay. So -- all right. Did you know him to be the Special Envoy or Special Representative, or were those terms used interchangeably?

A I don't remember. I truly don't remember. And I'm not sure what difference there is, but lawyers maybe know. He was not accredited to the Transitional National Council. We didn't break our diplomatic relations at this point. He was not accredited. So -- because it was not a recognized government. But he was sort of -- he was sort of a liaison presence.

Q And for those of us who come from outside the State Department, can you elaborate on the significance of that, of what accreditation means, not breaking diplomatic relations? Help us understand that.

A Accreditation is the process by which a head of state will appoint his or her representative to a foreign court or foreign country. That person is usually known as an ambassador. The recipient country -- recipient monarch or head of state -- has to provide concurrence with the choice of the sending country.

So there's a diplomatic process by which -- in this country, of course, it includes a Senate confirmation as an additional element. But a head of state will send a letter of accreditation -- send a request for agreement, it's called, to a foreign country.

The foreign country will, in most cases, in an overwhelming majority of cases send a letter accepting the agreement, providing agreement, in which case the ambassador then goes with letters of

accreditation to that country from the head of state. That's a typical appointment of an ambassador. The practice is followed globally with variations, depending on local circumstances, such as the Senate confirmation process in the United States.

The Transitional National Council was not a government at that time. So there was -- it would have been inappropriate for the United States to send a request for agreement to Benghazi or for Chris Stevens to be carrying letters of accreditation, nor, of course, was he at that point confirmed.

But the TNC had asked in the meetings with Hillary Clinton for representation to be able to work directly on a continuing basis with the U.S. Government, which is why a decision was made to send a representative to Benghazi.

Q Okay. And it's our understanding from a review of the records that there were some meetings in early to mid-March in Paris that Chris Stevens attended with the Secretary and Ambassador Cretz. First of all, were you present at those meetings?

A No.

Q Okay. Were you involved in coordination of those meetings, such as getting Chris Stevens there or preparing information for use in those meetings?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And would you describe what you did.

A Well, I, you know -- it was a variety of things. First, whenever the Secretary of State travels and is going to have meetings

on issues in a particular bureau's area of expertise, that bureau is responsible for doing the preparatory work in terms of the paperwork, you know, the talking points, the briefing papers.

Now, did I, myself, write those briefings papers? Of course not. I have staff that did that. But on a subject as important as Libya, I would pay particular attention to what was said, so I may have edited the papers that were prepared for her as they came to my office for approval. I don't remember exactly. But that would be typical when she was going to have meetings in Libya, in Paris, I would be signing off on the paperwork that was in preparation for her.

I also would be the one proposing to her staff: Hey, it's a good idea to have Chris Stevens there too since the decision has been made to send him, so let's include Chris Stevens in the meetings.

So those are the sorts of things I would be involved in.

But I intentionally did not travel because, again, the entire region was in an uproar. And for me to be going with the Secretary when she already had Gene Cretz, who was the Ambassador to Libya, and she was having Chris Stevens go, it would have been too many resources on one issue when we also had to worry about Yemen and Bahrain and Egypt and Tunisia and Syria.

Q Okay. If you could help us understand the decision to pick Chris Stevens -- because we did have Ambassador Cretz who was back in the U.S.; there was [REDACTED] who was the deputy chief of mission -- I mean, was there a reason not to pick someone who had been evacuated from Tripoli? Was there a reason to pick someone who had

not been currently assigned to Libya to go in and meet with TNC?

A Chris was perfect for this position. Chris had the Arabic skills. He had the Libya exposure. He was a new face for a new situation in Libya. He had the people skills. He was exactly the right person. Gene Cretz and [REDACTED] are extremely competent, good professionals who played a very, very important role, before, during, and after the uprising. But Chris Stevens was the right person at the right time for that job.

Q Did Chris Stevens, in his expedition, have any type of official status when they went into Libya?

A If you're asking, "did he have such things like a Libyan entry visa," no, that would have been asking the Qadhafi Government to give him a visa, which would have been quite odd, and we didn't want to give Qadhafi a veto over how we were going to deal with the TNC. But he certainly had the official backing of the, you know, of the U.S. Government so he went in officially to manage our relationship on a day-to-day basis with the TNC.

Ms. Betz. Well, and let me clarify because I think you hit something that is of interest to the committee, is that you clarified that we never broke official status with the official Libyan Government, but yet there's sort of a parallel track, if you will, of Stevens going in. And so that's -- you know, understanding the resources that went into that, any interaction, you know, with an official status, just understanding the background of sending him in in sort of this unofficial status is helpful for us.

Mr. Feltman. Again, the overall goal was to try to limit the need for a military solution, to focus on a political solution, and convince Qadhafi that his time was over. So you close down the Embassy in Tripoli -- of course, we closed it down earlier for security reasons -- but you have no representation in Tripoli, but suddenly you have somebody in Benghazi.

You know, psychologically, did this have an impact on Qadhafi's thinking to realize that the U.K., the U.S., France, Italy, whole lists of countries no longer had representation in Tripoli, but they had representation in Benghazi.

Now, the TNC, as I said, wasn't a government at the time. You know, there's certain attributes that a government has that we didn't think they had achieved those attributes yet. They very much wanted to be recognized as the legitimate government of Libya, and I'm not sure that any country actually recognized them within that period as legitimate government. I don't think they did. But it was important to show who -- which Libyans did the U.S. think were appropriate interlocutors at the time.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Now, you've just described -- I'm going to use "process" for lack of the appropriate word that I'm struggling to find right now -- of the United States Government and other governments, other foreign governments going into Benghazi to show Qadhafi that he should leave power and to avoid military intervention. We've seen other documents where you describe what was going on as the Libya experiment.

Is that what you meant by the term "Libya experiment," that the U.S. Government and other foreign countries were going into Benghazi as a show of support to the rebels to avoid having military intervention? Or does the term "Libya experiment" mean something else?

A Well, first of all, if I said "to avoid military intervention," I misspoke. We were hoping to limit or shorten military intervention. Military intervention had already started.

Qadhafi started -- Qadhafi is the one who started using the military in the first place, but then after the Security Council resolution there were the civilian protection mandates being acted upon by NATO countries. So we were hoping to be able to hasten the transition away from Qadhafi and therefore limit the military use. It wasn't a question of avoiding military at that point.

I'm not sure what I meant by -- I don't remember using that term, but I'm sure you have documentation that shows I did. I don't know what I meant. But there were very strong U.S. interests in Libya, but I wouldn't say that they went so far as to be the sort of state-building interests that term may suggest in hindsight.

You know, securing Libya's chemical weapons stocks and the precursors to chemical weapons was a key U.S. interest. Trying to limit the outflow or use of the MANPADS stocks was a key U.S. interest. U.S. had long-term commercial interests in Libya. We had human rights accountability interests in Libya. But there were others who had stronger interests in Libya, you know, European countries. And so I'm

not sure what I meant in hindsight about using the term "Libya experiment."

Mr. Snyder. If you used it. Like, I don't know if there's a document you want to show him. I don't have anything in front of us now.

Mr. Feltman. I simply don't remember. That wasn't something that I would have used so frequently that it sticks in my mind, if I used it at all.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q And that's helpful to us too, that it's not a term that you recall at this time.

A No.

Q Can you describe for us, during the time of deciding to send Chris Stevens in and when he first went into Benghazi, how the reporting structure within the State Department occurred? How did -- I mean, Stevens would report into the State Department. How would that information flow? How would the information get to you? What would you do with the information?

A Before he went?

Q Well, during the March, April timeframe because as we understand it, he was -- it took a couple of weeks for him to get into Benghazi because of conditions on the ground, because of weather, because of the ferry. But he was either in Crete or Malta or someplace waiting to go in.

A Yeah, this was all -- but this whole -- this was all a very

quick evolution. You know, the Libyan uprising starts in mid-February. The Security Council passes the resolution in mid-March to the start of the NATO strikes. By early April, Chris is there. You know, it's actually a fairly quick timeline.

And I don't remember -- I remember having discussions about how we were going to get Chris in there. There was some reluctance on DOD's part because of, you know, not wanting to have boots on the ground, so we had to look at various options. But I don't remember it being a terribly long period.

I do know that at some point -- and I don't remember when -- we started a 7 a.m. phone call with Chris Stevens. It may have been after he got to Benghazi, but it may have started before. I don't remember. And it was in that 7 a.m. phone call, 7 a.m. Washington time, phone call with Chris Stevens was extremely important because it was able to allow us to convey the information he was getting on the ground to the principals at the State Department and beyond at their morning meetings.

I didn't participate in those 7 a.m. phone calls. My staff did. But I was briefed at 8 o'clock every morning at what had transcribed on those phone calls that was of significance that I should know, so that I could then go to the meetings with Secretary Clinton that took place afterwards and make sure that she knew.

So there was a communication, a regular communication in addition to whatever was sent by email, in addition to whether cables came later, but in addition to whatever was a written product and in addition to

my own phone calls with Chris. We wanted to make sure that every day that we touched base with him.

Q Okay. And then would you describe for us your -- did you have daily meetings with the principals of the State Department? Were they weekly meetings? How often would you brief senior officials within the State Department?

A I saw the Secretary of State in the formal meetings she had with her senior staff three times a week. And in those three-times-a-week meetings, she would often say to somebody, you know, stop by my office, you know, let's keep talking afterwards. And often that person was me because, again, Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Bahrain, Syria, Libya. So when she's asking someone to stay after to talk about something after those formal meetings, it was likely me.

But far beyond that, we had constant meetings on various issues dealing with what we call shorthand Arab Spring. And she may call a meeting -- she may have called a meeting on, say, Egypt. But in that meeting on Egypt, if there was something that she needed to know, wanted to know, or I wanted to tell her on Libya, that would come up too.

So it's very hard for me to characterize how often I would have seen her because I saw her on so many different subjects dealing with the Arab Spring at that period and that it's hard to specify how many times Libya might have come up versus any of these other issues we were working on.

Q Okay. And given the nature of events that were occurring and that things evolved, did those meetings also evolve and decrease

in frequency, intensity over time, throughout 2011?

A I don't remember any let-up in the sort of feeling of intention and focus until my retirement. I mean, it was -- I felt like I was -- from the time the Tunisian uprising began in December of 2010 until my retirement in May of 2012, I felt like it was just a marathon the whole time.

Q So taking a step outside of coordination within the State Department, were there interagency meetings ongoing from the time -- from the U.N. resolution, and let's just go through the first 3-month time period, so the rest of March, April, May, and into June during that time. Were there regular, recurring interagency meetings that you attended or that you that you were aware of others within the State Department attended?

A There were constant interagency meetings.

Q And let me be specific, regarding Libya.

A On all of these topics. And they occurred at different levels. There were interagency task forces -- I'm not sure what -- I forget -- I'm using U.N. terminology because I've forgotten my U.S. terminology. But they were principal's committee meetings on Libya as well as other topics. There were deputy's committee meetings as well as other topics. There were meetings at my level. There were meetings at my staff level. The meeting schedule was pretty brutal on Libya as well as other subjects.

Q Okay. And with regard to Libya, who were the other interagency partners that were participating in these meetings? Just

the agencies, not specifically what would have been said.

A They were what you would expect for a foreign policy security issue. You know, DOD was there. The agency was there. You know, NSC, State, those were there for all of them. And then you would have others, depending on what the issues would be. You would have representatives of various counterterrorism organs being there.

But it would depend on what the -- you know, there was an agenda for meetings that was established and depending on what the agenda was. But I can't think of a single meeting that wouldn't have included State, DOD, agency, NSC.

Q Okay. And who were your counterparts within those other -- the other members of the interagency? Who did you primarily deal with from the national Security Council and from the agency, from DOD, from --

A You know, I would deal with whoever I needed to deal with. I would deal a lot with Denis McDonough on these issues. You know, I would call my counterparts at DOD. I mean, there were constant contacts and conversations among all of us working on these issues.

Q Okay. So you didn't have a primary point of contact in each of these agencies?

A No, I would call who I needed to call. I was able to get through to whoever I needed to get through to. I mean, obviously I wasn't calling Secretaries, but below that level.

Q For example, did you work with Ben Fishman at the National Security staff?

A Ben Fishman would work with my staff.

Q So he would be a level below yours?

A Ben Fishman would work with my staff. He traveled with me once to Benghazi in August 2011, but Ben Fishman worked with my staff.

Q Okay. And who on your staff would he primarily work with?

A I'm guessing the people who worked in the Office of Maghreb Affairs is who I remembered; you know, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], you know, those people.

Q Can you --

A And he would attend, you know, many of these meetings, but if there was a meeting at my level or higher he would be along the wall.

Q And all of those names just triggered something. Can you describe how NEA was structured and who within NEA was working on Libya issues during this time of, say, the first half of 2011 or throughout 2011 if it was constant?

A We had an Office of Maghreb Affairs that was headed by [REDACTED], I believe, to that whole period. I may not have the chronology exact, who had a deputy and who had desk officers. And, you know, the desk officers for, you know, say Morocco would help out with Libya because Libya was obviously at that point a much higher priority.

But we also had the added benefit of officers from Embassy Tripoli. Embassy Tripoli had been evacuated. And so for part of 2011, we had sort of a surge capacity provided by the talent from Embassy Tripoli. It was back in Washington.

At the beginning of all of this, in fact, throughout the spring

and the summer, the Office of Maghreb Affairs reported up to Deputy Assistant Secretary of State [REDACTED], who also covered the Arab Gulf. This was traditionally NEA's organization because the Arab Gulf and North Africa had traditionally been quiet. And so while they're geographically removed, they're different from other parts of NEA, which were always in some sort of chaos -- the other parts of the NEA world, not NEA the bureau, but NEA the countries.

Q You mean, NEA was not in chaos?

A 2011 you could've asked me that question.

But, you know, you often had -- you know, you had things in Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Egypt that would require a lot of attention, so you had different structures. But the Arab Gulf, you know, the six GCC countries, North Africa tended to be quiet. So they reported to one DAS. This became untenable. You had the Arab Gulf in uprisings, in Bahrain in the counterreactions of Bahrain, you had very serious problems in Yemen, and you had Tunisia and Libya. You couldn't have one DAS doing all this.

So sometime, I believe it was in the fall, we were able to get approval for another DAS position, just so that we could split those two portfolios and have one DAS concentrate on the Arab Gulf, one DAS concentrate on North Africa, and then that DAS, of course, would report to the PDAS, report to me.

Q When Libya was erupting and was the hot spot, did you designate a particular person to focus more -- from your senior staff, from your front office -- on Libya? For example, we see a lot of

interaction with Liz Dibble who was your principal.

A Well, but Liz Dibble didn't come on board until that fall. Ron Schlicher was still PDAS at the time the Libyan uprising began, if I remember correctly. Isn't that right? I think that Liz Dibble -- let me think. When did we move from Ron Schlicher to Liz Dibble? I believe that Liz Dibble did not begin work until, for me, until September 2011, and Ron Schlicher was the PDAS when all this began.

And Ron and I basically had -- we never formalized a division of labor on these crisis points, but Ron had served in Egypt and had very close ties with Egypt. So when we needed to have a particular focus on Egypt, for example, Ron was better equipped -- having local knowledge -- than I was. If there was something with Syria, given my time in Jordan, Israel, and Lebanon, I could focus on that. So we didn't have a formal division of labor, but we tended, given the need to manage all these crises at once, to look at where the comparative advantage was for each of us to work.

Q And that makes perfect sense. Did you have this unofficial division of labor with respect to Libya? Because, obviously, we're interested in talking with the people who were focused on Libya.

A As I recall, Ron worked a lot on the management issues regarding Libya: You know, how do we get Chris Stevens into Benghazi? What sort of -- what do we need to be asking for in terms of infrastructure support for Libya? And I worked more on the policy: How are we engaging with the TNC? What should we in NEA propose as

the U.S. priorities in those interactions? That sort of thing.

So that was more of a traditional role where the PDAS is working on the management of the bureau and management of the post, and the Assistant Secretary is working on the broader policy issues.

Q And did that sort of division continue when there was the handoff to Liz Dibble as your PDAS?

A Yes.

Q I have about a little over 10 minutes left.

How many times did you travel to Libya after Embassy Tripoli closed at the end of February of 2011? You talked about a trip in August of 2011 that you took with Ben Fishman. Had you been in Libya before that when -- and, in particular, to Benghazi to meet up with Envoy Stevens?

A I believe I was in Libya five times in 2011. I went to Benghazi in May of 2011. I went to Benghazi again in August of 2011. I went to Tripoli in September of 2011. I accompanied Secretary Clinton to Tripoli in October of 2011. I accompanied U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Susan Rice to Tripoli in November 2011. So I believe I was in Libya five times in 2011.

Q Did Ambassador Rice also go to Benghazi in November?

A Oh, yes. Yes. Yes, you're correct. She went to Benghazi in 2011.

Q Did she go to both Tripoli and Benghazi or just one or the other? We understand it has been a while, and you do a lot of travel.

A She went to both.

Q Both. In your trip to Benghazi in May, in late May of 2011, can you -- did you go -- you went just to Benghazi at that time. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q In Libya. And met up with Chris Stevens?

A No. Chris Stevens was on a much deserved R&R at the time, and I was there when [REDACTED] was heading up the small office we had.

Q She was the acting envoy at the time?

A Acting whatever the title was, yes.

Q She went in to relieve Chris Stevens at the time?

A Yes.

Q And what was the purpose of your visit?

A To basically reinforce the engagement that we had with the TNC to make some policy points to the TNC in a way that can reinforce what the local reps are doing. This is, again, part of diplomatic practice. You know, if one of the local representative is always saying to one's contacts, we suggest, you know, this or that or the other or we would like to see this, that, or the other, it always helps to have headquarters reinforce that point, you know, whether it's by visits, by phone calls, or whatever.

So I was there to basically reinforce the policy points with the TNC and, again, as part of this effort to show Qadhafi that people weren't dealing with him anymore.

I also had the occasion to meet with a broad range of civil society

representatives when I was there to show that the U.S. wanted to hear from, engage with, a broad spectrum of Libyans, that it wasn't simply that we were dealing with the head of the TNC, that we were trying to understand the broader Libyan context.

Q And when you say "civil society," I just want to make sure that I understand what you're talking about. Are you talking universities and educators, healthcare professionals? What is within your definition of "civil society"?

A In this case, we met with students. We met with women's groups. We went to a hospital to meet with medical professionals. We met with human rights activists. Benghazi had been, you know, essentially closed for decades because of Qadhafi's repression, and this was an important way to show sort of a reopening of the world with a city that traditionally had been an internationally open city.

Q Either prior to this trip or during this trip, were there discussions about how long to have the Benghazi expedition or the Stevens expedition continue in Benghazi?

I guess, let's take a step back first. What was the initial plan when he went in? Was he to be there for a day, a week, 30 days, 6 months, or was it more fluid than that?

A It was more fluid than that, but it was certainly the idea was to be there more than a day or a week. The idea was to be there for long enough that we would have the type of insights into TNC thinking that you can't get from a single meeting, that we would have the type of access to other decisionmakers in the TNC that you can't have when

you only are meeting with one or two persons.

We needed somebody who could better understand what was happening, what was motivating the leadership of the TNC, what were they thinking. So the idea was not that this would necessarily be years and years and years but certainly more than a few weeks.

Q Okay. And then when you -- either prior to your trip or during your trip in May of 2011, were there discussions about continuing the presence in Benghazi for an indefinite period of time, maybe not years but at least the foreseeable future?

A Yes, there were. And the discussions were, what's the appropriate -- when I was there, part of our discussions were, what's the appropriate platform for maintaining a presence for that period in Benghazi?

Q And by "platform," do you mean number of personnel?

A Number of personnel, communications, location. You know, at the time we were in a hotel --

Q The Tibesti Hotel?

A The Tibesti Hotel. And so the discussion had already started about what were the alternatives to being in a place like that.

Q Okay. And had there been some review of compounds and villas at that time?

A Yes, it had started, and it was very difficult because there were not that many places available or appropriate.

Q Okay.

A And we were, frankly, in competition with the British, the

French, the Italians, everybody else.

Q Everybody always wanted the best place.

A Yeah.

Q For the least amount of money.

Had there been similar discussions back at Main State regarding a continued presence in Benghazi prior to your going to the May trip?

A I'm sure there were, but I don't remember.

Q Okay. And do you recall approximately when it was that the decision was made to have a longer-term presence in Benghazi? Was it before your trip, during your trip in May, shortly after your trip, or some other period of time?

A I don't remember.

Q Was it certainly before you had your August trip?

A During the August trip, Chris and I talked about, frankly, our shared view that we needed to maintain a longer presence in Benghazi than the fall of Tripoli might otherwise suggest. I was in Benghazi when the battle for Tripoli began, and it was clear that this time, it was inevitable that Qadhafi was leaving Tripoli even though he wasn't, of course, found and killed until later.

And so Chris and I did talk in that August trip about the fact that both of us believed that we needed to maintain some kind of presence in Benghazi for the foreseeable future. We didn't talk about how long, but given the history of Libya, given the history of the revolution, given the need for Benghazi to remain supportive of whatever government took form in Tripoli, we thought it was politically extremely important

that we maintain some kind of presence in Benghazi beyond the fall of Tripoli.

Q In the course of those discussions, were there any benchmarks that you discussed that we need to be in Benghazi until this happens, or we need to be in Benghazi until the following three things happen, such as, you know, government being reestablished in Tripoli or, you know, Qadhafi completely out of power?

A We were thinking beyond those. We were thinking things like the elections that were to be scheduled, and in August 2011, we didn't know when there would be elections. We knew eventually the TNC or its successor would have to have some kind of elections to provide legitimacy to the governing structures, and we thought that it was important to maintain some kind of presence in Benghazi through whatever the electoral calendar was, passed the initial elections, and perhaps a little bit beyond to see things. So we were talking about things like that.

Q And were there other factors in addition to or apart from the elections that were important benchmarks to meet?

A Part of this was the historic realities of Libya. Libya emerged as an independent country in 1951 through a U.N. resolution, oddly enough. It's one of the few countries created by a U.N. resolution. And it was created out of three separate parts, you know, one part in the south, Fezzan, and then the part in the east, Cyrenaica, and then Tripoli in the area in the west. And the east and the west remain rivals.

I mentioned Qadhafi repressing Benghazi for decades. And Libya, if it's going to hang together as a unified state -- and we all hope it will regain that unified state approach -- it's going to have to -- Libya is going to have to transcend this division. And we thought it was important to maintain a presence to help show the people of Benghazi they were not reverting back to their neglected, oppressed state of being under Qadhafi.

So there was -- part of this was just historic reality of how you -- what you need to do to help keep Libya together as a unified state post-Qadhafi.

Ms. Jackson. Well, I see I have about 2 minutes left, and before I go to another topic, I think I will just stop.

Ms. Betz. Can I just ask one followup question?

Ms. Jackson. Oh, yes, Kim.

Ms. Betz. So, to that point, why not make the mission official?

Mr. Feltman. Because we knew we would never get the resources from Congress that we needed to make it official. This is a time of diplomatic retrenchment globally. We do not get the security resources or the diplomatic resources or the positions from Congress that we need.

So what we were trying to -- what Chris and I were trying to figure out was, how could we make a compelling enough argument that in the zero-sum game that we have in terms of our budget and our resources, that we could find enough resources to keep Benghazi operating through the critical transition period?

We didn't think we had any hope of keeping it there permanently because we would never get the type of budget support out of Congress we would need. This is a time when the U.S. reduces diplomatic presences, doesn't expand them.

Ms. Jackson. With that, we'll go off the record.

[Recess.]

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

Q Let's go back on the record. I'll just reintroduce myself. My name is Susanne Sachsman Grooms. I'm the Staff Director on the Democratic side of the Select Committee. And again I want to thank you for being here today. I think we have an incredibly distinguished diplomat in front of us, so we will try not to embarrass ourselves with our knowledge of the Mideast.

So I just want to start by covering a couple things that went over in the last round just briefly to clarify a couple different points. One of the things that you were talking about was a series of lots and lots of constant communications, interagency meetings, discussions with the Secretary, discussions within the Department, and with external interagency, in the 2011 time period about the Arab Spring for lack of a better term. Is that right?

A Yes.

Q Okay. It sounds like your memory doesn't particularly distinguish between specific discussions about Libya during that time period versus, you know, generalized lots of discussions about all of these different topics where Libya would have been included when relevant. Is that accurate?

A Yes, to an extent. It's hard to describe how different it

was working in NEA in, say, February 2011, versus February 2010. At the time in February 2010, I wouldn't have thought of NEA as being a quiet area of the world, but in comparison to what hit us in February of 2011, February 2010 was quiet. And it wasn't just NEA. It was the entire U.S. Government was focused on what was happening in all of these different countries. Everything was unfolding at once and going in different directions.

The way that Yemen was evolving was certainly different than the way that Tunisia was evolving, from Egypt involving, Syria, Libya, et cetera. So often meetings would go from one topic to the other. Now not necessarily at the NSC. The NSC would call my meetings on various subjects, and you would stick to the agenda at the NSC.

But if I had a meeting with Hillary Clinton, as I said earlier on Egypt, but I needed her to know something about Libya, the discussion would easily evolve into a Libya discussion because that was my target of opportunity because she was right in front of me, and I could tell her something she needed to know about Libya. Or she could take the opportunity to raise something she wanted to tell me on Libya. So while the NSC meetings would be distinct based on agendas, often our discussions at the State Department were more free form, looking at this entire region.

Q And when you speak about it becoming sort of a marathon of a job and a marathon throughout the region until the time period when you retired, you're talking about the whole region?

A Yes. We joked to ourselves that NEA stood for never, ever

again will I bid on this job.

Q And as part of the evolution, you were talking a little bit about how the NEA Bureau itself had to establish a new Deputy Assistant Secretary spot. Is that right?

A Yes.

Q Is that the spot that Ray Maxwell ended up taking?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what did his DAS spot entail?

A The DASes in NEA were responsible for geographic subsets of the region and/or functional areas, and his area was North Africa.

Q So that included Libya?

A That included Libya.

Q Okay. I think he, and I don't know if you've sort of seen this before, but he came before a previous committee to Congress and alleged that he had been sort of excluded from, and not involved in, Libya matters. From your point of view at the time you were there, was he still a reporting structure for Libya matters?

A He was still the reporting structure for Libya matters, and he cared particularly about the staff who worked for him sort of in the office of North African affairs. He was an advocate for making sure that I understood the pressures they were under in terms of producing papers, policy recommendations, et cetera. So he often engaged with me on basically protecting our own staff from the workload.

Q You also talked in the previous round about some issues or concerns that you had with obtaining congressional support for staying

or setting up the post in Benghazi. At the time, and this would then be in spring of 2011, there was bipartisan support for intervention in Libya. Right?

A Yes.

Q And so was the concern more a financial one?

A Yes, but it wasn't a concern about the short term. We knew we had support for engagement with the TNC. What this was, was the -- let me start over. When we started to look at the U.S. presence in Libya, what it would be like after the fall of Tripoli -- this was when Chris Stevens and I were talking about this in August of 2011 -- our working presumption was, it's impossible to open a new permanent diplomatic presence in Benghazi because of the budget realities.

I'm not sure the State Department has ever gotten its full requests funded by the U.S. Congress, so given the fact that it would be untenable for us -- we would look out to lunch. We would look as though we didn't understand the reality for us to propose having a permanent presence here -- what do we really need now to help get through the transition? That was the context. It wasn't complaining one way or the other. It was just accepting certain realities of how the State Department has to do business given the fiscal climate in the United States right now.

Q And I think you talked previously about the importance of going into Benghazi and the importance of engaging with the TNC to ensure that there would be a unified government. Can you explain what the importance of having a unified Libyan Democratic Government would

be to the United States Government in terms of counterterrorism, and chemical weapons, and MANPADs, and those sorts of things?

A If you permit me, I will go back a little bit historically. You know, there were decades when the U.S. did not have a diplomatic presence in Libya. You know, Qadhafi and his green revolution overthrew the monarchy in 1969. In the early 1970s, the U.S. withdrew its ambassador. By the late 1970s, U.S. Diplomatic Mission had been closed after it had been attacked and burned.

During that period, from the time the U.S. had no diplomatic presence, up until the settlement for the Pan Am 103 attack, you saw many, many examples where Libyan behavior was contrary to U.S. interests -- Pan Am 103 is the one that's most obvious -- but in terms of what Libya did to support revolutions in Africa, what Libya did in terms of supporting terrorist organizations. There's a whole list of things that were of great concern to the United States.

After the settlement in 2003, and the return of U.S. diplomats to Tripoli in 2004, the U.S. was engaging with the Qadhafi Government to promote U.S. interests. To build on the renunciation of weapons of mass destruction, the renunciation of terrorism in the Pan Am settlement that Qadhafi had done, but it was never the type of collegial relationship in which you could easily pursue U.S. interests.

So, of course, our aspiration was to see the type of government in Tripoli that would be able to engage with the United States and others on areas of mutual interest, and would be able to represent all of Libya, would be able to project a unified front when it came to controlling

counterterrorism, when it came to -- working on counterterrorism, excuse me. When it came to the protection of the remaining chemical weapons and things like that because there was always a risk that this country would split apart. And many of our discussions with TNC representatives were about that well-intentioned advice, but the need for inclusion, the need to show in word, and act, and representation that the TNC was capable of representing the interests of all of Libya, not just the interests of Benghazi.

Q And just so we have a sense of this sort of immediate need, when we went into Benghazi, especially following the fall of Qadhafi and in that 2011 timeframe. Can you give us a sense, though, of what the importance would be of the country not splitting apart, of having a centralized control of the MANPADs, chemical weapons, the militia, those sorts of things?

A Unfortunately I think we can see the risk of the country's split when we look at Libya today. But you've asked me about 2011, at which point the risks that we see manifested today were there but hadn't yet come out. But, you know, look at the MANPADs. MANPADs are a relatively easy to use weapon. They pose a risk to civil aviation. Plus it's, I understand, relatively simple to take explosive material out of MANPADs and use it for other purposes.

So there was a real danger, a real risk, to the smuggling of MANPADs across Libya's long and porous borders to other countries. And there were many concerns raised by the Egyptians about these things, the risk of these flowing into Egypt. The Israelis were concerned

about the explosives, the MANPADs themselves then going into Gaza through the tunnels from the Sinai. The African countries to Libya's south were concerned about the outflow of weapons. It was extremely important that we had local authorities willing to work with us to figure out how to try to control this risk. The U.S. was not going to put boots on the ground. So we needed to have a proper authority to be able to work with us on this. The chemical weapons were similar.

The Organization For the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, OPCW, based in the Hague, has the responsibility for monitoring the destruction of chemical weapons and chemical precursors when countries sign on to the Chemical Weapons Convention, as Qadhafi did as part of that 2003 settlement. And there was an ongoing program to destroy Libya's chemical weapons that had been proceeding under the Qadhafi Government, but it hadn't been completed yet, so there were still chemical weapons and precursors at a facility called Waddan in southern Libya, that needed protection. And we needed an authority that was able to have the capacity, the legitimacy, to protect that. So those are the sorts of things. Those are among the immediate concerns we had.

Q And when you talk about the risks being, in 2011, the risks being that Libya would become what it essentially is today, did you and did Chris Stevens in your discussions with him, feel that engaged diplomacy within Libya and specifically within Benghazi would help prevent Libya from becoming the way it is essentially today?

A I don't think any of us had an exaggerated sense of what

diplomatic efforts alone can achieve, but we certainly saw diplomatic engagement as important tools to try to achieve these goals, not the only tools, but the ones that were under our responsibility as State Department foreign service officers.

Q There has been, I think, much made and probably more in the election realm, but maybe not always in the election realm, about a lack of a U.S. strategy to deal with the change of government in Libya in the Arab Spring. From your perspective where you were sitting, was there a U.S. strategy -- I mean I've seen strategy documents -- but was there a U.S. strategy that you all were engaged in and trying to develop and implement?

A Yes, but it even predates the Libyan uprising, or it continues through the Libyan uprising. Because there was a policy to pursue limited U.S. objectives in Libya that preceded Qaddafi's fall. It included some of the issues we have already talked about, which is counterterrorism and protection of -- well, protection against proliferation of weapons, promotion of certain commercial interests, but it also included trying to encourage a more representative Libyan Government. More respect for human rights that were sadly lacking under the Qadhafi Government. So these basic policy objectives remained throughout this period. Of course, the Libyan uprising provided a new impetus to some of them and new opportunities and new challenges in trying to pursue them.

Q I want to talk a little bit -- so I'll go back a little bit to the last round where we left off because we were talking a little

bit about, I think, late 2011 and your discussions with Chris Stevens about extending the U.S. presence. Let me just start by talking for a couple minutes about Chris Stevens himself. Did you consider Chris Stevens to be an expert on Libya?

A Yes, as much as anyone is an expert on Libya.

Q From our discussions with a number of people within the State Department and previous committees, a lot of people talked about giving a fair amount of deference to Chris Stevens' policy views about Libya because of his expertise. Do you agree?

A Yes. I do not like trying to second guess people who are in the field, who are working on issues on the ground in ways that we at headquarters can't possibly understand.

Q And so in the fall of 2011, when you would have been talking to Chris Stevens, would you have given a lot of weight to his views about the extension of U.S. presence in Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q And you shared those views?

A Yes, largely.

Q And do you recall specifically what he -- and I understand it's been a long time -- but what he did say were his views about why it was important to stay at that time?

A We had sort of an on-and-off discussion about this when I was there, particularly in August when we were there together, but we had an on-and-off discussion about it over the phone or if we would see each other elsewhere as well because we knew we had kind of an uphill

climb on this.

The normal response would be once the government's in Tripoli, we didn't have anything in Benghazi before that, then you close down Benghazi. That would be sort of a normal response given the budget climate, given all the other complications. And so Chris and I would talk about did we really think this was essential. Why did we think it was essential. And it had to do with, again, the fact that Libya had been essentially a divided country before, where Benghazi had been neglected, oppressed even by Qadhafi, but yet Benghazi was where this uprising had begun. It was where the Libyan revolution had begun, so it was important that Benghazi feel part of this process. We felt that having a small diplomatic presence in Benghazi -- it would not be the Embassy.

Clearly the Embassy would be accredited to the government in Tripoli -- but that that would keep our presence as well as the presence of others, because we were not the only ones looking at this, as well as the presence of others, would keep Benghazi as part of the political equation. Because if you didn't have Benghazi feeling invested in what was happening in Tripoli, you had the risks of the country splitting again, is what we clearly thought.

Q And were these sort of ongoing discussions sort of throughout the fall, so you had your trip in August 2011? It looks like you were back in Tripoli in September, October, and then November. Were these sort of ongoing discussions with him during that time period?

A They were ongoing discussions, and of course they included

others as well, because we needed to muster our arguments. We needed to muster our rationale. We needed to feel confident ourselves that this was the right thing to do before we would propose something that was going to be, you know, financially difficult.

Q And it looks like, from the documents that we have seen, and I think some people we've spoken to, that the actual decision didn't get made to stay in Benghazi until December of 2011? Is that accurate?

A Yes, yes. And you're referring to the memo to Pat Kennedy.

Q Yes.

A Yes the decision was made in December, but of course there were a lot of preliminary discussions before that memo was sent forward to Pat Kennedy.

Q And preliminary discussions throughout the State Department? Is that what you mean?

A Throughout the State Department, but this was also, I'm sure, was also included in discussions at the NSC.

Q And do you recall what the NFC's views were?

A I don't recall any questions about it. I would remember objections to this.

Q And how would that have been sort of phrased? Would that have been sort of discussions and recommendations that started from the field with Chris Stevens, and then were you joining with Chris Stevens, and you would be then recommending that path forward to the NSC?

A I mean, what I remember is that we proposed this to the State

Department. The State Department had that responsibility. I don't remember exactly how we discussed it with the NSC.

Q It would have been a State Department decision?

A It would have been a State Department decision.

Q And the memo was signed off by Under Secretary Kennedy. Would it have been his decision within the State Department?

A Yes, it would have been Pat's decision, but I can't imagine that Pat didn't also consult, inform others, including the Secretary on something that was this significant.

Q On the issue of the large policy decision about staying in Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q Can you sort of describe the process for the memo itself, how it gets worked?

A The memo is, you know, drafted below my level. It's approved by me, and that's not just a nominal approval. On something that important, I read, and thought about it, probably made edits. I don't remember. But it's only written after there's been enough consensus among various stakeholders in the State Department. So this memo was only written after, you know, Diplomatic Security, other parts of the State Department, would have been in concurrence that there was a need to stay, so there was a lot of preliminary meetings before somebody started typing out this memo.

Q And from what we can see, it looks like -- well, did Chris Stevens to your knowledge have input into the memo?

A I'm sure he did.

Q Were you aware that some of the language that's actually in the memo appears to be sort of cut and pasted from one of Chris Stevens' emails?

A No, I'm not aware, but I'm not surprised.

Q And you're not surprised because?

A Because Chris was on the ground. Chris would be making the strongest arguments. Chris had a unique perspective that as smart as we may think we are at headquarters, we lack. I'm actually happy if my desk would be using arguments that Chris Stevens formulated because I think he was in a better position than any of the rest of us to know.

Q Yeah. Great. So much has been made from the fact that the memo is specific as to how many Diplomatic Security slots should be in Benghazi and how many, you know, in the year moving forward. Do you remember how that information got into the memo?

A It would have gotten into the memo by the discussions between NEA and DS.

Q Now, you had talked about lots of preliminary discussions on the policy decision of moving forward and keeping a diplomatic presence in Benghazi throughout the Department, with the NSC.

Would the level of detail of how many particular Diplomatic Security agents have been involved in those conversations, or is that a decision that DS would have made and would have just sort of been inputted into the memo?

A I don't know because by the time the memo came to me, those

words were already there. I would not have signed this memo. Actually I didn't sign the memo. I think I was travelling when the memo was sent and somebody signed on my behalf. But I approved it remotely. I wouldn't have approved this memo had DS not have cleared the memo. This would not have been something that we would have done independent of DS. So I assume that DS was comfortable with the numbers that were in that memo.

Q And did you generally defer to Diplomatic Security on diplomatic security matters?

A Yes.

Q Did you trust their judgment?

A Yes. I have served in some dangerous places throughout my career, including places where I know that I was a target, and DS has protected me extremely well throughout my career, including on my travels as NEA Assistant Secretary in some really problematic places. And so I have every reason to trust the professionalism of Diplomatic Security.

Q And so when you received the memo, did you sort of stop and question the DS presence, or was your view on it more of an overall policy, should we stay in, kind of a view?

A It was the latter. It was more of the policy view. I assumed that my staff and DS were in agreement on the DS requirements. Had there been a problem with DS, my staff would have alerted me, and they did not, so I did not focus on it.

Q And we have heard the term split memo or dissent memo.

Could Diplomatic Security have issued one on this action memo?

A Diplomatic Security cleared this memo.

Q Yes. I mean like in theory could they have?

A Yes. In theory you could always have a split memo that says NEA says this; DS says this, and you ask for a decision by the principals, but DS joined this memo.

Q Yes. And in the memo, it talked about extending through, it was obviously through the end of the calendar year of 2012. Why until the end of the calendar year of 2012?

A We thought that that would get us past the critical elements of transition, that there was supposed to be elections the following summer. I think they actually took place in August, although the date wasn't set when that memo went forward. And it would allow the government to take off as it would be formed out of those elections. So it would provide us the ability to have some understanding of the leadership circles in Benghazi, hopefully some influence over what the people in Benghazi were thinking through that election and transition period.

Libya is a big country. If we only had a diplomatic presence in Tripoli during those elections, I think we would have gotten a very distorted view of -- I was already gone from the State Department at this point, but I think it would have been a very distorted view if you are only reporting what's happening in Tripoli during something as critical as the first elections after Qadhafi's fall.

Q And do you recall whether there were sort of discussions

at the time about reevaluating later, right, to see whether there would be an extended U.S. presence or whether the plan was just to leave at the end of 2012?

A The idea was to look at it again.

Q I want to switch gears and show you an exhibit. I'm going to mark this as exhibit 1, and it's a letter that the committee has received from, I believe, 33 former ambassadors, former career ambassadors. I just want you to take some time to read it because I assume you haven't seen it.

[Feltman Exhibit No. 1

Was marked for identification.]

Ms. Betz. For the record, I think this is the first time that the majority has seen this letter.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Oh, okay. It's my understanding that a copy of the letter was sent to the majority and the minority.

Ms. Betz. It just may be us, so we'll double check, but just for the record.

Mr. Feltman. It's also been widely published.

Mr. Snyder. If we can take a few minutes and read it.

Mr. Snyder. Okay.

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

Q Before you were the Assistant Secretary, you were the Ambassador to Lebanon? Is that right? Well, not directly before.

A Not directly before but previously.

Q And you were the Ambassador to Lebanon during the 2004, 2008

under the Bush administration?

A Yes.

Q So you also would have been a career ambassador. Is that accurate?

A Yes.

Q A career Foreign Service?

A Yes.

Q And following the committee's hearing with Secretary Clinton, the committee received a letter from these 33 former career ambassadors. It identifies misunderstandings that they felt our members had or some of the members had during the hearing that were reflected during the questioning. Do you recall whether you had an opportunity to watch the hearing with Secretary Clinton?

A I do not own a television.

Q Okay. Wonderful for you.

A Actually the answer should be then no. But that didn't answer the question. The question is no. I certainly read the news coverage afterwards, but I did not -- and I heard excerpts on the radio, but I did not watch it.

Q The letters from 33 former career ambassadors, do you know some of these individuals?

A Many of them, the majority.

Q And do you respect their viewpoints?

A Yes.

Q I just want to go through some of the points within the

letter and ask you whether you agree with them because they said, and I'm quoting here: "Our experience in how ambassadors function and how they interact with the Department and with the Secretaries of State they serve, was at variance with understandings expresses in some lines of questions raised by the committee." And that's an important point, I think, that if the committee has been misunderstanding things, that we need to understand them better. And frankly you're our first ambassador here since we received the letter, so I think it will be helpful to walk through it, if you don't mind.

In the first page, that bottom paragraph, it reads: "Each of us had ample access to the Secretaries we served. However, that access more often than not, was conducted through a range of senior professional colleagues across the Department, each of whom was empowered to make decisions in the management and policy spheres. The normal chain of command is through regional and functional assistant secretaries, not directly to the secretaries. Skilled career Foreign Service ambassadors understand the need to move questions to decision at the right level and to work those decisions up the leadership chain as needed. We believe this experience is in keeping with sound organizational practice and compatible with what we have seen in the private and nongovernmental spheres in which our activities currently are focused."

Do you agree with that statement?

A Yes.

Q In your role as Assistant Secretary for NEA, were you part

of that normal chain of command that's sort of referenced within there?

A Yes.

Q And why do you think that chain of command functions well?

A It enables an ambassador, chief of mission overseas, to have immediate access to the part of the State Department that's most focused on his or her portfolio. That Assistant Secretary has the responsibility to make sure that other principals who need to know, know what the issue is if it's appropriate to be going beyond that. But often things that are of great concern at a particular post can be solved by the regional bureau that's working full-time to backstop that particular post. It would be untenable to expect the Secretary of State to be able to respond to each request from every Ambassador of, I think, the U.S. has diplomatic relations in over 190 countries.

Q Do you believe that when you personally raised up issues to the Secretary of State, that she treated them with the appropriate level of attention, thoughtfulness, and care?

A I was in senior leadership positions for the State Department when I was in Beirut, earlier when I was in Jerusalem, and then, of course, when I was in Washington. And I felt that whether I was trying to get something to Condoleeza Rice in the case of Jerusalem or Beirut, or trying to get something to Hillary Clinton in the case of my Washington tours, that I had absolutely the attention I needed from both of those Secretaries with whom I worked most closely.

Q And when you had a crisis and you needed attention, did you feel that you could get their attention?

A Absolutely.

Q What about when you raised issues with other management within the State Department like Under Secretary Kennedy? When you brought issues that needed to be addressed to his attention, do you think he took you seriously, and he treated those issues appropriately?

A We often called Pat Kennedy the miracle worker at NEA because he was the one who could often help us find the solution to something that was vexing us. He's tough. He has the responsibility for helping us find the resources we may need in a very tight budget climate, or in making sure that we have thought through extraction capabilities if there's something of risk. So he was a very tough counterpart, but he more often than not would find a way to address a problem that we could identify for him, so, yes, he was essential to my ability as Assistant Secretary to support my overseas posts.

Q And you felt when you went to him that he was actively trying to help solve the problems that you brought to him?

A Yes. If he thought something simply wasn't realistic that we were proposing, he would be straight with that. But more often than not, he almost seemed to relish seeing what seemed to be an intractable problem and finding a way to overcome that challenge.

Q And you were there when the Embassy in Tripoli evacuated. Right? Let me be more specific. You were in the NEA Bureau as the Assistant Secretary when the Embassy in Tripoli evacuated?

A Yes.

Q And can you explain how that worked and whether that was

sort of a good example of seeing Under Secretary Kennedy in a crisis situation?

A It was very complicated for a number of reasons. Securitywise, Libyan government, bureaucratic restrictions, exit visas, permissions, things like that, as well as meteorological, the weather. The weather didn't cooperate with us very well. This was a joint effort by DS, NEA, with management, Pat Kennedy, being the key person, to all of us playing very specific roles. I had to work with Bill Burns, the then Deputy Secretary, to try to get the permission of the Libyan government to let us leave because the Libyan government didn't want us to leave. It was a diplomatic defeat for them to see embassies departing. It showed that they weren't able to control the security of their own capital, and I think that they could probably play it back and realize that we weren't going to come back as long as Qadhafi was there. So we had a real diplomatic political problem. Then the logistical problem was how do you get people out given the security and things? And it was Pat Kennedy who was able to find a way to charter the boat from Malta that came in to the port in Tripoli to physically move these people. Again, the weather didn't cooperate with us. It wasn't the easiest thing. Pat looked at every detail of the physical movement of the people, while we looked at the diplomatic efforts of it, and security looked at the security aspects to make sure it could happen. I don't think there was anyone that was more important to that evacuation in Washington than Pat Kennedy. On the ground, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was essential, but in terms of Washington, it was Pat Kennedy

who was essential.

Q Was that a, and maybe there is no typical, but was that evacuation in your view sort of the typical process for how to work through an evacuation?

A I don't think there is a typical evacuation. I hope there never is.

Q At the time of the evacuation, I think we have seen some documents reflecting that there was a delay in the decision announcing U.S. policy against Qadhafi until after we could get the U.S. personnel out of Tripoli. Is that what you recall?

A You know, Qadhafi was very unpredictable. He was under threat, but he was certainly under pressure because of the uprising that was taking place. Given the history of what Qadhafi had done around the world, you had to take into account all contingencies. It may have been very, very remote, but what if Qadhafi had taken our diplomatic personnel as sort of human shields or hostages? You had to take that into account. Again, it may have been remote, but we had to play out all these contingencies; and so, yes, the decision was our statements in the initial days of the uprisings had to take into account the safety of our personnel and the safety of American citizens on the ground.

Q And that was a decision made by the State Department. Do you know who sort of made that decision, or was that just a consensus?

A I remember it was a consensus because it was such commonsense.

Q It was a consensus decision to take into account in U.S. policy and put it at the forefront of the safety of our Embassy personnel?

A The safety of our personnel has to take precedence in a situation like that. You can develop lots of ways to get messaging across to Qadhafi that what he was doing was unacceptable, and we did. We were speaking to his aides and advisers directly. We were using others who had influence on him to pass the message privately that what was happening was absolutely unacceptable. But your public messaging -- which is what governments typically react to because they have to show a public response to a public message -- you have to take into account the absolute essential responsibility of the U.S. Government, the State Department, for protection of American diplomats, other personnel, facilities, and American citizens.

Q And it goes without saying, but I'll ask it anyway, it was a policy decision that you agreed with?

A Yes.

Q I'm just going to take you back to the letter. On the second page where we had left off it reads: Ultimately if an Ambassador believes an issue is sufficiently critical to merit the Secretary's attention, the Ambassador has both the means and the responsibility to make certain it does. In the event of an urgent need for direct contact with the Secretary, however, none of us expected to use direct email contact as there are more effective ways of communicating. For example, the State Department Operations Center, which operates 24/7,

provides better access to senior officials than does any direct cell phone number and can track down department principals any time, anywhere. Do you agree with that statement?

A Yes.

Q And can you explain the importance of using the ops center when you're outside of the U.S., or outside of headquarters?

A Sometimes you can use the ops center in headquarters. The ops center knows where the Secretary is at all times and what the Secretary is doing at all times. So the ops center can reach -- I'll say her, because it was -- I'll use the pronoun her because it was a she -- at any time. And if the Secretary is like in a meeting with the President, the ops center would be able to find someone to pull the Secretary out if needed. If I had a direct cell phone and she had turned it off, what good is that? I needed to reach her urgently. The other thing is, the ops center, with permission of the callers, of the people on the phone, can take notes to alert others of the information. If you're having a one-on-one conversation with the Secretary, and you need follow-up, if you're an Ambassador and you call the Secretary and say, Madam Secretary, I need X,Y and Z, do you expect the Secretary of State herself to drop her entire schedule and then call up Pat Kennedy and say, Pat, we need this; call up Eric Boswell and say, Eric, we need this. You would want someone else to be on the call as well to make sure that the action items agreed upon are followed up, not because the Secretary will neglect, but because that's not the best use of the Secretary of State's time.

So that's the reason why I think using the ops center -- those are two reasons, the ability to reach the Secretary at all times and to know what the Secretary is doing, whether it's appropriate to interrupt or not, and to be able to make sure that action by other parts of the State Department are followed up upon.

Q And you would use that maybe even if you were in the same building as the Secretary?

A Yes. But there were a variety of things I could do and did do. I often would simply stop by Jake Sullivan's office. If there was something where I wanted the Secretary to know something, but I didn't need to engage with her directly and she had a very busy schedule, I would drop by Jake and say, Jake, can you make sure the boss knows X, Y or Z. And then Jake would tell me later if she had any reaction to X, Y or Z, or she perhaps would call me when she had a break and say, hey, I got your message, and I agree with what our proposing or whatever. So it wasn't always using the ops center. It was using whatever means was most appropriate and most convenient at the time.

Q And is it fair to say that your standard practice was not to email the Secretary's unclassified email account in order to get matters to her attention?

A I responded to emails that she sent me. I do not believe that there's a single email I initiated with her. I would have thought it would be inappropriate, you know, email address notwithstanding, whatever the email address is, I think it would have been inappropriate for an Assistant Secretary to email her directly when there are so many

other ways to get her information.

Q And so the lack of extensive email communication between you and the Secretary in her unclassified email account, doesn't reflect a lack of communications between the two of you or the lack of information that was flowing up from you to the Secretary. Is that accurate?

A That's accurate. I think it would be rare if we were both in Washington that we didn't see each other on a daily basis.

Q In here, just further down in that paragraph, it says, quote, "We did not expect the Secretary of State to read each of the hundreds of thousands of cables sent annually to the Department. We knew the Department cables sent under the Secretary's name were only rarely approved by him or her." Is that accurate?

A Yes.

Q And this, I think this particular claim is probably a reference to some allegations that we had seen before that the Washington Post Fact Checker had sort of checked already. Is it fair to say that lots and lots of department cables bear the Secretary of State's name in the signature line, but that does not mean that she approved the decision?

A Yes.

Q In the next paragraph it says, quote, "Ambassadors are given wide latitude in how they operate in the field. We were expected to use our good judgment paired with internal vetting processes in deciding where to travel in country. The same was expected in deciding

with whom Embassy staff should meet. Decisions all the more critical in war zones and other crisis situations." Was this true for the Ambassadors in the NEA Bureau when you were there and for you when you were the Ambassador to Lebanon?

A Yes. The exceptions being that if there is a designated terrorist entity, ambassadors would not be able to freely meet with representatives of terrorist organizations, but in general, yes, this is accurate.

Q And you had spoken previously about giving ambassadors sort of a wide latitude as to how they operate in the field and to their judgments about the field. Can you explain why that is better than sort of micromanaging things from D.C.?

A I don't think the 6,000 mile screwdriver works very well. It was important for me as Assistant Secretary to make sure that the chiefs of mission in NEA countries understood the realities of Washington. They needed to know if they had policy recommendations that simply were not feasible, if they were proposing ideas that were contrary to overall U.S. policies.

It was my job to steer them, to help them understand Washington realities, but it was their job to make sure Washington understood the realities that they were experiencing and they knew about on the ground. And for me to second guess who they were seeing, how they were interpreting interlocutors' views, interlocutors who I may not know or may have only met in very formal settings but they knew quite well, would have just been wrong and would have distorted the foreign policy

process, would have distorted our ability collectively to understand what was happening in any particular country.

Q And if they needed something from you in terms of resources, would they reach out to you?

A Yes, but it wouldn't start that way. It would start at a far lower level and perhaps be worked out without me ever knowing that there was a resource request from a certain post, or perhaps I would be told by my own management people, my own executive office, hey, we need such and such for this embassy or this ambassador, and we have figured out how to do it by shifting this around. Do you approve? And I would approve it without ever having the conversation with the Ambassador. If the Ambassador were not getting any satisfaction at lower levels, at that point the Ambassador may reach me. And I traveled quite frequently, and so ambassadors would often take the opportunity of my travel and take that opportunity to talk to me about issues that they had of concern about Washington support.

Q The next paragraph goes on to say, "In many countries rule of law is rarely what it should be and security issues in some of these countries can be dire. The Secretary has leadership responsibilities for the security of all of those under his or her charge. However, in carrying out that responsibility, any Secretary must rely heavily on senior subordinates and on ambassadors, who have a designated and specific authority in this regard, to flag when a security issue is not being dealt with adequately.

Diplomacy carries inherent risks especially in high-threat

posts. Ambassadors understand these risks and constantly make decisions of how much risk to take and for what purpose. They know that absolute security is not possible and that these decision rarely will be clear-cut. However, they need the latitude to make difficult day-to-day decisions, relying on advice from security professionals and the expectation that they will receive appropriate support from Washington."

Do you agree with those statements?

A Yes.

Q Now the NEA Bureau, especially during your time in that 2011 timeframe, was full of dangerous places. Can you speak to how to balance the policy needs for being in those countries with the security risks?

A It's something that one has to monitor constantly. This is not, as we learned in 2011 in NEA, if we didn't know it already, this is not a static region where you can make a decision today on how one is going to operate in any one country and expect to just be able to continue that procedure. You have to look at this constantly. It's why all embassies are required and do develop tripwires. They develop tripwires in several areas. They develop tripwires on when one might need to draw down Embassy staff, and if you're in a dangerous place, you have tripwires on what travel outside of an embassy compound, often a very fortified embassy compound, what tripwires would close down those sorts of travel requirements. I know this very well from, of course, my time in Beirut. The tripwires are an essential tool because

they're a reminder of what you all collectively agreed were warning signs. Because if you're someplace and the situation is slowly deteriorating, you may not recognize that deterioration, so your tripwires remind you of what it was you said need to alert you.

Q Would that have been a top-down analysis or a sort of bottom up where you gave deference to the ambassadors?

A In my experience, it tends to be a bottom-up where it's developed between security staff, other parts of an Embassy, say, but ultimately approved by the Emergency Action Committee of any post that includes the input of all of the heads of all of the agencies represented at that post.

Q And these ambassadors also talk about relying on the security professionals. I think you also spoke to that. Why would you rely on the security professionals on these sorts of decisions, the security professionals in the field, on these sorts of decisions?

A They have the responsibility, they have the skills, they have the knowledge of best practices. They are the ones who have, I would argue, the proven track record, of fulfilling these responsibilities.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. I think my time is up. So I will say thank you.

Ms. Jackson. Off the record.

[Recess.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q I have 11:09, and we'll begin our next hour of questioning.

The minority covered several topics that's on our list, which you'll be happy to know, because it will cut down the number of questions that we overall have. But I do have some sort of follow-up, add-on questions to what they covered.

But first, going back to my first round, we talked about your five trips to Libya in 2011. And you talked about Ben Fishman traveled with you in August of 2011. Did any other U.S. Government personnel, State Department, or interagency personnel travel with you in August of 2011, other than Mr. Fishman?

A My special assistant.

Q And that was?

A His name is [REDACTED].

Q What about your trip earlier in May of 2011?

A I'm sure I had a staff assistant with me because I tended to travel with the staff assistant to make sure that I stayed connected with Washington, but I don't remember who it was.

Q But no other interagency personnel accompanied you on that trip in May of 2011?

A No.

Q Okay. I believe your next trip was then to Tripoli in September. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And did anyone travel with you other than a staff assistant?

A No.

Q And then there was the October trip that you went with the Secretary. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And I assume she traveled with any number of people on that trip. Did you actually travel with the Secretary, or did you travel --

A I was on the road someplace else in the Middle East and North Africa and I met her in Malta and flew in and out with her from Malta.

Q And that was a day trip into --

A Yes.

Q Was there any discussion that she would go to Benghazi?

A I don't believe so, but there had been talk in the spring about a possible trip to Benghazi that never quite worked out for a number of scheduling and other reasons. But I don't believe that September trip included the possibility of Benghazi.

Q Okay. And when the Secretary was there, the embassy in Tripoli had reopened. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Did Chris Stevens come from Benghazi over to

Tripoli?

A I don't believe so.

Q Okay. And was there a reason that he didn't come over to meet with the Secretary?

A I don't believe so.

Q Okay. During the time that the Secretary was in Tripoli that day, were there meetings or discussions about a continued presence by the State Department in Benghazi?

A If there were, it was quite light and in passage. She had a very, very busy schedule going to see a variety of Libyan officials, meeting with representatives of Libyan civil society, delivering a speech. It was a jam-packed day and it wasn't the type of quiet time to have sort of policy discussions like that.

Q Okay. Do you recall any meeting with just the embassy staff and the Secretary that day where discussions about embassy staff, or the vision and future of our diplomatic presence in Libya was discussed internally with State Department personnel?

A She typically met with embassy personnel on her travels more to show support for them rather than have any type of sort of, you know, you can't discuss policy in a town hall, in a town hall-type setting. But I don't recall such a meeting in Tripoli. I either forgot that there was one or perhaps for a number of reasons it didn't happen.

Q And then I believe you also traveled, I think it was, in November of 2011. Is that when Ambassador Rice came to Libya?

A Yes.

Q Did you travel with her?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And I don't remember. She went to Tripoli and Benghazi or one or the other?

A She went to Benghazi and Tripoli, in that order.

Q Okay. And other than your staff assistant and perhaps a staff assistant traveling with her, were there any other representatives of other government agencies or any other U.N. people that traveled in November?

A I wasn't U.N. then. I was State Department. I was still State Department. She had her own staff from the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. That's different from the U.N. Those are also U.S. Government officials, work at the U.S. Mission of the U.N. Samantha Power went from the White House and then there were, you know, various others, but it was a State Department, U.S. Mission to the U.N. with Samantha Power in trip.

Q And do you recall the purpose of Samantha Power being along from the national security staff?

A I think it was natural for her to be included on one of these trips. First of all, she was the one who was the person at the White House who was watching international organizations, looking at the U.S. role in the United Nations, and after all, the effort in Libya was under the United Nations umbrella. So I think it was appropriate for her to witness firsthand what this U.N. mandate had at that time wrought.

Q Going back to your trip in August of 2011, and I believe that's the one that Mr. Fishman accompanied you on. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Was there discussions with Mr. Fishman about the overall U.S. Government involvement in Benghazi during that trip? Or actually, let me ask it this way: What was the purpose of Mr. Fishman going to Benghazi in August of 2011?

A His responsibilities at the NSC included Libya. I don't think they were limited to Libya, but he was the primary staff-level person dealing with the Libya policy at the White House. I don't think he had been to Libya. When he asked me if he could come with me, I welcomed it as a way to help him understand the challenges and opportunities that Libya presented by having a little bit of on-the-ground awareness.

Q Okay. And do you recall if he made subsequent trips to Libya after that?

A I don't know.

Q Okay. If you could just educate us a little bit on what the NSC brings when we're in a place like Libya or we're intervening in another country. I mean, from my reading, Libya was rather unique in what was happening because there was an overthrow of a government as opposed to what was happening in some of the other countries in North Africa.

But explain to us, if you could, or educate us, please, about how the NSC guides and directs what the U.S. Government's role is in a

country such as Libya?

A The NSC plays an important coordinating role. As much as the State Department professionals would like to think that we have a monopoly on representing the U.S. in any country abroad, in fact, that's not the case. And, you know, DOD had interests in Libya. Other agencies we can talk about elsewhere have interests in Libya.

And the NSC basically disciplines us all to try to come up with consensual approaches to things that affect all of our interests. Now that I work at the -- I don't want to talk about the United Nations that much but --

Q Right. And we'll steer clear.

A -- but the United Nations doesn't have such an organ. So I see the value in hindsight of having one part of a bureaucracy that's primary purpose is to make sure that the various other components of the bureaucracy are working in as collaborative a fashion as possible.

Q So the NSC would be the coordinating agency that would direct the State Department to say we want to do X, Y, and Z. We want humanitarian relief. We want support for educational opportunities. We want election monitoring people in Libya, for example. And you, State Department, are in charge of ensuring that these types of personnel get in. Would that be -- I'm just trying to understand how the NSC would undertake its coordinating role?

A There's several roles that the NSC plays in situations such as you described. First of all, there are -- and I'm going to talk more generally than just Libya -- there are often policy directives

that come out of the President, you know, presidential policy directives. The NSC will make sure, to the best of its ability -- that the rest of us are developing our own activities in accordance to those policy directives that come from the White House.

So there is a certain discipline that the NSC is designed to impose on the various components of this government. A second area also I would put into the disciplinarian for coordination. Let's say that the State Department had a certain proposal for an activity in any country, could be Libya or elsewhere. The NSC, through its coordination meetings can say, hey, these other agencies have an interest in that activity or have some equities here. You need to make sure that you're coordinating, you're not just going on your own.

The State Department is being the diplomatic arm of the U.S. Government. The Secretary of State is representing the President to foreign diplomats, can also use the NSC to make sure that other parts of the system are recognizing or supporting that lead role that the State Department does have. So I look at the NSC as being useful in imposing sort of coherence onto the system.

Now, it doesn't also work. This is not a perfect system. And, yes, there were times when we might be annoyed that the NSC is calling another meeting when I felt I had other things to do. But the lack of that coordinating role that I've seen elsewhere makes me appreciate that much more the structures that are set up here.

Q And during your time, and especially focusing on 2011, did the NSC have specific policy directives that they wanted accomplished

in Libya?

A You know, yes, but these were derived collaboratively through this interagency process that we touched on earlier.

Q Okay. Was there a presidential directive on the Middle East overall as a region?

A There was one that was in development, but I don't believe it was issued before I left. I may be wrong.

Q Okay.

Ms. Betz. Not one in 2011? That was issued in 2011?

Mr. Feltman. Maybe there -- I simply do not remember. But we had -- again, I don't feel any lack of, or any shortage of, engagement with the NSC to make sure that, from my own part, I was abiding by policy directions that came from the White House. But in terms of an overarching -- perhaps there was. I simply don't remember.

Ms. Betz. Would they play a role in logistics? Would they make sure staffing was adequate? I mean, did they have a role in sort of the logistics or resources within these policy directives?

Mr. Feltman. They would often ask us what we were doing to implement them, but it wasn't the same as directing staffing, no.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q What was happening in North Africa, in the spring and summer of 2011, in the political upheaval realm, was Libya different than other countries such as Egypt and Tunisia? I mean, how was the -- was the Arab Spring revolution the same in Libya or different than its surrounding countries?

A There were similarities and differences in all of these countries. The similarities were the mobilization of youth. The sort of collapse in the legitimacy of leaderships in all these organization -- in all of these countries, you know, that the legitimacy that Qadhafi had from his -- from the revolution had completely eroded. The legitimacy that Mubarak had, had eroded. So there were a lot of similarities between the phenomenons, the uprisings.

But, of course, how they developed in each country were sui generis based on a number of factors, not only that country's history but how the leadership reacted to those uprisings. Mubarak stepped down. Bashar al-Assad and Qadhafi tried to suppress through violence. Ali Abdullah Saleh in Yemen ultimately negotiated a way out of office.

So how these revolutions -- if you call them revolutions -- how these uprisings proceeded varied. But the fundamental feeling of youth disenfranchisement, of lack of opportunities, of lack of legitimacy by governments, these were similar. These were shared across the region.

Q From a different perspective, can you compare and contrast for us how the governments were able to evolve from these uprisings and talk about -- what I'm wanting to focus on is the capability of the new government to govern.

A Again, there's similarities and differences. But one of the characteristics of the Arab states, that went through uprisings in 2011 and after, one of the similarities from 2010 and before was

that you had strong leaders with weak legitimacy. You know, Bashar al-Assad, Qadhafi, Ben Ali in Tunis, Mubarak in Egypt, these were strong leaders who controlled the levers of the state to benefit their ruler and their supporters. They were strong leaders but they had weak legitimacy.

What happened after these uprisings is you had governments authorities that had strong legitimacy. They had overthrown the dictators. They had removed the dictators, but they were weak leaders. So you had the reverse which allowed, in the case of Egypt, for more or less, a return to the -- you know, after -- you know, it took a couple years but you had a return to the previous authoritarianism in Egypt.

In Tunisia you had a negotiation among the two political parties that led to elections and power sharing that's actually a positive way forward, although it's still weak. In the case of Libya, you've had, unfortunately, that strong legitimacy shatter under the differences between the various constituencies inside Libya. So you had similarities at the large level and then individual developments at the country level.

Q So why did Libya shatter?

A The institutions of Libya were not as strong as the institutions in Egypt or in Tunisia, for example. Qadhafi had hollowed out the institutions, including the armed forces of Libya over the course of his rule in favor of using a policy of fear to have everything revolve around him, meaning that the TNC and then the government that moved back to Tripoli, you know, in, what, September, August, September

of 2011, did not have the same institutional framework on which to develop their own authorities that was present in Cairo or in Tunis. There was a much greater challenge for the authorities in Libya.

And there were also far greater divisions in Libya than there were in, say, Tunisia. Tunisia is a relatively homogeneous country with a -- that's majority middle class, majority owning houses. It's a country that has some strong social foundations -- social economic challenges as well. I don't want to underestimate those.

But in Libya you had the historic divisions between east, west, and south. You had very strong tribal loyalties. Some of the tribes having supported Qadhafi and having benefitted from Qadhafi's rule that were suspicious of the changes. You had an Islamist secular split in Libya as well. You had -- some of these divisions were present in Tunisia as well but not to the extent that there were in Libya. It made the challenge in Libya much greater than the challenge of governance in Tunis.

Q So looking back, what could've been done or what should've been done by the U.S. Government to, if we could, prevent Libya from shattering?

A I don't think that -- we all wish that Libya today looked better than Libya does, without question. I don't think that the United States or any other country can assume that we could have, quote, saved Libya. Obviously, hindsight forces us to think again about decisions that were taken throughout 2011 and 2012.

But let's face the facts: The Libyans did not want foreign

intervention or foreign interference in their internal affairs. They accepted the U.N. Security Council resolution, the civilian protection mandate that NATO then implemented as a tool toward overthrowing Qadhafi. They did not accept a role for NATO troops to come in and secure Libya afterwards. The Libyans made a lot of decisions themselves that have contributed to the sorry state of Libya today.

But the knowledge that we all had that Libya could shatter, we didn't think it was inevitable but that it could shatter, is what has led to some of the things we're discussing today. Why it was that Chris Stevens and I both believed we should maintain a presence for some time in Benghazi, to from try to use our diplomatic interventions to understand if the country was starting to split, if there was anything that we could do to try to influence it. Because I really don't believe that in a country as complicated as Libya that only having a presence in Tripoli would have given us sufficient understanding.

Q So one of the things this committee is to do is to make recommendations. So is a recommendation that if we go into a country like Libya again under -- well, hopefully there are no more countries like Libya, but if we were to go into a country that is facing a similar situation, should we put more personnel in at the beginning? Should there be more of a -- not -- a surge or more personnel from across the spectrum in there? I mean, what would be a recommendation in hindsight of what could have been done differently?

A Please remember that I did retire from the State Department

in May 2012 so the discussions that took place between May and September of 2012 in the U.S. Government I'm not privy to. So what options were considered then I don't know.

You ask a very tough question because we do have the lesson of Benghazi, you know, behind us. And one could argue that contradicts my basic belief which is that we need to have diplomatic presences in critical areas around the world, despite the risks.

And I'm very proud to have served in the Foreign Service where people are willing to go out and serve in these sorts of places, despite the grave personal risk that they face and the personal hardship they often have, separation from families, et cetera. So I do believe that we need to be in places that are dangerous, and we need to find a way to mitigate the risks as best we can, but we're never going to eliminate the risks.

The other thing I believe strongly is that we have to make sure that even if the embassy walls are very high and very thick for obvious security reasons, that we are not closing ourselves off from the broadest spectrum possible of political opinion, of influence, of access to influence makers in a particular country. And so that means that we're going to have to find a way of developing and cultivating a wide base of contacts in countries like Libya to give us insights, influence, et cetera.

Libya is particularly challenging. As I said, there were no diplomatic relations. There were no diplomats in Libya for decades. The U.S. diplomats went back into Tripoli in 2004 and worked in very

restrictive environments. You know, Qadhafi was paranoid about U.S. engagements, so the embassy had faced lots of challenges.

And my salutes to Gene Cretz and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], and all the people that worked there for how creative there were in making contacts with Libyan society despite the fact that the Libyan Government didn't want them to meet with other Libyans. The Libyan Government wanted to maintain a monopoly on contacts with the U.S. Government.

But in most countries an embassy will develop over decades rich contact base, credibility with a wide number of civil society organizations, with universities, with students groups, with lawyers. In Libya, none of that existed, and that was why it was almost heroic what Gene and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and Chris and all these people did.

Ms. Jackson. Would you like to take a break? Let's go off the record.

[Recess.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q I want to turn now to the -- what we call the extension memo from December of 2011 that went out under your signature to Under Secretary Kennedy that we discussed or what you discussed in the last hour. And you had described a process of a series of meetings and discussions and essentially consensus before the memo goes up. Is that correct?

A Consensus among those other parts of the State Department

that had interests or whose support was essential, such as Diplomatic Security, yes.

Q And was OBO another essential partner or stakeholder in the memo, if you recall?

A I don't recall but there would have had to have been -- what I can say for sure is if OBO wasn't part of the process, Pat Kennedy would have made sure that once that memo got there that OBO was included. If we had somehow neglected, I don't remember.

Q Okay. Because they were going to be dealing with the physical security aspects of the villa compound that was going to be leased. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. OBO?

Mr. Feltman. OBO and DS.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q So I just want to makes sure I understand this clearance and consensus process. Is that -- would it be fair to describe that as a commitment from those components of the State Department that they are going to support the expansion into Benghazi as written in that document?

A I believe it reflects -- yes, I believe it would reflect an understanding by all those that were involved in development of that memo, what the responsibilities were that we were all undertaking, and if this memo were approved.

Q Let me take a step away from that particular memo. Were

there any other justification memos that had to go up? For example, was there a policy memo that went to the under secretary for political affairs -- and I don't remember if it was Wendy Sherman at the time, but I think it was -- saying we have a policy political reason for being in Benghazi through the end of 2012? Were there any other corresponding memos that would be approved, or were you on the political affairs sides the person that made that decision by being the author of the memo?

A I do not know if there were other memos that would have been, as you say, accompanying this one or not, you know, parallel, complementary memos. But certainly, I had these discussions with my bosses at the State Department about why Chris Stevens and I both thought that we needed to maintain a presence in Benghazi.

Q Okay. And we're just trying to understand the decision-making flow within the State Department. Would you typically see those types of parallel policy type memos go up, or would you just see more of the, what I would say is more the logistical type memos go forward?

A I mean, there was an earlier -- I know that there was an earlier policy memo that went forward, but it preceded this one, I believe, where we talked about what are the U.S. interests in Libya, what are the U.S. policy goals in Libya in the coming period, where we would say explicitly we're not here for state building. We're here for these specific things.

So I know that there was a memo that went forward so that there

was -- to make sure that we had a general understanding and consensus from our superiors what NEA was pursuing was, in fact, approved above just the NEA level.

Q And would that have gone to your under secretary for political affairs, or would it have gone to the deputy secretaries or to the secretary?

A I'm guessing it went to the deputy secretary with clearance from the under secretary of political affairs, but that's merely a guess. I don't remember. That typically would have been what I would have done and relied on Bill Burns to make sure if there was something specific for the secretary to see that it would have happened.

But, again, I want to underscore, I had ready access to the secretary. I don't think that anything that I would have put in any of these memos would have surprised her just because of the sort of ongoing discussion we had about the Arab Spring.

Q So at the time that the memo to Under Secretary Kennedy went out under your signature, you were confident that it was going to be approved because you had -- it had been massaged, if you will, through all the people who needed to be aware of it and be the decisionmakers?

A I was confident that we had done our best to build the consensus that would led to a yes. You're never sure when you sign a memo to Pat Kennedy if you're going to get that yes no matter how much homework you've done ahead of time, because Pat Kennedy is the one that's going to be responsible for making sure that we can do what we say we're going to do.

He's the one that's going to be responsible for making sure that the contingencies have properly been followed. He's looking at this not in the NEA context only. He's looking at this in the global context of what resources we have available in terms of financing, staffing, security, et cetera.

So yes, I had a fairly good sense that we had addressed the questions that Pat Kennedy was going to ask me, but I didn't know for sure whether Pat Kennedy would say yes when I sent this memo forward. I hoped he would and I thought he would.

Q Do you recall, did he have any questions or concerns that came back to you after the memo went to him?

A I don't recall.

Q Okay. If he did, who would have been in that process to have known any concerns that he had?

A Had Pat felt strongly about something, Pat would have picked up the phone and called me or Pat would have said, Jeff, come to my office. Pat picked up the phone regularly when he felt the need to. And then his -- I don't know what her title was at the time -- but his -- [REDACTED] who worked for him was in direct contact constantly with my executive director, [REDACTED].

Because, again, we had management issues, I mean, across the region. Embassy Sana'a was the -- was breached by a mob the day after Chris Stevens was -- no, Embassy Sana'a was breached -- because I was still assistant secretary at one point. Anyway, there were all sorts of management security issues that we had because of the reactions of

the Arab Spring that we had to be working directly with Pat Kennedy's office all the time. And so that was usually [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

Q And, granted, it's a few years down the road, but just so that I'm clear, you don't recall Pat Kennedy communicating any objections to any component of the December 2011 extension memo prior to his approval of it?

A I don't recall, but perhaps you have documentation he did. But I don't recall.

Q Okay. Actually, we don't have any documentation to that. We're just trying to confirm that the lack of documentation -- that we're interpreting the lack of documentation correctly.

Mr. Kenny. But, Sharon, just to be precise on that point, because you referred to it as a December 2011 memo and we understand there were various drafts and iterations of that. So when you say he had a objection, do you mean with the final or --

Ms. Jackson. With what was approved, yes.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Well, let me just follow up on that exchange. Unless there was an objection, would the signer or the approver, such as Under Secretary Kennedy, would they have seen the drafts, or would you grab the consensus first and then send up one memo?

A I would not send a memo to Pat Kennedy if I didn't think it had a good likelihood of him signing it. This was not just to put me on the record that I thought we should be in Benghazi. This was

to actually try to make sure we were in Benghazi.

And I don't know how [REDACTED] or the various components of M that signed off on -- that were part of the consensus building. I don't know how they operate with Pat Kennedy. I don't know if they showed him earlier drafts or not. I don't know. But I do know that the draft evolved based on the conversations we had with his office and the subcomponents under him.

Q Okay. And, again, just to wrap up this area, when all the different agencies or subcomponents cleared on it, you understood that to be their commitment to provide whatever resources were covered by their world?

A Yes.

Q I want to switch gears to something that you mentioned in passing before, and that is the Libyans were very resistant to having any type of foreign partners having a military presence in their country. And is that a correct recitation of what you said before?

A Yes.

Q Did our Department of Defense want to have a presence in Libya post revolution?

A They wanted to have, you know, defense attache, that sort of office, a traditional defense diplomatic presence. And we also asked DOD for, you know, some security support. But DOD most definitely did not want to have, quote, boots on the ground.

Q Are there other types of Department of Defense missions in a country which they call like mill-to-mill relations or something like

that, or is that what you're referring to when you talk about the defense attache, or are those two different things?

A A typical embassy will have two defense components in it. A defense attache, who is the head of all the defense activities, and a defense attache is essentially the military advisor to the Ambassador who represents DOD diplomatically with local counterparts who does things like that.

The other component tends to be the part of defense that will work on military sales, on military training. If you have an assistance program with a certain country, it will go through the military assistant's office, which typically falls under the DATT, but it's somewhat independent. So that's a typical military presence is a defense attache and a military assistance office.

Q And is the assistance office equipment or training or a combination of both?

A It depends on the country, but it can be both. It can be sales, it can be grants, it can be training. It depends on what the country is.

Q Okay. I'm going to mark an email exchange as exhibit number 2 and ask you to take a look at that.

And Ambassador Feltman, I'd like to note for the record that Chairman Trey Gowdy has joined us here today.

[Feltman Exhibit No. 2

Was marked for identification.]

Mr. Feltman. Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Gowdy. Ambassador, how are you?

Mr. Feltman. I'm fine, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q And for the record, this is an email exchange dated July 26, 2011, between at the top, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. It's subject line is "RE: [REDACTED]."

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Is it correct that this witness is not a party on any of the issues?

Mr. Feltman. I'm not a party to the --

Ms. Jackson. Yeah. But he may be aware of the issues that are discussed in here, and that will be my next question, if he is aware of the issues discussed in this.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q So if you would just take a couple minutes and look at that.

A Okay.

Q Ambassador Feltman, this email discusses generally a DOD presence in Benghazi. Are you aware of that issue being discussed at that time?

A I don't remember.

Q Okay. And in particular, on the second page of that email, the one that is July 26, 2011, at 11:04 a.m. between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], the third line says, "As you know, Chris and [REDACTED] have not welcomed the idea of DOD presence in Benghazi at this point, but we can listen." And signed, "[REDACTED]."

Do you know what they would be referring to based on the review

of this email exchange?

A I do not know the specific case in question. I do know that there was great clamoring from all across the U.S. Government to put personnel in Benghazi. And the facilities and ability to move people around were quite limited, and so we were constantly, constantly trying to resist a huge expansion or a huge surge in visitors. We had to manage the visitor load because, you know, people wanted to be part of New Libya, and they wanted to show that their department agency was there.

And so we had very complicated visitor rotation schedules to make sure we weren't overwhelming a very small staff that had a very important task. So I assume this is in that context, but I don't remember the specific case.

Q Do you recall that [REDACTED] was the DATT, the DATT, liaison with Embassy Tripoli, or he was the Department of Defense attache?

A The last time I was in Embassy Tripoli before the evacuation was in December 2010, and yes, I met with the DATT there.

Q And was that [REDACTED] at the time?

A I believe so. The name rings a bell. I believe so. Because the name doesn't ring a bell from this email exchange. The name rings a bell from something else from my distant past.

Q And just to tie the loop in here, [REDACTED] was on your staff at the time in NEA?

A Yes, she was the Libya desk officer.

Q Okay. And so she would have been the appropriate person

to be having these conversations?

A Yes. If this issue reached my desk or my ears, it must have been at the point of resolution, because I simply don't remember it.

Q And who's [REDACTED], if you know?

A [REDACTED] was the head of the political section in Embassy Tripoli, so she was part of what we sort of jokingly referred to as Embassy Tripoli on the Potomac.

Q In exile often?

A Yes.

Q And so this being in July of 2011, it's when they were in suspended operations from Tripoli and had been brought back here?

A By that summer, we were encouraging staff from Embassy Tripoli to find onward assignments because we realized that the Embassy Tripoli, as we had known it would not be going back in any form like we had it. So we were encouraging people at that point to go. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are both extremely talented professional officers.

Q And it's my understanding that the rotation process for movement within the State Department typically occurs in the summertime?

A Yes, and people have kids at school, people have, you know, obviously their professional obligations are paramount but we also try to keep into account family friendly policies.

Q Okay. During your time at NEA, was there a continued push for a military presence at some level in either Tripoli once it reopened or Benghazi?

A What I remember is the -- again, is the trying to reconcile the number of parts of the U.S. Government that felt they had a need to be present in either place with the realities of the physical and security resources available to us. I don't remember specific discussions with DOD. I just remember the overall thing, that there was an incredible pressure to find ways to move more people into both of those posts. And we were always having to find ways to limit, accommodate, whatever the answer was at the time.

Q Okay. DOD also provided security assets in Libya for you. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And that was in Tripoli?

A In Tripoli.

Q Okay. Do you know why there weren't DOD security assets in Benghazi?

A I don't remember.

Q Okay. Were they ever considered?

A I don't remember.

Q Was there any legal or policy restriction on having the DOD SST in Benghazi, for example, it wasn't an officially-recognized post?

A I don't know. I mean, I will say that reopening Embassy Tripoli was seen as particularly problematic. We knew that there were Qadhafi elements that were still around. The U.S. was obviously the leading country in NATO that had led to the air strikes. There were even, at that time, clashes between militias that were more Islamist

and militias that were more secularist in the Tripoli area.

And an embassy traditionally is often the focus of popular protests against certain policies. And so there was -- and an embassy also -- the embassy also was going to have many, many more components than Benghazi was, so there was a lot of discussion about how to provide the type of security that would allow Gene Cretz to go back, and his staff.

Q But you don't recall similar conversations regarding Benghazi?

A There were security discussions on Benghazi, without question. But I don't remember discussing DOD assets in terms of Benghazi.

Q Okay. But then just to clarify, as -- you don't recall that there was any legal or policy impediment to having an SST in Benghazi such that it wasn't an officially-recognized post?

A I don't know. I don't remember, but I don't know if there are or not.

Q Who would have an answer to that?

A I suppose Defense lawyers.

Q Department of Defense lawyers?

A I suppose. I don't know.

Q Was it your assessment that there was a higher anti-western sentiment in Tripoli versus Benghazi in the fall of 2011?

A Yes.

Q And did that continue through your time until the end of

May 2012?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Was there an anti-western sentiment also in Benghazi?

A There was an anti-western sentiment in Eastern Libya, particularly in the Derna area, which is something we can talk about in another setting. But certainly my sense when I was leaving the department, when I retired in May, was still perhaps wrongly that the security risks were higher in Tripoli than in Benghazi.

Ms. Betz. Did that sentiment change, particularly end of 2011 into 2012?

Mr. Feltman. I would say that it changed but not fundamentally. You know, that, yes, there were question marks we had over -- I had over Benghazi as well. But, again, I could have been wrong about what the real situation was like in May of 2012, my last month of U.S. Government service, but I still assumed that the greater risks were in Tripoli, certainly the greater exposure was in Tripoli. The number of people, the type of facilities we had in Tripoli was far, far greater exposure than in Benghazi.

So, you know, yes, I think that -- yes, my evaluation changed somewhat from 2011 but not fundamentally.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Do you recall discussions in late 2011 and early 2012 of having Chris Stevens go into Tripoli as the charge prior to his nomination as ambassador?

A It was a crazy idea I had. It did not get any traction anywhere else, and it was right that it didn't get any traction. I was wrong in proposing it.

Q Can you elaborate on that?

A You know, I was thinking of just how good Chris was and how symbolically important it would be for Chris, who was there in Benghazi when the revolution, as they called it, was unfolding and succeeding, for having him in Tripoli, I thought that would be really, really important symbolically. It would add more weight to the U.S. return to Tripoli.

But Gene Cretz and [REDACTED] are really good. They had contacts. There was another type of symbolic importance to have them return because they had been -- Gene had been more or less forced out by Qadhafi in December 2010, to have him go back also had political importance. So yes, the idea of sending Chris in to Tripoli was mine, but others in the State Department, in hindsight, I think, rightly, said no.

Q And who were those others?

A I don't think anybody else said yes.

Q Well, just on the off chance that someone else might have said yes, I want to mark as Exhibit 3 -- if you could take a few minutes and look at that.

[Feltman Exhibit No. 3

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q For the record, I would note that this is an email exchange of October 22, 2011, between Cheryl Mills and H. The subject line is "FW: Secretary in Tripoli." And I'm going to focus on the middle exchange but take a few minutes and review this. And it also bears document number State SCB 0045106.

Have you had an opportunity to review that?

A Yes, I have.

Q The middle exchange that is at 2:36 p.m. in the middle sentence is from Cheryl Mills to Gene Cretz. And, again, Gene Cretz was the then-ambassador in Tripoli at the time. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And Cheryl Mills was the chief of staff and counselor to the secretary. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Middle line says, and I quote, "I think we will move forward with seeking to have Chris become charge in January and then nominate him subsequently so he can begin serving."

Do you understand this to be a reference to your idea of having Chris Stevens go in as the interim head in Tripoli pending his nomination?

A Yes.

Q And this is the secretary's chief of staff who is concurring with your idea. Is that correct?

A It appears so.

Q Okay. You had not known that?

A Well, if I had, I'd forgotten it.

Q Do you know why it didn't happen?

A I don't know why it didn't happen, but it could very well be that somebody pointed out that if we knew we were going to nominate Chris that we probably shouldn't be sending him there ahead of agreement, of Senate confirmation, et cetera, et cetera; that it could have been -- it could have had to do with the prerogatives of your sister body up here.

Q And the country and the Libyans?

A I don't think that the Libyans would have had a problem with Chris since they accepted the agreement later.

Q Do you recall any discussions that you had regarding interfering with the prerogatives of the Senate and confirmation as the reason, and if so, who were those conversations with?

A I would suspect -- I don't remember, but I would suspect that both H. and Pat Kennedy would have said, Jeff, you're crazy.

Q Do you recall specific conversations where they said that?

A No, I do not.

Q Do you recall specific conversations with Pat Kennedy alone?

A Not on this subject.

Q Okay. It's our understanding that Ambassador Stevens or soon-to-be Ambassador Stevens came out of Benghazi in late November 2011 and then returned to Libya as ambassador in late May of 2012. Does that coincide with your understanding?

A Yes.

Q And, in fact, he went in just as you were leaving the State Department. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Did you have contact with him in that period between November of 2011 and May of 2012?

A Periodically through the, you know, through the confirmation process, yes, and then particularly in May, because I'm still sick that I had to miss his swearing-in ceremony because I needed to go to a White House meeting on something or other. And so we were communicating about that.

Q Was Chris Stevens kept involved with what was happening in Libya during that period when he left his envoy before he went back as ambassador?

A I don't remember what he did when he came back -- when he came back from Benghazi, but once he was nominated he was in a very special spot that all nominees to be chiefs of mission are in, which is that you have to prepare for your confirmation hearing. You have to have consultations on the hill. You need to stay informed about what's happening in Libya so you can answer questions, but you no longer can take decisions because you're not yet confirmed.

It would be presumptuous of any ambassador or nominee to play a decision-making role on an issue for which you've been nominated but haven't yet been confirmed. So Chris would have had to be kept informed of Libya, but he no longer would have been in a key decision-making

role in Libya until confirmation.

Q Okay. Why was he brought out in November?

A I mean, he'd been there since April. You know, the conditions were very, very difficult in Benghazi. We knew in November -- we hoped -- I don't remember when the White House agreed to nominate him. I don't remember the chronology. But we, by November, hoped that he would become the nominee for the -- to be the ambassador and we hoped that he would get confirmation. And we were just being humane, that he needed to have some kind of break to have a little bit of normalcy in his life. It was not -- it was far from a normal existence, the life he lived in Benghazi.

Q So Chris Stevens comes out in November of 2011 and then the extension memo to Pat Kennedy is not submitted until late December. Did Chris Stevens have any role in crafting that? I mean, when he came out, did he come back to Main State? Did he take a vacation for a month? What was his role, if any, in the extension of Benghazi?

A Certainly, the intellectual arguments mustered in that memo were influenced by, in some cases authored by, Chris Stevens. At what point I don't know, but it was before his nomination, so it was not inappropriate for him to be playing that kind of role. He had some personal things he needed to take care of as well. He took some time off for health reasons.

Q Do you know if he, prior to his nomination, had any meetings with DS or OBO regarding the amount of security that was needed in Libya or the physical security that was required both in Tripoli and Benghazi?

A It would have been typical for an ambassadorial nominee to go around to talk to all the various parts of U.S. Government that played a role in the post he or she was assumed to take after confirmation, but I don't know his specific calendar.

Q Okay. But that would occur after his confirmation?

A No. It can -- after his?

Q Confirmation.

A No. You can talk -- the rules are that you can talk to people about your post once you've been nominated as long as you're not assuming confirmation, like you can't be taking decisions as if you're going to be confirmed. But once you're nominated, you're free game to talk to people about the post you're going to receive inside the U.S. Government. You don't talk to foreign interlocutors about your post until confirmation, but you can talk to U.S. Government officials about it.

Q Okay. What about that period prior to nomination? He comes out in November. He's not nominated until January sometime. What about that time period? What are -- are there any rules governing what he can and cannot do then?

A I don't remember what he did, if he went back to his -- we had snatched Chris out of an office in State Department. I believe it was INL. We had taken Chris back in the spring for Benghazi. And I don't remember if he went back to that office or what he did, but I am confident that we talked to him about his experience, about his thoughts, about his analysis.

We would have been very shortsighted not to use him as a resource as we were trying to analyze various aspects of Libya policy given the fact that he had the type of on-the-ground experience in Benghazi that the rest of us lacked.

Ms. Jackson. I see that I am almost out of time, but I would ask, Mr. Gowdy, do you have any questions for the witness?

Mr. Gowdy. No, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson. Then we will conclude our second hour of questioning and go off the record and take a short break to at least discuss logistics.

[Recess.]

Ms. Jackson. By agreement of the parties, the majority staff is going to continue asking questions, hopefully until we're done, hopefully in about 30 minutes or so. And then we'll turn it over to our minority colleagues, and then we're going to recess to a brief classified session this afternoon.

So what I want to do first is hand you a document that I'm going to mark as exhibit 4, and it is document C05579435.

[Feltman Exhibit No. 4

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q And it's marked unclassified in an action memo for Under Secretary Kennedy, and dated May 1, 2012. The subject line is "Request for permission for TDY travel of USG personnel to Tripoli, Libya." And I'll give you a minute or two to review that essentially 1-page document.

A Okay.

Q During the course of our investigation, we have learned that it was not unusual when an embassy went on authorized departure or ordered departure, that Under Secretary Kennedy would take over making certain decisions regarding that overseas post during the time period of ordered departure. Is that in keeping with your understanding of how State Department would operate?

A Yes. I have been at many posts on authorized ordered departures over the years given places where I've served, and the rules are that M approves travel to those posts.

Q What I'm unsure about and what I'd like to ask you about is, this is a memo dated May 1, 2012, when Embassy Tripoli had resumed -- and in fact, the memo says that operations were reestablished on September 22, 2011. However, it remains an unaccompanied status. If, on May 1, 2012 -- Ambassador Cretz was there, was he not?

A I believe so.

Q And is it typical that the Ambassador is the person who authorizes travel to a particular embassy?

A Yes.

Q Do you know why this and what we have seen are other memos were still going to Under Secretary Kennedy in May of 2012?

A I don't remember why.

Q Is there anything in the procedures or rules of the State Department that take away this authority from an Ambassador?

A I'm not aware, but I want to refer back to an answer I gave earlier, which was the incredibly tight constraints on housing, beds, logistical support at Embassy Tripoli. And if I had been Gene Cretz at that time, which of course I wasn't, I would be telling agencies, my own as well as others across the board: I'm sorry, I can't take your TDY right now because there is not a bed. Agencies don't like to hear that. Each agency or part of agency would believe that its

mission is more important than anybody else's mission, so perhaps -- I'm speculating here -- there was some internal decision that M could help on this, could help insulate Gene, who had other things to do, with very limited staff, than trying to sift through who were the most important visitors at a post that could not receive everyone who wished to go.

Q Well, I guess I'm just a little confused about that, or it sort of begs the question because Under Secretary Kennedy had 11 offices and bureaus to supervise, and he had a myriad of -- I think at the time the number was 275 overseas posts. It seems like very sort of in-the-weeds decisions to be making given that the Embassy had been reopened for 7, 8 months at the time.

A I'm not copied on this memo. I don't remember seeing this memo, but I have full confidence that [REDACTED], who did work for me, who was really good at her job, would have been following some understanding that we collectively had about how to deal with this.

Q So she would be a person who would maybe have some better understanding or clarity on this particular memo and why these decisions were still going to Under Secretary Kennedy?

A I don't preclude that I knew about this. I simply don't remember.

Q Who else in the NEA front office would have insight on why this was still occurring?

A I would assume that her boss, [REDACTED], who was the EX director and who she was acting for according to what's written here

on this memo, would have been aware, and perhaps the PDAS. Again, I may have been told about this. I may have been briefed about this, but it's not something that 3-1/2 years later, 3 years, or several years later, I remember.

Q I also want to return to the December 2011 memo that extended Benghazi operations into the end of 2012, and I have a copy of the memo if you would like to review it, but I just wanted to ask you, do you recall that that memo called for a principal officer and an IMO, or a management officer and five DS agents?

A I don't recall the exact wording of that memo.

Q Let me pull out that memo.

A Something now 4 years old.

Ms. Jackson. So I'm going to mark this as exhibit 5.

[Feltman Exhibit No. 5

was marked for identification.]

Ms. Deck. Just to be clear, when we spoke about the December 2011 memo to Pat Kennedy earlier today, this is the memo that was being referred to. Is that right?

Ms. Jackson. Yes. At least we were.

Ms. Deck. That was my understanding?

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q And for the record, exhibit 5 does not bear a document number, but it is an action memo for Under Secretary Kennedy dated December 27, 2011, from NEA, Jeffrey Feltman. Subject: Future of operations in Benghazi, Libya. And I'll allow the witness a few

minutes to review this. And just for direction, the second full paragraph on page 2 discusses the staffing.

A Okay.

Q And reading from page 2, the second paragraph, the second sentence, it says: Headed by an FS-02 or GS-14 officer, this office would work in close coordination with Tripoli on political and economic reporting; public diplomacy; and commercial work in the eastern part of Libya and serve as, quote, "host," end quote, for the activities of USAID, PM, and any other government TDY personnel in Benghazi. Because this would be a smaller operation, Benghazi would continue to be supported by one IRM TDYer for communications and management issues and one NEA TDY reporting officer in addition to the TDY head of operations.

And then the last sentence reads: "With a full complement of five special agents, our permanent presence would include eight U.S. direct hire employees, two slots for TDY PM and USAID officers, and one LES program assistant."

Does that refresh your recollection as to what the staffing was suggested for the expansion?

A I can read what I approved at the time. I don't remember the specific numbers, but I can read what's in this memo.

Q Can you tell us what an FS-02 or and GS-14 officer is?

A And FS-02 or GS-14 officer I would say would fall in the upper ranks of the mid-level of career professionals. These are not senior Foreign Service officers. It's not even threshold of being

senior Foreign Service officers, but it's someone who has more than entry level experience. It's someone who has had some management experience before, someone who would be, probably had been head of a section of an embassy before, had this person served overseas, so somebody who is past the midranks going upward.

Q And in this memo that is extending the operations in Benghazi through the end of 2012, where it's talking about needing five Diplomatic Security agents, is that then the considered assessment of what was needed to protect the people as outlined in this memo?

A Could you repeat the question, please?

Q Okay. The number of five DS agents, was that the then considered opinion that you needed five DS agents to provide security for this mid-level reporting officer, the IRM TDYer and the NEA reporting officer?

A It would be the considered opinion of those that contributed to this memo who are listed on the clearance page of what was needed in terms of the American security personnel.

Q Okay. And then if the post is also augmented by host nation security?

A In general, that is the case. In a country like Libya, or any number of other countries, diplomatic missions often have to create their own local guard force if the hosts are unable to provide the type of security that we would require.

Q Is it your experience that an ambassador generally requires greater security than a FS-02 or GS-14 officer?

A You know, this varies widely from place to place what the security requirements are. If you're asking me, in general, does an ambassador require more security than an FS-02 officer, the answer would be yes because of the visibility of the Ambassador, the political importance of the Ambassador, the targets to those who might not like the U.S. Government. But I cannot speak about the specific requirements of anybody in Libya past May 30, 2014.

Q But prior to May 30 --

A 2012, I'm sorry.

Q 2012. Yes.

A I'm sorry.

Q Prior to your departure from the State Department, was it your understanding that the Ambassador, whether it was Ambassador Cretz or Ambassador Stevens in those few days that he was there in those few days as Ambassador, would have required a higher level of security than a political reporting officer in the country of Libya?

A It's not something that the NEA Assistant Secretary is going to get involved in unless an ambassador or Pat Kennedy asks the NEA Assistant Secretary to get involved in. These decisions are made by the Ambassador with his chief security officer, the head DS agent on the ground, based on evolving circumstances. I don't think that we -- I think that one should assume that in any post, including Libya, there's an ongoing discussion between whoever is the senior American and whoever is his or her senior security officer about what's the appropriate posture given the circumstances as understood at the time.

Q Do you recall that when he was in Benghazi, then Envoy Stevens had 10 Diplomatic Security agents assigned to his personal protection?

A I don't remember how many he had. Obviously, I would have been a beneficiary when I visited, but I don't remember how many he had.

Q When you would go to visit, would the security detail be augmented in any way? Would you bring DS agents with you when you traveled, or would they be augmented from Egypt or Tunisia or elsewhere?

A When I went to Libya, there was no augmentation because of my presence. If I went to some post that had a lower security profile but I had a higher security threat, there was higher security threat information, DS may send someone there. But in the case of Libya, I relied on what was available on the ground when I visited.

Q When you were visiting with Libya, did you always attend meetings with Envoy Stevens?

A Yes. In May of 2011, my meetings included [REDACTED] because Chris Stevens was back. But in all of my meetings in Libya, when I was working for the U.S. Government and all of my meetings as Assistant Secretary of State -- and that was before my retirement -- I would naturally include whoever was the lead American in those meetings.

Q So there was no sort of divide and conquer, and you each were doing different meetings at the same time that would necessitate there being two teams of security?

A No, we did not divide and conquer, no.

Q Did you have conversations with Chris Stevens regarding the security in Libya and in Benghazi in particular right before he left in November? So let's focus on the time period of your trip there in August through the end of the year?

A I don't remember any security conversations between my trip in August and November with Chris Stevens on security. If there were, they were nothing significant that sticks in my head.

Q During the time when he had been nominated and pending going back to Libya as the then Ambassador, do you recall having discussions with him regarding the security situation in Libya?

A No.

Q Do you recall having conversations with Ambassador Cretz regarding the security in Libya?

A Yes, but they were general conversations. Things like, I could ask Gene: Are you getting what you need? Are you getting along with your DS colleagues? Do you share the same assessments of what's needed? Those are the sorts of conversations that the Assistant Secretary has with chiefs of mission, and those are the sorts of conversations I had with Gene Cretz after he went back to Tripoli.

Q Did he express frustration with you that he was not getting what he asked for in Libya?

A I don't remember. I don't categorically say no, but I simply don't remember. What I remember is his frustration with the number of people who wanted to come to Libya that he could not

accommodate.

Q Would you read cables that were issued by Embassy Tripoli if they pertained to security matters or requests for security?

A Mixed because sometimes I would; sometimes I wouldn't. I knew that others on my staff were monitoring this, and I would, you know, rely on others to alert me if there was something that they felt was not being addressed that should be addressed. They were, as I said before, I was monitoring developments in 19 countries during a time when the region was in turmoil, and I tended to read in many cases summaries of cables rather than entire cables.

Q And who would have been that person that would have kept you apprised of issues?

A It would have been [REDACTED], [REDACTED], Ray Maxwell. It would have come up the system to me. We had morning meetings every day with the senior leadership of NEA, and that was an opportunity, those were operational meetings. Those were not policy meetings. Those were meetings where we could say: Okay, what has to happen? It could be operations. Like what's the paper we need to get from the Secretary of State because she's traveling today, or it could be about how do we make sure that this congressional visitor to Benghazi is going to be well taken care of. And security issues would come up in those meetings if those working for me felt that I needed to engage on something -- I needed to call Pat Kennedy, I needed to call Eric Boswell, I needed to make decisions -- things like that when I was Assistant Secretary.

Ms. Jackson. I'm going to hand you what I've marked as exhibit 6, which is an email exchange at the top, but it includes a cable, which is known as 12 Tripoli 130.

[Feltman Exhibit No. 6

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q The email exchange at the top is from a [REDACTED], dated March 29, 2012. And the subject line is: "Request for DS TDY and FTE support." It bears document No. C05389197. I'll give you as much time as you need to review that.

A This cable reminds me of one thing that Chris Stevens was doing after his deployment after November 2011 in Benghazi. He took the FACT course. I remember he took the FACT course before he went out to Tripoli as Ambassador.

Q Is that the Foreign Affairs Counterterrorism Training course?

A Yes.

Q Was that a requirement for individuals who were going to serve in Libya?

A Libya and other posts of similar problematic security profile, yes.

Q The high-threat posts?

A Yes.

Q Was that generally restricted to war zones, near war zones?

A War zones, near war zones, places that had a particular

security threat against American personnel.

Q And how long was that course? Do you recall? Was it a matter of a week, or more like 4 weeks or 6 weeks?

A It was an evolving course. When I took it myself, I think it was only a week, and I think it was expanded to 2 weeks, I believe.

Q Going back to exhibit 6, this is a -- would you agree with the summary that this is a cable sent in by Embassy Tripoli for security support for the U.S. State Department personnel at the Embassy and in Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q And in particular, on the third page of this, it says, in the paragraph entitled DS Agent Support in Benghazi, it reads, Post requests continued supported for five TDY DS agents in Benghazi on 45- to 60-day rotations.

Do you know, are you aware that this cable was not granted in full by DS?

A No.

Q This was never brought to your attention?

A Not that I recall, but I would be very surprised if people in the bureau were not working on this, working on the basis of this cable. It's a very well-argued cable. It reflects many of the issues I have raised today, such as the incredible number of people wanting to go on VIP visits and TDY, so it reflects the reality that I remember more than 3-1/2 years ago, so I'd be very surprised if my staff, who I had full confidence in, weren't working on this at DS.

Q But would it surprise you that the State Department, given what you've told us about the Ambassador is the person on the ground and is supposed to know the situation on the ground and what security resources are needed to protect his people, that the Ambassador did not get what he requested, given that you've described this as a very well-reasoned cable?

A I can't speak for this cable because I don't remember the work -- I don't remember the cable or the work that was done afterwards. I do know that when I was Chief of Mission in Beirut, I asked for lots of things, including regarding security, that I did not get. There was constantly a dialogue and discussion between what our essential needs were, what we thought would make it easier or safer to do our jobs, and what was available in Washington. When I was Ambassador in Beirut, I would have loved to have had more armored vehicles to allow more Embassy officers to get off the compound more frequently. That just wasn't possible because of cost issues. So I suspect that there was an ongoing discussion between DS, NEA, and Embassy Tripoli, about which of these could be met, how security needs might otherwise be addressed through alternative means. I think this is a very well-argued cable, but it doesn't mean that I think that everything in here was absolutely essential to Tripoli security. I don't know. I wasn't part of those discussions.

Ms. Betz. Then going back to exhibit 5, when there is a specified number of agents, would that be the essential number of agents that you or NEA with DS concurrence felt was a minimum number of agents or

essential to the operating of the mission? I guess the bottom line is trying to reconcile what was cleared here, what was being requested here, and then, you know, ostensibly not being fulfilled when an Ambassador was making these requests.

Mr. Feltman. I do not remember and perhaps didn't know at the time, but I certainly don't remember what were the exact numbers of people in different areas of Benghazi or Tripoli's work in spring of 2012. I simply don't remember. It's been a long time, and I've done a lot since that time. But, yes, I see the number five on a memo I approved in terms of DS agents in Benghazi, and I see that number five repeated here, so there's a consistency between these two memos that reflect what must have been an NEA, DS, Embassy Tripoli understanding of what Benghazi needed for support. But how this was followed up on, I simply don't remember.

Ms. Jackson. And I guess what we're trying to understand is why if DS was cleared on five, does an Ambassador have to write a cable saying we want five?

Mr. Feltman. I can't speculate on what happened in 2011 and 2012.

Ms. Jackson. And just again, using documents to go back in time, since it is difficult to remember, I'm handing you an email exchange, dated February 9, 2012, from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED], bearing document No. C05390170, and the subject line is, RE: Draft email for your clearance, lack of security staffing at Benghazi undermining mission. I'll give you a few minutes to review that document.

Was marked for identification.]

Mr. Feltman. Okay.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Do you recall that, in February of 2012, that this issue was brought to your attention?

A I recall this was brought to my attention at some point, but I don't know when it was brought to my attention.

Q Okay. As we read the bottom of page 1 of this document, it appears that [REDACTED] has drafted an email for you to send on and/or perhaps drafted an email for [REDACTED] to send on to you. Is that your reading of this memo?

A It's my reading of the memo, but I note that I'm not copied on this, and I don't remember receiving this email. I remember the issue. I don't remember receiving the email. Perhaps you have documentation I did.

Q We don't, which is why we're asking the question as to whether you recall receiving this?

A I don't recall receiving the email. I remember the issue, but I, again, point out that this has been now nearly 4 years ago.

Q Was this a recurring problem that was brought to your attention?

A It was a recurring problem that was brought to my attention across NEA. I don't remember it being specific to Libya. This memo has a particular critical need in Libya, but we were always having to look for the resources. Whether it was security resources, financial

resources, OBO resources, or Embassy, there was a constantly looking across a rapidly change NEA region to figure out how in a time of frozen or declining resources overall for the State Department, we could have what we needed, what we felt we needed.

Q Do you recall elevating this issue to Under Secretary Kennedy as is suggested in this email exchange?

A I talked to Pat Kennedy about many issues. He initiated discussions. I initiated discussions. I talked to Eric Boswell about many of these issues, but I simply don't remember whether this specific issue was raised. I suspect it was. This is a pretty serious one.

Q Why is this a serious issue?

A If we're talking about having the presence that, according to [REDACTED], is on lockdown because of lack of security resources, well, then there is no reason -- one could question why we're there. And that would, of course, concern me.

Q And was [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] some of your most trusted employees in NEA?

A I had many trusted employees of NEA, but, yes, they were among the people who I had full confidence in.

Q At the top of this email, [REDACTED] writes to [REDACTED], she goes: "Also, the Secretary asked last week if we still had a presence in Benghazi. I think she would be upset to hear that, yes, we do but because we don't have enough security, they are on lockdown."

Were you ever in a meeting where the Secretary asked if we still

had a presence in Benghazi?

A No. That part of the memo surprises me.

Q Do you have any reason to believe that [REDACTED] would have misspoken in any way?

A No.

Q Was she a very careful person?

A In my experience, yes.

Q One last area, and then I'll conclude. Did you know an individual by the name of [REDACTED]?

A I met him when I was in Benghazi.

Q What was his role or association or affiliation with the Benghazi mission, if he had one?

A In terms of his contractual relationship with the Benghazi mission, I don't recall. I think there was something -- I don't know that he was a locally engaged staff or he had some contractual relationship. We eventually had some contractual relationship with him, but I don't remember what it was. But, in general, he was someone that is familiar to all of us who had served overseas working for the Foreign Service, which is someone who befriends a mission and has the ability to open doors, provide contacts, provide analysis. It's important not to be over relying on any of these people because you never know what their agendas may be, but it's also important to take advantage of any help that they could have in providing local contacts, local understanding, local context. He was one of those that every, every American who serves overseas has, the type of contact every U.S.

diplomat serving in a political and leadership role would have.

Q He's the person who sort of has his ear to the ground, if you will?

A Yes, he would have his ear to the ground. But, again, one cannot, and Chris did not, over rely on any one person. Nobody has a monopoly on information in any country.

Q Were there other Libyans that you're aware of that had a contractual relationship with the Benghazi mission?

A I mean, I met other locals when I was there, so we must have had some other local staff in some relationship because I did meet with locals there. These are not the sorts of things that the Assistant Secretary is going to get concerned about, unless it's brought to his attention that one needs to.

Q Actually, let me rephrase. In the relationship or undertaking the duties that ██████████ did, being sort of your eyes and ears and making introductions, was there any other Libyan under contract or being paid in any way that you're aware of in Benghazi?

A No, I'm not aware of any others, but if the question is intended to suggest that we only talk to people who ██████████ would set up for us, that answer is clearly no.

Ms. Jackson. That was not the intent of the question at all. That's all the questions I have. Let's go off the record.

[Recess.]

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

Q Let's go back on the record.

A I would like to mention something again about exhibit 7, which was an email exchange between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] about Benghazi and Benghazi being on lockdown. Because as I said, this surprises me. It surprises me that this was written in this particular way, because, A, I have total trust in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] based on the experience I had working with them. But, B, I also had sort of an ongoing conversation with Secretary Clinton about developments in the Middle East and North Africa, and I don't know what the explanation is for what's written here, but I can't imagine that she would have been surprised at having a presence in Benghazi. So I'm not quite sure what to make of this. I want to make that clear because the decisions of personnel -- not numbers -- but where people were in the Middle East was something that interested the Secretary greatly, and I'm convinced that she knew that we had maintained a presence in Benghazi beyond the return to Tripoli in the fall of 2012 -- the fall of 2011.

Q Okay. So just to make the record clear, we're looking at exhibit 7, and the part that you were finding surprising was the statement in here written by [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] that, and I'm quoting, that "also the Secretary asked last week if we still have a presence in Benghazi." That's the part that you're talking about?

A Yeah. I don't know because I wasn't part of this exchange, but I can see the Secretary saying: Hey, we still have those people in Benghazi, don't we? I could see something like that, that she's affirming the knowledge that she had, but this more than any of the

other exhibits that you guys have shown me today sort of surprises me, and I don't quite understand it because I know the Secretary knew that we still had people in Benghazi.

Q I wouldn't worry about it too much. I think we have already spoken to [REDACTED] about it, and it doesn't seem that there was very much to it.

Let's stay on that document, though, because we're on it anyway, and I want to draw your attention to the lower part of it, not that upper part that you were talking about, but the original sort of email from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] with the subject line, "Draft email for your clearance," ostensibly for [REDACTED] clearance. Within that email, which you never received and you have already explained you don't recall, she is talking about issues with being able to, issues with not having enough security such that posts could travel off of post. Is that right? So it's, and I'll quote: "Post needs a minimum of three agents to facilitate one movement at a time in town and one to remain on compound." I'll quote: "DS staffing has dropped to two agents several times over the last few months between rotations, which has prevented the PO from leaving the compound. DS tells post it is unlikely they can fully staff Benghazi due to broader staffing challenges across NEA and has suggested we adjust our expectations about movements and outreach."

So is it fair to say that this is a discussion about whether there's enough DS agents to fulfill the mission in terms of exiting the post and meeting and engaging with individuals off post?

A That's exactly what it's about. I also do want to underscore that people also come to us. When I was in Benghazi visiting Chris in August -- visiting Chris -- when I was in Benghazi having meetings with Chris in August of 2011, we combined going off compound to see certain officials with receiving others on the compound. So this is -- the idea of not being able to move off compound is a severe constraint without question, but it doesn't preclude contacts all together.

Q And, also, is it fair to say that nothing in this email is raising a specific concern about the security of the people on compound, as in we don't have enough agents to defend the compound and keep our people safe?

A This memo, as I read it, is about getting people off compound, what is required to get people off compound to meetings elsewhere.

Q Around this same time period, [REDACTED] came into D.C. and met with Deputy Assistant Secretary Lamb about some of these issues. Were you aware of that?

A I may have been at the time. I don't remember.

Q And if she was meeting with DAS Lamb, is it possible then that that conversation was being worked at a lower level below you, that it never got brought to your attention?

A I mean, yes. In general, the State Department, like other organizations, tries to address problems, overcome challenges, come to solutions, at lower levels. If it can be done at the desk officer

level, it doesn't go higher. If it can't be done there, it goes office director and on up. So if [REDACTED] and Charlene Lamb were working on something, it wouldn't necessarily have come to my attention. Even if they had reached an absolute block in the ability to reach consensus, it would have gone to the DAS or PDAS level before coming to me.

Q Do you recall whether anyone, Ambassador Stevens, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], Ambassador Cretz, or anyone else asked you for help to intervene and ensure that they received more security assistance in Benghazi?

A I simply don't remember.

Q And if they had done that, what would you have done?

A I would have started by talking to Eric Boswell. I would have referred back to the memo that we talked about today, the December memo, in which there was a clear consensus of what the needs were in Benghazi and how to address them at that time. And I would have, had Eric and I not been able to come to agreement between ourselves, which would have been rare -- Eric and I usually could -- then I would have asked to see Pat Kennedy.

Q Do you recall having that experience happen?

A I don't recall this. It happened a lot where I would talk to Eric or Pat about issues, but what the specific subjects were that I talked with them each time 4 years ago, I don't remember.

Q And would you recall if it had not gotten resolved, essentially so -- if this issue in Libya had gone on, you would have talked to Eric Boswell; he would have told you no. Or you would have

talked to Pat Kennedy, and he would have said no to you. Would you recall if that had not gotten resolved in any way?

A I don't recall. I don't recall one way or the other, but I think I would have recalled if we had had a big fight about it.

Q And did anyone in Benghazi or Tripoli ever tell you that they thought that the security situation in Benghazi had gotten so dangerous that they recommended evacuation?

A No.

Q And if they had, would you have taken the request seriously?

A It would have depended on the source, and I would have wanted others to look across the spectrum of information we had available to us to evaluate in the context of what else we knew. But it is a serious allegation, so I would not have just dismissed it without further consideration.

Q And certainly if the Ambassador, Ambassador Cretz or later Ambassador Stevens, had recommended evacuation?

A Oh, had they recommended -- I thought you meant just the random Muhammad on the street. Had Chris Stevens or Gene Cretz made such a recommendation, that would have been extremely serious. It would have been taken seriously by all of us in Washington.

Q Let's go back up to essentially the top of that exhibit 7, talking about the Secretary. There have been some allegations to the effect that Secretary Clinton's attention shifted to neglect of Libya or that her level of care or concern fell in 2012. In your view, did Secretary Clinton essentially check out on Libya in 2012?

A No.

Q Did she turn a blind eye to Libya in 2012?

A No.

Q Did she turn a blind eye to Benghazi in 2012?

A No.

Q Did she ever say or do anything that suggested to you that she did not care about the Department's personnel in Libya?

A Oh, Heavens, no.

Q Or that she didn't care about the Department's personnel who were assigned in Benghazi?

A No.

Q And you say, "Heavens, no," I assume because --

A She was always asking me how people were doing. She knew how hard it was for people at these posts in this time of great turmoil. She knew how hard NEA was working. She came down to NEA a couple times just to give us sort of a morale boost. I don't remember her specifically asking about this or that post. I just know that she was always asking me: How are your people doing, Jeff?

Q And in her conversations with you, it was your impression that she took the safety and security of American personnel overseas seriously?

A Yes.

Q Let me turn your attention to exhibit 6. This went over in the last round too, and I just want to bring your attention to the sort of DS agent support in Benghazi. So this is a cable that I believe

you said in the last round you don't recall whether you ever saw, from March 28, 2012, from Tripoli to D.C., to provide extra security in D.C. In that first line, it reads, and this is the sort of first full paragraph on the second page of the cable: "DS Agent Support in Benghazi: Post requests continued support for five TDY DS agents in Benghazi on 45- to 60-day rotations." Is there anything about that sentence that implies to you reading it now that they were not getting the support for five TDY DS agents? I mean, it says "continued support."

A I read what I read, which is continued support, that there must have been some concerned that at some point, given the limitations on DS resources globally, that there was a worry that at some point, DS may say: We can't do this any longer.

So, to me, this reads as putting down a marker. You know, those people you agreed to back in that December 27 memo, we still need them.

Q I now want to shift quite a bit to your time at the U.N., and I'm not going to ask you about conversations or discussions at the U.N., but I do want to just briefly talk so we can sort of draw some lines around your actions at the U.N.

When you were in your position at the U.N., you had already retired from the U.S. Government in May. Is that right?

A I left the U.S. Government entirely in May. I retired and took a break, took a break in service before I was hired by the U.N. of 5 weeks or something. So as of May 30, 2012, my only -- I have two connections with the U.S. Government. One is I'm a retiree. I have

a Foreign Service pension like my colleagues who have retired from the Foreign Service. And, second, the United States is an extremely important member state of the United Nations, and in that context, I continue to engage with U.S. officials on issues on which the U.N. is working, as I engage with Russian, South African, and Brazilian officials.

Q But from your capacity in the U.N., would your statements from a position at the U.N. be on behalf of the U.N. or behalf of the U.S.?

A I work for the United Nations. I do not work for the U.S. Government. I have taken an oath of office to the United Nations that I do not represent the interests of any member state. I represent the principles and the values of the charter of the United Nations, to the best of my ability.

Q So just two quick followups from exhibit 6, which is the cable from March 28, 2012. Are you aware of whether or not this cable was responded to by Diplomatic Security?

A I am not aware.

Q And do you see any action items for NEA within this cable?

A I would hope that my staff would be following up with DS on this cable. The action itself is in DS' purview. But Embassy Tripoli personnel are in Tripoli. NEA staff is in Washington, so I would have expected my staff to be representing Embassy Tripoli's interests in seeing some of these issues followed up on, so I hope that the very fine staff that worked for me was following up on these issues

once this cable came in.

Q So, at this point, I'm just going to move to something that we do with all the witnesses. I'm going to ask you a series of questions that we ask every witness about a series of public allegations that have occurred since the attacks.

A These are identical questions?

Q Identical questions to every witness. It's our understanding that even where the questions may have been answered by another investigation, that our colleagues in the majority are still pursuing some of these allegations, so we ask the same questions to everybody just to make sure that we have covered them. What I'm asking for is not sort of an opinion, but just whether you have firsthand information, and if you don't, we'll just simply move on to the next one, and there's about a dozen, so please bear with me.

It's been alleged that the Secretary of State, Secretary Clinton, intentionally blocked military action on the night of the attacks. One Congressman has speculated that Secretary Clinton told Leon Panetta to stand down, and this resulted in the Defense Department not sending more assets to help in Benghazi. Do you have any evidence that Secretary of State Clinton ordered Secretary of Defense Panetta to stand down on the night of the attacks?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that Secretary of State Clinton issued any kind of order to Secretary of Defense Panetta on the night of the attacks?

A No. I, again, had left the U.S. Government service months before the attack.

Q It has been alleged that Secretary Clinton personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security to Libya. The Washington Post Fact Checker evaluated this claim and gave it, quote, "Four Pinocchios," its highest award for false claims. Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security resources to Libya?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton was personally involved in providing specific instructions on day-to-day security resources in Benghazi?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risks posed by Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for military operations Libya in the spring of 2011?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton --

A No.

Q Let me just ask it, sir. Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risks posed by Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for military operations Libya in spring 2011?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that the U.S. mission in Benghazi included transferring weapons to Syrian rebels or to other countries. A bipartisan report issued by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence found that, quote, "The CIA was not collecting and shipping arms from Libya to Syria," end quote, and that they found, quote, "no support for this allegation," end quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict the House Intelligence Committee's bipartisan report finding that the CIA was not shipping arms from Libya to Syria?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that the U.S. facilities in Benghazi were being used to facilitate weapons transfers from Libya to Syria or to any other foreign country?

A No.

Q A team of CIA security personnel was temporarily delayed from departing the Annex to assist the Special Mission compound, and there have been a number of allegations about the cause and the appropriateness of that delay. The House Intelligence Committee issued a bipartisan report concluding that the team was not ordered to, quote, "stand down" but that instead there were tactical disagreements on the ground over how quickly to depart. Do you have any evidence that would contradict the House Intelligence Committee's finding that there was no standdown order to CIA personnel?

A No.

Q Putting aside whether or not you personally agree with the

decision to delay temporarily or think it was the right decision, do you have any evidence that there was a bad or improper reason behind the temporary delay of the CIA security personnel who departed the Annex to assist the Special Mission compound?

A No.

Q A concern has been raised by one individual that in the course of producing documents to the Accountability Review Board, damaging documents may have been removed or scrubbed out of that production. Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department removed or scrubbed damaging documents from the materials that were provided to the ARB?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department directed anyone else at the State Department to remove or scrub damaging documents from the materials that were provided to the ARB?

A No.

Q Let me ask the questions also for documents that were provided to Congress. Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department removed or scrubbed damaging documents from the materials that were provided to Congress?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that CIA Deputy Director Michael Morell altered unclassified talking points about the Benghazi attacks for political reasons and that he then misrepresented his actions when he told Congress that the CIA, quote, "faithfully performed our duties

in accordance with the highest standards of objectivity and nonpartisanship," end quote.

Do you have any evidence that CIA Deputy Director Mike Morell gave false or misleading evidence to Congress about the Benghazi talking points?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that CIA Deputy Director Morell altered the talking points provided to Congress for political reasons?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that Ambassador Susan Rice made an intentional misrepresentation when she spoke on the Sunday talk shows about the Benghazi attacks. Do you have any evidence that Ambassador Rice intentionally misrepresented facts about the Benghazi attacks on the Sunday talk shows?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that the President of the United States was virtually AWOL as Commander in Chief on the night of the attacks and that he was, quote, "missing in action," end quote. Do you have any evidence to support the allegation that the President was virtually AWOL as Commander in Chief or missing in action on the night of the attacks?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that a team of four military personnel at Embassy Tripoli on the night of the attacks who were considering flying on the second plane to Benghazi were ordered by their superiors

to stand down, meaning to cease all operations. Military officials have stated that those four officials were instead ordered to remain in place in Tripoli to provide security and medical assistance in their current location. A Republican staff report issued by the House Armed Services Committee found that, quote, "there was no standdown order issued to military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi," end quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict the conclusion of the House Armed Services Committee that there was no standdown order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that the military failed to deploy assets on the night of the attack that would have saved lives. However, former Republican Congressman Howard "Buck" McKeon, the former chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, conducted a review of the attacks, after which, he stated, quote, "Given where the troops were, how quickly the thing all happened, and how quickly it dissipated, we probably couldn't have done more than we did," end quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict Congressman McKeon's conclusion?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that the Pentagon had military assets available to them on the night of the attacks that could have saved lives but that the Pentagon leadership intentionally decided not

to deploy?

A No.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Thank you. Let's go off the record.

[Whereupon, at 2:19 p.m., the committee proceeded in closed session.]

Ms. Jackson. We will go back on the record. We are in a classified setting at this time. We anticipate that -- or at least I anticipate that any question and answer or any question I pose to you will only elicit an answer at the secret level. However, if you believe that your answer will go to a higher level, if you could indicate to us. We are cleared -- I believe all of us have been cleared up to the TS level for this session.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Yes.

Ms. Jackson. So we can go higher than that. Obviously, if it's SCI on top of that --

Mr. Feltman. I don't have SCI clearance any longer.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. Did you at the time?

Mr. Feltman. Yes.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. So I just have about four areas that I would like to ask you about, but first I would like to ask a follow-up from the last round of questions.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Sharon, I just wanted to interject. To the extent that -- and I understand that we're not going into SCI, but one of my staffers is not cleared for SCI. So if there was something SCI, we would definitely not say it.

Mr. Feltman. I can't talk SCI. I've been read out of all the SCI programs and I cannot talk SCI.

EXAMINATION

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q So, Ambassador Feltman, since you've been read out of SCI programs, if you're aware of information that reaches that level, just tell us that there is information at that level and nothing else, if you're allowed to say that, and then we will take it from there.

But before we get to that, in the last set of questions, you were asked a series of questions about the Secretary's involvement or concern about her personnel. During 2011 and 2012, did the Secretary ever convene or chair a meeting or direct a meeting to be held regarding the security of State Department personnel in Libya?

A I'm not aware of any.

Q Okay. Are you aware that she ever convened or chaired or directed a meeting to be held regarding the security of any State Department personnel in overseas posts in North Africa?

A Yeah, we talked about North Africa a lot with the Secretary, as I talked about many issues with her. And I knew that if I needed to talk to her about something that she was there, whether it was security or anything else. And I assumed that she was operating under the assumption that the rest of us were doing our jobs. So I don't recall any such meeting by her, but I know she would have been expecting the rest of us to have such meetings.

[Feltman Exhibit No. 8

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q I'm going to hand you what I've marked as government exhibit 8, which is an -- it bears document number State SCB 0045021. It is an email exchange at the top between Jacob Sullivan and H. dated March 29, 2011. And I see down at the bottom that you are on the original email exchange from a Phillip Gordon to Bill Burns, yourself, and Jacob Sullivan, and the subject is "Libyan."

I'll give you a moment to take a look at this email exchange.

A Okay.

Q The bottom email exchange which is to you and others says that [REDACTED] says that the plane of the Libyan mystery visitor has just landed. Said he'd keep us posted as details emerge.

And then at the top it says, [REDACTED] now says the issue of the visitor is, quote, 'more complicated than they thought,' end quote, and he prefers to send me a secure message in the morning. Will let you know."

Who was this Libyan mystery visitor?

A [REDACTED]

Q [REDACTED]?

A [REDACTED]

Q Thank you. And was he brought to the United -- well, was the plane landing in the United States?

A No.

Q Okay. Was it a European country?

A It was the United Kingdom.

Q Okay. And what was the purpose of [REDACTED] coming to have

a meeting?

A It was never clear even afterwards.

Q Okay. Who met with [REDACTED]?

A The UK officials, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Q Okay. Were any U.S. Government personnel part of that meeting?

A I do not believe so.

Q Okay. And so the information that came to the U.S. Government came from the UK officials?

A Regarding this Libyan mystery visitor to the UK, yes, I believe so.

Q Is there anything else you can tell us about this Libyan mystery visitor?

A I'm still intrigued by this to this day [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It was -- again, I'm not quite sure whether, you know, what was going on.

Ms. Betz. [REDACTED]

Mr. Feltman. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q We touched earlier on any anti-Western sentiment in the eastern part of Libya and you had made a reference that that might be better discussed in a classified setting. So could we have you

elaborate on your awareness of anti-Western sentiment in eastern Libya during 2011 and 2012, during your time with the State Department.

A The city of Derna in eastern Libya was off limits to Americans at the time because of the Islamist extremist flavor of that particular city. And eastern Libya was also under Qadhafi -- I'm not saying sponsored by Qadhafi but just during the Qadhafi era -- eastern Libya had been the source of many of the foreign fighters who had flown to Iraq via Damascus, and so that's what I was referring to.

Q Okay. And when you say it was off limits, you mean that the U.S. Government refused to allow its personnel to go there, or was it the Libyan Government such as it was, refused to allow U.S. Government people to travel there?

A Perhaps I used the term too glibly. But in general, as, you know, Chris Stevens and his team would go around eastern Libya outside of Benghazi, an area that they tended to avoid was Derna, as they evaluated the security conditions to permit moves, because Derna was known to be harboring basically Al Qaeda sympathizers.

Q And did the number of part time in and around that area that were harboring anti-Western sympathies, did that population grow? Did it become more robust throughout 2011 and 2012?

A I don't think any of us -- when I was working for the U.S. Government and when I had access to information that was available to U.S. Government officials, which, again, ended in May 2012, I don't think any of us would have been able to characterize how deep, how widespread was anti-Americanism. Because there was a great outpouring

of appreciation to the United States in Benghazi, for example, but obviously that didn't reflect all of Benghazi. And how you calculate what the percentages are, I don't know.

I remember going, for example, on that Susan Rice visit that we referred to earlier in November 2011, Susan Rice was in many ways the symbol for Libyans of U.S. support for their struggle. Susan Rice had voted in favor of Resolution 1973 in March of 2011. That resolution is what authorized the protection of civilians and led to the NATO air strikes, contributed to the overthrow of Qadhafi.

And at the time of that vote, there were those jumbotrons set up in downtown Benghazi, and the Libyans watched the vote at the security council. And there was apparently -- of course, I wasn't there. I was in Washington or perhaps traveling elsewhere. But apparently when Susan Rice raised her right hand to vote, and that was captured on those jumbotrons in Benghazi, that everybody in these crowds and the squares of downtown Benghazi just erupted into applause and cheers, because at that point they figured that the United States, meaning the world, was on the side of the struggle.

So when I went to Benghazi with Susan -- accompanied Susan Rice in November 2011, the crowds of people cheering her in the streets were overwhelming. It was the type of crowds that gave you, you know, goose pimples on your neck to see this. And everybody, whenever they would see her, the motorcade would pass, would raise their right arm mimicking what they had seen her in terms of voting for the resolution.

So you knew that there was pro-American sentiment in Benghazi from

these sorts of outpourings of appreciation of the United States. But you also knew that that wasn't the whole story, that the elements in Derna were not only in Derna. But how you balanced what the percentages were, none of us had a really good handle on that.

Q Was there intelligence reporting that came to you in your role as the assistant secretary for NEA regarding extremist elements, Islamic extremists in the eastern part of Libya or elsewhere in Libya?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And from that sources would you get intelligence products?

A From the sources that are represented around this room with the symbols here on the wall.

Q Okay. So from all members of the United States Government intelligence community?

A Well, I mean, you know, the State Department assistant secretaries of State did not tend to get things from the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency on Benghazi but, you know, INR would produce reports, the agency would produce reports, DIA would produce reports.

Q And did you read those reports?

A Yes. I was briefed every morning at 7:00 a.m. by an analyst who came in from the agency with reading for me and the ability to help me understand what I was reading. And this was -- if I was in Washington, this was an essential meeting that I attended every day.

Q Okay. And did you also receive DIA reports?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And did you have separate briefings on the DIA reports or would you --

A No.

Q -- receive those in written form?

A No. I received those in written form. But let me say that the agency briefers that were provided to me did not only look at agency products. They looked across the board. They were essentially a classified clipping service for me, and they helped me understand what it was I was seeing.

You know, they could identify trends because they were watching a situation over a course of months and could help me, again, identify what was important about the information I was reading.

Q Okay. And did you notice a trend during 2011 and through the end of your tenure with the State Department in the end of May 2012 that the radical Islamic extremists were increasing especially in eastern Libya?

A What I recall is a growing awareness that there was a secular Islamist split in Libya. It had been papered over during the overthrow of Qadhafi because the secularists and the Islamists had joined forces to try to overthrow Qadhafi, but that after the overthrow of Qadhafi that this secular Islamist split was growing and was putting at risk the accomplishments of the overthrow of Qadhafi. That was absolutely clear.

In terms of growing -- to answer your question specifically, the

answer is no, but there were other trends that I did notice.

Q And was the Islamist threat principally centered in eastern Libya?

A No. There were areas in western Libya as well. And, again, this was -- what was clear to me from the reports I was reading was that this was a threat to the unity of Libya and to the institutions that were set up by the transitional authorities. That was what was becoming clear was the split between the secular and the Islamists.

Q Did you also view it as a threat to U.S. Government personnel on the ground?

A It's something that we always talked about, clearly, particularly given the fact that we knew that there had been foreign terrorists fighters that had flown into Iraq from Libya and that some of those had come back.

Q Were you aware of any U.S. Government personnel in Derna, whether State Department or any other agency?

A It's something I can't talk about. You can talk to others about.

Q Okay. And who would -- through what agency would we talk to?

Mr. Snyder. One second.

Mr. Feltman. I cannot talk about this. When I left, when I retired from the U.S. Government --

Mr. Snyder. I understand.

Ms. Betz. That's all. That's fine.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Okay. All right. We touched on earlier in the day and said we would come back to it [REDACTED] Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And were they there prior to Chris Stevens going in?

A I believe so. I think it was more or less the same time. They may have preceded Chris by a little bit. It was more or less the same time, but I think they did meet him.

Q Were you aware of what their objective or purpose was for being in Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what was that?

A I can't talk about it.

Q Was there any discussion [REDACTED] when the [REDACTED], was there any discussion [REDACTED]?

A Yes. And I even met with the person that was then heading [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] So yes, there were such discussions and I really can't go farther than that.

Q Okay. Were you aware that there was a State Department-run program regarding MANPADs?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what was that program?

A The program was to try to find a way to control, limit the proliferation, limit the export of MANPADs through a variety of means, through encouraging local discipline or regarding, encouraging ways to buy back. It was looking at what's a very real threat to civil aviation not only in Libya but beyond.

Q Did the State Department run more than one MANPADs program?

A I'm just aware of the general policy guidelines was just -- was to secure and destroy. The policy of the government at that time was that we needed to find ways to secure and destroy MANPADs before they fell into the hands of others or were used against civil aviation. And given the fact that it was a PM-led program, I wasn't aware of all the details of it.

Q And were you aware of any other U.S. Government agency engaged in a MANPADs program?

A I can't talk any more about it.

Q Okay. The directive for the State Department to engage in a MANPADs eradication program, was that something that the Secretary ordered, or is it something that the National Security Council, national security staff, or White House ordered?

A I mean, it came out of these general policy discussions that were initiated by the State Department, that included the interagency, that were coordinated by the National Security Council. We had certain interests in Libya. As I said in the unclassified section, our interests weren't unlimited. This is not a question of Egypt where we have enormous number of interests. Our interests in Libya were

fairly limited, but one of them was counterproliferation, which included as a subset of that the control and destruction of MANPADs.

Q Okay. But when you say "we," are you talking about the State Department or the U.S. Government at large?

A The U.S. Government at large. The State Department would do policy papers that would be presented to the NSC and discussed in interagency processes. I am sorry that I'm not able to draw a greater distinction here. It seemed at the time to be entirely commonsense that the U.S. Government would want to prohibit, prevent MANPADs from falling into other's hands. And I don't remember who came up with that bright idea to begin with.

Ms. Jackson. Those are all the questions I have.

Ms. Betz. Again, thank you. I mean, we're just trying to put all the pieces together and just trying to understand.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. No, we don't have any follow-up.

Ms. Jackson. Before we then conclude, I usually ask one follow-up question.

Mr. Feltman. Sure.

Ms. Jackson. And, again, we appreciate your being here today. We appreciate the candid way in which you've responded to our questions.

As you sit here and reflect upon the day, is there any question or answer that you previously gave that you would like to expand on or elaborate on or clarify in any way before we let you go to go catch a plane, train, or automobile?

Mr. Feltman. You know, this is one of those things where probably

for the next week I'll be thinking of what I said and thinking of what I might have said more articulately. I think it's natural. But in terms of -- I tried to answer your questions candidly, perhaps more fulsomely than the State Department counsel would have wished in some cases.

You know, as you all know, I was very close to Chris, both officially and personally. And I hope that we can all draw real lessons from this to prevent others from meeting similar fates as Chris and three of his colleagues in Benghazi. But having served in the Middle East for many years of my professional career, I know that it's impossible ever to eliminate all the dangers we face, and I think it's important that the United States be in these sorts of places to pursue U.S. interests despite the risks.

And I'm proud that I was part of that cadre of people who were willing to do that. So yes, I want everybody to draw lessons from what happened in Benghazi, but I also want people to recognize that there is no perfect security in today's world for U.S. diplomatic work overseas.

Ms. Jackson. All right. Thank you, sir.

Ms. Betz. Thank you.

Ms. Jackson. We'll go off the record.

[Whereupon, at 2:49 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

Certificate of Deponent/Interviewee

I have read the foregoing 139 pages, which contain the correct transcript of the answers made by me to the questions therein recorded.


JEFFREY FELTMAN

Witness Name

18 March 2016

Date

[REDACTED]

From: Jeffrey Feltman <feltman@un.org>
Sent: Friday, March 18, 2016 12:16 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: transcript

[REDACTED]

I have reviewed the transcript you sent to me [REDACTED] I found only three places where there should be changes, and none of the changes are substantive:

Page 46, two thirds of the way down: I said "we would look out to lunch," and I am fairly confident I said "out of touch" rather than "out to lunch."

Page 86, in the first sentence of the first full paragraph: there is typo, in that "there" should be "they" ("how creative they were").

Page 111, at the beginning of my answer at the end of the page: should be "An FS-02," not "And FS-02."

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Sincerely,
Jeff Feltman

Jeffrey Feltman
Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs
United Nations, New York

[DPA on the Web](#) | [Twitter](#) | [YouTube](#)
[Politically Speaking Online Magazine](#)



EXHIBIT 1

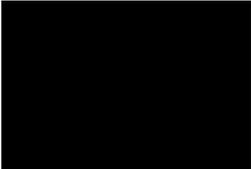
November 30, 2015

To: MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI:
The Honorable Trey Gowdy (R-SC), Chairman
The Honorable Susan Brooks (R-IN)
The Honorable Jim Jordan (R-OH)
The Honorable Mike Pompeo (R-KS)
The Honorable Martha Roby (R-AL)
The Honorable Peter Roskam (R-IL)
The Honorable Lynn Westmoreland (R-GA)
The Honorable Elijah Cummings (D-MD), Ranking Member
The Honorable Adam Smith (D-WA)
The Honorable Adam Schiff (D-CA)
The Honorable Linda Sanchez (D-CA)
The Honorable Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)

As foreign policy professionals and former ambassadors, we write to offer our perspective on issues raised during recent testimony by former Secretary Clinton before the House Select Committee on Benghazi.

Collectively, we have represented our country at the level of ambassador to 51 countries, and to our most important multilateral partners, under both Republican and Democratic presidents. Like Ambassador Christopher Stevens, all of us served as career Foreign Service ambassadors; many of us also have served at high-threat posts, in crisis situations, and/or in senior policy and management positions within the Department. Our experience in how ambassadors function, and how they interact with the Department and with the Secretaries of State they serve, was at variance with understandings expressed in some lines of questions raised by the Committee.

Each of us had ample access to the Secretaries we served. However, that access, more often than not, was conducted through a range of senior professional colleagues across the Department, each of whom was empowered to make decisions in the management and policy spheres. The normal chain of command is through regional and functional assistant secretaries, not directly to the Secretary. Skilled career Foreign Service ambassadors understand the need to move questions to decision at the right level, and to work those decisions up the leadership chain as needed. We believe this experience is in keeping with sound organizational practice,



and compatible with what we have seen in the private and non-governmental spheres in which our activities currently are focused.

Ultimately, if an ambassador believes an issue is sufficiently critical to merit the Secretary's attention, the ambassador has both the means and the responsibility to make certain it does. In the event of an urgent need for direct contact with the Secretary, however, none of us expected to use direct email contact, as there are more effective ways of communicating. For example, the State Department Operations Center, which operates 24/7, provides better access to senior officials than does any direct cell phone number and can track down Department principals anytime, anywhere. Certain forms of immediate cables can receive rapid attention and be distributed more broadly than emails, something important when an ambassador seeks to hold the system accountable for a response. We did not expect the Secretary of State to read each of the hundreds of thousands of cables sent annually to the Department. We knew that Department cables sent under the Secretary's name were only rarely approved by him or her.

Ambassadors are given wide latitude in how they operate in the field. We were expected to use our good judgment, paired with internal vetting processes, in deciding where to travel in-country. The same was expected in deciding with whom embassy staffs should meet – decisions all the more critical in war zones and other crisis situations.

In many countries, rule of law is rarely what it should be, and security issues in some of these countries can be dire. The Secretary has leadership responsibility for the security of all of those under his or her charge. However, in carrying out that responsibility, any Secretary must rely heavily on senior subordinates and on ambassadors, who have a designated and specific authority in this regard, to flag when a security issue is not being dealt with adequately. Diplomacy carries inherent risks, especially in high-threat posts; ambassadors understand these risks and constantly must make decisions of how much risk to take for what purpose. They know that absolute security is not possible, and that these decisions rarely will be clear-cut. However, they need the latitude to make difficult day-to-day decisions, relying on advice from security professionals and the expectation that they will receive appropriate support from Washington. They know, too, that available Congressional funding often does not meet the Department's critical security needs – and that the processes to redress those needs take time, even in crisis situations.

Finally, Ambassadors cannot do their jobs without a strong grasp of public messaging – important both to our roles personally and to the overall embassy

mission. All of us welcomed, even insisted on, the opportunity to advise Washington on that score; doing so in fluid and unclear crisis situations, such as the circumstances surrounding Benghazi, is particularly critical. Ambassadors and their staffs develop their own information sources, but never to the exclusion of outsiders' insights that might prove of value. We would rather hear those views, and be able to factor them into our own analyses, than not. We often responded to myriad questions - from the Administration, the private sector, and Congress - particularly when developments impact policy choices. This is part of the job, all the more so when events are fast-breaking or situations are confused.

We believe that maintaining bipartisan consensus on our country's foreign policy is a paramount national interest. From that perspective, we urge that the Committee take the above considerations in mind as it examines actions taken, or not taken, during the tragic occurrences of September 11, 2012.

Sincerely,

Amb. (ret.) John R. Beyrle
Russia, 2008-2012
Bulgaria, 2005-2008

Amb. (ret.) James Keough Bishop
Somalia, 1990-1991
Liberia, 1987-1990
Niger, 1979-1981

Amb. (ret.) Barbara K. Bodine
Yemen, 1997-2001

Amb. (ret.) A. Peter Burleigh
United Nations, 1997-2000
Sri Lanka and the Maldives, 1995-1997
Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism, 1992-1993

Amb. (ret.) R. Nicholas Burns
Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, 2005-2008
NATO, 2001-2005
Greece, 1997-2001

Amb. (ret.) John Campbell
Nigeria, 2004-2007

Amb. (ret.) Katherine Canavan
Botswana, 2005-2008
Lesotho, 1998-2001

Amb. (ret.) James Collins
Russia, 1997-2001
Ambassador-at-Large, New Independent States, 1994-1997

Amb. (ret.) Edwin G. Corr
El Salvador, 1985-1988
Bolivia, 1981-1985
Peru, 1980-1981

Amb. (ret.) Ryan C. Crocker
Afghanistan, 2011-2012
Iraq, 2007-2009
Pakistan, 2004-2007
Syria, 1998-2001
Kuwait, 1994-1997
Lebanon, 1990-1993

Amb. (ret.) James B. Cunningham
Afghanistan, 2012-2014
Israel, 2008-2011
Chief of Mission, Hong Kong, 2005-2008
United Nations, 2000-2004

Amb. (ret.) Robert S. Gelbard
Indonesia, 1999-2001
Bolivia, 1988-1991

Amb. (ret.) Michael Guest
Romania, 2001-2004

Amb. (ret.) Richard Hoagland
Kazakhstan, 2008-2011
Tajikistan, 2003-2006

Amb. (ret.) Dennis Jett
Peru, 1996-1999
Mozambique, 1993-1996

Amb. (ret.) Richard D. Kauzlarich
Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1997-1999
Azerbaijan, 1994-1997

Amb. (ret.) Laura E. Kennedy
Conference on Disarmament, 2010-2013
Turkmenistan, 2001-2003

Amb. (ret.) Richard LeBaron
Kuwait, 2007-2010

Amb. (ret.) Tom Miller
Greece, 2001-2004
Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1999-2001
Cyprus negotiations, 1997-1999

Amb. (ret.) Cameron Munter
Pakistan, 2010-2012
Serbia, 2007-2009

Amb. (ret.) Ronald E. Neumann
Afghanistan, 2005-2007
Bahrain, 2001-2004
Algeria, 1994-1997

Amb. (ret.) Thomas Niles
Greece, 1993-1997
European Union, 1989-1991
Canada, 1985-1989

Amb. (ret.) Maurice S. Parker
Swaziland, 2007-2009

Amb. (ret.) Donald Petterson
Sudan, 1992-1995
Tanzania, 1986-1989
Somalia, 1978-1982

Amb. (ret.) Steven Pifer
Ukraine, 1998-2000

Amb. (ret.) Laurence Pope
Chad, 1993-1996

Amb. (ret.) Nancy Powell
India, 2012-2014
Nepal, 2007-2009
Pakistan, 2002-2004
Ghana, 2001-2002
Uganda, 1997-1999

Amb. (ret.) Robert Pringle
Mali, 1987-1990

Amb. (ret.) Charles A. Ray
Zimbabwe, 2009-2012
Cambodia, 2002-2005

Amb. (ret.) Francis J. Ricciardone
Turkey, 2011-2014
Egypt, 2005-2008
Philippines, 2002-2005

Amb. (ret.) Patrick Theros
Qatar, 1995-1998

Amb. (ret.) Edward S. Walker, Jr.
Israel, 1997-1999
Egypt, 1994-1997
United Arab Emirates, 1989-1992

Amb. (ret.) Frank Wisner
India, 1994-1997
Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, 1993-1994
Under Secretary of State for International Security Affairs, 1992-1993
Philippines, 1991-1992
Egypt, 1986-1991
Zambia, 1979-1982

EXHIBIT 2

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 26, 2011 5:14 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: [REDACTED]

Categories: Working
Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

Great!
 [REDACTED]

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 26, 2011 1:49 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: [REDACTED]

Casey's, 3:30pm mañana. We're all set. Thanks!

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 26, 2011 12:37 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: [REDACTED]

Perfect. Wherever. Casey's?
 Thanks!
 [REDACTED]

SBU
 This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 26, 2011 12:35 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: [REDACTED]

Great, thanks! I've already asked him to raise the staffing issue directly with [REDACTED], but I'm sure he'll want to share his arguments for an OSD presence with us as well, in addition to whatever else he wants to tell us.

How about 3:30pm tomorrow? Any preference on where we should meet? I'm not really sure how to get him access to the building, but we could meet offsite, somewhere close by.

Best,

SBU
This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 26, 2011 11:04 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: [REDACTED]

Thanks!

Anytime after 3 tomorrow would be great.

As you know, Chris and [REDACTED] have not welcomed the idea of DOD presence in Benghazi at this point. But we can listen.

SBU
This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 26, 2011 11:01 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: [REDACTED]

Hi [REDACTED]

FYI on all of the info below. Do you have any time this week to meet with [REDACTED] former DATT from Embassy Tripoli? Tomorrow afternoon would probably work best for me.

Thanks,

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 26, 2011 10:40 AM
To: [REDACTED]; Cretz, Gene A
Subject: RE: [REDACTED]

REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

Yes, certainly.

██████████
 Director
 Office of Maghreb Affairs
 Department of State
 202-647-4679
 ██████████@state.gov

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: ██████████
Sent: Tuesday, July 26, 2011 10:32 AM
To: ██████████; Cretz, Gene A
Subject: RE: ██████████

I just spoke with ██████████ and it does sound like OSD is pushing for this now in order to preposition someone for Benghazi. He said that OSD now recognizes that it would be valuable to have a point person to manage potential security assistance issues (programs such as IMET and FMF) now that we've recognized the TNC, while implying that it would be most useful for that person to be in Libya. I told him that we had no room to add additional staff right now, encouraging him to speak with ██████████ for more information.

██████████ says he has some other information that he couldn't share over the phone. He asked to meet me to discuss. I told him I'd get back to him on that. I think it might be valuable for ██████████ if she has time, to join me for this meeting. What do you think?

Thanks,
 ██████████

SBU
 This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: ██████████
Sent: Tuesday, July 26, 2011 9:26 AM
To: ██████████; Cretz, Gene A
Subject: RE: ██████████

I think it could be helpful for you to talk to him. I agree with you. OSD is now pushing quite vigorously to position someone for DATT type slot in Benghazi. As I mentioned, we don't support. Allowing them to put him at State may be a way to pre-position him for that, or it could serve as a sop for them, while we postpone having him go out. (I don't see how they plan to get around "the no boots on the ground" rule but maybe they have a work-around.) ██████████ will you be in touch with ██████████ to urge him to speak to ██████████?

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 26, 2011 4:30 AM
To: [REDACTED]; Cretz, Gene A; [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: [REDACTED]

what does OSD want him to do? given that we're in the process of winding down Emb Tripoli, I don't see a lot of value-added in bringing him to State right now. I'm happy to talk to [REDACTED] - he can call me through Ops any time. Is he no longer working in Sudan?

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Mon 7/25/2011 5:10 PM
To: Cretz, Gene A; [REDACTED]
Subject: [REDACTED]

Ambassador, [REDACTED], and [REDACTED]:

I received some information today from [REDACTED] and then through [REDACTED] (from [REDACTED]) that suggests that OSD would like for [REDACTED] to sit with Embassy Tripoli at State on a temporary basis. Just wanted to make sure you were aware and to seek guidance on how I should respond. Should I refer [REDACTED] assigning office to anyone in NEA ([REDACTED] perhaps?)?

Thanks,
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Political and Economic Affairs Chief
U.S. Embassy Tripoli (now in Washington)
Office: 202-663-1017
Cell: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]@state.gov

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

EXHIBIT 3

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, October 21, 2011 5:17 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Secretary in Tripoli

From: Cretz, Gene A
Sent: Friday, October 21, 2011 04:50 AM
To: Mills, Cheryl D
Subject: Secretary in Tripoli

T thanks for the kind words. I think the Secretary's visit here was picture perfect given the chaos we labor under in Libya. The Secretary was great and her efforts will I think help us move forward on our project to help the war-wounded. On a lighter note, I will never be lonely here after the Secretary was kind enough to give my personal contact information to all 120,000 students at the university during her stirring dialogue with them. It has been quite a week ; I don't think I can take any more excitement. All the best, Gene.

From: Mills, Cheryl D
Sent: Sunday, October 16, 2011 2:36 PM
To: Cretz, Gene A
Subject: RE: contact

Thanks so much Gene – you have been a terrific partner in a hard circumstance.

I think we will move forward with seeking to have Chris become charge in January and then nominate him subsequently so he can begin serving.

cdm

From: Cretz, Gene A
Sent: Friday, October 14, 2011 1:36 PM
To: Mills, Cheryl D
Subject: contact

Hi Cheryl: hope this finds you well. I know that Jeff has been in touch with you regarding the switch between myself and Chris Stevens.

[REDACTED] please rest assured that I consider myself extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to work closely with/for the Secretary during the past 8 months. I consider the Secretary's visit to Tripoli this coming week to be the high point of my 30 year career. Warm regards, Gene.

PERSONAL
 This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

**United States Department of State***Washington, D. C. 20522-0611***UNCLASSIFIED****May 1, 2012****ACTION MEMO FOR UNDER SECRETARY KENNEDY – M****FROM:** NEA-SCA/EX – [REDACTED] Acting**SUBJECT:** Request for Permission for TDY Travel of USG Personnel to Tripoli, Libya**Recommendation**

That you approve the request for U.S. government personnel listed on the attached spreadsheet (Tab) to travel to Tripoli, Libya while it is an unaccompanied post.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

Background

Embassy Tripoli went on Authorized Departure on February 20, 2011, upgraded to Ordered Departure the next day, and suspended operations on February 25, 2011. Ordered Departure terminated August 18, 2011 after post was in departure status for 180 days. Operations were re-established on September 22, 2011; however, it remains in unaccompanied status.

The personnel in the attached spreadsheet will be traveling to provide long- and short-term logistical, security, and reporting support to Embassy Tripoli.

As with all travel to Tripoli, actual date of arrival will depend on the availability of accommodations. However, current timetables indicate beds will be available.

The Ambassador supports this request.

Attachment:

Tab 1 – List of Personnel Requesting Travel

Tab 2 – Daily Staffing Count

UNCLASSIFIED

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

Drafted: [REDACTED], 7-6543 or [REDACTED]

Cleared:

M: [REDACTED], ok

NEA/MAG: [REDACTED], ok

DS: [REDACTED], ok

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

EXHIBIT 4

(STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.)

201123787



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

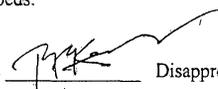
December 27, 2011

ACTION MEMO FOR UNDER SECRETARY KENNEDY - MFROM: NEA - Jeffrey Feltman 

SUBJECT: Future of Operations in Benghazi, Libya

Recommendation 1:

That you approve a continued U.S. presence in Benghazi through the end of calendar year 2012; and that you approve a combined footprint of 35 U.S. government personnel in Benghazi, including eight State Department and USAID and two TDY beds.

Approve 

Disapprove _____

Recommendation 2:

That you approve the release of the existing State Department lease in Benghazi on Villa A; and that you approve the retention of Villas B and C for office and residential space for the State Department presence.

Approve 

Disapprove _____

Background

The Transitional National Council (TNC) recently declared Libya liberated and moved the center of TNC operations from Benghazi to Tripoli. Chris Stevens, the Department's original Special Envoy to the TNC, has been replaced by Bureau of Political Military Affairs officer [REDACTED], who previously served at Embassy Tripoli. Entry level officer [REDACTED] transitioned to Tripoli in mid-December and USAID has shifted its permanent presence to Tripoli. Because of budget constraints and the reduced footprint, Diplomatic Security's current presence consists of two Special Agents, with an additional three slots currently unfilled.

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

(STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.)

(STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

With Information Management Officer (IMO)/Management Officer [REDACTED] the permanent presence in Benghazi is five, down from an approved footprint of 17. The current leases are paid through February 4, 2012, and extendable at our discretion through 2015.

Although our presence in Benghazi has shrunk considerably since the reopening of the Embassy in Tripoli, I would like to maintain a small State-run presence in Benghazi through the end of calendar year 2012, to include the critical summer elections period. Headed by an FS-02 or GS-14 officer, this office would work in close coordination with Tripoli on political and economic reporting, public diplomacy and commercial work in the eastern part of Libya and serve as "host" for the activities of USAID, PM, and any other U.S. government TDY personnel in Benghazi. Because this would be a smaller operation, Benghazi would continue to be supported by one IRM TDYer for communications and management issues and one NEA TDY reporting officer in addition to the TDY head of operations. NEA also would support the continuation of an LES PSA position to provide translation, policy, and administrative support. With the full complement of five Special Agents, our permanent presence would include eight U.S. direct hire employees, two slots for TDY PM and USAID officers, and one LES program assistant.

A continued presence in Benghazi will emphasize U.S. interest in the eastern part of Libya. Many Libyans have said the U.S. presence in Benghazi has a salutary, calming effect on easterners who are fearful that the new focus on Tripoli could once again lead to their neglect and exclusion from reconstruction and wealth distribution and strongly favor a permanent U.S. presence in the form of a full consulate. They feel the United States will help ensure they are dealt with fairly. TNC officials have said some government agencies may shift their headquarters to Benghazi (such as the National Oil Company). Other government agencies and corporations already have their headquarters in Benghazi and will likely remain there for the foreseeable future. The team will be able to monitor political trends (Islamists, tribes, political parties, militias) and public sentiment regarding the "new Libya," as well as report on the critical period leading up to and through Libya's first post-Qadhafi elections. Programmatic benefits to a continued U.S. presence in Benghazi include building on USAID/OTI's programs to strengthen civil society groups, media training, and capacity building in municipal councils. We should continue to engage with the populace, particularly with the large population of Libyan youth, an important and receptive audience with high expectations for the post-revolution period.

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

(STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.)

(STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

Italy, Tunisia, Morocco, Malta, Finland, Turkey, Egypt, Sweden, Sudan, and the Palestinian Authority all have consulates in Benghazi. In informal conversations, representatives of the United Kingdom and French have said their governments would be unlikely to maintain offices there for budgetary reasons. The European Union and the United Nations have not announced whether they will maintain long-term presences in Benghazi.

Facilities

The current Benghazi State platform (Villas A, B, and C) is a 13-acre walled compound with 3.5 villas, office space, and a dining hall. Although all groups have come to the conclusion that co-location is the best and most economical option for continued presence, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and the current State facility is not large enough to permit co-location. Tripoli Facility Manager [REDACTED] recently traveled to Benghazi to study a proposed villa compound (Villa D – see Tab [REDACTED]) and determined that the electrical, plumbing and physical security work needed to bring the facility up to an acceptable standard would negate any cost savings of the move.

The current Villa Compound is much larger than we need for the duration of our presence in Benghazi. We currently pay \$70,000/month for the three properties (A - \$28,000/month, B - \$14,000/month, and C - \$28,000/month). NEA proposes to release the Villa A property and use Villa C for residential and Villa B for offices, dining facility, and TDY housing. If you agree with this course of action, NEA will work with DS to rapidly implement a series of corrective security measures as part of the consolidation of the State footprint. We have one-year leases renewable for up to three additional one-year periods on these villas, with an option to terminate without financial penalty after the first six months, with sixty days notice. In order to avoid any additional rent payments on Villa A, NEA proposes to give immediate notice of termination, but would like to retain the leases on Villas B and C through the end of calendar year 2012 [REDACTED]

Attachment:

Tab – Benghazi proposal

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

(STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.)

Info Office: DETCMDR_INFO, EXEC_INFO
MRN: 12 TRIPOLI 130
Date/DTG: Mar 28, 2012 / 280648Z MAR 12
From: AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*
E.O.: 13526
TAGS: ASEC, AMGT, LY
Captions: SENSITIVE
Reference: 12 TRIPOLI 64
Pass Line: STATE FOR DS/IP/NEA AND NEA/EX
Correction Reason: CORRECTED COPY: Refel added.
Subject: REQUEST FOR DS TDY AND FTE SUPPORT

1. (SBU) SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST: As Tripoli seeks to transition from emergency to normalized security operations, post and the RSO face a considerable workload in a constantly evolving environment. Accomplishment of RSO's core objectives -- essential support for movement security, including continuing high volume of senior-level visits; rebuilding and expanding post's PSA Local Guard Force (LGF); managing major physical security projects; creating a locally engaged bodyguard force; and establishing traditional RSO programs -- requires continued TDY support from the Department, as well as an increase in the number of our permanently assigned RSO staff. In order to transition successfully from the current MSD and SST-based security model to one that incorporates more locally based and non-emergency assets, post requests: 12 TDY DS agents for 45-60 day rotations in Tripoli (to replace our two departing MSD teams); 5 TDY DS agents for 45-60 day rotations in Benghazi; continued deployment of one MSD team through completion of training of our second LES bodyguard team (o/a July 1); one TDY ARSO from April 1 til July 1; and one WAE TDY'er to assist with LGF program development and emergency planning. In addition, post requests an increase in full-time staffing for RSO Tripoli to include: one RSO, one Deputy RSO, and four ARSOs. Post is extremely grateful for the extraordinary support provided by DS as we transition to normalized security operations. End summary and action request.

2. (SBU) As noted in our EAC reports and regular DS spot reports, the security environment in Tripoli remains uncertain and unstable. Although there has been a marked decrease in the number of militia checkpoints around Tripoli, the Transitional National Council (TNC) has not yet succeeded in demobilizing the multiple militias or bringing them into a centralized command and control structure. This uncertain environment is likely to continue through the entire transition cycle, which as outlined in the TNC's constitutional charter, is expected to last at least one year beyond the June 2012 election for the constitutional assembly. In REF A, Post provided a detailed description of the evolving security environment at Post, VIP visit demands, physical security projects underway, and an update of LGF and LES close protection recruitment, staffing, and training efforts.

3. (SBU) As recommended by the Department, post is developing plans to transition our security staffing from an MSD and SST-based model to one that incorporates more locally based and non-emergency assets. Post requests the following support:

-TDY DS AGENTS: Post requests twelve (12) TDY DS agents, with a preference for high-threat trained personnel, for 45-60 day rotations, to provide movement and static security in lieu of two MSD teams. Since Tripoli reopened in September 2011, post has relied on three teams of MSD agents (18 DS agents) to

provided emergency support in support of our operations. One of the three MSD teams departed post in March and was not replaced. While post has reduced its movement security profile in light of a general improvement in the security environment, Post requires a DS escort for movement of personnel who have not received FACT, SNOE, or similar post provided training. Currently, MSD and SST personnel man [REDACTED] Quick Reaction Force (QRF) elements, deployed as a response force, for all day time movements in Tripoli. Movements after 1800 hrs generally require QRF support and a DS escort in the vehicle. MSD and SST personnel also provide personnel to support COM and DCM movement teams. Post also is required to deploy MSD and SST personnel to support VIP visits, which occur at rate of 3-5 per month. Finally, MSD and SST assets provide static armed security at the temporary Chancery and interim Residential compounds. As Post's LES close protection assets and program expands, we would expect the number of TDY DS agents to contract accordingly, with a planned complete reduction of TDY DS agents in Tripoli within the next 3-5 months. However, complete elimination of our USDH TDY security presence is contingent upon post receiving host government permission to arm our LES bodyguard force.

-DS AGENT SUPPORT IN BENGHAZI: Post requests continued support for 5 TDY DS agents in Benghazi on 45-60 day rotations. This number is required to ensure that we have an appropriate USDH presence to protect our COMSEC; support the two long-term USDH TDY'ers; and support an increasing number of program/assistance TDY's from both Tripoli and Washington. The number of TDY'ers in Benghazi is expected to increase in the run-up to the June elections. Embassy Tripoli is in the process of recruiting four LES drivers and an RSO LES SPSS, which will support operations in Benghazi. Post also plans to deploy a TDY RSO from Tripoli once expanded permanent staffing is established and stabilized. Once these positions are filled, Post anticipates requiring fewer TDY DS agents to support Benghazi. Although an LGF contractor has begun operations in Benghazi, initial discussions regarding contractor-provided armed close protection / movement support does not appear viable based on complications regarding GOL firearms permits. Currently, the LGF contractor is able to obtain only short-term (48-72 hr) firearms permits for specific VIP visits.

-MSD TEAMS: Post requests the continued deployment of one MSD team of six agents to provide training team assistance for a surge of newly hired LGF and LES movement security. We would expect the first group of 12 LES movement security team members to complete an 8-week MSD led training course on April 19 and a second group of 12 team members to complete the same training on June 14. Approximately 50 newly hired LGF will complete MSD assisted two-week basic training courses by mid-April. Post anticipates the departure of the MSD training team upon completion of the second LES movement security team training course and deployment, on/about July 1, 2012. Post requests that the second MSD team currently deployed until mid-May be replaced with the aforementioned TDY non-MSD DS agents.

-ARSO SUPPORT: Post expects its two permanent ARSOs to arrive in mid-April and mid-June respectively. Post requests one TDY DS AGENT with prior ARSO experience to act in a TDY ARSO capacity for periods of 45-60 days beginning on April 1 until July 1.

-ADDITIONAL SUPPORT: Post requests one WAE TDYer to assist with LGF program development and assist with emergency planning, to include development of Post's Emergency Action Plan (EAP).

4. (SBU) FULL TIME STAFFING: Given the vast increase in the number of programs and personnel that RSO is required to manage as well as the fluid security environment in which those programs must be built, Post supports the proposed full time staffing for RSO Tripoli of 1 RSO, 1 Deputy RSO, and 4 Assistant RSOs. As Post expects continued operations in Benghazi through CY 2012 and Tripoli's tours of duty to remain at one year, the proposed permanent staffing would provide sufficient support during periods of RR/RRBs while also stabilizing support for operations in Benghazi.

5-(U) Embassy Tripoli is extremely grateful for the extraordinary support provided by DS as we transition to normalized security operations. Point of contact for this request is [REDACTED], RSO Tripoli, [REDACTED]@state.gov, 24hr VOIP/TOC - [REDACTED]

Signature: CRETZ

Drafted By:

Cleared By:

Approved By:

Released By: 3

Info:

Action Post:

Dissemination Rule: DETCMDR_INFO, RSO, EXEC_INFO, MGT_ACTION

UNCLASSIFIED
SBU

EXHIBIT 6

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2012 4:19 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: draft email for your clearance: (SBU) Lack of Security Staffing at Benghazi undermining mission

Categories: Working
Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
SensitivityCode: Sensitive

Also, the Secretary asked last week if we still have a presence in Benghazi – I think she would be upset to hear that yes we do but because we don't have enough security they are on lockdown.

SBU
This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2012 3:25 PM
To: NEA-MAG-LIBYA
Subject: FW: draft email for your clearance: (SBU) Lack of Security Staffing at Benghazi undermining mission

SBU
This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2012 3:24 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: draft email for your clearance: (SBU) Lack of Security Staffing at Benghazi undermining mission

Let me know if this works and whether you want to consult with [REDACTED] or EX before sending this to the FO. Another issue to keep in mind is Embassy Tunis' longstanding request for an A/RSO. If we ask JDF to present this to M, we might get asked which would be our top priority within MAG. (That's not a fair question of course, because Tunis is asking for a permanent A/RSO FTE, whereas we are looking for a solid commitment of 4 TDY DS agents through the end of the year.)

Thanks.

We determined early on that it was important to us to maintain a presence in Benghazi to engage with the TNC and keep an eye on political and security developments in the east. The mission in Benghazi has also allowed PM and USAID to conduct periodic TDYs in the east to further develop their contacts and monitor progress on our MANPADS, elections

and civil society assistance programs. The simmering protests in Benghazi and the east against the TNC and local councils over the last few weeks (along with violent unrest in Bani Wali in the west) have shaken the interim government, and illustrated the importance of maintaining a broad base of contacts and visibility outside of Tripoli.

Unfortunately, DS staffing is becoming a recurring problem in Benghazi. At the current security threat level, Benghazi needs a minimum of four agents to support moves out of town (3 to accompany the Principal Officer or TDY officer, and 1 to remain on compound with the IRM/management person). Post needs a minimum of three agents to facilitate one movement at a time in town, and one to remain on compound.

DS staffing has dropped to two agents several times over the last few months between rotations, which has prevented the PO from leaving the compound. DS tells post it is unlikely they can fully staff Benghazi due to broader staffing challenges across NEA, and has suggested we adjust our expectations about movements and outreach.

The fluid security situation makes it unlikely that RSO and EAC will decide to significantly ease the security profile in the immediate future. If DS cannot or will not allocate the right resources for Benghazi, we may want to push back with M to force a discussion about DS's decision. If there is no recourse, we should reconsider whether we keep the mission going. There is very little reason to maintain the expense if our people are going to be trapped on the compound and unable to get around.

[REDACTED]
Deputy Director, Office of Maghreb Affairs
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
U.S. Department of State
(O) 202-647-4675 (F) 202-736-4460

SBU

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

EXHIBIT 7

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2012 4:19 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: draft email for your clearance: (SBU) Lack of Security Staffing at Benghazi undermining mission

Categories: Working
Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
SensitivityCode: Sensitive

Also, the Secretary asked last week if we still have a presence in Benghazi – I think she would be upset to hear that yes we do but because we don't have enough security they are on lockdown.

SBU
This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2012 3:25 PM
To: NEA-MAG-LIBYA
Subject: FW: draft email for your clearance: (SBU) Lack of Security Staffing at Benghazi undermining mission

SBU
This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2012 3:24 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: draft email for your clearance: (SBU) Lack of Security Staffing at Benghazi undermining mission

Let me know if this works and whether you want to consult with [REDACTED] or EX before sending this to the FO. Another issue to keep in mind is Embassy Tunis' longstanding request for an A/RSO. If we ask JDF to present this to M, we might get asked which would be our top priority within MAG. (That's not a fair question of course, because Tunis is asking for a permanent A/RSO FTE, whereas we are looking for a solid commitment of 4 TDY DS agents through the end of the year.)

Thanks.

We determined early on that it was important to us to maintain a presence in Benghazi to engage with the TNC and keep an eye on political and security developments in the east. The mission in Benghazi has also allowed PM and USAID to conduct periodic TDYs in the east to further develop their contacts and monitor progress on our MANPADS, elections

and civil society assistance programs. The simmering protests in Benghazi and the east against the TNC and local councils over the last few weeks (along with violent unrest in Bani Wali in the west) have shaken the interim government, and illustrated the importance of maintaining a broad base of contacts and visibility outside of Tripoli.

Unfortunately, DS staffing is becoming a recurring problem in Benghazi. At the current security threat level, Benghazi needs a minimum of four agents to support moves out of town (3 to accompany the Principal Officer or TDY officer, and 1 to remain on compound with the IRM/management person). Post needs a minimum of three agents to facilitate one movement at a time in town, and one to remain on compound.

DS staffing has dropped to two agents several times over the last few months between rotations, which has prevented the PO from leaving the compound. DS tells post it is unlikely they can fully staff Benghazi due to broader staffing challenges across NEA, and has suggested we adjust our expectations about movements and outreach.

The fluid security situation makes it unlikely that RSO and EAC will decide to significantly ease the security profile in the immediate future. If DS cannot or will not allocate the right resources for Benghazi, we may want to push back with M to force a discussion about DS's decision. If there is no recourse, we should reconsider whether we keep the mission going. There is very little reason to maintain the expense if our people are going to be trapped on the compound and unable to get around.

[REDACTED]
Deputy Director, Office of Maghreb Affairs
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
U.S. Department of State
(O) 202-647-4675 (F) 202-736-4460

SBU
This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

EXHIBIT 8

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJ@state.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2011 10:41 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Libyan

Fyi

----- Original Message -----

From: Gordon, Philip H
Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2011 05:56 PM
To: Feltman, Jeffrey D; Burns, William J; Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: Re: Libyan

██████████ now says the issue of the visitor is "more complicated than they thought" and he prefers to send me a secure message in the morning. Will let you know.
Meanwhile, press here all about whether US/coalition going to "arm rebels" based on HRC comments about "no decision yet, resolution allows that". Tomorrow's Guardian headline is "Coalition ready to arm rebellion if Gadafy clings to power". Don't know if playing same way back home.

----- Original Message -----

From: Feltman, Jeffrey D
Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2011 02:57 PM
To: Gordon, Philip H; Burns, William J; Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: Re: Libyan

Thanks.
Jeffrey Feltman

----- Original Message -----

From: Gordon, Philip H
Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2011 02:34 PM
To: Burns, William J; Feltman, Jeffrey D; Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: Libyan

██████████ says plane of Libyan mystery visitor just landed. Said he'd keep us posted as details emerge.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

**INTERVIEW OF
CHIEF OF OPERATIONS
FOR THE
NEAR EAST DIVISION**

BEFORE THE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, DECEMBER 10, 2015

Excerpts of the foregoing interview were cited in the Report of the Select Committee on Benghazi. The Central Intelligence Agency declined the Committee's request to declassify the interview transcript.

**INTERVIEW OF
THOMAS NIDES**

BEFORE THE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, JULY 23, 2015

APPEARANCES

FOR THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI

DANA CHIPMAN, *Chief Counsel*
MAC TOLAR, *Senior Counsel*
SHERIA CLARKE, *Counsel*
KIM BETZ, *Member Outreach Liaison and Counsel*
SUSANNE SACHSMAN GROOMS, *Minority Staff Director/General Counsel*
HEATHER SAWYER, *Minority Chief Counsel*
RONAK DESAI, *Minority Counsel*
ERIN O'BRIEN, *Minority Detailee*

FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ERIC SNYDER, *Senior Counsel*
* * *

FOR THOMAS NIDES

RUSSELL ANELLO
RAUL YANES

INTERVIEW OF THOMAS NIDES

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2015

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI,
Washington, DC.

The interview in the above matter was held in Room HVC-205, Capitol Visitor Center, commencing at 10:08 a.m.

Present: Representatives Gowdy, Jordan, Brooks, and Roby.

Appearances:

For the Select Committee on Benghazi: Dana Chipman, Chief Investigative Counsel; Mac Tolar, Senior Counsel; Sheria Clarke, Counsel; Kim Betz, Member Outreach Liaison; Susanne Sachsman Grooms, Minority Staff Director/General Counsel; Heather Sawyer, Minority Chief Counsel; Ronak Desai, Minority Counsel; Erin O'Brien, Minority Detailee.

For the U.S. Department of State: Eric Snyder, Senior Counsel;
* * *

For Thomas Nides: Russell Anello, Raul Yanes.

Ms. BETZ. So I'm just going to go over a few ground rules that will sort of guide our discussion today. This is a transcribed interview of Thomas Nides conducted by the House Select Committee on Benghazi. The interview is being conducted voluntarily as part of the committee's investigation into the attacks on the U. S. diplomatic facilities in Benghazi, Libya, and related matters pursuant to House Resolution 567 of the 113th Congress, and House Resolution 5 of the 114th Congress.

Would the witness please state his name for the record?

Mr. NIDES. Thomas Nides.

Ms. BETZ. We appreciate your willingness to appear at this interview. My name is Kim Betz with the committee's majority staff, and I will ask everyone around the room to go ahead and introduce themselves.

Ms. CLARKE. Sheria Clarke, majority staff.

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. I'm Susanne Sachsman Grooms, minority staff.

Mr. DESAI. Ronak Desai with the minority staff.

Ms. O'BRIEN. Erin O'Brien with the minority.

Mr. SNYDER. Eric Snyder, State Department.

Ms. * * *. * * *, State Department.

Mr. ANELLO. Russel Anello with Mr. Nides.

Mr. YANES. Raul Yanes, Mr. Nides' attorney.

Mr. CHIPMAN. Dana Chipman with the committee staff.

Ms. BETZ. Thank you. I want to discuss a few process details that will guide our discussion today. Generally, the way that the questioning has worked, a member from the majority will ask questions first for up to an hour. And then the minority will have an opportunity to ask questions for an equal period of time if they choose. Questions may be asked only by a member of the committee or designated staff.

It has been our practice to alternate back and forth, 1 hour per side, until we are out of questions and the interview is over, but in some cases, we deviated from this practice. Unlike testimony or a deposition in Federal Court, the committee format is not bound by the rules of evidence. The witness or their counsel may raise objections for privilege, subject to review by the chairman of the committee. If these objections cannot be resolved in the interview, the witness can be required return for a deposition or hearing.

Members and staff of the committee, however, are not permitted to raise objections when the other side is asking questions. This has not been an issue we encountered in the past, but I wanted to make sure that you are clear on the process.

This session will start as unclassified. If any question calls for a classified answer, please let us know, and we will reserve its answer until we move into a classified setting, and we will move downstairs if necessary to a classified setting.

As I said earlier, we want to make this process as easy as possible for you. You are welcome to confer with counsel at any time throughout the interview. If something needs to be clarified, just ask us, and we will try to clarify it for you. If you need to discuss anything with your counsel, we will go off the record, and stop the clock to provide you with this opportunity. We would like to take a break whenever it is convenient for you. This can be after every hour of questioning, after a couple of rounds, whatever you prefer. During a round of questioning, if you need anything, a glass of water, use of the facilities, time to confer, you know, just please let us know, and we will go off the record and stop the clock. Like I said, we want to make this as easy as possible.

As you can see we have an official reporter that is taking down everything you say to make a written record, so we ask that you give verbal responses, yes or no, as opposed to nods of the head. I'm going to ask the reporter to please feel free to jump in if you do respond nonverbally so that we can clarify your answer. Do you understand this?

Mr. NIDES. I do.

Ms. BETZ. Also, we should both try not to talk over each other, so it is easier to get a clear record. I'm guilty of that. So we want you to answer our questions in the most complete and truthful manner possible, so we will take our time and repeat or clarify our questions if necessary. If you have any question, or if you do not understand any of our questions, please let us know. We will be happy to clarify or repeat our questions.

If you honestly don't know an answer to a question, or do not remember, it is best not to guess. Just please give us your best recollection, and if there are things you do not know or can't remember, just say so. And please inform us who, to the best of your recollection, may be able to provide a more complete answer.

You are required to answer questions from Congress truthfully.

Do you understand this?

Mr. NIDES. I do.

Ms. BETZ. This also applies to questions posed by congressional staff in an interview. Do you understand this?

Mr. NIDES. I do.

Ms. BETZ. Witnesses that knowingly provide false testimony could be subject to criminal prosecution for perjury or making false statements. Do you understand this?

Mr. NIDES. I do.

Ms. BETZ. Is there any reason you are unable to provide truthful answer to today's questions?

Mr. NIDES. No.

Ms. BETZ. That's the end of my preamble. I will ask the minority if they would like to add anything.

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. No. Thank you for coming.

Ms. BETZ. So the time is now 10:13, and we will start with our questions.

EXAMINATION BY MS. BETZ

Q: Mr. Nides, is that what you prefer?

A: No, Tom is—Tom, I would prefer.

Q: That is very formal. Your position at the State Department, Deputy Secretary for Management, is a relatively or was a relatively new position. The Secretary talked a little bit about the position earlier this fall when she testified before the committee. So I just wanted to get a sense from you what the reporting structure was, vis-a-vis your position, the Under Secretary for Management, and how the decisionmaking worked. What was in your purview? What was in the Under Secretary's purview?

A: Well, first, thank you for having me. I think, as you probably know, that the job—I was only the second occupant of the job. Jack Lew was the first; I was the second. So it is a work in progress, as I like to say. As you know, I think it was Hal Rogers who actually come up with the idea of a second deputy. It wasn't until Hillary Clinton determined to actually fill the job and called Paul, debated it, and then ultimately decided not to. And I think Secretary Clinton was the first one to actually fill the job.

The job was, obviously, new. It is going to take many years, I think, for—to get clear about what—who is responsible for what, and the structure the State Department needs to, obviously, shake out as it relates to that.

But as I—my primary responsibility as the Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources was really focusing principally on the resource side of it. I was the point person on the budget for the State Department. I managed—not only managed the State Department budget, but I was the chief advocate for the budget up on the Hill. I spent an enormous amount of time on areas that were focused on large sums of money or people. I spent an enormous amount of time in Afghanistan, in Pakistan, and Iraq because those were the three areas where we were spending huge amounts of resources. We had the structure. I obviously reported to Secretary Clinton.

The Under Secretary for Management reported to me. Although, to be honest, it was a work in progress. I think it still is a work in progress, because when you look at a work chart, although he is under the Deputy Secretary, the exact solid lines, or dotted lines, were somewhat vague. But that job, his job had been around for 50 years, so many of the actual functions reported directly to that individual and, obviously, he reported to me.

Q: So it was—would you say a case-by-case sort of situation as to the decisions that you made versus the decisions that he made?

A: Yeah, I would be—I would probably clarify to say that he would make, you know, he is a 30-year veteran of the State Department, so, I never second-guessed, in many cases, the expertise of someone who had been around for that many years, especially as related to security, or building operations, or technology, having been there as long as he had been.

But I think where I would get involved is if there was a conflict, if there was a decision that couldn't get made, or there was a question of conflicting disagreements among the careerists. But I was very focused, as Secretary Clinton was, to make sure that the career people, the people who were the professionals who were making the decisions, and ultimately we were, you know, responsible to—would come up to us only as those decisions were actually implemented or close to being implemented.

Q: Would there ever been a time where you would resolve any management issues that were going on, sort of within his division?

A: You know, I think that, you know, again—I, again, as someone who had been there, I had only just gotten there. You know, I was, obviously, not a—I was a political appointee and only just arrived, and I had been there for 2 years. I would say a great preponderance of the decisions that were made were made by the career professionals, and rarely did those decisions ultimately come up to me to basically be the judge and jury on the decisions. I mean, obviously, I signed off on decisions, on some decisions, but many of those decisions were made by the career people who were actually on the ground making them.

Q: Okay. Just taking a step back to the afternoon and night of the attack on September 11, how were you first notified?

A: Well, I just returned from Egypt. I was in Egypt on Monday. I think, you know, on the seventh floor, I don't really—so obviously, 3 years ago, I don't recall exactly the chain of events. I'm presuming that either the watch ops or the ops center may have notified us that there was something going on—remember that something first was going on in Egypt—

Q: Right.

A: [continuing]. Which I had just left and I realized that that had just occurred. So that was going on, you know, the Middle East was kind of chaotic at this point. There was lots of concerns about this video, about all the kind of concerns around that. So we were all kind of heightened, somewhat heightened alert vis-a-vis that. But I think ultimately I was—I probably was—I was probably notified by the ops center. I don't recall.

Q: Do you remember what your next step was once you were notified? Did you talk to the Secretary right away? Did you talk to Cheryl Mills, Jake Sullivan?

A: You know, I don't really recall exactly the chain of events. It was kind of a bit of a blur. We didn't know how serious it was. We didn't know the capacity of—we were also still trying to figure out what happened in Egypt, because that was protesters who had jumped over the fence and we saw how serious that was.

I think ultimately we got together at some point, midafternoon, to try to assess it and try to get, you know, clear information because at that point information was coming quite erratically, and ops center was the collection of all of that. So I don't remember the chain of events between 3 o'clock, or 4 o'clock, or 5 o'clock, but I know we were all communicating.

Q: Did you reach out to anybody? Did you reach out to your contacts at the NSC, CIA, DOD that afternoon?

A: You know, I know there was a flurry of conversations. I just can't remember, you know, who talked to who when. I'm sure there is a log from the ops center.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But I know we were all, you know, there's not that many of us on the seventh floor. We were—at this point, we were just trying to gather information. We didn't know if this was—something was happening in Benghazi, or what was going on in Tripoli. You know, there's a lots in the Middle East—North Africa was a little bit inflamed at this point. So I don't really recall who I actually talked to. I'm sure I talked to a lot of people. A lot of people were talking to us, and we were just, you know, they use this word, the fog of war. I don't know, I guess some people talk about that. It was actually—there's some truth to that, right, especially when you are talking about people's lives. And I think that was what we were basically focused on.

Q: Did you—were you on the call when the Secretary talked to Director Petraeus that afternoon?

A: No.

Q: Were you on the call when she talked to President Magarief?

A: No.

Q: Did she update, or did anybody update you as to what was discussed on those calls?

A: You know, I don't recall. I don't recall. I may have seen the readouts, but I don't recall it.

Q: Well, later that evening, I believe there was a 7:05, or around the 7 o'clock call, conference call that the Secretary convened, I think, with some State Department principals. Do you remember who was on that call?

A: All I remember is she was at the State Department, so I was physically there. She was there quite late. So if she had a call, I don't know, I must have been on the—I don't remember, to be honest with you.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: [continuing]. But she was there quite late that night. So I don't know if she went into another room to have another call, but I was certainly in the room during most of those activities.

Q: Was Jake Sullivan on the call?

A: I don't—I have no idea who was on the call. I mean, Jake, obviously—

Q: Right.

A: [continuing]. And Cheryl, and many of those people were all on the seventh floor. I don't know who was in and who was out and I don't know when the call took place, but—

Q: But it was a call or a meeting that sort of prefaced the later 7:30 SVTC? Correct?

A: To be honest with you, I just don't remember. I don't—you know, it was 3 years ago. I know we had dozens of meetings and dozens of conference calls, and dozens of trying to find out what was going on. So I don't know the 7 or 7:30, I just don't know.

Q: Well, let me ask you this: When you talked, when you convened and discussed what was going on, did you discuss the status of the Ambassador?

A: Oh, yeah, I mean, I think, well, we didn't know, unfortunately. We didn't know if he was—unfortunately, we didn't know if he was dead or alive. We were told he was missing. We weren't sure where he was. We didn't know where the other Americans were. We didn't know the situation on the ground. It was quite confusing. We were getting all sorts of information that we couldn't figure out if it was fact or fictional. So those reports continued to come in throughout the evening.

Q: Did you discuss evacuating personnel?

A: Again, I don't remember exactly the conversation. I assume—remember, there was a very structurally small group of people in Benghazi at that point. I think we were really trying to figure out the status of the people that were there, and the safety of those individuals that were there. And I don't recall exactly what the words were used about getting people in or out. Clearly, they wanted to get people out if they could, at least save their lives. So I don't remember the specific, you know, what was the word, "evacuate." I think the question was, can we, you know, save these people's lives.

Q: Did you discuss the deployment of the FEST?

A: Not to my knowledge. I know there was conversations could we get resources to Benghazi, and those conversations were going on. But I don't recall that particular team. The question was, was there resources either in Tripoli or somewhere else we get to help? I'm sure those conversations were going on.

Q: Did you discuss, there must have been some sort of discussion on strategy, though, in addition to trying to acquire information as to how to identify the whereabouts of the Ambassador?

A: Well, sure. I mean, the strategy was how, if this consulate or temporary facility is under attack, how are we going to save people's lives? Right?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So certainly, there was—that was first and foremost in everyone's mind. First of all, how serious was it? What was going on? We were trying to get—we couldn't—the problem was, you know, sadly, we just didn't have enough information, right? The communication was being done through a cell phone, I think, in Benghazi to the office in Tripoli, who were then communicating with us. It was very confusing of what was actually happening.

So I don't recall exactly—I guess, strategy, strategy was we needed more information on what was actually going on. Because quite frankly, no one knew what was going on until very late.

Q: Did the Secretary discuss her conversation with President Magarief with you all in terms of obtaining country clearance, or just putting him on notice for any types of clearance, that any type of potential military deployment of assets would be needed?

A: To be honest with you, I don't recall the specific conversations. I think we were trying to figure out anything and everything we could do to save the lives. If, in fact, what was going on was what we are seeing or hearing, that they are under attack. I don't recall who had what conversations and what were asked for and what wasn't asked for.

Q: So we just—we talked a little bit—you just mentioned the 7:30 White House SVTC. Do you recall being on the SVTC?

A: I really—I mean, I really don't. I mean, I'm sure I was on—my assumption is I was on most of the calls, but I can't tell you if it was 7:30, or 7:45, or—the calls all were a blur at that point, because we were getting called by a lot of people at different points, so I have no idea. I'm sure there is a manifest somewhere if I was there or not so I assume. I assume if you ask that, I was there, but I don't remember.

Q: Do you remember talking to DOD Panetta's chief of staff, Jeremy Bash?

A: I don't remember it. I have been told that I did. Or somehow, I had seen an email and I guess I did, or he sent me an email, but I don't remember talking to him, but I could have. I don't know.

Q: Do you remember any potential conversations, or conversations with the CIA on that SVTC?

A: Again, I just don't remember. To be honest with you, I don't remember. I assume they were on the call, but I can't, to be honest with you, I can't tell you what was said or wasn't said. I can't remember.

Q: Was there ongoing conversations with the CIA that night?

A: I—as I think about it, I assume there was, but I can't tell you when they were. I assume Secretary Clinton reached out to the head of the CIA at that point. But I can't tell you for sure when those conversations happened, but, again, I just, you know, it was a—it was a pretty distressing few hours, and a lot of calls were happening, a lot of meetings were happening, a lot of people were trying to figure out what was going on. So I don't recall the specifics of who talked to who when.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But my assumption is there was a lot of conversations going on among all the players at the table.

Q: Did you, in that discussion, talk about what you saw while you were in Cairo vis-a-vis the beginning of any potential protests or—

A: No, I had taken a business delegation with me. We met with the new president and there was no—it was, quite frankly, I left before the disruption happened.

Q: Okay. Do you remember having any later calls with Jake Sullivan or Under Secretary Kennedy later that evening, around 10:00 o'clock?

A: You know, I don't. I mean, I assume we had lots of calls, but I don't remember specific calls of when I had them, but we were all, we were all sitting in the Secretary's conference room, you

know, for 9 hours, and eating Indian food or something, and trying to figure out what was going on and trying to make sure that we were doing the right thing.

Q: Was the strategy at that point to wait and see what you could do or what information you could glean about the Ambassador before any sort of additional steps were taken?

A: No. I think there was—I think we were trying to get—one, they were trying to assess the seriousness of the situation in Benghazi. I think we then started worrying about the operations in Tripoli.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: We then started being concerned about the rest of North Africa of what these other embassies—I mean, there was concerns about what was potentially going to happen in Pakistan. So at that point, we were, you know, somewhat concerned about this spreading very quickly to all parts of the Middle East, and I think that's what we were becoming concerned about.

So now we were concerned about saving the lives of the guys in Benghazi. We were also worried about what was happening in the rest of the Middle East.

Q: So that's what I'm trying to nail down at what—sort of what was the strategy with regard to Benghazi, putting aside what was—what potentially happened later in the week with regard to other Arab Spring nations? So, do you understand what I'm trying to say?

A: So—

Q: So I understand, you know, that the, sort of that area, that region, was sort of in turmoil?

A: Yeah.

Q: But at that point, that night, there were, you know, your personnel—

A: Sure.

Q: [continuing]. On the ground, what was being done to, A, either get them out? What was the decisionmaking process at that time among the senior staff?

A: Well, I think principally, we were relying on the Diplomatic Security operations to help us figure out what could or couldn't be done. I know there was lots of calls to the militia that had actually protected us in the past.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So there was lots of communication trying to get them to go to the consulate. Again, I'm using the word consulate. It wasn't a consulate. It was a temporary facility, differentiations that you all know now, probably better than most. And so I think there was lots of ongoing—I wasn't a party to that, but I know there were lots of conversations. Because again, as you are well aware, we count on, because the Vienna Convention, for the host countries to protect these facilities. We can only have so many DS agents and facilities. We count on the country to help us protect. In this particular case, the militia, the local militia had been previously quite helpful in protecting our facilities.

Now, ultimately, what happened, I'm not exactly sure what conversations were taking place, but I know there was some of that. I think we were trying to get more information from the Diplomatic

Security, whatever feeds we were getting in from them on actually what's happening. So I think it was really a resource gathering, and then trying to communicate as much as we could with the governments to try to get as much help as we could.

Q: Well, let me ask you this: Because the mission wasn't officially notified to the Libyan Government, so technically, those individuals on the ground weren't technically covered under Chief of Mission authority?

A: Yes.

Q: So they were really in an unprotected status. Would you agree?

A: Well, again, I think the ARB, as you know, looked at those issues, and the recommendations were, quite frankly, to think about in the future, you know, what decisions get made to actually put facilities in those kinds of high-risk areas. And we can obviously have a long conversation about how we made those decisions to have the facility in Benghazi at that point. But again, so the government was somewhat confusing part of our—part of the security was given, in some cases, by the militia that were in the area who had protected the embassy directly and indirectly for quite a while. But we, obviously, had our Diplomatic Security officials over there.

Q: Were you still at the State Department when the second attack occurred?

A: Second attack, I don't—

Q: The attack on the Annex?

A: The attack on the Annex? The second, that night?

Q: The CIA.

A: That night?

Q: Yes.

A: Oh, sure, you mean physically at the State Department?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Yeah, I don't think I left until 2 or 3 in the morning. I don't remember exactly. Again, I can't refresh my timelines of when. The night was very long.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But I assume I was in the facility at that point, or at the State Department at that point.

Q: Would the ops center have notified you of the second attack, or the attack on the Annex?

A: I assume. I assume.

Q: At that point, when you were notified of the attack on the Annex, did anyone reach out to the CIA?

Mr. YANES. He said he doesn't remember being notified of that, and you are assuming that the ops center was—notified people. I mean, they may have, but I don't think he remembers being notified of that.

Mr. NIDES. Again, my assumption is the ops center, because I assume there's reports from the ops center, so I know I haven't looked at all the reports. The ops center was every half an hour, updating things. Right. So I don't know what I read or what I didn't read, or what I was notified or wasn't being notified. So, again, I would have to rely upon the communication from the ops center.

BY MS. BETZ

Q: The decision to evacuate all of the personnel from Benghazi, is that a decision that the State Department, the Secretary, and her senior staff made?

A: I think my assumption is—again, I would have to, again, it is 3 years ago, we would rely upon the security professionals to make the decision. Right? So I don't think Secretary Clinton, nor I, nor Bill Burns would make those decisions on our own, because ultimately, you have people who really understand security, how to get people out, how to move people.

I'm certainly not qualified to do that, nor do I think Secretary Clinton was. So my assumption is, is that we relied upon the people who were part of the Diplomatic Security who protect our men and women. They are the ones that would ultimately make that decision. They would make a recommendation to us, and I would say in almost 100 percent of the cases, we would accept their recommendation.

Q: So let me just clarify. Were you—so you were consulted. So did the security experts or professionals consult you on a decision to evacuate all of the personnel?

A: I'm sorry, I would love to tell you I remember. I don't remember. It was 2 years ago. Again, I would—traditionally, all of the security decisions that were made in any of our embassies are made by the professionals within Diplomatic Security. And I would say the vast majority of those—

Q: Uh-huh.

A: [continuing]. Are accepted by. So I assume in this case it was, but to be honest with you, I don't remember the decision tree at that point, nor do I remember being part of the actual decision about to evacuate folks from Benghazi.

Q: Do you recall being part of any discussion on any acquisition, or any modes of transportation to get out of Benghazi to Tripoli?

A: I don't—I don't remember. I, to be honest with you, I don't remember.

Q: So moving along, after the attack, there were a number of discussions on the Secretary's appearance on the Sunday talk shows. Were you involved at all in her decision not to appear?

A: No.

Q: Were you involved in any of the discussions regarding the talking points that Ambassador Rice used to prepare for her appearance on the Sunday talk shows?

A: No.

Q: Having been in Cairo on that Monday before the attack, you had, you know, you had experienced what was going on in Cairo, and I think I understand from some of the documents, that you had opinions as to the difference between what occurred in Benghazi, and what occurred in Cairo. Is that—

A: Well, you know, all I know is what the facts were, which the facts on the ground in Egypt I was well aware of because I was briefed as soon as I got there. There was basically a nonviolent action. There were some protesters jumping over the fence and grabbing a flag, and they were escorted off the grounds. Obviously, that was substantially different than, I think, what was going on in

Benghazi. So I think from that perspective, yes, I could at least compare those two things.

Q: Okay, I would like to show you a document. And it's number 2 in your tab.

[Nides Exhibit No. 1 was marked for identification.]

Ms. BETZ. And we will give the witness an opportunity to look at the document. It is State Department document C05562242, produced to that House Select Committee on Benghazi. And while the witness is not identified as a sender or a recipient, he is referenced in the email.

BY MS. BETZ

Q: Okay. Have you had a chance to look at the document?

A: Sure.

Q: Who is Prem Kumar?

A: He worked at the White House. He was the, I think he must have been the desk officer at the White House, I think. I don't know what he—he moved around a lot. I think he just left, actually, just recently.

Q: Okay, and who was * * *?

A: He worked for me. He was one of my assistants at the State Department.

Q: And the prefacing email says, “* * *, * * *, I believe your boss is going to speak with the new Egyptian Ambassador,” or “Amb today, re: Security of Embassy Cairo. Could I get a readout from you when that's happened.”

So then * * * responds, “Prem, Nides said he understood the difference between the targeted attack in Libya and the way the protest escalated in Egypt, but pushed the Egyptian Ambassador on ensuring security, particularly with protests likely on Friday. Nides also noted”—this is, I believe, a mistake, “our request to get 10 visas processed today for extra diplomatic security agents out tonight. The Ambassador said he would expedite.”

Does the first sentence reflect your discussion with the Egyptian Ambassador?

A: Again, it's 3 years ago. I don't—I guess, if he had written it, I assume he was in the meeting with me. It's his recollection of a meeting. I'm not sure it was totally my recollection, but I don't have any objections to what was written.

Q: Okay. Thanks. So taking a sort of giant step back and looking into 2011, and I want to talk a little bit about the then-envoy's—Envoy Stevens' mission into Benghazi—

A: Uh-huh.

Q: [continuing]. And the decision to both ask him and send him in. Were you involved in the decision to ask Ambassador Stevens to go into Benghazi?

A: No.

Q: Was the NSC involved in that decision?

Mr. YANES. The National Security Council, NSC?

Ms. BETZ. Correct.

Mr. Nides. I have no—I don't know. My assumption is I assume there was some conversation, but I have no idea.

BY MS. BETZ

Q: Was there a request to send him a State Department decision alone, or request?

A: Again, I don't know.

Q: I was going to show you another document. This would be tab 4, I believe.

A: Tab 4?

Q: Tab 4.

Ms. BETZ. Can we go off the record for a second?

[Discussion off the record.]

[Nides Exhibit No. 2 was marked for identification.]

BY MS. BETZ

Q: We will go back on the record. For purposes of identifying the document, it is STATE-SCB0075262. It is from a * * * to you dated Thursday March 24, 2011.

A: Got it.

Q: Just directing your attention to the last sentence, or last sort of bullet. It says, "We continue to look at options for moving Chris Steven into Libya. The pressure is on for this to happen soon."

A: Uh-huh.

Q: Do you know where that pressure was coming from?

A: I don't. I mean, my working assumption is is that the NEA or the career people, the Ambassador on the ground, really wanted more support. I mean, more embassy officials, and wanted to Chris to come. So I assume that's what she—and she was my staffer who kind of was the officer in charge of this reporting to me on this particular topic. She was in charge of the decisionmaking. She was in charge of reporting the conversation, so I was kept informed.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So my assumption is that was a reflection of the career people asking for Chris to come. But, again, I wasn't in the meeting. I don't recall exactly when it was.

Mr. YANES. So you are not sure and the document doesn't say.

Mr. NIDES. Yeah, that's correct.

BY MS. BETZ

Q: Well, I'm just curious. Other documents suggest that the NSC, NSS was pushing. I didn't know if you had—

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. I think that is a mischaracterization of what other documents say, but if you have other documents, I think—

Ms. BETZ. Well, I do, and those are in the safe. So but just move along—

BY MS. BETZ

Q: So there weren't any other discussions at the senior or principal level about sending the Envoy, pressure to send Envoy Stevens in, to your recollection?

A: Not to my recollection. No.

Q: One of the reasons we were very interested in speaking with you was the detail that your staffer had with regard to the mission logistics.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: * * * was a very descriptive and detailed emailer, and probably more so than anybody in the State Department, at least from the documents that we have reviewed. Is there a reason why the emails were so descriptive? Did you have a reason to have—

A: She is just really good.

Mr. YANES. I'm sorry, which emails?

BY MS. BETZ

Q: Well, there are a number of emails. I'm just saying generally.

A: I don't know which emails you are speaking of, but, you know, she is a talented career Foreign Service officer.

Q: Yeah. Were the email updates from her the only updates on the Envoy's mission that you received?

A: I can't remember. I don't, you know, again, it's 3 years ago. I'm not exactly sure what I received or what I didn't receive.

Q: Well, were you briefed in person, daily, on the—

Mr. YANES. Again, on what? I'm sorry, about what?

Ms. BETZ [continuing]. On the Envoy's mission into Benghazi?

Mr. NIDES. Yeah, again, I don't recall how often I was briefed. We had, obviously, 270 missions around the world. I don't—you know, again, I can't tell you if I was briefed, you know, every other week, every month. But most of my stuff that I was receiving was received in written form.

BY MS. BETZ

Q: Do you—so you don't recall getting an early-morning briefing from those on the ground, from then-Envoy Stevens on the ground?

A: I don't.

Q: What decisions, vis-à-vis the Envoy's mission did you make versus Under Secretary Kennedy Did you make staffing decisions?

A: No. Ultimately, again, the practice has been to let the professionals make recommendations to the seventh floor.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And I would say, in most cases, that's what we did.

Q: How was the mission funded?

A: I—I have no idea. I mean, I assume it was funded through our normal process, right, our normal funds. But I don't know if there was a specific—I assume it is through normal funds that we had available, but I don't recall.

Q: Was there concern when Envoy Stevens went in with regard to the no-boots-on-the-ground policy? Was that something that you discussed?

Mr. YANES. Do you know what that is, the no-boots-on-the-ground policy?

Mr. NIDES. I don't know what you are referring to.

BY MS. BETZ

Q: That would be military support.

A: Yeah, I know what the word means, but I don't know if you are referencing some—

Q: Just the DOD's support for Envoy Stevens in going in, in addition to the diplomatic security agents that accompanied him.

A: Yeah, I wasn't aware of any—involved in those conversations.

Q: Was there concern, on the part of the State Department, that leaving Benghazi, if security ever got so bad early on, that would send a negative message to the TNC?

A: No.

Mr. YANES. By anybody in the State Department?

Mr. NIDES. Not by me. Are you asking for me?

BY MS. BETZ

Q: You, or did anybody express concern?

A: I have no recollection of that. Not by me personally, I don't believe. But I don't—I have no idea what other people going could have expressed views that I was aware of.

Q: Later in the spring, as part of our multilateral effort, I believe the United States provided—

Mr. YANES. This is spring of 2011?

BY MS. BETZ

Q: We are still in spring of 2011, yeah. I haven't deviated from that—provided nonlethal assistance to the TNC. Correct? Like humanitarian aid?

A: Again, I don't—it's 3 years ago. If you say it's the case, then I assume it is, I don't recall exactly.

Mr. YANES. Four years ago.

Mr. NIDES. Four years ago. I don't recall exactly what was given and what wasn't given at that time.

BY MS. BETZ

Q: Are you aware of any discussions, or were you involved in any discussions vis-à-vis, at some point in 2011, of changing the Envoy's mission to a more permanent presence?

A: I don't recall those conversations.

Q: Were you aware of concerns by Congress about the mission and its resource implication?

A: Again, I'm sorry to say, I just don't recall, you know, those conversations if they occurred.

Q: I want to come back to the staffing.

A: Sure.

Q: So if you would look at tab 10. And I believe this is exhibit 3.

[Nides Exhibit No. 3 was marked for identification.]

Mr. DESAI. This is exhibit 3 for the record. Is that right?

Ms. BETZ. Yes. So for purposes of identifying the document, it is STATE-SCB0061065. It is from the witness, to * * *. I will give the witness a minute to look at the document.

Mr. NIDES. Yeah.

BY MS. BETZ

Q: And I would like to draw your attention to the last bullet which says, "The Benghazi Mission is working with NEA on reverse tripwires that must be met before growing the mission. AID/OEDA is interested in sending in more personnel. I reminded NEA and USAID that all staffing increases must be approved by depu-

ties; Jeff's request for an additional five people is on a hold until further notice."

Do you recall this email?

A: I don't. But I assume that's the case. Always happens where the career professionals, which Jeff and some of the people you referenced here, generally want more personnel on the ground, and there's a tendency for us to push back on those requests, especially on the career professionals; not on the security side. That's decided on a different level. But this was basically the desire for them to add additional people. And we were constantly pushing back on the idea of having more people on the ground than some of the career people would have actually liked us to have.

Q: So ultimately, you were making decisions regarding staffing?

A: In this particular case, the decisions were coming to us, and, ultimately, we were pushing back on this particular decision.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: As articulated in this memo.

Q: Right. Was that the case for a number of the staffing requests throughout the Envoy's mission in 2011?

A: The only issue that came to us would be issues around permanent FTEs. I mean, counsel, staff, if, in fact, the request would grow beyond what we wanted to do, those questions that couldn't get resolved at the career level, they would be elevated to the deputy level. But that happened very rarely. I'm, obviously, clearly concerned about making sure that the levels of career staff were limited at the time.

Q: Do you know in the email, there is a reference to reverse tripwires. Do you know what those reverse trip—first of all, what is a reverse tripwire?

A: I don't know what she is referring to.

Q: Okay. So you are not aware of any—if they were ever met?

A: Again, I don't know what she is referring to.

Q: So this email is dated June 13. Moving forward a month later—

A: Tab 11?

Q: No, in the document. The document.

A: Oh, moving on. Oh, sorry. I was moving forward.

Q: So that is June 2011. I want to fast forward to June 2011 when the United States recognized the TNC as the legitimate government of Libya. Was there concern at this time about formally recognizing a presence in Benghazi and that it would somehow undermine our overall Libya strategy?

Mr. YANES. By Tom?

Ms. BETZ. Just a discussion. Again, this is your knowledge any discussions that you might have had with the Secretary, or—

Mr. NIDES. To be honest with you, I just can't recall those discussions.

BY MS. BETZ

Q: I'm going to draw your attention to tab 12. And this will be Exhibit 4.

[Nides Exhibit No. 4 was marked for identification.]

Mr. NIDES. Very small print.

BY MS. BETZ

Q: Very small print. And for purposes of identifying the document, it reads, "U.S. Department of State Doc# C05578334." It's a document—there's no heading. There's no identifying information. For purposes of just questioning, I want to discuss the first two paragraphs and in particular, because your name is referenced—

A: Sure.

Q: [continuing]. In here. I wanted to ask you about that.

A: Go ahead.

Mr. YANES. Have you read it?

Mr. NIDES. Yeah, I just read it.

BY MS. BETZ

Q: The first paragraph, in short, basically says—"The State Department does not intend to establish,"—and it crosses out "a formal diplomatic mission"—"consular or diplomatic premise in Benghazi at this point. (Tripoli remains the capital of Libya where our embassy remains) despite the recent USG decision to recognize the TNC as legitimate governing authority in Libya during this interim process. The United States Government and the TNC have both stated their commitment to a unified, free Libya with Tripoli as its capital; the establishment of a"—"formal" crossed out—"diplomatic mission in Benghazi would undermine this commitment and send the wrong political message." And it goes on.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: Is that a position that was shared throughout the seventh floor by you or others?

A: Again, I don't recall the discussion. I don't actually recall—obviously, I don't recall the memo, or the—I guess this was in memo form, so I don't recall that. So to be honest with you, I have no idea if this was a widely-held view or not widely-held view. I don't know where this went or if we met on it. I just can't recall.

Mr. YANES. Did he get this document?

Ms. BETZ. I don't know, and I'm conceding that I don't know for purposes of just questioning, his name is mentioned in the document.

Mr. YANES. Okay.

Ms. BETZ. So I wasn't aware if it was shared with you or not.

Mr. YANES. Still on the second paragraph, right?

Ms. BETZ. Yes.

BY MS. BETZ

Q: Was this position discussed, or the future of the Benghazi Mission discussed when Embassy Tripoli reopened, in later in September?

A: I'm really sorry. I just don't remember. I just don't remember the conversations around the staffing. This is 4 years ago. I just don't know if we had conversations or no conversations.

Q: Did you have any discussion about the resource implications of having both Embassy Tripoli and the mission operational?

A: Not to my—not to my recollection.

Q: Did you have any discussion about how both of them would be funded?

A: Again, I just—I can't remember exactly any conversations regarding this. You know, again, we had conversations about every—again, we have 270 missions. So I'm not—I can't really recall this particular discussion on this particular staffing of this particular non-consulate.

Q: Well, let me ask you this: Given that there were 270 sort of facilities, how many did we send a special envoy into?

A: Again, I have no recollection of that. I don't know.

Q: How many did we work the U.N. in to establish a no-fly zone?

A: Again, I can't venture to say how many. I'm sure there were a few, but I just don't recall.

Q: So Libya was not unique in those—

A: Libya was always unique, but I can't tell you that one was more unique than the other, depending on what circumstances. I was focused a lot on Iraq. I was focused a lot on Pakistan. I was focused a lot on Afghanistan. They were quite unique since we had tens of thousands of people in each one of those countries. So those were, in itself, fairly unique, and I spent a huge amount of my time focusing on those individuals.

Q: Okay. I'm going to show you another document, and this is under tab 13.

[Nides Exhibit No. 5 was marked for identification.]

BY MS. BETZ

Q: So for purposes of identifying the document, it is State Department SCB0074167. It is sent from the witness to * * *. It is actually an email conversation, and the underlying email is an ops alert. And what I want to focus on is * * * email to you saying: "Latest on Libya. Also Paul Grove will be in Benghazi a few days; he arrived today." Who was Paul Grove?

A: You want to focus on how I told her she should take a day off?

Q: Yeah.

A: Because I'm a nice guy.

Q: Some of these things are comical.

A: Yeah, sure I promise I will—

Q: Who was Paul Grove?

A: Paul Grove worked on the Appropriations Committee.

Q: Okay. So were you in contact with him after he returned from Benghazi?

A: I don't recall. I mean, I talked to Paul Grove a lot. I don't know if I talked to him then or not.

Q: So did he report back to you after his trip to Benghazi?

Do you have any recollection?

A: I'm sorry, I don't.

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. I'm sorry. I think I just didn't hear.

Did you say you worked on the Appropriations Committee in Congress?

Mr. YANES. That he did; not that Tom did.

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. Paul Grove.

Mr. NIDES. Paul Grove. Yeah, I'm sorry.

BY MS. BETZ

Q: Okay. Turning to tab 14, which will be exhibit No. 6.

A: We were on 14?

Q: Tab 14.

Mr. YANES. Tab 14.

Mr. NIDES. Same one.

Mr. YANES. Don't worry about it. We were on 13 before.

Mr. NIDES. Same one. Okay. My tabs must be off. Anyway, it doesn't matter. Go ahead.

Ms. BETZ. Are they off?

Mr. NIDES. This is the same email I just had, right?

Mr. YANES. No.

Mr. NIDES. Oh, okay, I'm sorry about that.

[Nides Exhibit No. 6 was marked for identification.]

BY MS. BETZ

Q: For identifying purposes, this document is SCB0074157. It is an email from the witness to * * *. Again, it's an email chain. For purposes of this discussion, I want to focus on the underlying email, which describes an email that was sent out regarding NEA posts and a heightened awareness during the 9/11 anniversary.

And specifically, it identifies the missions in Tripoli and Benghazi, and regarding the unique requirements that they have for additional security resources and personnel.

Do you recall receiving this email?

A: I don't.

Q: So you are not aware of any special precautions that were taken in 2011 regarding the 9/11 anniversary with either at Benghazi—

Mr. YANES. He didn't say that, but go ahead.

Mr. NIDES. No, I don't recall the memo. And I don't recall those conversations, but my working assumption is any time the 9/11 anniversary came around, we were always on heightened alert.

BY MS. BETZ

Q: So were you aware of whether an email went out in 2012 that was similar to this alert?

A: I don't know. I have no idea.

Q: Are you aware of—fast forwarding again, to December 2011, there was the discussion and eventual memo drafted for extending the mission. Were you aware of that discussion and/or memo?

A: I don't recall. I don't recall the discussions.

Q: You don't recall the discussions. Do you recall the memo?

A: No.

Q: No. Okay. So we should turn to tab 16. I mean. Just to help your recollection.

A: No, no, I have no problem with it. Please, that's fine.

That's fine.

Q: So this will be Exhibit Number 7. Tab 16.

[Nides Exhibit No. 7 was marked for identification.]

BY MS. BETZ

Q: So for purposes of identifying the document, it is an action memo for Under Secretary Kennedy, with the number, identifying number 201123787. And we will just go off the record.

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MS. BETZ:

Q: So have you had a chance to read the memo?

A: Sure.

Q: And as I said, it is an action memo for Under Secretary Kennedy. It is from Jeffrey Feltman out of NEA. But if you turn to the last page, it was cleared by you, or your staff, * * * .

A: Uh-huh.

Q: Do you recall this document?

A: I don't.

Q: So you are not aware whether or not your staff was consulted? Were you consulted in the drafting of the memo?

A: I don't recall. Looks like she signed off, and so she was consulted on it.

Q: Is this a memo that you should have been consulted on, given the resource implications?

A: My working assumption is that if the head of the NEA and Kennedy, who was the Under Secretary for Management including facilities and security signed off on it, and my staff was a staff person who was working on it, my assumption is a lot of people in the building probably reviewed it and came up with a conclusion.

MS. BETZ. And I think this memo is a point of contention. I guess we're trying to understand what the point of the memo is. Was it intended to legitimize or make the mission official within the State Department?

Mr. NIDES. Again——

Mr. YANES. I don't know what you can tell from reading this.

Mr. NIDES. I think every time we expanded a facility, either created one or took one offline, there was an action memo that was done and people need to approve it. The professionals who ran the State Department need to approve it because they had implications, including money, security, resources, and I think this would be common practice in any facility, not just Libya, but in London or anywhere else we have a facility that would have either buying a piece of property or adding facilities or adding people, so pretty common format for those kind of decisions.

BY MS. BETZ

Q: Given, though, the fact that we still had—that we now had Embassy Tripoli up and running, and we also now had this presence, the continued presence in Benghazi, there would be resource implications such that it should have been brought to your attention?

A: No. Again, I think as I just pointed out, the individual who manages facilities and the budget implications of this, okay, and the career staff of the NEA who has got the political—not political like politics, but political understanding, who is a career foreign service officer, the combination of that and their staff is who we ultimately would respect for this kind of decision.

Q: If a bureau clears on it, do they have the responsibility to fulfill what their responsibility identified in the memo? So for example, if DS clears the memo and the memo states that there are five

special agents to be located at the facility, would they then be obligated to ensure that those five agents were at the facility?

A: Again, I don't know because the context of how these decisions get made, my assumption is circumstances on the ground change, numbers of people change, the numbers of FTEs and how many security are associated with those FTEs change, so I'm not a security professional, so I couldn't really tell you the decision between 5 or 6 or 7 and how those decisions were made.

Q: Have you been to Libya?

A: Have I been—

Q: Do you travel to Libya?

A: I did.

Q: When did you go?

A: I think 2011. I don't remember—when was I gone? I went to Tunisia for 1 day. I don't recall what day that that was. I did go.

Q: January 2012?

A: Is that when I went?

Q: Yes.

A: Okay. Thank you. I knew you could jog my memory. Yes, I did go. January 2012 is when I went.

Q: Did you travel to Benghazi?

A: No, I didn't go to Benghazi.

Q: Just stayed in Tripoli?

A: I hope—no, I don't think I went to Benghazi.

Q: Did you have discussions with the Libyan Government regarding their ability to provide host nation support?

A: You know, I don't recall my conversations. My assumption, I met with government officials, and I assume that that topic would come up because that topic came up in every country I visited, be it Afghanistan, Iraq, or Pakistan or any other interesting locations I happened to travel with, that could come up. So I assume if I were there, I discussed that with them, but I don't recall the conversations.

Q: Do you recall discussing the contents of your trip with the Secretary or anybody else at the State Department when you returned?

A: Common practice would be I would have a conversation or at least a memo would go to the Secretary, but I don't recall if I did that and how I did it, but general practice would be to send something to her either verbally or by written form, but I don't know if it was done or not.

Q: Were you concerned after your discussions with the Libyan Government about their ability to provide host nation support?

A: Again, it was almost 3 years ago. I don't remember how I felt about it. Obviously, it wasn't Paris, so I understand it was not—it was a difficult place, but I don't recall my attitude or my state of mind at that point when I came back from the trip.

Q: Sort of moving along in 2012. Were you notified of the April attack on the facility in Benghazi?

A: On the April attack. I don't know which attack you're referring to. Is this the—

Q: It would be the first attack on the mission.

A: Is this before they moved into the facility?

Q: This would be in 2012, so they are at the temporary mission facility.

A: I don't—it could. I don't recall. You know, if there was an attack, my assumption is I would be notified, but I don't recall being notified.

Q: So you did not take any steps—did you contact Under Secretary Kennedy regarding what steps DS was taking to bolster security at the facility?

Mr. YANES. When?

Ms. BETZ. April 2012.

Mr. NIDES. Yeah, I'm sorry. I just can't recall 3 years ago when I—again, my assumption is if I was notified that something happened, I would probably respond to it, but I don't recall being notified, and I don't—that constant recall is what I said about being notified.

BY MS. BETZ

Q: Do you recall being notified of the June attack?

A: Again, the same answer. I just don't recall.

Q: June 2012?

A: Yeah. I don't recall, sorry.

Q: Were you made aware of the attack on the U.K. Ambassador later in June 2012?

A: Again, I'm sorry to say, I just don't recall. I mean, again, someone of that nature of that attack, I assume I was notified but—

Ms. BETZ. I see that my time has expired, so I will go off the record.

[Discussion off the record.]

Mrs. BROOKS. Just a couple of questions. Going back on record, and I apologize having just walked in and only hearing a very narrow time period.

Can you tell me what your general recollection is, or actually any specific recollection is, about your specific involvement with Libya or Benghazi, and Benghazi?

Mr. NIDES. Well, I think as has been clear—I went there, obviously. I was certainly consulted on staffing, which has been clear by the record. Obviously—

Mrs. BROOKS. And who would have done that consulting?

Mr. NIDES. I think Under Secretary Kennedy certainly would brief me on security matters or facility situations, but the decisions—obviously, those decisions are made at the under secretary level or the security professionals level.

Mrs. BROOKS. Would that have been a one-on-one briefing?

Mr. NIDES. You know, Congresswoman, I don't recall how—but assuming I was briefed individually by groups, we had lots of meetings, this was obviously a very complicated period of time for us leading up to the—during the crisis and prior to that and certainly subsequently. As you know, I was heavily involved in the—after the attack—

Mrs. BROOKS. Right.

Mr. NIDES [continuing]. By being a staff person in charge of the ARB implementation, so I was keenly aware of the issues that were raised.

Mrs. BROOKS. But prior to the attack.

Mr. NIDES. Sure.

Mrs. BROOKS. Would your interactions with respect to conversations with Patrick Kennedy have been in tandem with a lot of conversations about a lot of other facilities, or do you recall ever having any specific discussions about Libya or any specific meetings?

Mr. NIDES. You know, again, I'm sorry, unfortunately, it's been 3 years ago or 4 years ago, so I don't recall who was in the meetings and what conversations. I'm sure I had multiple conversations on Libya and multiple conversations about the situation there, but I can't—to be honest, I can't tell you if they were individual or solely about that or it was a group of conversations.

Mrs. BROOKS. Were you interviewed by the ARB?

Mr. NIDES. No.

Mrs. BROOKS. And so is this your first time giving a statement on—

Mr. NIDES. Well, actually I spent 8-and-a-half hours testifying in front of the House and the Senate on this situation when Secretary Clinton couldn't come in December of 2012, and so Bill Burns and I testified both in the House and the Senate for a long period of time, so I spent a lot of time on the topic.

Mrs. BROOKS. And were you—

Mr. NIDES. This is the first time in this—obviously, in this setting.

Mrs. BROOKS. Okay. And were you asked specific questions during that 8 hours about what your personal involvement was with respect to Libya?

Mr. NIDES. I think most of the questions were around what we did after the fact. I think the focus of that hearing was about what the action items were going to be so this doesn't happen again, and that was what they were focused on.

Mrs. BROOKS. And what was protocol with respect to the timing as to when DS or Patrick Kennedy would bring you information about attacks? What was the protocol?

Mr. NIDES. You know—

Mrs. BROOKS. Whether it was on Libya or any other facility in the world.

Mr. NIDES. Well, thank God it didn't happen very often.

Mrs. BROOKS. Yes.

Mr. NIDES. So I would say 99 percent of the time, this was never an issue. This is unfortunately the one time it did happen, but as you know, we are very fortunate that this doesn't happen very often at all, thank God.

So I think any time an attack or something occurred, we'd be notified through the watch officer or through the ops center. That was, I think, the typical way, because it would happen in the middle of the night. Even in places like Iraq where there are rockets were being launched constantly in our facilities in Iraq for the last, you know, for 4 or 5 years. So we were notified continually about activity. But yes, if there was an incident, the ops center would generally notify all of us that this had happened.

Mrs. BROOKS. And, I don't know where you are in questioning and where you plan to go, but when that would happen and when

you would receive that notification, would you receive it by text, phone call, how would you receive that information?

Mr. NIDES. I think the standard operating procedure was is that the ops center would send out a notification about an incident, and we would be notified.

Mrs. BROOKS. By email or by how?

Mr. NIDES. By email, generally, by email.

Mrs. BROOKS. Okay.

Mr. NIDES. By your State Department email you get a communication from the ops center.

Mrs. BROOKS. Okay. I'm going to hold. I don't want to go further than what—but thank you.

Mr. NIDES. Oh, you're welcome. Thank you.

Ms. BETZ. Off the record.

[Recess.]

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. Let's go back on the record.

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS

Q: Hi. I'll just reintroduce myself. I am Susanne Sachsman Grooms. I work for Representative Cummings. I just want to start by going over a couple of things that we went over in the last round, and then I think we'll move on.

Can I draw your attention back to exhibit 3, and so why don't we use the actual exhibits. That might be a little easier than the tabs.

Mr. YANES. Is this just one set of everything?

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. Yeah. I'm sorry. Those are the actual exhibits. I'm not sure which tab exhibit 3 was—

Mr. NIDES. He gave us all the exhibits in this stack.

Ms. BETZ. I gave you all the exhibits.

Mr. YANES. Okay. I got it. So which one you start with?

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. Exhibit 3.

Mr. NIDES. This one.

Mr. YANES. No. There you go.

EXAMINATION BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS

Q: And if you will recall, this is an email from * * * staffer to you on June 13, 2011. We had discussed in the last round, it says, "I reminded"—this is your staffer. "I reminded NEA and USAID that all staffing increases must be approved by deputies. Jeff's request for an additional 5 people is on hold until further notice."

You explained in the last round that was career people and not security. I just want a little more clarification on that. So when you were talking about your approval on these staffing decisions, this was approval for nonsecurity-related personnel?

A: Correct.

Q: And were some of the constraints on approving more nonsecurity-related personnel the issue of the fact that there were not enough security personnel and enough beds for those individuals to be added?

A: I don't recall the rationale for the reason, but everything is a derivative of one another. So if you add more heads, meaning more nonsecurity people, you by nature have to have more security people. So the bigger the footprint, the security professionals will

then dictate how many security people needed, vis-à-vis those numbers.

So we don't opine on the security, but if you opine on the numbers of professionals, by the nature of the security footprint, is enlarged and the number of beds and food and costs also go up as a derivative of that.

Q: And your role would not have been to opine on how much would be the appropriate amount of security for that space?

A: Absolutely not.

Q: Okay. And you would rely on the diplomatic security professionals?

A: Without question.

Q: And in your experience with them, which I understand was about 2 years of it, did you feel that they had sufficient expertise and good judgment?

A: Absolutely.

Q: And you trusted them?

A: True.

Ms. BETZ. Can we just go off?

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. Yes.

[Discussion off the record.]

Ms. BETZ. All right thank you.

Mr. NIDES. Sure.

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS

Q: Great. Thank you. So, I think there were a fair amount of questions in the last round about the night of the attacks, and it sounds like you don't have a lot of specific recollection from the night of the attacks. Is that a fair statement?

A: That is correct.

Q: I think you described it as a fog of war?

A: That would be a correct assumption or a correct articulation of what I said.

Q: And—but you were at the State Department. You were with Secretary Clinton for some portion of that evening?

A: As long as—all night I was there for most of the evening and she was there for most of the evening as well.

Q: And from your memory, and I understand that you don't have a lot, but can you describe what the feeling and the sentiment was in the room, right, was there a sense of urgency? Was there a concern about the safety of individuals? Was there an attempt to go in and rescue them, that kind of a thing?

A: There was a sense of dramatic concern about the safety of the men who were at that facility and a deep sense of concern that we could do it—anything we possibly could do to secure their health and wellbeing. This was a unbelievably chaotic evening. We were trying to get information as quickly as we could. We were trying to have calls with varieties of people to determine the situation.

We had no idea where Ambassador Stevens was. Some reports were that he was alive at the hospital, some reports were that he was still in the facility, but Secretary Clinton, Secretary Burns, myself, Pat Kennedy, the whole 7th floor, we were engulfed in trying to figure out what we could do to potentially save these individuals' lives.

Q: And is it fair so say that your lack of specific recollection about what you specifically did or what other people specifically did doesn't mean that you weren't doing anything?

A: I would said say that's a very fair characterization. And as you know, obviously almost 3-and-a-half 4 years ago but in any crisis you are trying to, everyone is triage you're trying to figure out how to solve the problem at hand which we're all doing what we can to resolve it.

Q: I think you had said earlier that you recall that earlier in the day there were—before the attacks in Benghazi, there were concerns about the video and the Embassy in Cairo and the protests around that. Do you recall that?

A: Yes. As I mentioned earlier, I was in Cairo on Monday, and I had just left Cairo and which at that point the protest broke out in Cairo. I don't know what the time was in Cairo where the protesters jumped over the fence, and so I was hypersensitive to that issue.

And clearly, we worked, as has been reported, tirelessly for several weeks before the video to try to get this pastor in Florida not to release the video because we knew it would inflame. It was a depiction of Mohammed. It was obviously quite distasteful, so we were trying to make sure that it didn't get released. Not that we were successful in doing that, unfortunately, so we were all hypersensitive about the implication of that and September 11.

Q: And do you recall protests earlier in the day also in Tunisia?

A: I know there was, but I don't remember at the time—what I was thinking at the time, but I have to say I know that there was.

Q: And at the time when you were watching the protests in Cairo, were you concerned about the fact that the—were you concerned about the safety of the U.S. personnel there?

A: In Cairo?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Absolutely. In fact, I called in the Ambassador of Egypt on that week, maybe it was Wednesday, to reinforce how concerned we were to make sure that they were doing everything they could. As again, as you know, under the Vienna Convention, we rely upon our host countries to protect our personnel. We don't have enough people on the ground to protect them. We only have a handful of Marines in each one of these facilities, so we're very focused on making sure. They understood that we were watching them to make sure that they were protecting our people. We were going to hold them accountable to protect them.

Q: And were you concerned that it might spread; that the protests might spread throughout the region?

A: We were very concerned.

Q: This committee spoke with Ambassador Jeff Feltman, who was the assistant secretary of NEA at the time, and he told us that—this is the way he described it. He described the entire Middle East region during that period when they were protests in Cairo, Yemen, Sudan, Tunisia, as being in, quote, “an uproar,” and in, quote, “turmoil.” Would you agree with that characterization?

A: Yes, I would.

Q: And why?

A: Because it was. You had new democracies or fledging democracies, and you had huge amounts of anxiety in the social media that we were watching. We had protests breaking out throughout the Middle East. It was very unstable, and we were very much focused on this as being the contagion that would spread throughout the Middle East.

So we had evidence of it, and had anxiety about it, and we were doing everything we could to make sure it didn't happen.

Q: So is it fair to say that in addition to both a primary concern that night on September 11th of evacuating personnel and making sure that they were safe and alive, that you and the senior leadership team were all thinking forward as to how to keep individuals and other embassies safe?

A: Without question.

Q: And do you recall specific actions that you took at that point to try and do that?

A: I recall reaching out, obviously, I mentioned to the Ambassador of Egypt who came to see me. I spoke to the Pakistanis, I spoke to Tunisians. You know, I don't recall, but I—my assumption, I spent a lot of time on the phone talking to these governments and making sure that they were providing us everything they could provide us to make sure that we kept our people safe.

Q: It's been alleged by some that Secretary Clinton was checked out in the 2011 time period, and at times, that she just didn't care about the safety and security of the personnel in the ground. What would be your views on that?

Mr. YANES. In 2011?

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS

Q: In 2011, 2012. I think the allegation was that from 2011 to 2012, she had been more engaged in 2011 and less engaged in 2012, but generally speaking, either to that or to her general engagement and concern for the safety and security of personnel?

A: It's absurd. It's not the case. And with all due respect to those who might have that view, she woke up every day caring about the safety of our diplomats. I mean, unfortunately, you know, luckily we get it right 99 percent of the time, but I don't think anyone was more concerned and more worried about the safety of our people than she was.

Q: And did she express that the evening of the attacks?

A: With great passion.

Q: Do you recall when Secretary Clinton left the State Department on the night of the attacks?

A: I don't know exactly what the time was. All I know is it was very late in the evening. I know we were all sitting in her conference room till late in the evening where we actually ordered food in. We all sat around and tried to get information going on and off the call, so I don't know what time she actually departed. But it didn't really matter because I think once she left, be it midnight or before, she was in constant communication, and she had a secure phone at her house, and I think she was back at the office right away in the morning.

So, you know, the good news and the bad news about communication, it's constant, so—and she only lives six blocks away or a

mile-and-a-half away, whatever it is, very quickly, so she was in constant contact.

Q: So if you had needed to reach her on the night of the attacks, you could?

A: In a moment's notice.

Q: What about Patrick Kennedy? Did he ever do or say anything that suggested to you that he didn't care about the safety of the Department's personnel in Libya or Benghazi?

A: Absolutely not.

BY MR. DESAI

Q: Secretary Nides, good morning. I wanted to switch gears just slightly here. So I think in the last hour when you were talking to my colleagues from the majority in enumerating some of your responsibilities and role as deputy secretary for management and resources, one of things that you said, correct me if I'm wrong, is that you were the chief budget advocate for the Department on the Hill. Is that right?

A: That's correct.

Q: And I just wanted to unpack that with you a bit more and explore that topic and specifically this idea of, you know, conducting effective diplomacy abroad while still confronting the reality of budgetary constraints.

And I know this is a topic that you had been thoughtful about, had spoken about, and written about during your time as deputy secretary, given some opinion editorials that I've come across and some remarks that you had delivered.

The Accountability Review Board, I believe, speaks about this issue specifically, and I just wanted to show you a portion of that. So I'm going to go ahead and mark this as exhibit 8, I believe we're on. Is that right?

[Nide Exhibit No. 8 was marked for identification.]

BY MR. DESAI

Q: And what I've handed you here, Mr. Secretary, is a portion of the Accountability Review Board's final report. There's no cover page because I don't believe there was one, but I have here about the first 3 pages or so of the report, and I want to direct your attention to page 3 of what I just handed to you and specifically to the first paragraph, and I'm going to just read that out loud to you and ask that you bear with me as it's a bit of a lengthy paragraph.

But it starts off saying, quote, "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. But it has also had the effect of conditioning a full State Department managers to favor restricting the use of resources as a general orientation. There is no easy way to cut through this Gordian knot, all the more so as budgetary austerity looms large ahead."

"At the same time, it is imperative for the State Department be mission-driven rather than resource-constrained, particularly when being present in increasingly risky areas of the world is integral to

U.S. national security. The recommendations in this report attempt to grapple with these issues and err on the side of increased attention to prioritization and to fuller support for people and facilities engaged in working in high risk, high threat areas. The solution requires a more serious and sustained commitment from Congress to support State Department needs, which in total, constitute a small percentage both of the full national budget and that spent for national security. “One overall conclusion in this report is that 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,” end quote.

Now, this lengthy paragraph makes reference to how the State Department’s budget is just a small percentage of the full national budget. If you recall, what percentage is the Department’s budget in the national budget?

A: One percent.

Q: One percent. Is that right? The last sentence of that paragraph says, quote, “One overall conclusion in this report is that 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,” unquote.

Do you agree with the ARB’s assertion given this conclusion?

A: I do.

Q: And why is that?

A: As you all know, we have—you know, 1 percent of the national budget is spent on diplomacy. That means everything we do, 270 missions, all of our consulate offices, all of our ambassadors, all of our career foreign service officers, everything included, all the assistants, okay, 1 percent. That is not a lot of money, right. And we have to protect 270 facilities around the world, which is also very complicated, and we live in a very dangerous world.

All those imperatives are coming to us at the right time. I’m very conscientious of the constraints we are in financially as a country, but I do think that we need to be focused on this, and one of the recommendations with the ARB was on the appropriations process, the speed in which we can do contracts, a variety of different recommendations of the ARB, which I was in charge of implementing or beginning those streams to be implemented.

So I concur with the ARB’s assessment. It’s not all about money, just to be clear, but money is very important in this discussion, and it’s important for people to understand that.

Q: Now, prior to joining the Department, I believe it was in 2011, you had come from the private sector. Is that right?

A: I did.

Q: And you returned to the private sector after your tenure at the State Department ended. Is that right?

A: Yeah, I worked on Capitol Hill for multiple years working for the Speaker of the House and the majority whip. I worked in the administration as well, and I’ve been in and out of private sector multiple times to serve our country.

Q: So you have pretty exhaustive government experience working in the legislative branch as well as working in the private sector, so one would assume that that gives you a fairly unique perspective on budgetary issues both inside and outside the government.

And if you could just briefly describe for us, you know, what impact do budgetary cuts, or even budgetary uncertainty have on the Department's operation in its ability to conduct effective diplomacy?

A: Listen, you know, again, I'm also very aware of the constraints that the Congress, both on the Republican side and Democratic side, are grappling with with the budget, so I'm not unaware or blind to the fact that money is very tight. And we have a lot of demands on our money.

That said, the problems in the world are only getting greater, and it can't be just the military budget. It has to be a diplomatic budget as well because, as people have said, you know, it's a combination of both to make sure we keep ourselves safe.

So my concern, obviously, is when there are budget constraints and there are going to be always budget constraints, but when the budget constraints on occasion may in fact misalign with what our missions are, that's where I get—when I get worried. People are pushing us to do more and to do more with less on things on occasion that that doesn't always work out as well as we hoped.

Q: I want to show you another document, Secretary Nides, I'm going to enter into the record as exhibit number 9.

[Nides Exhibit No. 9 was marked for identification.]

BY MR. DESAI

Q: And this is a transcript of remarks that you delivered at the Center for American Progress on October—excuse me—August 31st, 2011. The remarks are titled, quote, “A Unified Security Budget for the United States,” and just for the purposes of the record, this transcript can still be found online at cdn.americanprogress.org/wp.content/upload/event/2011/08/image/securitybudgettranscript.pdf.

A: Can't wait to see it again.

Q: You're about to see it right now, yeah.

Do you recall delivering these remarks at the Center for American Progress?

A: I do now.

Q: And if you recall—I know it's been a few years now, and we're going to go through some of the specifics here in a second, but just before we do that, do you recall what the speech was about and why you gave it?

A: I think it was in the context of our budget and our budget submission and the importance of making sure that the State Department is funded appropriately.

Q: Okay. So we're going to get into some of the specifics here. If I can direct your attention to the third page of the document I just handed you, and I'm looking kind of toward the bottom of that third page. I know it's not numbered as such, but the penultimate paragraph on that page, the second sentence, you say, quote, “As deputy secretary of state, I could be focused on many issues and in many places. But few things are as important to me than fighting for the resources that our diplomats and development experts need to enhance our national security and our economic security,” end quote.

And I know you've spoken about some of this already, but again, why was this so important to write? Why was this, as you called

it, you know, few things more important than fighting for the resources that was needed?

A: Listen, I spent a huge amount of time in Iraq and Afghanistan and Pakistan, and I saw the commitment that the men and women at the State Department were doing for our country, and understanding that they played a really important role to keep us secure here at home, and you know, and if you just spent some time in those countries and spent time around the world and spent time with these diplomats, and I don't care if—you know, your political affiliation, you care about these people, and you want them to be secure and you want them to have the resources to do their job. That's one piece.

The second piece, it works, okay. I mean, I don't think—one of the biggest advocates for us was Dave Petraeus, Mike Mullen, you know, John Allen, all generals, one admiral, they were the biggest proponents of the State Department budget because they understood you can't just win these battles on the battlefield, and so having the resources for the State Department to do, you know, rule of law, education, programs, that was the key part of what we did, and so I was obviously passionate about making sure educating people and the American people of the importance of State Department budget.

Q: Okay. On the next page of the document at the fourth paragraph, the first sentence, it says, quote, Secretary Clinton has made the case that State and USAID are essential to our national security and ought to be considered part of a national security budget.

You've alluded to this, but if you can make the connection between State's budget and national security more expressed, because I think that's something that some may not see as obvious or inherent, right, that we're looking at national security in this less traditional way. If you could just, again, elaborate further on the connection between those two things?

A: I think it was best said when I was with Dave Petraeus in Afghanistan where General Petraeus turned to me and said my job is to clear, and your job is to hold, and that is, you know, very poignant. You know, the reality is we are partners with the Defense Department, and I think Secretary Clinton, and I assume Secretary Kerry and Secretary Clinton had a very strong relationship with the Defense Department.

First of all, it was important to have, but we are a partnership. You cannot have one with the other, so the passionate connection between the two, you know, that's why there has been very little conflict between the State Department and Defense Department during the Clinton administration—Clinton term as Secretary of State because we know we were intricately involved in the planning and the purpose, and so consequently having a strong USAID, having a strong development program, critically important to the security of the men and women in the country.

Q: Looking at the next page from the one we just discussed, the top half, you go through some of the math surrounding the budget, and I would be doing you a great disservice if I try to go through that math with you, so I'll skip it, but 4 paragraphs down, you told the audience at CAP, quote, "We know that resources are necessary

to advance our national security interests and prosperity around the world, and we are at risk of not getting them,” end quote.

What were you referring to when you say we are at the risk of not getting them?

A: The budget’s getting cut. Again, I understand—it’s not a political comment. I just understand the constraint because, quite frankly, some of the biggest advocates for the State Department budget were Republicans, so this is not a Democrat versus Republican. Money is tight, and that’s a problem. And it wouldn’t be as big a problem if the world was getting safer, but as the world is getting more dangerous and the monies are being cut, that is what I was referring to.

Q: Okay. And on the previous page, you actually have given the audience some numbers. If you can just turn back one page, and again, this is the third paragraph. You said, quote, “In the fiscal 2011 budget, which has now been finished, State and USAID took a massive hit, a 13.6 percent cut from what the administration believed we needed in 2011.”

From what you recall, did those cuts actually take place?

A: I can’t recall what the actual numbers were. I know we—I don’t recall.

Q: And do you recall if the budget was cut in any capacity, whether it was 13.6 percent or some larger or smaller figure than that?

A: I think it was cut. What the numbers were, I can’t recall, but again, we were operating in a very constrained budget environment, so I don’t—ultimately those numbers were taken down in some level.

Q: And would you have described then 2011 as a challenging year for the Department with respect to budgetary constraints?

A: Sure.

Q: And what impact, from what you can recall, did those cuts have, again, on the Department and on the ability of our diplomats to conduct its work abroad?

A: Again, I think if you put it in context, the State Department budget was 1 percent of the budget, of the Federal budget. The reality is, as we all know, we were going through a turmoil, as this continued down the Middle East, right, so you are going through, you know, chaos in Libya and Tunisia and Egypt, and things were happening all over the region, and so the demand—and oh, by the way, we are still having tens of thousands of people in Iraq and Afghanistan, we had massive conflicts in Pakistan, you know, we had, you know, democracy flourishing in some and reversing in others. So the reality is, just getting the numbers requested, even that wasn’t going to be sufficient to answer the calls of what they were demanding of us.

So that was the biggest issue. The dollar amounts you could live with if the demands weren’t as high as they were, but the demands were getting higher and higher and the problems were getting more and more difficult, so the resources were a challenge.

Q: I just want to ask you one last question about these remarks that you delivered, and again on the next page, just flip one over, you said, quote, “And we need the resources to advance our economic agenda as well,” end quote.

And you spoke and articulated the connections between having adequate resources and advancing national security. I just wanted to ask you that same question with respect to economic interests and American economic agendas in moving forward and how we can—or how we strengthen and advance economic interests by giving the Department the resources it needs so that it can do the work that it's meant to do?

A: Listen, I champion, I think, on economic State craft, which was the use of the State Department to advocate on behalf of U.S. companies and advocate on behalf of U.S. jobs. The State Department is uniquely positioned to do that. We have ambassadors and staff in every country in the world, some of our biggest training partners, and it used to be that Just Made in America was good enough. That's not the case anymore, right. We're being challenged in every sector, in every industry to compete. We need all the tools that we can have, including the advocacy of our embassies and our diplomatic corps, and there's no one better, and equipped than people who are on the ground holding the American flag to advocate on behalf of U.S. companies and U.S. interests.

So I think obviously having a robust budget in that particular area is important in the economic interest of the U.S.

Q: If I can switch gears again. So the Secretary convened the Accountability Review Board shortly after the Benghazi attacks. Is that right?

A: That's correct.

Q: And do you recall when she convened the ARB?

A: I don't.

Q: From what we have, it was, I think, less than a month or so afterwards, and isn't it also correct that she entrusted you to oversee the ARB's implementation once the ARB's report was released, I believe, in December of 2012?

A: That's correct.

Q: Okay. So I want to ask you a few questions about that, but before we turn to that specifically, I want to ask you just a couple of questions about some of these steps the Department took after the attack and once the board was convened but before the ARB issued its final report in December 2012.

And I think you had talked about some of these steps during your testimony to Congress in December of that year, but if you could just speak to, if you recall, some of the steps that you oversaw and that you know that the Department took in response to the attacks?

A: The first thing we did is we convened a thing called ISAF, which was basically a joint program between the State Department and Defense Department to make sure we step back and look at all the other potential hotspots that we need to reevaluate in the wake of the new normal.

And this had never happened before, and we got the Secretary of Defense and State to authorize it. We sent, I think it was, 17 teams or 18 teams around the world to evaluate each embassy in these defined hotspots, determine if they had appropriate security, appropriate facilities, probably as important as anything is, one of the elements of the security of our people is the Vienna Convention, and the Vienna Convention, as you know, is the convention

that requires the host country to provide the security for the facilities.

But even if they're required to, they may not have either the will or the capabilities of doing that, and these teams were to assess that as well. And we wanted it quickly done within 30 days. So to try to pull that off in 30 days is not an easy accomplishment because many of our uniformed officers, in getting the permissions from host countries to allow U.S. military to come in and evaluate is not always easy, but that was really a principal step that we took.

Because as I said earlier—I hate to use the word—the world is on fire, okay, and chaos was breaking out, and we had to really determine at that time how serious this was going to be over the next 6 months to make sure what just happened in Benghazi never happened again. And so that was really the biggest—and we took a lot of quick steps, right, but that, I think, was a very important action step we took. That was even before the ARB actually presented their final findings.

Q: So one of the steps was that you deployed these interagency security assessment teams to these hotspots abroad. Was there anything else that you recall that the Department did during this time period?

A: Well, we obviously increased our security in all the countries that we had the ability to do. We called for additional Marines where we could. We asked the Defense Department to offer additional Marines. That is more difficult, I learned, than I thought, because you can't just send Marines into a country because you have to have places for them to live, you have to have places to operate. I mean, it's not as simple as just sending, you know, 500 Marines to 30 countries. It just doesn't work that way. You have to get permission from the host country.

So we sent Marines. We sent more additional DS staff. We asked for additional funds from the Defense Department. There's a joint fund that we operate together to help us in some of the countries. So you know, we did—again, to be honest with you, I can't remember all the things I was doing. All I remember is there were 70-some recommendations by the ARB, and Secretary Clinton accepted every single one of the recommendations, and we began implementing all of those before we left.

Q: Now, you just, I think, told us that when these ISAF teams were deployed, they were deployed in a relatively quick amount of time. Is that right?

A: My recollection is that's correct.

Q: And do you recall how quickly they were deployed?

A: I think within like 48 hours or 72 hours. I mean, we were—by the way, it was very hard to pull off. You had to identify the people. You got to get them plane tickets and private—I mean, it's—you know, it's complicated. You just can't send, you know, 15 people into a country and have these people, Marines or Army, Navy, and State Department officials start interviewing government officials in host countries. They don't particularly like that very much, and so, you know, it was complicated, and most of the countries we were going to but in nature of where we're—they weren't necessarily vacation hotspots. I mean, they were really

complicated places to go. So we really felt that we needed to quickly assess how serious an issue we were dealing with.

Q: So this reflects the priority and the importance that the Department and top leadership at that time had placed on ensuring that and making these assessments on our posts abroad in these hotspots. Is that right?

A: Sure. And just to be clear, you know, it was a self-reflection moment, too. So I mean, all the reports did not come back rosy to say we did everything right, right. There were plenty of reports that came back that the security needed to be improved here, or you know, windows didn't have the right bars on it or it wasn't the right fire equipment. I mean, they went down to the nitty-gritty of what needed to be done, and when you do that, it's kind of a self-assessment, you know.

You don't always like what comes back in a self-assessment, but no one told us to do that. That wasn't the recommendation of the ARB. That was Secretary Clinton demanding we do that and get on top of it before another problem happened, so again, we weren't responding to some inquiry or someone saying go do it. We did it on our own, and quite frankly, we didn't know what we'd get back, and there were plenty of things that needed to be resolved.

And then we had a checklist, we had a whole team of people who then went down the checklist and made sure that every one of those facilities that had things that needed to be done were actually done.

Q: Right. And just to be clear, this all happened before the ARB issued its report. This is days after the attack. Is that right?

A: This was done very quickly. I can't tell you exactly every date, but this was taken on with the most important speed and efficiency.

Q: And even with the sense of self-assessment and this level of granularity that you just described, there also seems to be a sense of urgency, if I'm hearing you correctly. Is that right?

A: Urgency was the word of the day.

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS

Q: Do you remember any specific conversations with the Secretary about this, about sending out the ISAF teams?

A: Well, she approved it, so she was involved in the discussion of it. She also understood that what would come back wasn't going to be, hey, you guys are doing everything great, okay. So she was well aware this self-assessment is a self-assessment. So yes, I don't recall specific meetings and what conversations I had with her, but she certainly was aware that we were doing this because it had to be jointly agreed by the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State, which never has occurred before. I mean, this was not—it wasn't like press a button and these teams get arranged. They've never done this before, so it was a relatively new kind of program.

Q: And you spoke to one of the specific things that the ISAF teams were doing, which was not only determining whether there was a will in the host country to protect Americans but whether they had the capacity to do it. Is that right?

A: That's correct.

Q: And that, ultimately, was really the problem in Libya, right, in Benghazi. It wasn't a problem of the will of the host country but in fact a problem of the implementation and the ability. Is that sort of accurate?

A: That's correct.

Q: And so is that why that piece of the ISAF was sort of the focus?

A: Yeah. I mean, again, as I said, I mean, there is—they're bound by the Vienna Convention. That's great. However, that doesn't always translate into making sure that our people are secure.

Q: And I think in the last round you got asked a number of questions around the specificity of the recognition and chief of mission recognition in Benghazi, and I think that's probably something that only experienced State Department lawyers truly understand.

I don't recall whether you were actually able to speak to it, but let me just bring you back to one of those documents for a quick minute. It was exhibit 4?

A: Yeah.

Q: And so this is the document that was entitled, "Benghazi Staffing Plans." I think in the last round you said you didn't recall if you had seen it. It appears to be a draft document. Is that right?

A: Again, I don't know if it was a draft document. I did not see it, that's correct. I mean, I'm not aware that I saw it. Let's put it that way.

Q: And in this particular document was—the discussion was around, in the last round, staff in Benghazi—quote, "Staff in Benghazi would remain without privileges and immunities under the Vienna Convention on diplomatic relations, except for those already accredited to Embassy in Tripoli. We should consider receiving unilateral assurances from the TNC on privileges and immunities."

This document appears to have been from before the TNC was officially recognized. At some point, the TNC was the—became the officially recognized government. Is that correct?

A: Yes.

Q: And so initially when the Special Envoy went into Libya, as I understand it, the TNC wasn't the officially recognized government, and he was in Benghazi a little bit under the radar, to some extent, and then at some point the TNC did become the formally recognized government, and then at a later point there was actually a democratic election. Is that accurate?

A: I believe so, yeah.

Q: In the summer of 2012?

A: I believe so.

Q: And I think that there was some misunderstanding perhaps in the previous round about whether the individuals in Benghazi were in fact under a chief of mission authority.

As I understand it, the individuals in Benghazi were under the chief of mission authority from the embassy in Tripoli and that all individuals in the country, even if there isn't an officially recognized embassy in a particular area, remain under the chief of mission authority of that—of that country. Do you have any knowledge on this area?

A: I would let the lawyers determine that, unfortunately.

Q: But again, the problem specifically in Benghazi on the night of the attacks was not a refusal from the host government to come and save our individuals. It was a matter of an inability. Is that accurate?

A: I think that's a good characterization.

BY MR. DESAI

Q: So Secretary Nides, if I can just refocus your attention back to the ARB and the Accountability Review Board's work. And the ARB interviewed approximately 100 witnesses to review documents, and they issued their report roughly 2 months after Secretary Clinton convened the board, and that report was issued sometime in December 2012.

And there have been allegations surrounding the ARB that I just want to quickly address with you before I ask the rest of my questions. And those allegations focus or allege, rather, that the ARB's investigation, and in particular, the co-chairs, Ambassador Pickering and Admiral Michael Mullen, that their work was not sufficiently independent and was not sufficiently objective.

And I just want to ask you that, in your experience at the time, do you agree with these allegations or think they have any merit?

A: I do not.

Q: And why is that? What was your assessment of their work?

A: Well, first of all, the two individuals you just spoke about are, in my view, true patriots and have phenomenal reputations.

Second, they did a very thoughtful and thorough review, among with other members of the committee, not just them, but most importantly, we accepted every one of the recommendations, okay. And some of those recommendations were pretty aggressive. So these were not—so this was, you know, 29 individual recommendations, and we accepted all of them without debate.

And so consequently, they had total carte blanche to do and recommend anything they wanted to, and given what we did, we basically accepted those.

Q: You described Ambassador Pickering and Admiral Mullen as patriots. Both of these gentleman worked for Republican presidents prior to their service on the Accountability Review Board. Is that correct?

A: I think that is correct.

Q: And are you aware of an instance in which their work was unduly influenced or that the integrity of their investigation was in any way compromised?

A: None.

Q: Okay. Moving on, I think you confirmed for me just a few minutes ago that once the ARB was convened, Secretary Clinton tasked you with overseeing the implementation of the ARB's recommendation. Is that correct?

A: That's correct.

Q: Or rather, once the ARB issued its report in December 2012, why were you specifically chosen for that particular task, Mr. Secretary?

A: Good question. Because obviously, I had management experience, I was the deputy secretary of management, but I also had

come from the private sector. I knew how to drive a process to get things done, and I was given tasks in which to do it.

Q: And did Secretary Clinton give you any directions when she gave you these tasks with respect to the objective, the purpose, conveying a certain amount of urgency with respect to the importance of this?

A: Yeah. She said, "Get it done and get it done quickly."

Q: And in your view, did the Secretary move expeditiously to implement the ARB's recommendation? You just mentioned that she accepted all the recommendations that they made, which was something like 29 specific recommendations, so in your view, did she move expeditiously to implement them once they were accepted?

A: She did.

Q: Were you aware, Mr. Secretary, that in September of 2013—and I recognize that this is after you left the Department, if I'm not mistaken. I think your tenure ended in February of that year, if I'm not mistaken. But in September of 2013, the Department's Office of Inspector General actually conducted an assessment of the ARB process generally, and what that process entailed was doing a review of the 12 or so ARBs that had taken place from the, you know, east Africa bombings in 1998, all the way through the Benghazi—the Benghazi ARB from December of 2012. Were you aware that the IG did that?

A: I was not.

Q: And just as an initial matter, to be clear, the inspector general of the Department is an independent nonpolitical entity. Is that right?

A: It's supposed to be, yes.

Q: And what function does the IG—the IG supposed to have?

A: Supposed to be an independent investigative arm that has no political affiliation and is totally independent.

Mr. DESAI. So what I want to do at this time, is just—

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. And I know you have a sense of humor, but just for the record, the IG, you are not making an allegation that the IG is not independent of the State Department?

Mr. NIDES. What did I say?

Mr. DESAI. You said it is supposed to be.

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. It is supposed to be.

Mr. NIDES. Oh, of course, it is totally independent.

Mr. DESAI. And you have no instincts—

Mr. NIDES. No, absolutely none. That was—

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. Yeah, I just didn't want it to sound odd later.

Mr. NIDES. Please, please. No, no, it is totally independent.

BY MR. DESAI

Q: At this time, I'm going to show you a portion of the IG's report which is titled the Special Review of the Accountability Review Board Process. I'm going to mark this for the record as Exhibit 10. [Nides Exhibit No. 10 was marked for identification.]

BY MR. DESAI

Q: So what we have here is the cover sheet of the State IG's report titled Special Review of the Accountability Review Board Process. It is dated September 2013. I have the cover page and I have a couple of additional pages attached to it, maybe two or three pages that I wanted to go over with you.

And if I can direct your attention to the first page, page 1. The first bullet under "Key Judgments." And this is just something that we discussed a few minutes ago with respect to the independence of the ARB. And the IG under its Key Judgments, its very first Key Judgment it says, quote, "The Accountability Review Board process operates as intended—independently and without bias to identify vulnerabilities in The Department of State's security programs," end quote.

And I think what you just told me a few minutes ago is that this finding is, in fact, consistent with your experience with the ARB with respect to its independence and its integrity, is that right?

A: Yes, it is.

Q: If I can direct your attention to the next page, and this is page 19, and under "Department Action," the inspector general noted, quote, "The Department's handling of the Benghazi ARB recommendations represents a significant departure from the previous norm in that Secretary Clinton took charge directly of oversight for the implementation process," end quote.

Is the IG's assertion here also consistent with your experience overseeing the ARB implementation team?

A: It is.

Q: Now, you had mentioned that the ARB had made 29 recommendations; the Secretary accepted all of them. With respect to its actual implementation, the mechanics of it, if you can just briefly walk me through how that happened? How did the ARB implementation team go about implementing those 29 recommendations?

A: You know, we did it like you would do any major project. You have individual tasks assigned by the individual people. You have people accountable for milestones. You set up clear guidelines of what you wanted to accomplish. And you constantly held people accountable for what they said they were going to accomplish.

It is not more complicated than that, but it's obviously, execution is the key, and obviously, holding people accountable, having someone at my level meeting with them weekly, and in many cases daily to make sure that things got done, that's how you drive a process.

Q: And when you say someone at your level, you mean someone at the highest level, the higher echelons of the Department. Is that right?

A: I would.

Q: And do you think it made a difference that someone at your level and others who were in the leadership, including Secretary Clinton, took such an active role with respect to the ARB's implementation to make sure that it was implemented effectively? Do you think that made a difference?

A: Absolutely.

Q: If I can redirect your attention back to the document I just gave you, and the very last page, which I believe it's page 20, the second paragraph of that document, it says, quote, "High-level leadership has been critical in driving and sustaining implementation of the Benghazi ARB recommendations and this approach establishes a model for how the Department should handle future ARB recommendations," end quote. So you would agree with what the inspector general has said here. Is that right?

A: I would.

Q: How would you characterize the rate of implementation and the speed at which these recommendations were implemented during the time you were overseeing the implementation team?

A: Oh, rapid, and probably at warp speed for the government.

Q: And what do you attribute that to, just to be clear?

A: Attention from the top.

Q: Okay.

A: And I should say that the commitment among the career Foreign Service officers to get it right. So as much as we were imploring it to get done, the career people at the Department desperately wanted to make sure this never happens again. And they were certainly willing to participate and make sure it didn't happen again.

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. I think we are almost out of time.

Mr. DESAI. Yeah, we are just wrapping up. Thank you so much. We will go off the record.

[Recess.]

BY MS. BETZ

Q: So we will go back on the record. The time is 12:31, and we will continue with our next hour. Thank you for your patience.

A: Please.

Q: So I wanted to follow up on some questions that our colleagues had the last hour and going back to the night of the attack. And you had described a situation where you were engulfed in identifying or trying to identify what you could do to help the situation in Benghazi. What were some of the specifics that were being discussed during that time?

A: Well, as I said earlier, I don't recall specific conversations, just the atmospherics of what was going on, obviously. We were trying to determine where Ambassador Stevens was; how many Americans were potentially hurt; what we could do to potentially help them. So I think we were focused on the current situation, also, what was happening at our Embassy as well in Libya.

So it's hard for me to articulate specific conversations, but there was an atmosphere of, we need to save these people's lives. We also need to understand potentially what other threats are out there, and what we are going to do about them. So I think there was, again, generically my—again, 3-plus years ago, not to use the term I have been using a lot, but the fog of war, but I can't really tell you specifically, I said this, and they said that in response, but there was a general sense of let's resolve the issue as best we can.

Q: I want to go back to the discussion about the FEST. We had mentioned the FEST in our first hour, and that is a State Department tool that is often recommended by the counterterrorism de-

partment. And it's my understanding that it can be deployed within 4 hours of a deputy's committee approval.

Why wasn't the FEST considered?

A: I don't recall. I mean, first of all, I wasn't—I can't recall, was I a party to the discussion, so I can't say it wasn't deployed, or it was deployed, or why it wasn't deployed because I wasn't—I don't recall those conversations.

Q: Do you recall conversations in terms of saving people's lives deploying any type of military asset?

A: I know there was conversations that were going on in an attempt to try to make sure that we get any resource we possibly could get in to save lives. Specifically what those conversations were, and who they were with, I can't recall, but there certainly was a view, is there any way we can get people there to help, including the local militia which really was the focus of people because those are the people that were blocks away, and they couldn't seem to get that to happen as well.

Q: How were you notified that the Ambassador was no longer alive?

A: Again, I don't remember all of the details, but I think I was notified by the ops center in the middle of the night, maybe at 4 o'clock in the morning. I had gone home to shower. I may have gotten some confirmation that, in fact, he wasn't at the hospital, which some people had assumed that he was. But, originally, like I said, they had taken him out of the facility, brought him to the hospital and he was dead when he arrived at the hospital.

Q: And at that point a decision was made to evacuate the personnel, all personnel out of Benghazi?

A: Again, I don't remember exactly what the chain of events were, and what that order was, and how it was executed, but I don't recall what the timing of that was.

Q: In the last hour we had a significant discussion on the budget constraints and budget cuts that were, I guess, Congress was doing, if you will, or that was what was being suggested. Did Congress—

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. I will object to that.

Ms. BETZ. You'll object to that?

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. You don't need to characterize what we were suggesting.

Ms. BETZ. Okay. All right.

BY MS. BETZ

Q: Did Congress push you to go into Libya?

A: Again, I don't have any insight into the decision on Libya, Congress or not Congress. I don't have any—I don't have any insight to that. I don't know if Members of Congress wrote Secretary Clinton and asked her to go into Libya, so I know I wasn't a party to the discussions on the decision to go into Libya.

Q: Did Congress push the State Department to open two facilities in Libya?

A: Again, I'm not a party to the decisions of who said what when, and who asked for more facilities. So I can't say yes or no because I wasn't aware of the conversations.

Q: If Congress wasn't notified that the mission was taking place, is it a fair assessment that it was more of a State Department initiative rather than a constraint or a budget implication that was imposed by Congress?

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. That's assuming that Congress wasn't notified.

Ms. BETZ. Well, Congress wasn't notified.

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. Well, many, many Members of Congress were aware that facilities—

Ms. BETZ. They were aware, but there was no official notification.

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. Yes, but HPSCI, and Armed Services, lots of committees in Congress were aware.

Ms. BETZ. Aware is different than being officially notified that there is an official presence in Benghazi.

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. Correct.

Ms. BETZ. Thank you.

Mr. NIDES. So again, unfortunately, my statement is the same which is, I wasn't aware of the conversations either by the Congress or the State Department and the decisionmaking to decide to go into Libya, or to make a decision about going on Benghazi. I don't recall, to say it better.

BY MS. BETZ

Q: So we also spent a good deal of time talking about the ISATs and the initiatives at the attack, and you mentioned that these were put together within 48 hours of the attack. What precluded you from putting the ISATs together before? What resources were available that weren't available before the attack?

A: Again, I'm not sure if it was 48 hours or 72 hours. It was very quickly. I may have said 48 hours, may have been 24. I don't know exactly. But again, it was immediate. It was very quick. The constraints are, as you are aware, bringing a joint DOD-State Department identifying—it was, first of all it was over the Christmas holidays, right, so identifying people to go, to get them on planes, finding DOD military officials that could also meet up and go, setting up the appropriate—you know, how hard it is to do just a codel.

So this was, obviously, hugely complicated. And so our view was that we had to make sure that we had the right cooperations, and we needed to make sure that the host country understood what we were doing. You are sending military officials into the country with uniforms on, which you have to get permission of which to do. So logistically, it was very complicated to do and to do it successfully. And these were, by the way, as I repeated, very hot spots which equal dangerous spots in many cases, so making sure that those people were secure once they got to the ground was also important here.

Q: But it's fair to say that the ISATs could have been put together prior to the attack?

A: Well, they were never set up in a way—the idea was for a preventive—to respond, to make sure what happened in Benghazi doesn't happen in another place. So you can't—sure, you can't predict what's going to happen if you—it's like a car, you hit a car, you make sure you took the right turn you would have never hit

the car in the first place. Probably not a great analogy, but the reality of this is, is that the ISATs were never critical, it was a new concept. We made it up. We basically said, we need to make sure—Secretary Clinton said, we want to make sure that we are in a new normal. We have a huge amount of countries that potentially are in crisis mode. Let's do a self-assessment as quickly as possible to determine, to make sure this doesn't happen again.

Q: No, I understand that. But the whole concept of an ISAT, there was nothing to preclude you from putting these teams together prior to the attack in terms of preventing?

A: Well, we hoped the professional Diplomatic Security professionals that we have on the ground are doing that continually. Right? Again, as you know, we have over 270 missions. You know, we get this right 99 percent of the time. And obviously, when something like this tragically happens, we have got to step back and learn from it. And one of the ways to learn from it is to have a self-assessment and go in and look at all of the countries that are potentially now in this high-risk category and assess that.

Q: And I think that's fair. But I think just to sort of close this, the Secretary was very focused on a 21st century expeditionary diplomacy?

A: Sure.

Q: So point being is if we are doing new ways of thinking with diplomacy, there was nothing to preclude you from putting the ISATs or executing the concept of an ISAT prior to the attacks; 21st century diplomacy with 21st century security?

A: There's nothing to preclude us from doing anything. I mean, the reality of this is, so but I—to be clear, the focus of the State Department after attempting to try to make sure that we save the lives of those Americans in Benghazi, then quickly shifted to make sure it didn't happen again in another country.

So we created a concept that never existed before, and as you know, try to create something that has never existed before in the government within 48 hours is not easy to do. It's even more complicated when you are trying to do it with another very large department. So the State Department, and Defense Department had never done anything like this before and certainly never done anything like this in the speed in which they did it. So, you know, that was the recommendations that we came up with and executed.

Ms. BETZ. And I just wanted to note for the record that we were joined again by Congressman Jordan.

Mr. JORDAN. Can I ask a question?

Ms. BETZ. Yeah, and I'm going to yield.

Mr. JORDAN. Mr. Nides, in the Democrat hour, the last hour, you said you were with the Secretary that entire night. I think your direct quote was, you were with her all night as long as she was at the Department.

Mr. NIDES. As long as she was at the Department.

Mr. JORDAN. Okay, and were you with her when she communicated with the President?

Mr. NIDES. I was not. I mean, I was there. I don't know when the conversation—it was 2.5 years ago. She wasn't—I wasn't sitting in the room when she was calling the President, I don't believe.

Mr. JORDAN. She indicated that she didn't meet with the President that night, but she talked to him on the phone. So you were not in the room when she talked with him?

Mr. NIDES. I have no recollection.

Mr. JORDAN. Do you know how many times she talked with the President that night?

Mr. NIDES. Again, I don't have any recollection—

Mr. JORDAN. So you wouldn't know how long the call was?

Mr. NIDES. I would not.

Mr. JORDAN. You won't know what they discussed on the call?

Mr. NIDES. I would not.

Mr. JORDAN. Did she talk to you as one of her key advisors prior to the call saying what she was going to convey to the President on her conversation with the President?

Mr. NIDES. I don't recall.

Mr. JORDAN. What time that evening did the call take place?

Mr. NIDES. Again, I'm sorry. I just don't remember.

Mr. JORDAN. You don't remember?

Mr. NIDES. I mean, again, it was almost 3½ years ago. I don't know what time a call came in or didn't come in.

Mr. JORDAN. Well, let me give you some context. Did the call happen prior to the 10:08 statement that was announced by the State Department that became the official statement of our government, or did it happen after the 10:08 statement?

Mr. NIDES. Honestly, unfortunately, I just don't know. I don't remember. I don't recall.

Mr. JORDAN. Were you involved in putting the statement together, the statement that talked about the video, some of the stuff to justify this behavior? Were you involved in putting that statement together?

Mr. NIDES. I was not.

Mr. JORDAN. Were you involved in talking at all about the video that night prior to any statement going out with just, just the Secretary or some of the other key advisors, key people at the State Department?

Mr. NIDES. I don't recall I was.

Mr. JORDAN. How about with the Secretary's conversations with the Department of Defense, particularly Secretary Panetta? Were you in the room when she talked with Secretary Panetta?

Mr. NIDES. I don't recall that I was or wasn't.

Mr. JORDAN. And do you know what time the calls with Secretary Panetta took place? Do you happen to know that?

Mr. NIDES. No, I'm sorry.

Mr. JORDAN. Same kind of answer, okay. Who did you talk with that day at the White House, if anyone?

Mr. NIDES. You know, again, it was—

Mr. JORDAN. Did you talk to—

Mr. NIDES [continuing]. Three plus years ago. I don't really recall who I spoke to.

Mr. JORDAN. Okay.

Mr. NIDES. I'm sure I spoke to a lot of people because we were all talking to a lot of people, but to be honest with you, I just I don't have a recollection of who—

Mr. JORDAN. Who did you talk with at the Department of Defense? Did you happen to talk with Mr. Bash, Jeremy Bash that day?

Mr. NIDES. I don't—I have seen an email, I guess, that there was an email of correspondence, and I could have talked to Jeremy Bash. I could have talked to him on the phone. I just don't recall.

Mr. JORDAN. What about James Miller? Did you talk with James Miller on that day?

Mr. NIDES. Again, I talked to James Miller a lot, so the chances of me talking to James Miller that day, it could have happened.

Mr. JORDAN. Do we have the email communications between Mr. Nides and Mr. Miller, and Mr. Nides and Mr. Bash? Did you email with Mr. Bash that day?

Mr. NIDES. I have seen an email.

Ms. BETZ. We did have those—

Mr. JORDAN. Okay, and we have all of those?

Mr. NIDES. I don't know what you have.

Mr. JORDAN. Okay.

Mr. NIDES. Okay. I'm sorry. I wish I knew.

Mr. JORDAN. Okay, and your title is Deputy Secretary of Management and Resources?

Mr. NIDES. That's correct.

Mr. JORDAN. Did you have anything, any say in, or in okaying the email arrangement that Secretary Clinton had set up, her personal email?

Mr. NIDES. No.

Mr. JORDAN. Okay, and did you have any oversight, or influence, or impact, or interaction with Bryan Pagliano?

Mr. NIDES. I did not.

Mr. JORDAN. Okay, that's all I have got.

Mr. NIDES. Thank you.

BY MS. BETZ

Q: I want to followup again on the questioning on the ARB that we discussed last hour and we talked about, a little bit about the formation of the ARB.

Do you recall meeting with the ARB?

A: I do.

Q: And was the meeting before the report was issued?

A: I assume it was.

Q: Did you get a copy of the report before it was issued?

A: I don't recall. I mean, I just don't know. I don't—I mean, I have no recollection of it. I'm not saying I didn't. I just don't recall.

Q: Did Cheryl Mills talk to you about meeting with the ARB?

A: Sure. We had plenty of conversations about the ARB. I don't know about—communicated with her about the ARB.

Q: Was it your understanding that the ARB was sort of being put together in the normal course of action the way ARBs typically were?

A: Again, I have no insight to how ARBs were typically put together.

Q: Let me show you a document. Are we on 11?

Ms. BETZ. This would be your last tab. Tab 20.

Mr. NIDES. Last tab.

Ms. BETZ. And this will be exhibit 11; very last tab in the notebook.

[Nide Exhibit No. 11 was marked for identification.]

BY MS. BETZ

Q: And specifically, it would be the last page of that document.

A: Is this the "Dear Colleagues" one?

Q: The "Dear Colleagues," yes.

A: Okay.

Q: So for identification purposes, it is STATE-SCB0093144. The witness is not a sender, nor is a recipient, but has talked about his role in ARB. So I just want to refer you to the last page that says: "Dear Colleagues, just a reminder—the Federal Registry notice takes three work days to be published which means that I will need the names of the ARB members and the rest of the information by Wednesday morning if they will be starting work on Monday, October 1. I would appreciate knowing how this ARB is going to work since it is not going in the normal way."

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. Can I just—I'm sorry, can we just pause? It's a long document. Can you just show me where he is referenced in this?

Ms. BETZ. I said he is not referenced in it, but we have been discussing his role in the ARB.

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. Oh, okay. I thought you said he was referenced.

Ms. BETZ. No, he is not referenced in it.

BY MS. BETZ

Q: But I just wanted to get your comments on this last phrase that the ARB is not going the normal way.

A: All right, I don't have any idea what that refers to.

Q: So you don't have any knowledge about how the ARB was supposed to work?

A: I do not.

Q: Were you involved in any of the selection of the ARB panelists?

A: I was not.

Q: Were you consulted?

A: Not to my recollection.

Q: I think we will go off the record.

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS

Q: Let's go back on. I will be brief. Just a couple of followups and I think in one of the previous rounds, you had referenced the importance both to you, to the Secretary and to everybody at the State Department, I think, that you all work together to make sure nothing like Benghazi ever happens again. Is that accurate?

A: It is.

Q: And while I understand that that's a goal, I think I just—I just wanted to discuss for a moment the possibility of that as a standard which is to say I think that's—I think from my understanding from talking to, I think, all of the people that we have

spoken to, while that is the goal, it is to some extent an impossible standard. Is that accurate?

A: Unfortunately, that's true.

Q: And so as you had said, I think previously, you know, and even if—and obviously, mistakes were made in this instance, but even in circumstances where all individuals are doing their best efforts, you know, 100 percent of the time, there still can be an attack that's successful against us. Is that accurate?

A: It is.

Q: And it is not necessarily true that if there is an attack that that means that individuals acted poorly, or specifically made mistakes?

A: That is correct.

Q: Although we share the goal, and I think our members have—

A: I'm sorry?

Q: We share the goal and I think our members have stated the same goal—

A: Of course.

Q: [continuing]. Numerous times. I think there have been some allegations and some discussion about the government presence in Benghazi and whether that was something that the White House demanded or the Secretary demanded, whether it was something that sort of came from the top down as opposed to from the bottom up, from what that means, I mean, the NEA Bureau or career Foreign Service officers, including Ambassador Stevens. I know you don't have a great recollection of the decision itself, but do you recall whether the discussions around Benghazi, the presence in Benghazi and Libya policy was something that was bottom up or top down?

A: Again, I can't recall specific conversations about who said what when. From the period of time of the 2-plus years that I was there, there was always a constant push for more people, meaning more Foreign Service officers to be on the ground to help on USAID programs, on economic issues, and there is constantly a push by the bureaus to get more head count into the countries in which they are working in.

I don't believe this was any different than that. But again, I can't recall specific conversations about who asked for what resources, but it is traditional at the State Department, and quite frankly, at DOD, for the commander on the ground, which is the equivalent of an ambassador, to continue to ask for more resources and to ask for more people on the ground; specifically, more program people, career Foreign Service officers.

Q: And I feel like we have gone through the night of the attack as extensive as we can. But I think in the last round you described that on the night of the attack, that the sentiment was that—the sentiment of the Secretary, and her senior advisors was that you all wanted to get any resources that you possibly could into the area to save lives. Is that accurate?

A: That is correct.

Q: And did that include military resources?

A: Absolutely.

BY MR. DESAI

Q: We are toward the end, at least for this session. This is the eighth congressional investigation into the Benghazi attacks and we are hoping it's the last one. And toward that end, we are going to ask you about a series of allegations that have been made in connection with the attacks that the minority feels have been asked and answered. But it's our understanding that some of our colleagues on the other side are still pursuing them. So as a result, we are compelled to ask every witness that we speak to about these allegations.

So here is how I would like to proceed. I will tell you what the allegation is, and then I will just ask you whether or not you have any information or any evidence to support the allegation.

A: Got it.

Q: And I am not as interested in your opinion, but only whether or not you have evidence or information about the allegation. And if you don't have any information or evidence, I will just move on to the next allegation until we are out of allegations. And as you will see, there are quite a few of these allegations. I'm going to ask in advance just for your patience as we go through them.

I will start with the first one. It has been alleged that Secretary of State Clinton intentionally blocked military action on the night of the attacks. One Congressman has speculated that, quote, "Secretary Clinton told Leon Panetta to stand down," end quote, and this resulted in the Defense Department not sending more assets to help in Benghazi.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary of State Clinton ordered Secretary of Defense Panetta to stand down on the night of the attacks?

A: No.

Q: Do you have any evidence that Secretary of State Clinton issued any kind of order to Secretary of Defense Panetta on the night of the attacks?

A: No.

Q: It has been alleged Secretary Clinton personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security to Libya. The Washington Post fact checker evaluated this claim and gave it four Pinocchios, its highest award for false claims.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security resources to Libya?

A: No.

Q: Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton was personally involved in providing specific instruction on day-to-day security resources in Benghazi?

A: No.

Q: I will just pause for one second just to let the record reflect that Chairman Gowdy has joined us.

Mr. NIDES. Mr. Chairman, how are you?

Chairman GOWDY. How are you doing?

Mr. NIDES. Great. Thank you.

BY MR. DESAI

Q: It has been alleged that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risks posed by Colonel Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support to military operations in Libya in spring 2011.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risks posed by Colonel Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for military operations in Libya in spring 2011?

A: No, I don't.

Q: It has been alleged to the U.S. Mission in Benghazi included transferring weapons to Syrian rebels or to other countries. A bipartisan report issued by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence found that quote, "The CIA was not collecting and shipping arms from Libya to Syria," end quote, and they found, quote, "No support for this allegation," end quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict the House Intelligence Committee's bipartisan report finding that the CIA was not shipping arms from Libya to Syria?

A: No, I don't.

Q: Do you have any evidence that the U.S. facilities in Benghazi were being used to facilitate weapons transfers from Libya to Syria or to any other foreign country?

A: No, I don't.

Q: A team of CIA security personnel was temporarily delayed from departing the Annex to assist the special mission compound and there have been a number of allegations about the cause of and the appropriateness of that delay. The House Intelligence Committee issued a bipartisan report concluding that the team was not ordered to stand down. But that instead, there were tactical disagreements on the ground over how quickly to depart.

Do you have any evidence that would contradict the House Intelligence Committee's finding that there was no standdown order to CIA personnel?

A: No, I don't.

Q: Putting aside whether you personally agree with the decisions to delay temporarily or think it was the right decision, do you have any evidence that there was a bad or improper reason behind the temporary delay of the CIA security personnel to depart the Annex to assist the special mission compound?

A: I do not.

Q: A concern has been raised by one individual that in the course of producing documents to the Accountability Review Board damaging documents may have been removed or scrubbed from that production.

Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department removed or scrubbed damaging documents from the materials that were provided to the ARB?

A: I do not.

Q: Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department directed anyone else at the State Department to remove or scrub damaging documents from the materials that were provided to the ARB?

A: I do not.

Q: Allow me to ask you these questions also for documents that were provided to Congress.

Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department removed or scrubbed damaging documents from the materials that were provided to Congress?

A: I do not.

Q: It has been alleged that CIA Deputy Director Michael Morell, altered unclassified talking points about the Benghazi attacks for political reasons and that he then misrepresented his actions when he told Congress that the CIA, quote, “faithfully performed our duties in accordance with the highest standards of objectivity and nonpartisanship,” end quote.

Do you have any evidence that CIA Deputy Director Mike Morell gave false or intentionally misleading testimony to Congress about the Benghazi talking points?

A: I do not.

Q: Do you have any evidence that CIA Deputy Director Morell altered the talking points to Congress for political reasons?

A: I do not.

Q: It has been alleged that Ambassador Susan Rice made and intentional misrepresentation when she spoke on the Sunday talk shows about the Benghazi attacks.

Do you have any evidence that Ambassador Rice intentionally misrepresented facts about the Benghazi attacks on the Sunday talk shows?

A: I do not.

Q: It has been alleged that the President of the United States was, quote, “virtually AWOL as Commander in Chief,” end quote, on the night of the attacks and that he was, quote, “missing in action.”

Do you have any evidence to support the allegation that the President was virtually AWOL as Commander in Chief or missing in action on the night of the attacks?

A: I do not.

Q: It has been alleged that a team of four military personnel at Embassy Tripoli on the night of the attacks who were considering flying on the second plane to Benghazi were ordered by their superiors to stand down or to cease all operations. Military officials have stated that those four individuals were instead ordered to, quote, “remain in place,” end quote. In Tripoli to provide security and medical assistance in their current location. A Republican staff report issued by the House Armed Services Committee found that, quote, “There was no standdown order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi,” end quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict the conclusion of the House Armed Services Committee that there was no standdown order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi?

A: I do not.

Q: It has been alleged that the military failed to deploy assets on the night of the attack that would have saved lives. However, former Republican Congressman Howard “Buck” McKeon, the

former chairman of the House Armed Services Committee conducted a review of the attacks after which he stated, quote, "Given where the troops were, how quickly the thing all happened, and how quickly it dissipated, we probably couldn't have done more than we did," end quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict Chairman McKeon's conclusion?

A: I do not.

Q: Do you have any evidence that the Pentagon had military assets available to them on the night of the attacks that could have saved lives; that the Pentagon leadership intentionally decided not deploy them?

A: I do not.

Q: I think with that, we will go off the record.

Mr. YANES. Well, hang on a second. Is the questioning over from both sides in the nonclassified session?

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. Is the chairman going to—are you good? Chairman GOWDY. Yes.

Mr. YANES. Okay, the only thing I would like to say—

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. Do you want to stay on the record?

Mr. YANES. Yeah, on the record, please. So we were contacted by the committee staff shortly before Thanksgiving Mr. Chipman called and asked that Mr. Nides come in and testify before Christmas. There was no way we could get our security clearances in time for that to happen.

Mr. Nides didn't want to delay the timing that the committee wanted, so for the classified session, Mr. Snyder, and his colleague from the State Department will represent Mr. Nides in the classified session. That's all.

Mr. DESAI. Okay. Thank you.

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. We can go off.

[Whereupon, at 1:04 p.m., the interview proceeded in classified session.]

Ms. BETZ. We'll go back on the record. The time is 1:38.

And I should preface, we are in a classified setting now, and I believe we're cleared through—Secret? Top Secret?

Mr. SNYDER. Well, I think—

Ms. BETZ. I don't know if we have limitations or if we had set—

Mr. SNYDER. It's probably best if we agreed to keep it as Secret, unless somebody thinks something goes over Secret. Otherwise, it becomes very unwieldy to deal with the transcript, if that's all right.

Ms. BETZ. And that's fine.

Mr. SNYDER. And everyone here is cleared through at least Top Secret.

Ms. BETZ. Okay. So everyone is cleared through TS, but we'll try to keep at Secret. Mr. Snyder. Okay.

EXAMINATION BY MS. BETZ

Q: Thank you for coming back down here. I want to pick up where we left off. And I know that we sort of discussed in great detail the night of the attacks, but I wanted to discuss with you

in detail to try and better understand what the decisions were made that night.

And if you would turn to tab 1, which will now be exhibit 12.

And you know what? I don't have the exhibit tabs. Let's just do exhibit 12.

[Nides Exhibit No. 12 was marked for identification.]

BY MS. BETZ

Q: And I'll give the witness a minute to look at the document.

A: Okay. I've seen it.

Q: For identification purposes, it's document CO5562028.

It's an email. At the top of the email chain, it's from Jake Sullivan to Jeremy Bash, Wendy Sherman, and the witness, Tom Nides.

Do you recall this document?

A: I do not.

Q: Just for purposes of discussing, it says, "After consulting"—and this is Jeremy Bash speaking to you all in the underlying email.

"After consulting with General Dempsey, General Ham, and the Joint Staff, we have identified the forces that could move to Benghazi. They are spinning up as we speak. They include a SOF element that was in Croatia (which can fly to Suda Bay, Crete) and a Marine FAST team out of Roda, Spain.

"Assuming principals agree to deploy these elements, we will ask State to secure the approval from host nation. Please advise how you wish to convey that approval to us. Burns/Nides/Sherman to Miller/Winnefeld would be my recommended course."

There is an email above that that says, "Thanks Jeremy plus Cheryl. We are joining a SVTC with NSS colleagues at 7:30. Believe your team will be on as well. We should work through this issue in that venue."

Does this help refresh your memory?

A: Sure.

Q: So, in that underlying email, you are tasked with a specific do-out. Do you recall doing that? Do you recall getting country clearance?

A: Well, first of all, I don't think I was the one tasked with—it's emailed to all of us.

Q: Well, it's emailed to all of you, but in that third paragraph, it says, "Assuming principals agree to deploy these elements, we will ask State to secure the approval from host nation. Please advise how you wish to convey that approval to us." Burns, Nides, and Sherman, you would be part of that group.

A: Yeah. So, first of all, I don't recall, again, what I did that evening vis-a-vis this. So the answer is I don't recall if I made a call or didn't make a call. And I don't know—in many cases, I wouldn't have been the person to do that call, even though I was on this email. Either Bill Burns would do it or Wendy Sherman would do it. I wouldn't necessarily be the person to make the call.

Q: Did they make that call?

A: I have no idea.

Ms. BETZ. I guess we'll go off the record for a minute.

[Discussion off the record.]

Ms. BETZ. We'll go back on the record.

BY MS. BETZ

Q: So you believe that, just to pick back up, Burns and Sherman would have made——

A: Again, I don't know if anyone made the call. I mean, I don't recall what happened following that. So, from what I glean from this, they were asking us to make the call, but we were going to meet about this, I guess, after the SVTC at 7:30, right? Or after the meeting. I don't know whether it would fall on me—the followup memos were vis-a-vis this, but I don't recall doing anything in regards to this.

Q: Do you recall discussing this, the deployment of assets, in the SVTC?

A: No. During the period of time between the attack and when we found out that the Ambassador had died, there were lots of conversations about what we could do to help. My assumption, this was part of that conversation, about are there things we can get into the country to help.

So I assume that the general topic was discussed, but I just simply don't remember what we did at that meeting. Did we call the Defense Department? Did we spit up the assets? I just don't recall.

Q: Do you recall DOD being on that SVTC?

A: I don't. I'm sorry.

Q: You don't remember Jeremy Bash being on the SVTC?

A: I don't recall. You know, again, as I said before, we were having numerous calls, SVTCs all evening, so I don't remember who was on which call at which point.

Q: So I'm going to show you what will be now exhibit 13.

[Nides Exhibit No. 13 was marked for identification.]

BY MS. BETZ

Q: It's not in a tab, so I will give it to you.

A: Thank you.

Q: And for purposes of our discussion, I'm looking at page 5 of this email chain. And while you're looking at it, I'll go ahead and identify it. It's State Department document CO5580636. And it is an email chain. The sender and the recipients are redacted.

A: Okay.

Q: So, just taking a step back, does this email help refresh your memory as to whether or not you participated on the 7:30 SVTC?

A: Again, I'm sorry, but I just don't—I participated in a lot of meetings that evening. And I certainly could have been there, but I don't recall this particular conversation. So I would have to say I just don't—I wouldn't call it a confirmation about whether I was there or not.

Q: Okay. But the exhibit 12 that I just showed you identified those individuals who were meeting with the Secretary——

A: Sure.

Q: [continuing]. And then those who would have been on the SVTC, of which you would have been one of those individuals.

A: My assumption is I probably was in the room, but I can't confirm that I was because, again, it was 3½ years ago. I assume

there's a manifest of the meeting, but I don't—my assumption is I presume I was there, but I have no idea.

Q: Well, this email sums up, I think—

A: Sure.

Q: [continuing]. Certain details of that SVTC. And it describes Denis McDonough chairing with Secretary of State Clinton and her team joining. Presumably you would be one of those—

A: Yeah.

Q: [continuing]. On her team? Would you—

A: Yes.

Q: Is that a fair characterization?

A: Yeah, sure. Absolutely.

Q: "DOD was represented by Jeremy Bash and Vice Admiral Kurt Tidd."

A: Yeah.

Q: "* * *, our Libya desk officer, and I also participated, and Lieutenant General Kelly sat in as well. Special thanks"—redacted—"for providing excellent support to Jeremy during the SVTC and for the summary."

So you don't have a recollection of discussing any deployment of military assets with Jeremy Bash on the SVTC?

A: Again, I don't. I mean, I'm not saying it didn't happen. I mean, obviously, the readout of the SVTC obviously had said that those discussions were there, and presumably 3 years ago I was in the room when that was happening, but I don't directly recall the conversation that took place.

Q: Do you recall the CIA being on the call?

A: Again, I'm sorry. I really don't.

Q: Okay.

At the bottom of this email, there lists a number of do-outs, some of which are for the State Department. Do you know who would have been tasked with those do-outs, who would have been responsible or tasked with working with individuals to identify the location and status of Ambassador Stevens?

A: I assume Diplomatic Security, but I'm just making that assumption. So I know Diplomatic Security within the State Department would be tasked because those were the people that were on the ground and had connectivity there. But I can't say that for certain.

Q: Who within the State Department would have been responsible for engaging the Libyan Government for additional cooperation on potential U.S. military intervention?

A: In most cases, it would be the bureau, the NEA: bureau would be the point of contact in that, or, obviously, the ambassador on the ground. But since the ambassador on the ground wasn't there, unfortunately, probably the bureau from Washington would be calling the Libyan Government. That would be the normal protocol, but I can't confirm that's actually what happened.

Q: The task-out for State goes on to state, "We'll work directly with Vice Admiral Tidd's staff to get details of units on standby for deployment to Tripoli and Benghazi." Do you know who would have been tasked to work with Vice Admiral Tidd and his staff?

A: I don't, but, again, my assumption is any one of us could have been. I don't recall that I was, but I'm not saying that it couldn't

have been possible. Again, it was pretty fast-moving. People were taking tasks all over the seventh floor and resolving it. But, again, I can't say for certain that I wasn't, but, certainly, I could have been engaged in that process.

Please.

Q: And with all due respect, so what decisions did the senior staff make that night? If everything is delegated to the Diplomatic Security bureau, what were your tasks that night?

A: Well, again, I think as proven, I think, over the course of discussion, the way this works is that the professionals, the security professionals, the people on the ground bring up recommendations to the senior officials at the State Department, and decisions are made that way. But the actual work determination is not put in the hands of political appointees; it's put in the hands of the career Foreign Service folks who have been there.

So, again, depending what decision needed to be made, presumably much of that work was being done by the security professionals determining what we could do vis-a-vis the saving of individuals' lives. And they would be engaged with the career people that were involved.

Q: What recommendations were made that night, then, to you by the career staff?

Mr. SNYDER. Just to be clear, I think you said you don't have any real recollection—

Mr. NIDES. Yeah.

Mr. SNYDER [continuing]. Or just don't recall.

But are you saying typically?

BY MS. BETZ

Q: I mean, so I just want to be clear. So no recommendations were made by the career staff to you that night as to what should and shouldn't be done?

A: Again, unfortunately, as I said, you know, again, this is 3 years ago. We had 10, 20, 30 meetings at different points, so I don't recall what recommendations were brought. This was an information-gathering exercise, as you can see by this, to try to find out the facts on the ground. It was fast-moving—fog of war, all the things that we have talked about before. So, again, I can't articulate exactly what recommendations were brought up in this particular meeting.

Q: So, moving on from the night of the attack, I just want to follow up on some questions that we had in our first round regarding decisionmaking. And we talked a little bit about decisions that were made regarding staffing, and I just wanted to see if additional documents would refresh your memory.

So if you could turn to tab 7.

[Nides Exhibit No. 14 was marked for identification.]

BY MS. BETZ

Q: For identification purposes, I'll just go ahead and identify it. It's SCB0075032. And it's from the witness to * * *.

A: Okay.

Q: First of all, does this email refresh your recollection of a discussion during the 2011 time period?

A: It was written to me, so, I mean, I don't recall the memo, but I certainly understand the topics.

Q: Uh-huh. Well, I would direct your attention to the underlying email, which is from your staff to you and specifically updating you on Ambassador Stevens. And, specifically, I'll go to the start with the second sentence in that paragraph.

"There is a push for the mandate of Stevens' trip (and the DART, see below) to expand; the current mandate is for Stevens to stay in Libya for up to 30 days, situation permitting, so that he can 'get to know the TNC.' NEA: will be drafting a paper for Steinberg, which essentially will ask for an expanded scope of work for Stevens—which will allow him to stay in Libya for longer (90 days or more). Once NEA has some policy guidance about what Stevens should be seeking to accomplish in Libya, it will devise a plan for a new footprint on the ground—this will require needed resources and could shift the mission from an envoy situation to a more permanent presence. We will need to watch this closely, and I've flagged for P and D(S) staff that you and Pat should be included in these discussions."

Did you have those discussions?

A: I don't recall having discussions, but, again, long time ago. My assumption is, if they said I should have a conversation, I assume I had them.

Q: Uh-huh. Was there a conversation about changing the mission to a more permanent presence?

A: Again, respectfully, I just can't recall that specific conversation.

Q: Would you have any recollection, given resources within your purview or your portfolio, budget implications, resource implications, would you have had that discussion about a more permanent footprint and what that would mean?

A: Again, I don't recall that. Obviously, there's a continual push, as I've discussed before, among career Foreign Service officers to expand our missions in many of these countries. And this, again, you know, foot-stomps what I had said recently, or previously, that, again, there's a constant view that we needed to have more resources on the ground, meaning more Foreign Service officers. And I assume that was the context in which I would be meeting about.

Q: Is it fair to characterize you as a check on those discussions that the career Foreign Service officers wanted to have regarding increase in staffing?

A: Ultimately, I think we would try to look at the facts and have a discussion. I don't know if the word "check" is the appropriate one, but we certainly would be able to weigh in if, in fact, we disagreed with the recommendations.

Q: I want to move and discuss a little bit about the CIA's presence in Benghazi. Were you aware that the CIA: had a presence?

A: I was not.

Q: You were not. So did you ever have any discussions with Morell about the presence of the CIA in Benghazi?

A: Let me rephrase that. I'm not aware that I did, okay? So I—again, it was 3 years ago. I don't believe I did, but, you know, I don't know if someone—if someone was in a meeting with me and told me about. So I don't want to overstate my knowledge.

Mr. SNYDER. And you're saying prior to the attack, clearly.

Ms. BETZ. Correct. I'm sorry. This is in 2011.

Mr. NIDES. Yeah, I don't believe I did. But, again, I—3, 4 years ago, you know, someone could have briefed me on that and I wasn't aware of it or paid attention to it.

Ms. BETZ. This will be exhibit 15.

[Nides Exhibit No. 15 was marked for identification.]

BY MS. BETZ

Q: For identification purposes, it's SCB0071180. It's from Patrick Kennedy to Jacob Sullivan, Joseph Macmanus, and—but the witness is copied on the email.

A: Okay.

Q: Do you recall this email?

A: I do not.

Q: Okay. So what I would like to focus on is the last sentence that's in brackets.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: * * *

A: Good thing I said I could have been told. Again, I—

Q: So you have no recollection—

A: No.

Q: * * *

A: I don't.

Q: [continuing]. At that time?

A: I certainly don't recall knowing it. I may have known it at the time, but I certainly don't recall knowing it right now.

Q: Okay.

I want to turn now to what would be exhibit 15 in your binder. This will be exhibit 16.

[Nides Exhibit No. 16 was marked for identification.]

BY MS. BETZ

Q: It's a long document, and I think, for our purposes, I just want to focus on the first two paragraphs.

A: Okay.

Q: Or, actually, the second paragraph.

A: Okay.

Q: Do you recall receiving this note from Jake Sullivan, Assistant Secretary Feltman, and Bill Taylor?

A: No, I don't.

Q: So I'd like to focus on the second paragraph—

A: Please.

Q: [continuing]. Which discusses several broad goals for Libya. "We would like to see a Libya that is unitary and democratic, that denies access to extremists, that has effective control over its weaponry, including weapons of mass destruction, or WMD, and that maintains peaceful relations with its neighbors. We also have an interest in ensuring that Libya can sell its oil and gas on the global market. But post-conflict stabilization in Libya, while clearly a worthy undertaking at the right level of investment, cannot be counted as one of our highest foreign policy priorities. Strategically for us, Libya does not loom as large * * *."

Was that the prevailing view among the seventh floor?

A: Again, I wasn't—I don't remember any dialogue around the memo. I don't recall the memo. I think that parts of the paragraph, obviously, were important. I don't recall exactly the debate that went on. This is obviously a memo that was for discussion purposes. This was not a decision memo. This was a discussion memo. So I can't recall if there was followup discussions based upon what was in the paragraphs or in the sentences and if they were changed or not.

So I can't tell you what I believe was the prevailing view because I don't know exactly ultimately what we came up to in our conversations about it.

Q: But I think it would—is it fair to say that this would be a viewpoint espoused by Jake Sullivan, Jeff Feltman, and Bill Taylor?

A: Well, I guess they wrote the memo, so I'd assume that they believe in what they wrote.

Now, in many cases, memos are to begin as a baseline for a discussion ultimately with the two of us and the Secretary. So, again, I can't recall what the followup was, but, certainly, there's much in that paragraph no one would disagree with, obviously. So then the question, obviously, is, did we have this dialogue around what our goals should be in Libya and do those changes. I can't tell you, to be certain, when those meetings occurred and what was discussed at those meetings.

Q: But you don't recall having a discussion that would refute, sort of, those positions in that, characterizing this?

A: Either way, I don't recall having a discussion that either confirmed or refute it. So, to be honest, I can't remember on either one of those scores.

Q: Okay. I would like to show you another document. This will be exhibit No. 17.

[Nides Exhibit No. 17 was marked for identification.]

BY MS. BETZ

Q: It's not in your binder.

A: Okay.

Q: So, for identification purposes, it's State Department document C05578764. It's an action memo for Deputy Secretaries Steinberg and Nides. And it's from NEA: Assistant Secretary Jeffrey Feltman.

Do you recall ever seeing this action memo? A: I do not.

Q: And I should preface, it's neither approved or disapproved.

None of the boxes are checked.

But I was curious, given that your staff is listed on the cleared—it doesn't say okay, but your staff is listed—I assume that they were consulted. Would they have been consulted in this?

A: Again, I mean, the standard operating procedure is that when—again, I'm not saying—I don't recall the memo, but the standard operating procedure in a memo like this, they would have okayed it. That's why the—so, for some reason, the document, my staff didn't okay it. I'm not saying that they didn't okay it, but they're not identified on this as having agreed to it.

And, second, as I indicated, I didn't sign this memo. I'm not saying that I didn't sign it for a different memo, but this particular

memo doesn't have my signature on it. But, again, this is not an uncommon memo to make a decision on increasing a presence at a new facility.

Q: Correct. And that's a fair characterization. I guess I wanted to ask you whether or not an action memo had been approved or disapproved by you—not necessarily this memo, any other memo that described a type of presence for the mission in Benghazi.

A: Again, I don't have a recollection of it. My assumption is, if there were people there, the approval process had to take place at some level for having our individual Foreign Service officers there. I don't recall the discussion or the meeting in which that was, quote, "signed off on."

Q: Do you know, just by looking at the memo, if elements of the memo were implemented?

A: Again, I would have to go back and look at the memo in great detail and then determine what was done based upon the memo. So I would be hard pressed to tell you what was implemented and what wasn't implemented. Obviously, they went through a great amount of detail about what they wanted to accomplish, and, again, I would have to go and look at what they actually did versus what the memo said.

Q: Who else would have been consulted in discussions about the memo or the contents of the memo regarding the presence or a phased approach regarding the presence in Benghazi?

A: Well, it looks like everyone on the last page who cleared the memo. So my assumption would be that would be the group of people who would be consulted with. But that would be a normal process.

I think it would ultimately—the bureau would normally initiate a discussion around this, meaning that they want resources on the ground, and do the work. They would consult with the Under Secretary, which would be Mr. Kennedy. And then he ultimately would assign different parts of his department, including OBO, which is the building operations, and would do leases. The security professionals would do security. The technology people would do technology. So every piece would be examined and reexamined to make sure they were making the right decision.

So there was no lack of professionalism looking at these kinds of decisions, but I really know individually who approved this one. But the normal operating procedure is lots of hands on it and lots of professional career Foreign Service officers examining these issues to great detail.

Q: The memo, I think, and just by flipping through it, is very specific as to some of the cost implications—

A: Sure.

Q: [continuing]. Of the presence. Would those cost figures or resource issues, would they have been discussed with you?

A: Again—

Q: Given that's within your portfolio, correct?

A: Again, to the best of my knowledge, I don't recall that discussion. I'm not saying, again, it didn't occur. I just don't recall this specific incident or this specific number.

Now, I should say that not every dollar that was spent at the State Department I approved. So, again, I'm not in any way sug-

gesting that I didn't have a full-throated conversation about every dollar that was going to be spent there, but I don't recall that to be the case.

Ms. Betz. I think I am done.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. I have, like, a real quick followup, but it won't take but a minute. I don't think that we need to move. I'll talk real loud.

Can you go back to exhibit 14?

Mr. SNYDER. Do you remember what tab that was or—was it this one?

Mr. NIDES. Oh, thank you.

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. This document. This is—

Mr. SNYDER. 7.

Ms. BETZ. 7. Thank you.

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS

Q: And just for the record, this is exhibit 14. It's the email from * * * to you on April 14, 2011. And we just discussed a reference in it to NEA: drafting a paper for Steinberg which essentially will ask for an expanded scope for the work of Stevens.

When you just discussed the staffing approval process and the way that the career individuals would ask for more staffing, in this context, this document, I just wanted to confirm that it's the same as in the context that we discussed it previously, which is to say, when you're talking about people coming from the field up to you and asking for and pushing for more presence and more staff of career Foreign Service officers in a particular area and that sometimes you would be the check on that, that what you're talking about is not security staff.

A: 100 percent correct. We make sure there's a clear distinction between security and nonsecurity personnel. The decisions of the security is a decision of the RSO, who is usually on the ground, and the security people in the bureau, the Diplomatic Security people. So the decision of—in fact, it's rarely that the diplomat or ambassador will overrule an RSO, who is the security expert on the ground.

So, yes, all references about personnel was a reference of a non-security personnel. The security footprint was a derivative of how many bodies you had in the particular facility. So that is 100 percent correct.

Q: Okay. And to the extent that what we're talking about is a cost check regarding, you know, not wanting to increase too much of a presence or not wanting to increase too much of a cost in Libya or in Benghazi because there are budgetary constraints or whatever, from your perspective, you're talking about bodies of Foreign Service officers, not Diplomatic Security personnel. Is that right?

A: Again, 100 percent correct.

Ms. SACHSMAN GROOMS. That's all I had.

Ms. BETZ. We are off.

[Whereupon, at 2:12 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

EXHIBIT 1

C05562242

[REDACTED]
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, September 13, 2012 12:29 PM
To: Prem G. Kumar
Cc: D(B)-NEA Duty Officer3 [REDACTED] S_SpecialAssistants: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Egypt

Prem -

Nides said he understood the difference between the targeted attack in Libya and the way the protest escalated in Egypt, but pushed the Egypt Ambassador on ensuring security, particularly with protests likely on Friday. Nides also noted the our request to get 10 visas processed today for extra diplomatic security agents out tonight. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Ambassador raised the film, and Nides said the Secretary would be condemning it shortly. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Best,
[REDACTED]

From: Kumar, Prem G. [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Thursday, September 13, 2012 10:32 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Egypt

[REDACTED] - Based on the discussion [REDACTED] this morning, believe your boss was going to speak with the new Egyptian Amb today re: security of Emb Cairo. Could I get a read-out from you when that's happened? [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Thanks, Prem

EXHIBIT 2

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: [REDACTED] </O=SBUSTATE/OU=FSI AG/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, March 24, 2011 1:47 PM
To: Nides, Thomas R <NidesTR@state.gov>
Cc: [REDACTED]@state.gov>; [REDACTED]@state.gov>
Subject: Libya Update, March 24

Situation Update: The coalition is continuing its air assault, and severely damaged the Libyan air force last night. Six NATO ships are patrolling the Libyan coast. Q forces continue to push eastward. The French believe it will take two weeks to destroy Q's military at the current pace of operations.

No Fly Zone: NATO continues to consult regarding the takeover of No Fly Zone command and control.

Coalition Meeting: the UK is hosting a meeting in London on Tuesday to discuss further coalition planning. Unclear who from the Department will attend, but the USG will send representation. The UK plans for this meeting to be larger than the meeting held by the French last week, to include parties previously excluded including the Turks.

Vesting of Frozen Assets: We continue to have **discussions about the State position regarding the possible vesting of Libyan assets frozen by Treasury.** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The last time the USG vested frozen assets was with Iraqi assets in 2003, although we vested assets frozen in the 1990s, prior to the 2003 UNSCR on Iraq. [REDACTED]

Non-Lethal Assistance: We had a good discussion with PM, F, NEA, and L today about how to fund non-lethal assistance, should we be able to provide it. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

U.S. Envoy to Libya: We continue to look at options for moving Chris Stevens into Libya. Pressure is on for this to happen soon.

[REDACTED]
Special Assistant
Office of Deputy Secretary Thomas Nides
U.S. Department of State
HST 7240
202-647-5094

EXHIBIT 3

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: Nides, Thomas R </O=SBUSTATE/OU=SES/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=NIDESTR>
Sent: Monday, June 13, 2011 1:13 PM
To: [REDACTED]@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Latest on Benghazi Staffing, June 13

So why is everyone leaving?

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 13, 2011 10:53 AM
To: Nides, Thomas R
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Latest on Benghazi Staffing, June 13

Tom,

The latest from Benghazi:

- **We have drawn down State and USAID personnel in Benghazi to 13 people. One additional person will depart on Wednesday, bringing total staff to 12.**
- Six of the eight foreign missions staying at the Tibesti Hotel have departed; only the Spanish and Greeks remain.
- **We continue to stay at a secure compound, but will need to depart by Thursday. Pat will call to see if we can extend our time there. Should that not work, the 12 will move to a hotel in Baida, 2.5 hours NE of Benghazi for at least at least two weeks while OBO negotiates a contract on an already identified villa that could accommodate about 25 persons.**
- **RM will work with NEA and OBO re: lease costs. Pat has already noted he will approve a compound.**
- Once we have the villa lease, DS will do additional upgrades, which will take 2-3 weeks. We will move staff on to the compound immediately after lease, and upgrades will be done while we are on property.
- **The Benghazi mission is working with NEA on reverse tripwires that must be met before growing the mission. AID/OFDA is interested in sending in more personnel. I reminded NEA and USAID that all staffing increases must be approved by deputies; Jeff's request for an additional 5 people is on hold until further notice.**

We have another call tomorrow at 9:30 EST regarding the current situation.

EXHIBIT 4

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 21, 2011 9:19 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: ACTION: Clearance on Bgzi Staffing paper [REDACTED]
Attachments: Benghazi staffing-revised.docx

See some changes and am including L/DL which should clear as well.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 21, 2011 8:33 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: FW: ACTION: Clearance on Bgzi Staffing paper [REDACTED]

Please see edits. Please put me down as info; I can't clear on this paper until I talk to the Deputy. The paper should go [REDACTED] without my clearance, as I can't get clearance from him in 2 hours.

Thanks
 [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 21, 2011 8:04 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: ACTION: Clearance on Bgzi Staffing paper [REDACTED]

Please clear on the attached as soon as possible. I just learned that Benghazi is on the agenda [REDACTED]

Many thanks, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
 Post Management Officer
 Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia
 NEA-SCA/EX

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 19, 2011 10:06 AM
To: [REDACTED] Stevens, John C
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Bzi staffing, take 3

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

As promised, here's an updated version of the Benghazi staffing paper that reflects input from [REDACTED] & Chris. I'm heading out around noon today so I'd be grateful if someone [REDACTED] could take over the clearance process from here. Many thanks.

<<Benghazi staffing-revised.docx>>

This email is UNCLASSIFIED _____

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 19, 2011 9:30 AM
To: [REDACTED] Stevens, John C
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: revised Benghazi staffing paper

[REDACTED] – [REDACTED] provided some comments overnight, which I'm working into the paper. I'll send a revised version to all of you later this morning.

This email is UNCLASSIFIED _____

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 18, 2011 5:52 PM
To: [REDACTED] Stevens, John C
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: revised Benghazi staffing paper

Following today's discussions about the impact of recognition on the Bzi presence, I've taken a stab at updating the paper that we drafted last week re Bzi staffing. Consensus seemed to be that movement toward a more formal status didn't make sense, so I went ahead and added that as the lead para. Any and all suggestions most welcome – particularly if the FO has expressed views other than what we heard from [REDACTED] this morning.

[REDACTED] asked that we try to have something ready this week. I'm heading out at noon tomorrow, so won't be able to follow up on clearances. [REDACTED] volunteered to take this on, if that works for MAG.

Many thanks!

<< File: Benghazi staffing.docx >>

SBU

This email is UNCLASSIFIED

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

Sensitive But Unclassified

Benghazi Staffing Plans

Given the interim nature of the TNC and our presence in Benghazi, the State Department does not intend to establish a ~~formal diplomatic mission~~ consular or diplomatic premise in Benghazi at this point (Tripoli remains the capital of Libya where our embassy remains), despite the recent USG decision to recognize the TNC as the legitimate governing authority in Libya during this interim phase. The United States government and the TNC have both stated their commitment to a unified, free Libya with Tripoli as its capital; the establishment of a ~~formal diplomatic mission~~ in Benghazi would undermine this commitment and send the wrong political message. Establishment of a ~~formal diplomatic~~ consular mission premise in Benghazi also would set off a chain of complex legal and administrative requirements that do not make sense for what is intended to be a short-term presence, until Qadhafi departs power and we can reopen our embassy ~~re-establish a diplomatic presence~~ in Tripoli. Staff in Benghazi would remain without privileges and immunities under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, except for those already accredited to the Embassy in Tripoli. We should consider receiving unilateral assurances from the TNC on privileges and immunities.

In May, Deputy Secretary Steinberg and Deputy Secretary Nides agreed to cap staffing in Benghazi at 17, given the security environment and objectives of the mission. While there has not been a formal proposal to increase staffing in Benghazi since May, State Department principals are open to discussions about staffing, assuming the needs and objectives are clearly outlined. The Department will also take into consideration any plans for staffing in Tripoli, as there are limited resources to staff missions in Libya.

Even in the wake of the decision to recognize the TNC, staffing in Benghazi will continue to be limited by the available facilities. Deteriorating security conditions forced the team to move from the Tibesti Hotel on June 10; since that time, the team has been living and working in an interim location (Villa A) that can accommodate only ten people. Efforts are underway to identify and lease an adjoining property (Villa B) that could increase total staffing to 15. The State Department hopes to complete the necessary administrative and security arrangements for Villas A and B by August 1. The State Department also is considering leasing another adjoining property (Villa C) that could increase total staffing to 24. Due to the volatile security conditions and limited evacuation and extraction (E&E) capabilities, the Under Secretary of State for Management has ordered that any future staffing increases should not bring the mission above 24 individuals, the maximum lift for E&E.

Comment [SAC1]: Thought Villa A could only accommodate 7 people comfortably, and that we had 9 on the ground uncomfortably. We need to be consistent with numbers.

Assuming that the overall status quo continues and the security environment remains permissive, the State Department believes that a phased, gradual increase in staffing in Benghazi is necessary in order to meet the reporting, planning and management demands placed on the Special Envoy and his team – requirements that are sure to increase in the wake of the recognition announcement. As a first step, the team plans to increase staffing to 15 as soon as leasing and security arrangements are complete for Villas A and B. (At present there are eight persons at the mission: Stevens, poloff, IMO, and five DS agents.) Changing realities on the ground require a shift in the make-up of our staffing in Benghazi. As a

Sensitive But Unclassified

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

Sensitive But Unclassified

Sensitive But Unclassified

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

EXHIBIT 5

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: Nides, Thomas R </O=SBUSTATE/OU=SES/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=NIDESTR>
Sent: Sunday, September 4, 2011 10:43 PM
To: [REDACTED]@state.gov>
Subject: Re: SITUATION REPORT No. 14 09/04/III (SBU Version)

Thanks. I thought u are taking a few days off...do it

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2011 06:36 PM
To: Nides, Thomas R
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: SITUATION REPORT No. 14 09/04/III (SBU Version)

Latest on Libya. Also [REDACTED] will be in Benghazi a few days; he arrived today.

From: OpsAlert
Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2011 04:06 PM
Subject: SITUATION REPORT No. 14 09/04/III (SBU Version)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED



EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
 Operations Center

SITUATION REPORT No. 14
Libya Task Force TFLY03
 Sunday, September 04, 2011
 1600 EDT

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

- (SBU) A State Department initial assessment team arrived safely in Tripoli September 4. *(TFLY03/Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs e-mail)*
- (U) Renewed negotiations failed between tribal elders from the besieged town of Bani Walid, a bastion of support for Col. Qadhafi, and Transitional National Council (TNC) fighters stationed six miles outside the town. A TNC commander said TNC forces were prepared to attack the town, which is estimated to hold 100 pro-Qadhafi soldiers. Bani Walid remains without electricity or water, and food supplies are dwindling. A TNC spokesperson added the hospital is out of supplies. One key anti-Qadhafi negotiator said civilians in the town could not move and feared they may be shot in revenge or used as human shields. *(Reuters, BBC, The Guardian, AP)*
- (U) The TNC extended the September 3 deadline for the surrender of Sirte until September 10 after receiving a phone call from a Qadhafi regime figure who said Qadhafi loyalists in Sirte were willing to surrender. *(CNN)*
- (U) TNC leaders said they are now sure Qadhafi's son Khamis died in fighting around Tripoli August 29 and was buried near Bani Walid. Khamis Qadhafi commanded the 32nd Reinforced Brigade, the best trained and equipped force in the Libyan military. *(BBC)*
- (SBU) The TNC's Ministry of Foreign Affairs will move from Benghazi to Tripoli September 5 and will be housed in the Qadhafi-era MFA building. Deputy FM Bishari will head the ministry until a foreign minister is appointed. *(TFLY03/Office of the Special Envoy to the Transitional National Council e-mail)*
- (SBU) TNC officials announced plans to train 3000 demobilized opposition fighters as police and national

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

security officers and to set up training and scholarships for others, according to press. The Office of the Special Envoy to the TNC comments the key issues will be recruitment and salary payment.

(TFLY03/ Office of the Special Envoy to the Transitional National Council e-mail, Reuters)

- (SBU) Ismail Salabi, an Islamist commander in the anti-Qadhafi February 17 Brigade, called for the TNC to resign, media report. The Office of the Special Envoy to the TNC comments Salabi's statement echoes the views of other Islamists in Libya.

(TFLY03/ Office of the Special Envoy to the Transitional National Council e-mail, Reuters)

- (U) Algeria's prime minister defended his country's decision to shelter members of Qadhafi's family as a humanitarian gesture. **(Reuters)**

INTERNATIONAL REACTIONS

- (U) UN Special Envoy on Post-Conflict Planning in Libya Martin said the TNC needed to form a single public security force to stem weapons proliferation. Martin added the TNC needed to start the electoral process soon if it is to honor its commitment to building democracy. **(Reuters)**

- (SBU) Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov said members of Libya's former government should participate in the process of reconciliation, media report. The Libya desk comments the statements fall in line with earlier plans offered by the African Union and UN Special Envoy to Libya al-Khatib. Finding individuals not implicated in the worst acts of the Qadhafi regime but with the knowledge to meet the new government's technical needs will be challenging. **(TFLY03/Libya desk telcon and e-mail, Reuters)**

- (U) The Republic of Korea (ROK) will re-open its embassy in Tripoli by September 10. ROK diplomats, including Ambassador Jo Dae-Sik, are working from Tunisia. **(AFP)**

HUMANITARIAN HIGHLIGHTS

- (SBU) There are approximately 125,000 internally displaced Libyans, including 38,000 around Tripoli, 51,000 in eastern Libya, and 35,000 in the Nafusa Mountains in western Libya. **(TFLY03/Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration e-mail)**

- (SBU) Human Rights Watch issued a report detailing where sub-Saharan migrants and Libyans of sub-Saharan origin are being detained.

(TFLY03/Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration e-mail)

- (SBU) UN Humanitarian Air Services said it will fly into Misrata starting September 4 as an alternative to the airport in Tripoli, which remains closed. Other humanitarian flights are currently arriving in Benghazi, Cairo, Valletta, and Djerba, Tunisia.

(TFLY03/Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs e-mail)

- (U) For additional information, please see the attached *LIBYA: Supplemental Humanitarian Update #108*.

Additional updates on events in WEAPONS PROLIFERATION are available through our classified website at <http://ses.state.sgov.gov>

Drafted: [REDACTED]

Approved: [REDACTED]

Dist: State (all bureaus), NSS, OSD, NMCC, JCS, CIA, OSC, NCTC, DHS, DNI

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

EXHIBIT 6

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: Nides, Thomas R </O=SBUSTATE/OU=SES/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=NIDESTR>
Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2011 8:56 PM
To: [REDACTED]@state.gov>
Cc: [REDACTED]@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Update on regional security at NEA posts

it didn't come up...unless I wasn't paying attention.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2011 08:47 PM
To: Nides, Thomas R
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Update on regional security at NEA posts

Tom,

I understand this was discussed [REDACTED] I wanted you to see the latest on regional security at NEA posts regarding the PA/UNGA issue.

Thanks
 [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2011 1:07 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: NEA-Staff-Assistants-DL; [REDACTED]; S_SpecialAssistants; [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Update on regional security at NEA posts

All NEA Posts have been on a heightened state of alert since January 2011 with the beginning of the Arab Spring, followed by the death of Usama bin Laden in May 2011, and most recently due to the 9/11 anniversary. All posts held Emergency Action Committee meetings to review their security posture in advance of the 9/11 anniversary. Most posts have been actively monitoring daily and weekly civil unrest (Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Damascus, Algiers, Beirut, Casablanca, Rabat, Cairo, Sanaa, and Tunis), while other posts are responding to specific threats of varying degrees of credibility (Jeddah, Kuwait City, Riyadh, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai). Recent Emergency Action Committee meetings reflect that all security measures being taken are appropriate given local conditions and additional security support is being provided to the region as requested.

The special missions in Tripoli and Benghazi have unique requirements and as such, have a need for additional security resources and personnel. These resources include additional security personnel from three Mobile Security Deployment (MSD) teams, fully armored vehicles (FAVs), tactical radios, personnel trackers, and other special security equipment.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

While U.S. Embassy Sana'a's Ordered Departure status recently expired, their security posture continues to be augmented by a USMC Fleet Antiterrorism Support Team (FAST) and an MSD team. As the number of Mission personnel continues to grow, transportation between U.S. Embassy housing, the Sheraton and the Embassy will continue to require close scrutiny.

The recent attack on the Israeli Embassy in Cairo has returned our U.S. Embassy in Cairo to a state of heightened alert. This attack is a cause for concern in the region as similar attacks against Israeli embassies may result in U.S. Missions having to respond in a similar fashion.

Daily we communicate with NEA posts concerning any possible threats or potential incidents. Our missions are poised to adjust their security posture in light of any regional political and economic developments, including any reactions stemming from UN Security Council or General Assembly resolutions.

SBU

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: Waller, Robert [mailto:████████████████████]
Sent: Monday, September 12, 2011 3:48 PM
To: NEA-Staff-Assistants-DL
Cc: Waller, Jacob; Kumar, Prem G.; Simon, Steven
Subject: regional security plan

SA's:

Heads up that ██████████ will be looking to State for an update on the security posture of our NEA posts in advance of UNGA, and an assurance that all the necessary resources are in place. I understand that Prem has already given NEA a heads up that State/Emb. Cairo will need to be prepared to brief this with respect to Embassy Cairo, but it might be a good idea to begin work on a short paper that shows a plan for all of the regional posts.

Please flag this for S special assistants and DepSec Nides' staff as well.

Thanks,

Rob

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

EXHIBIT 7

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMM.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

C05456837 Date: 10/20/2015



201123781
 United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

STATE-SCB0047413-MOU

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

December 27, 2011

ACTION MEMO FOR UNDER SECRETARY KENNEDY - M

FROM: NEA - Jeffrey Feltman *JF*

SUBJECT: Future of Operations in Benghazi, Libya

Recommendation 1:

That you approve a continued U.S. presence in Benghazi through the end of calendar year 2012; and that you approve a combined footprint of 35 U.S. government personnel in Benghazi, including eight State Department and USAID and two TDY beds.

Approve *JF* _____ Disapprove _____

Recommendation 2:

That you approve the release of the existing State Department lease in Benghazi on Villa A; and that you approve the retention of Villas B and C for office and residential space for the State Department presence.

Approve *JF* _____ Disapprove _____

Background

The Transitional National Council (TNC) recently declared Libya liberated and moved the center of TNC operations from Benghazi to Tripoli. Chris Stevens, the Department's original Special Envoy to the TNC, has been replaced by Bureau of Political Military Affairs officer Mike Miller, who previously served at Embassy Tripoli. Entry level officer Nathan Tek transitioned to Tripoli in mid-December and USAID has shifted its permanent presence to Tripoli. Because of budget constraints and the reduced footprint, Diplomatic Security's current presence consists of two Special Agents, with an additional three slots currently unfilled.

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

With Information Management Officer (IMO)/Management Officer Dana Pierce, the permanent presence in Benghazi is five, down from an approved footprint of 17. The current leases are paid through February 4, 2012, and extendable at our discretion through 2015.

Although our presence in Benghazi has shrunk considerably since the reopening of the Embassy in Tripoli, I would like to maintain a small State-run presence in Benghazi through the end of calendar year 2012, to include the critical summer elections period. Headed by an FS-02 or GS-14 officer, this office would work in close coordination with Tripoli on political and economic reporting, public diplomacy and commercial work in the eastern part of Libya and serve as "host" for the activities of USAID, PM, and any other U.S. government TDY personnel in Benghazi. Because this would be a smaller operation, Benghazi would continue to be supported by one IRM TDYer for communications and management issues and one NEA TDY reporting officer in addition to the TDY head of operations. NEA also would support the continuation of an LES PSA position to provide translation, policy, and administrative support. With the full complement of five Special Agents, our permanent presence would include eight U.S. direct hire employees, two slots for TDY PM and USAID officers, and one LES program assistant.

A continued presence in Benghazi will emphasize U.S. interest in the eastern part of Libya. Many Libyans have said the U.S. presence in Benghazi has a salutary, calming effect on easterners who are fearful that the new focus on Tripoli could once again lead to their neglect and exclusion from reconstruction and wealth distribution and strongly favor a permanent U.S. presence in the form of a full consulate. They feel the United States will help ensure they are dealt with fairly. TNC officials have said some government agencies may shift their headquarters to Benghazi (such as the National Oil Company). Other government agencies and corporations already have their headquarters in Benghazi and will likely remain there for the foreseeable future. The team will be able to monitor political trends (Islamists, tribes, political parties, militias) and public sentiment regarding the "new Libya," as well as report on the critical period leading up to and through Libya's first post-Qadhafi elections. Programmatic benefits to a continued U.S. presence in Benghazi include building on USAID/OTI's programs to strengthen civil society groups, media training, and capacity building in municipal councils. We should continue to engage with the populace, particularly with the large population of Libyan youth, an important and receptive audience with high expectations for the post-revolution period.

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

2

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

Italy, Tunisia, Morocco, Malta, Finland, Turkey, Egypt, Sweden, Sudan, and the Palestinian Authority all have consulates in Benghazi. In informal conversations, representatives of the United Kingdom and French have said their governments would be unlikely to maintain offices there for budgetary reasons. The European Union and the United Nations have not announced whether they will maintain long-term presences in Benghazi.

Facilities

The current Benghazi State platform (Villas A, B, and C) is a 13-acre walled compound with 3.5 villas, office space, and a dining hall. Although all groups have come to the conclusion that

Tripoli Facility Manager George Ibarra recently traveled to Benghazi to study a proposed villa compound (Villa D - see Tab) and determined that the electrical, plumbing and physical security work needed to bring the facility up to an acceptable standard would negate any cost savings of the move.

The current Villa Compound is much larger than we need for the duration of our presence in Benghazi. We currently pay \$70,000/month for the three properties (A - \$28,000/month, B - \$14,000/month, and C - \$28,000/month). NEA proposes to release the Villa A property and use Villa C for residential and Villa B for offices, dining facility, and TDY housing. If you agree with this course of action, NEA will work with DS to rapidly implement a series of corrective security measures as part of the consolidation of the State footprint. We have one-year leases renewable for up to three additional one-year periods on these villas, with an option to terminate without financial penalty after the first six months, with sixty days notice. In order to avoid any additional rent payments on Villa A, NEA proposes to give immediate notice of termination, but would like to retain the leases on Villas B and C through the end of calendar year 2012 or until such time as an appropriate alternate property can be found that would allow for co-location of all U.S. government personnel in Benghazi.

Attachment:

Tab - Benghazi proposal

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

3

EXHIBIT 8

UNCLASSIFIED

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”
-- George Santayana, *Reason in Common Sense* (1905)

INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Title III of the Omnibus Diplomatic and Antiterrorism Act of 1986, 22 U.S.C. § 4831 *et seq.*, (the “Act”), Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton convened an Accountability Review Board (ARB) for Benghazi to examine the facts and circumstances surrounding the September 11-12, 2012, killings of four U.S. government personnel, including the U.S. Ambassador to Libya, John Christopher Stevens, in Benghazi, Libya. A series of attacks on September 11-12, 2012 involving arson, small-arms and machine-gun fire, and use of rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), grenades and mortars, focused on two U.S. facilities in Benghazi, as well as U.S. personnel en route between the two facilities. In addition, the attacks severely wounded two U.S. personnel, injured three Libyan contract guards and resulted in the destruction and abandonment of both facilities – the U.S. Special Mission compound (SMC) and Annex.

Four Board members were selected by the Secretary of State and one member from the intelligence community (IC) was selected by the Director for National Intelligence. Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering served as Chairman, with Admiral Michael Mullen as Vice Chairman. Additional members were Catherine Bertini, Richard Shinnick, and Hugh Turner, who represented the IC.

The criminal investigation of the September 11-12, 2012, Benghazi attacks, for which the statutory responsibility rests with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), was still underway at the time of this report. The Board enjoyed excellent cooperation with the Department of Justice and FBI throughout preparation of this report. The key questions surrounding the identity, actions and motivations of the perpetrators remain to be determined by the ongoing criminal investigation.

As called for by the Act, this report examines: whether the attacks were security related; whether security systems and procedures were adequate and implemented properly; the impact of intelligence and information availability; whether any other facts or circumstances in these cases may be relevant to appropriate security management of U.S. missions worldwide; and, finally, whether any U.S. government employee or contractor, as defined by the Act, breached her or his duty.

UNCLASSIFIED

- 2 -

The Benghazi attacks represented the first murder of a U.S. ambassador since 1988, and took place 11 years to the day after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Ambassador Stevens personified the U.S. commitment to a free and democratic Libya. His knowledge of Arabic, his ability to move in all sectors of the population, and his wide circle of friends, particularly in Benghazi, marked him as an exceptional practitioner of modern diplomacy. The U.S. Special Mission in Benghazi, established in November 2011, was the successor to his highly successful endeavor as Special Envoy to the rebel-led government that eventually toppled Muammar Qaddafi in fall 2011. The Special Mission bolstered U.S. support for Libya's democratic transition through engagement with eastern Libya, the birthplace of the revolt against Qaddafi and a regional power center.

The Benghazi attacks took place against a backdrop of significantly increased demands on U.S. diplomats to be present in the world's most dangerous places to advance American interests and connect with populations beyond capitals, and beyond host governments' reach. With State Department civilians at the forefront of U.S. efforts to stabilize and build capacity in Iraq, as the U.S. military draws down in Afghanistan, and with security threats growing in volatile environments where the U.S. military is not present – from Peshawar to Bamako – the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) is being stretched to the limit as never before. DS overall has done a fine job protecting thousands of employees in some 273 U.S. diplomatic missions around the world. No diplomatic presence is without risk, given past attempts by terrorists to pursue U.S. targets worldwide. And the total elimination of risk is a non-starter 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 non-existent.

The Benghazi attacks also took place in a context in which the global terrorism threat as most often represented by al Qaeda (AQ) is fragmenting and increasingly devolving to local affiliates and other actors who share many of AQ's aims, including violent anti-Americanism, without necessarily being organized or operated under direct AQ command and control. This growing, diffuse range of terrorist and hostile actors poses an additional challenge to American security officers, diplomats, development professionals and decision-makers seeking to mitigate risk and remain active in high threat environments without resorting to an unacceptable total fortress and stay-at-home approach to U.S. diplomacy.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

- 3 -

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. But it has also had the effect of conditioning a few State Department managers to favor restricting the use of resources as a general orientation. There is no easy way to cut through this Gordian knot, all the more so as budgetary austerity looms large ahead. At the same time, it is imperative for the State Department to be mission-driven, rather than resource-constrained – particularly when being present in increasingly risky areas of the world is integral to U.S. national security. The recommendations in this report attempt to grapple with these issues and err on the side of increased attention to prioritization and to fuller support for people and facilities engaged in working in high risk, high threat areas. The solution requires a more serious and sustained commitment from Congress to support State Department needs, which, in total, constitute a small percentage both of the full national budget and that spent for national security. One overall conclusion in this report is that 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.

Mindful of these considerations, the ARB has examined the terrorist attacks in Benghazi with an eye towards how we can better advance American interests and protect our personnel in an increasingly complex and dangerous world. This Board presents its findings and recommendations with the unanimous conclusion that while the United States cannot retreat in the face of such challenges, we must work more rigorously and adeptly to address them, and that American diplomats and security professionals, like their military colleagues, serve the nation in an inherently risky profession. Risk mitigation involves 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. There is no one paradigm. Experienced leadership, close coordination and agility, timely informed decision making, and adequate funding and personnel resources are essential. The selfless courage of the four Americans who died in the line of duty in Benghazi on September 11-12, 2012, as well as those who were injured and all those who valiantly fought to save their colleagues, inspires all of us as we seek to draw the right lessons from that tragic night.

UNCLASSIFIED

Center for American Progress

A Unified Security Budget for the United States

Introduction/Moderator:
Richard Verma,
Senior Fellow,
Center for American Progress

Keynote Speaker:
Thomas R. Nides,
Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources

Panelists:
Miriam Pemberton,
Center for American Progress

Lawrence Korb,
Center for American Progress

Location: Washington, D.C.

Time: 9:30 a.m. EDT
Date: Wednesday, August 31, 2011

*Transcript by
Federal News Service
Washington, D.C.*

LAWRENCE KORB: Good morning. My name is Larry Korb, and on behalf of our president, John Podesta, my colleagues in the national security team, I'd like to welcome you to this discussion, this event to talk about a unified national security budget.

Some seven years ago, I began working with some of my colleagues here, with Miriam Pemberton on a unified national security budget. And our latest iteration is out there for you. Please take as many copies as you'd like.

Our approach basically has been that when you're looking at national security, you should not look just at the Department of Defense -- or, as we call it, the offensive component -- you should also look at the defensive component, which is homeland security; and the preventive, if you will, of State Department and AID. Some people call it the three Ds: defense, development and diplomacy. And this is the way you need to look at it if you really want to ensure that whatever amount of money you're spending, you get the most bang for the -- for the -- for the buck.

It's interesting that over the years this concept -- when we first started here back with Miriam, myself and under the leadership of Bob Boorstin, our initial chairman here of our national security division, most people did not pay attention to it and thought it was somewhat naïve. But over the years, people have more and more accepted the -- accepted the concept, even people in the Department of Defense, like Admiral Mullen, who has said it's time to invest in other departments, such as Homeland Security, intelligence and the State Department, whose budget pales compared to massive Pentagon funding.

And even recently, just recently this year, Admiral Mullen said, "My fear, quite frankly, is that we aren't moving fast enough in this regard. U.S. foreign policy is still too dominated by the military."

And if you get a chance to look at our report, you'll see that for every dollar we spend on State and AID, we spend \$12 for Defense. For every dollar we spend on homeland security, we spend \$11 on the Pentagon budget. And our fear this year is that things may get worse because, as we deal with this situation, people -- with our deficit situation, people might be more willing to go after the State Department and AID rather than the Department of Defense.

Now, in addition to Admiral Mullen, other people who have embraced the concept include the -- when they had the Quadrennial Defense Review review by Steve Hadley and Bill Perry, they said let's have a unified national security budget. And of course it's sort of good news and bad news. On our first part of the deficit reduction package, they do talk about security spending in terms of what they need to do.

Now, today we're going to have -- we're going to have -- our keynote speaker is going to be the deputy secretary of state, Tom Nides, and he will speak for about 10 or 15 minutes. And then we'll have a panel, which will be composed of Miriam, our -- who's the leader in this project and who's a senior fellow at the Institute for Policy Analysis; and Rich Verma, who is

now a member of our team here at CAP and until recently was assistant secretary of state for legislative affairs.

Now, I can't think of a person more qualified to be the deputy secretary of state than our speaker today. Secretary Nides has experience in the business sector with Morgan Stanley. He's worked over on the Hill, where he was a top aide to Tom Foley when Tom Foley was speaker. He's also – before this appointment worked in the executive branch as – working for the U.S. – United States trade representative.

And if I can quote an interview he gave to The Cable, he said, “The DOD budget is” “national security;” State and AID are likewise.

Please join me in welcoming Secretary Nides. (Applause.)

THOMAS NIDES: Thank you very much. Thank you, Larry. I want to thank everyone for being here in August. I hope this is not considered a vacation day for those of you who are sitting in the audience. If so, that's quite sad.

I want to thank Larry and Miriam for, quite frankly, the hard work they have done on thinking how we can better spend taxpayers' money to protect and enhance our national security.

I also want to thank my pal Rich Verma. As you know, Rich has left a few months ago as the assistant secretary for legislative affairs. I want to be clear. There's probably no finer assistant secretary this administration had than Rich Verma. You don't have to ask me. You can ask about anyone at the White House that will also attest to my good words.

We probably wouldn't have a New START treaty, a defense trade agreement with the U.K. or Australia; or sanctions against Iran; and much, much more without Rich's fantastic assistance. And I, along with about just every other senior official at the State Department, wouldn't have their job, either, because Rich was in charge of getting us all confirmed. And for me, that was a heavy lift. So I am appreciative and thank Rich for all the work he's done not only on behalf of myself and my colleagues but on behalf of the American people.

And even though he's not here, I want to thank my friend John Podesta because he's built one heck of an organization and he deserves an enormous amount of credit.

As I said, thanks to Rich, I have a great job that I've had for about nine months. As deputy secretary of state, I could be focused on many issues and in many places. But few things are as important to me than fighting for the resources that our diplomats and development experts need to enhance our national security and our economic security. Few things are more important than making the case for security, economic and humanitarian assistance. And few things are more important than making sure that Washington appropriates funding in a rational way.

Beginning in 2007, the Department of State and USAID's budgets dramatically increased, and credit starts with Secretary Condoleezza Rice. Secretary Clinton picked up where

she left off and pushed forward a – strong budgets for the State Department and USAID. We made great strides in getting additional resources to elevate diplomacy and development alongside our military. As the three pillars of our national security, we added foreign service officers and civil servants. We invested in programs to combat hunger, illness and poverty, and we increased our diplomatic presence in places like Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The reality is that State and USAID and the military are working more closely together in places around the world than ever in our history. I saw it when I was – in travel to Iraq, in Pakistan and early this summer in Afghanistan. You can see it when our diplomats and development officers are working hand in glove with the military to respond to humanitarian crises [sic] in Japan and Haiti. Around the world, you will find representatives from across the interagency and the security establishment working together on joint missions on behalf of the country. They don't think about which subcommittee funds them or what respective budget allocations are. They really just don't care. All they know is that they work together with a common purpose and often in dangerous and deadly environments. We need a budget that reflects this reality, but as everyone knows, we're facing the process of major budget cuts. These cuts could be the most significant we have had in two decades and they could have a devastating impact on the work that we do.

Let me put our situation in clear and stark terms for you. In the fiscal 2011 budget, which has now been finished, State and USAID took a massive hit, a 13.6 percent cut from what the administration believed we needed in 2011. And although it's unclear what's going to happen in 2012, we could face more catastrophic cuts, which I'll get to in a minute.

Secretary Clinton has made the case that State and USAID are essential to our national security and ought to be considered part of a national security budget, which Larry and Miriam recommended in their paper. Secretary Clinton and key allies – Secretary Clinton has very – several key allies in making the argument – current, former defense secretaries; the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and numerous senior military officials. Now, for the first time as part of the debt-ceiling legislation just passed, State and USAID funding are included in a national security budget alongside spending for defense, intelligence, homeland security, the veterans' programs and military construction. That is the good news. But there is real risk that Congress could decide to shield defense spending and other categories of spending by cutting everything else. And that, my friends, is the bad news.

The House Foreign Affairs Committee already approved the State Department budget that included substantial cuts, as well as potentially debilitating restrictions, on how we can spend our money. The House Appropriations Subcommittee approved a bill that provides just \$36.9 billion of our core budget, which is an 18 percent cut. The House did accept the president's proposal for the for the "overseas contingency operations" account, or what you might have heard of, called OCO, to pay for the temporary and extraordinary costs in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. This is the same approach that DOD takes. By isolating the extraordinary costs from – for these three countries, OCO has the effect of showing that the core budget for State and USAID – the core budget, which manages our day-to-day operations – is relatively flat from 2010 to 2012.

As we increase the cost in these three countries around \$4 billion for State and USAID, the Defense Department's OCO spending is coming down by \$45 billion. So to repeat: As our cost of our OCO is going up by \$4 billion in 2012 for our operations in Iraq, the DOD's cost is going down by \$45 billion.

Now, in the business world, they call that leveraging an investment, investing \$4 to save 45 (dollars). Although the OCO account is helpful – it is helpful – we cannot just fund our efforts in the frontline states and gut our base budget for everything else we do in the world. So the question is what do we do about it?

We at State and USAID are not trying to rob the Pentagon to pay ourselves. I am not here today to talk about cutting military spending. Our goal is to match our spending on diplomacy and development and the military with our national security challenges. I've said this until I am blue in my face and I'll repeat it again: The State Department and USAID make up about 1 percent of the federal budget. Deep and disproportionate cuts in the State and USAID won't do anything or make any sense if our goal is to enhance our national security.

We know that resources are necessary to advance our national security interests and prosperity around the world, and we are at risk of not getting them. This is no time to retreat from the world, because as everyone knows, it is a critical moment in our foreign policy. We have a chance to capitalize on opportunities in the Middle East and to be part of an historic pivot point in the Arab world. We have the chance to invest in programs to curb and even prevent humanitarian crises [sic]. We need the resources to sustain our diplomatic presence and effectiveness in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

And we need the resources to advance our economic agenda as well. Our economic officers and our ambassadors work to open markets abroad and create jobs at home. They facilitate trade and travel and tourism. This is especially important at this moment as our economy recovers from a very long recession.

The reality is that if we don't seize these opportunities, someone else will. As Secretary Clinton has said, other countries will promote their own models and serve their own best interests. They will create jobs elsewhere rather than in the United States. They will claim the mantle of global leadership. We should not allow this to happen.

We recognize as well as everyone else that we get value from every dollar spent. We have to be able to justify each dollar we spend every day, and we have to be fixated on improving what I like to refer as our rate of return. That is why Secretary Clinton, with Rich, undertook the QDDR, the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, which is the first of its kind, top-to-bottom review of how the State Department works and how it doesn't work and how we can operate more effectively and efficiently in the 21st century. To her credit, most organizations wait until a crisis breaks out to undertake such an initiative. Secretary Clinton started the QDDR when things were going pretty well.

With Secretary Clinton's leadership, we're undertaking more public-private partnerships with NGOs and, yes, with the business community as well. Most importantly, in this difficult

budgetary climate, we have to make our case to win it. Humanitarian security and economic assistance in tough times and in not so tough times are often the first buckets of spending to get thrown out the window. I understand that most Americans think that the foreign assistance makes up 25 percent of our budget, even though, as I said, it's only about 1 percent. The positive side, however, is that when asked how much we ought to be spending on foreign assistance, people say between 10 (percent) and 15 percent, which I'll take. (Laughter.)

Finally, we're not making this case alone, as Larry pointed out. There is bipartisan support for what we do. Senator Lindsey Graham understands as well as anyone the importance of State and USAID's work for our national security. General Dave Petraeus, our new CIA director; Admiral Mullen and Leon Panetta understand the role of diplomacy and development in enhancing our national security. Bill Gates, Bono and the former Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, who just returned from the Horn of Africa with Jill Biden, all understand our mission. NGOs, and just as importantly, the business community also understands that diplomacy and development support are national security. They understand that our national security and economic security and our leadership role in the world are at stake if these cuts are too dramatic.

We recognize the threat that the deficit and the long-term debt poses to our national security, but there is a smart and balanced approach to deficit reduction. What we don't need to do is hammer at a bipartisan programs [sic] that over time have created safer, more stable and, quite frankly, a more prosperous world.

I want to thank the Center for American Progress and Larry and Miriam and Rich for giving me a chance to speak, and I'm more than happy to take a few of your questions. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

MR. : (Off mic.) Now we'll go to the second phase. We will ask a few questions to the secretary, then, we'll open it up to the audience if you will be with us – [inaudible] – says until 10:28. So Jonathan – (inaudible) -- and then we'll go.

All right. Miriam, do you have a question for the secretary?

MIRIAM PEMBERTON: Yeah, thanks a lot.

I really appreciated your remarks. One point that I especially noted was when you talked about diplomacy and development aides working hand in glove with the military. So sometimes unified security budgeting is sort of lumped with integrated operations. And, you know, when one partner has most of the money, that partner tends to call most of the shots. And so I wonder how you balance the need for working with the Pentagon on integrated operations while preserving the integrity and the independence of the State Department as the lead agency in U.S. foreign policy.

MR. NIDES: Well, it's a – that's a – first of all, thank you. That's a very good question, because I – as someone who is new to the world of diplomacy and realizing the sensitivity between our prerogatives and making sure that our prerogatives are secured, this debate comes up quite a bit. One of the things – it starts in the top. Hillary Clinton, when she came in,

established a very clear, strong relationship with Bob Gates. And that has basically – has been pushed down throughout both of our buildings.

She made it very clear that we were going to work hand in hand with them in Afghanistan – the idea of kind of clear and hold, the idea that they would be clear that we'd be holding with our diplomatic presence.

What we're doing in Iraq – as you know, we're about ready to embark into the largest military-civilian transition since the Marshall Plan. What we're doing hand-in-hand in Pakistan is totally connected.

So first it started at the top. And I think, quite frankly, that relationship has created unbelievable synergy. I would think – and again, I may be delusional but I would say that if you asked people at the State Department, the relationship between us and the military has probably never been as good as it is today for a variety of reasons: One, personalities; two, that there is a need for coexistence, because, just as you point out, they can't do it without us and we can't do it without them.

But make it clear: We -- the chief of mission authority is extremely strong. At the end of the day – the role of Karl Eikenberry, having worked with General Petraeus and now with Ryan Crocker working with General John Allen – that relationship is completely equal. There is – I had a civits (ph) yesterday with both of them, and you can just sense from them the pure quality of their relationship. So I'm – and I watch this closely, because I certainly understand the issues around the State Department prerogatives, but if it's FMF, which is foreign military sales and activities, I feel that we, obviously, have an enormous say on how that proceeds – programs that we're working in Afghanistan, everything around transition.

There is a – there's a mutual respect, but there's also a mutual need. They need our help and we need theirs. And so I believe – and I think you'd have to ask my colleagues at the State Department but I think – I think we have the balance correct and I think, quite frankly, Leon Panetta – Defense Secretary Panetta and Secretary – and Secretary Clinton also have a long history of a relationship, as you know. And I think, again, that helps a great deal, because of a lot of this is personality-driven as well, throughout the building. So I feel pretty good about it, but Rich is – quite frankly, probably could even express views because he was – had been there at the beginning of the term. But I feel very good about where that is and the prerogatives that both buildings have.

MR. KORB: Rich, do you have a question for Tom? Or do you want to give us some of your experience trying to deal with the Hill to get them, you know, to not be so tough on your former employer there?

RICHARD VERMA: Sure. How long do you have to – for me to talk about this? I'll tell you, when we came in, we had a great team that knew the Hill. I mean, to have Jack Lew that worked for the speaker of the House, to have Jim Steinberg that worked for Senator Kennedy, and then to have Secretary Clinton, a former senator – these are people that not only understood the intricacies of the budget and appropriations process and how OMB worked, they

also understood what – the case they had to make to the American people and to their elected officials in order to get the money, and the first two years that they were there were very successful. And to have Tom come in right behind them and continue that obviously in a much different environment, it's definitely a tough go, but you know, this is, as you said, Larry, the best guy for the – for the job.

I do have a question, Tom, though, about this idea of diplomacy and development as national security. I know this is something that we've all argued for many years but now I wonder, is there some kind of perhaps buyer's remorse. Are we – is this a matter of be careful what you've asked for? Because now we're there, now the law has been changed so that security spending, you know, is subject to the – to the budget framework that was laid out at the end of July, early August. We are security spending: Still a good development, still the right thing to argue for?

MR. NIDES: Oh, without question. Listen, I – it's a question of which pot you want to be in, right? So obviously there is a – the thematic notion that development alongside defense and diplomacy alongside defense and development is a – is important symbolically, but in a rational world in where – let's be clear, Defense has substantially more money than the State Department and USAID do. Obviously, over the years, the Defense budget has been shielded from many of the cuts over the last five to seven years. So part of the strategy obviously is to be in the bucket where obviously the cuts have been shielded and symbolically and realistically.

I mean, go figure, of course, once we get that done, they start cutting some of the Defense spending, but that's – you know, that is obviously the reality of the world in which we're living. That said, if I had to ask the question would I rather be in the national security frame or could be competing with – you know, against dollars for education, health, the environment, I'd like to be where we are now. So I think that the argument you all made over the last few years is the right – not only symbolic because it's real and it's real on the ground. And now having spent time in Afghanistan and Pakistan and Iraq and these frontline states, I see it every day. I mean, I – when I go to Kandahar and I met a PRT and I – and I had the military, the generals and the – and the – and the military standing next to us and talking about the civilian importance of what they're doing within civil society, that's what it's all about. That's a – that's a combined national security argument.

On the – on the money, listen, we're going to have to – we're going to have to convince the Hill that the cuts need to be reasonable and they need to be balanced. And the good news is I think Defense Secretary Panetta understands that as a former OMB head, as a former member of Congress. Certainly – Admiral Mullen certainly has believed that and articulated that. So I think, Ned (ph), I'm – obviously I'm worried, as anyone would be, because these budget cuts are enormous and could have a devastating impact on what we do on health, on environment, you know, economic development.

But again, I think it is the right choice. It is the reality in which we can make case. And we're going to have to fight for every dollar that we get. And I believe we'll have a pretty good shot at attempting to try to keep the base budget, which I think is really the important debate here, at a reasonable level going into 2012.

MR. KORB: Rich, you want to follow up?

MR. VERMA: Yeah, I can just follow up on that. The other thing the agreement did is it did set these hard caps for security versus non-security. I think security is about at 680 (billion dollars) or 684 (billion dollars) for FY '12. Now, when you prepare the president's budget, you get spend a couple years – all the agencies get to work together and they get to show up to the Congress all singing off the same sheet of music as to how that budget should be allocated. Here you are, you know, now with a new set of agencies to basically – to compete with for that same allocation. Is there an agreement amongst the agencies in the security bucket as to how that 684 (billion dollars) should be divided or is that a work in progress? (Laughter.)

MR. NIDES: Oh, you know so much about this, Rich. (Laughter.) This is what we call a loaded question.

The food fight hasn't actually occurred yet. But, you know, we'll have, I think, reasonable discussions. Listen, let – I want to be – here's what – I just want to put this in perspective because I – it's somewhat confusing because only in Washington would you be just finishing '11, haven't even begun to fight about '12, and we are presenting '13 budget in January. I mean, it's – no one can imagine how this operates for those of you who've spent time in the – in Washington on the budget process. It is something of an enjoyment to say the least.

So what we have to be under – what State and USAID are really going to be fighting for in this budget is basically our base budget. Our base budget in 2011 was \$47 billion, OK? We wanted about 52 (billion dollars); we got 47 (billion dollars). We took a big cut in '11. So it's \$47 billion. And that \$47 billion, just to be abundantly clear, pays – has paid for everything. I mean, that's all foreign assistance, that's for all our billets for all our diplomats. It's for everything we do on health. It's the PEPFAR money, at 8 billion (dollars). It's everything, OK? That's the \$47 billion, the base budget. That is what we had in '11.

In '12 we asked for 53 (billion dollars) to \$54 billion, a fairly substantial increase in '12, for only one reason, which is Iraq. As you know, as I pointed out, we are taking on the transition in Iraq. As the military goes down to zero – or about zero, depending upon what happens, but basically virtual no military boots on the ground in Iraq, as under the agreement – State Department's picking up the diplomatic piece, so we have to pay for everything. It's our presence now in Iraq. And the cost of that is about an extra 5 ½ (billion dollars) to \$6 billion. The State Department has to come up with that money. That is why our number went up from '11 to '12. And quite frankly, the Hill gets that.

And so what we have done is, is that in '12 we got – because of Rich's good work, we got this thing called OCO, which I mentioned in my speech, which is a – which is a good thing, which has basically let us take the money for Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan and put it in a separate account called OCO. Defense Department's been doing this for years, OK? So you can see that our cost for the war costs are separate so when – as we draw down, that account becomes slower and slower. We used to do this through supplementals and now we're just going to be OCO. So we have that in place, and it's about \$8 billion for our OCO account in 2012.

Put that aside for a minute. We still have our base budget for everything else we do, right? For all of our diplomats, for all of our health programs, for environment, for all – we call ESF, all of our economic assistance around the world, for everything we do for Israel and Egypt. And so that base budget still needs to be about \$47 billion, OK?

Here's what's happened. The House took that \$47 billion and took it down to \$38 billion, OK, which is, as I pointed out in my speech, really enormously problematic and devastating to many of our programs. Now, we hope, to be honest, that reasonable people will – you know, the Senate will come in and they will work together and try to make sure that we take that number in the House and move that number to something reasonable for our base budget. So that is what we're going to be fighting for.

It's a very – you know, I will – (inaudible) – very simple: we must protect the base budget or, quite frankly, the impact of a 18 percent cut in our base budget – you know, well, those of you – you don't have to be math geniuses to figure out we will have to make some enormously compromising cuts, both with our diplomatic corps and our civil service corps and quite frankly, in programs, at a time, I think, would be – is critical.

And again, we understand we need to make cuts. And Rich knows that we're all practical here. We're all – we've already – we have to give, like everyone else has give. It's a question about rationality, and that's what we're dealing with.

MR. KORB: Let me follow up on Rich's point, go back to the executive branch. Do you think it would make sense if Jack Lew would come out and take whatever number is supposed to be there for 2013 and then, before you send it up to the Congress, for the three secretaries – Secretary Napolitano, Secretary Clinton, Secretary Panetta – to agree on a distribution, and if there's a disagreement take it up to OMB or to the White House? Because after all, that's what – the Department of Defense, when it first got started, it was War and Navy, and they each wanted their own budgets, and eventually they were – you know, had to complete with each other.

MR. NIDES: Yeah, I – listen, I believe that that will happen at some level. How it happens, the formality of it, I'm not an OMB expert. Many of you, probably, in the audience are. There's no question – they're not going to throw the – they're not going to throw the money in a – in a room and lock the doors and let us all kind of like fight for it. You know, I think – although that'd be kind of interesting, but – (laughter) – I'll bet on Hillary Clinton – but I – (laughter) – but that said, yeah, I think there'll be a reasonable – again, we are – (chuckles) – you know, it's kind of – it's, again, we are a very small percentage of not only the overall budget for the federal government, we're also a very small percentage of the national security budget, all which is very important.

My belief is that the good news here, from a bipartisan perspective – this is not just – I mean, I've been very pleased by the support we've had on the Republican side, especially in the Senate but also in the House. But guys like Lindsey Graham and Richard Lugar, and there's this – you know, a huge amount of support of people saying we need a balanced approach. So obviously that – also, listen, Hal Rogers has been a very big supporter of the State Department.

And I believe that he, along with other members of the Republican leadership, also understand that we're at a critical point here in how we divide up the pie, as we like to say. I think cooler heads will prevail and we will be able to have a – to make sure our base budget is at a level to sustain a funding level I think we all believe we need to.

MR. KORB: Good. All right, now, the secretary has to leave in about, I said, at 10:28. So what I'd like to do now –

MR. NIDES: I don't know where they came up with the 10:28, all right? (Laughter.) He was just joking, I'm sure. I hope.

MR. KORB: (Laughs.) OK. What I'd like to do now is open it up to the audience and get your questions directed to the secretary and then let Rich and Miriam chime in as necessary. I'd like to first go to the press. Any members of the press have questions? Yes, ma'am. And wait – please wait for the microphone and identify yourself.

Q: Hi. Kate Brannen, Defense News. I was curious if there is a State Department team working with the Pentagon on their strategic review of roles and missions and how you see that review influencing State's future missions, if at all? Thanks.

MR. NIDES: We have – we have constant conversations and constant planning, especially in those front-line states in particular. So we are working aggressively on a transition plan in Afghanistan. As you know, the president has committed to a plan for 2014. The troop withdrawal will obviously be happening this year, beginning. We have to begin transitioning a plan for Afghanistan about what you're – you know, what – where you'll be physically located, how many people will be in each location, where will the military be, where they will not be, when can we withdraw our civilian numbers as we draw down our military.

So we have a – we have a very sophisticated planning process led by General Allen, who is now our commander in Afghanistan, along with Ryan Crocker, who arguably is probably one of the finest diplomats the world has ever seen, the combination of those two working with Washington and the Pentagon. And we have deputies meetings at the White House every week on transition. So that is on Afghanistan.

Iraq, I should tell you, I probably spend a couple hours a day working with the Defense Department on the transition in Iraq. As you know, under the strategic agreement we will have no forces at the end of the year in Iraq. That is a massively big transition.

We are probably – or probably have 50,000 troops there now that are going to be going down. As they go down and withdraw, the State Department is stepping up the transition between the handoff. I mean, the mission set's obviously changing. The diplomats are not going to be doing the same mission set as the military. We're going to go back to a more normalized diplomatic mission in Iraq, but we're working hand in hand. You know, we all read what goes on in Pakistan. We continue to work very closely with the military and our – obviously other agencies as it relates to Pakistan.

So yes, we have very – by necessity and desire – I mean, necessity being you can't do these transactions without formal planning. And by desire, you know, you have to execute this in an effective way. And quite frankly, I've been very pleased on the kind of cooperation, as I said at the beginning of my talk, between the two departments. But they are ongoing on a daily basis.

MR. KORB: OK, the floor is now open for questions. I'll take a couple and then give you a chance to – OK, here – let's take – the hands that are up, Billy. Go to each of them. There are three.

Q: I'm Mitzi – is this on?

MR. KORB: Yes.

Q: I'm Mitzi Werthheim, with the Naval Postgraduate School. Mr. Secretary, I was really impressed with the way you talked about what the State Department offers and what the return is to the American taxpayer. I don't know that I've heard it expressed as well before, and I keep wondering about the importance of having really simple – not simple stories – complex stories told in a clear, simple way so the general public says, "My God, of course we need them." And we use too many words and not enough pictures. These are all flow diagrams, but I think it would help if you could figure out how to let folks in the middle of the country know what they're getting for what you're doing.

MR. KORB: OK. All right. Do you want to go ahead? Do you want to take each one? (Laughter.)

MR. NIDES: Yeah, I just – yeah, but you know, I – you're 100 percent – I was shocked. OK, first of all, I didn't – to be honest with you, I didn't know how much money on – as a percentage basis the State Department, USAID was part of the – of the – of the budget. You know, quite frankly, I was probably one of the people who thought it was 25 percent. (Laughs.)

And so the ROI, you know, which – as someone who comes from the business world as – I've been, you know, both in politics and business – is unbelievable. I mean, I just – I did something – or I didn't actually do it, Jonathan did it. But they put it on The Huffington Post a couple of days ago, the 10 things you didn't know about the State Department, which is basically talking about everything we do, about job creation and – I mean, all – I mean, significant, important things beyond what we're doing on health and what we're doing on the environment. I can't tell you how many people have called me. I mean, first of all, people must be – I mean, The Huffington Post is great, obviously. If anyone's here, it's perfect. But I mean, who's reading this stuff in August, right?

I mean, the calls that I got from people saying, "I didn't know that. I didn't realize you guys do that. I mean, I thought this was all – you know, I didn't get that." So I think you're 100 percent right.

Listen, I'm also realistic and understand when people are hurting here at home, OK, when people are worried about education and their health care and, quite frankly, their jobs, it's very hard to try to explain to someone the importance of what we're doing in Somalia, OK? It's sometimes very hard to explain why we need to do what we do on the Horn of Africa, because they're like, "Well, we've got – we've got problems here."

What we are trying to be clear to people is what we do is as much about defensive – playing defense as it is offense, because you know, I talk about this: For every dollar – you know, Mike Mullen will say, "For every dollar you guys spend, we save \$5, because we don't have to put boots on the ground. We don't" – you know, if there's a crisis, the military's going in. The American people expect it. If we can somehow avoid the crisis by diplomacy, by stuff like Feed the Future, which is – food programs, by things that we do around global health in Africa, that has enormous benefits, economic benefits and practical.

And listen, people want to say, "OK, if you're going to spend the money, tell me how this money is being spent. If you don't, don't spend it." So we have to be more practical, more exact. And I think, quite frankly, Secretary Clinton is as good a spokesperson as any, but we have to continually paint the picture.

Q: Is it on your website?

MR. NIDES: Yes.

MR. KORB: OK, let's go over here. We'll go back and forth. (Laughs.)

Q: (Off mic) – is this on? It is? OK. Charlie Henken (sp), C. Henken (sp) and Associates. So my question is a follow-on to my seat partner here, which concerned roles and missions and the strategy for – integrating a strategy towards holistic roles and missions on a whole-of-government basis. Let's take an example – Western Pacific driving the DOD budget. Do you have a (C ?) control versus a power projection capability in 2025 or in 2010 or whatever? And there's just a host of multibillion-dollar implications in that area, but it's hard because the State Department has to manage the perceptions of the day-to-day relationship with the Chinese on economic, political and so forth. So you can't be too open. You can't have all the bureaucracy working on all of the details together, but my sense is there hasn't been adequate coordination in, say, the Western Pacific dimension of roles and missions, as opposed to the Middle East.

MR. NIDES: Yeah, I don't – you know, I – again, I would probably suggest that it is not where it needs to be – (inaudible) – because listen, there needs to be clearly very defined roles for – one of the things having come out of where I've come from and many of you in this room: Someone needs to be responsible. One of the problems in government – group gropes is interesting, but a lot of things don't get done. And I think one of the ways – you have to have clear responsibilities and clear lines of command and lines – you know, lines of control and command, right? And, you know, that's why the State Department's prerogatives need to be preserved and where we begin as chief of mission authority, which is dictated by the president,

and where the military has their roles and responsibilities. And we could have a long debate about how that is formulated and especially in the areas where there's complete integration.

So I think we've made material progress, but listen, I see it in Afghanistan, where the Defense Department has enormous more money than the State Department has for many of the development programs that we're working on hand in hand and how that transitions back over to the State Department, because one of the problems is when the military leaves, so goes the money. That we've seen over and over again. And so there is a strong need for strong integration, but I still believe there needs to be clear roles and responsibilities, which I think you agree -- would agree, too. But I think we're making progress, but we're nowhere near where we need to be over the long haul, because as dollars get stretched, we need to make sure that we are avoiding the duplication and, quite frankly, to make sure that the programs are actually being validated to be successful.

MR. KORB: OK, anybody on that side? That gentleman back there.

Q: Thanks. Evan Coren from the Information Security Oversight Office. I was wondering if this would also do away with the distinction between the 050 and -- function and 150 budget distinctions that they draw between defense and foreign policy budgets, and if the NSC would also be considered lumped in with that rather than lumped in with the White House.

MR. NIDES: I'm not sure -- I'm not sure I understand your question. What is your question you're asking?

Q: So right now the --

MR. KORB: Yeah, don't move the mic, because when you move the mic, we lose your -- (laughs) --

Q: Right. So the Hill and the OMB put budgets into functions -- function 050 --

MR. NIDES: Yeah, I know. Yeah, I know that. Yeah.

Q: Yeah, so will this go away with -- do away with that distinction?

MR. NIDES: No.

Q: And also, is there any talk of including the national security staff within the lump of DOD, AID, State or leaving it still within the White House?

MR. NIDES: No, I -- no, I don't think that -- first of all, and Rich and I actually had this conversation yesterday. I mean, this is real, the national security budget's real, but let's be clear. We are not -- they're not changing the appropriations process on the Hill, OK? So we -- you know, Kay Granger is still the, you know, chairwoman of our appropriations committee. They're not changing the -- how the Hill deals with our budget beyond, you know, a national security framework where the budget allocations are due, but we'll still have subcommittees,

subcommittee discussions, markups within subcommittees and in the full committee. And those will also be in the – in the Senate.

Again, I think this is the first year. Over the next few years, as we get to a clear feeling of how this is working, you could potentially see other changes within the national security framework. But right now I think we're – we are at overall "chapeau," as they like to say, of the – of the overarching numbers. And then we'll continue the normal appropriations process, as they – as the committee process begins.

MR. VERMA: Larry, let me just follow up.

MR. KORB: Oh, go ahead.

MR. VERMA: Does it argue, though, for a new – without getting you in trouble with your Hill colleagues, one of the things that I know Miriam and Larry called for in the report was a different committee structure. And now that you've got one lump category, even though you have the subcommittees, should there be kind of a super or select kind of committee on security – (inaudible) –

MR. NIDES: You don't really think I'm going to answer that, do you?

MR. VERMA: (Laughs.)

MR. NIDES: Would you have answered that if you were in my job?

MR. VERMA: No, and that's why I'm asking you.

MR. NIDES: That's right. OK, yeah. (Laughs.)

You know, listen, I think – and I know the brilliance on the Hill. They'll figure it out, but I think – I'm serious. Oh, God, I'm getting myself in trouble. But I think that the – oh, yeah, I think over time they'll have to see how this works. I mean, again, in – they'll have to continue relooking how the structures work on the committees. But having been a Hill rat in an earlier part of my career, changing the appropriations processes and committees is a high order.

But if you would have told me that – you know, a year ago that the State Department and USAID would be now under the (chapeau ?) of a national security budget, not on the domestic side of the ledger, I would have said that was impossible, so anything is certainly possible in the future.

MR. KORBA: You can see Rich has made the transition from government to –

MR. VERMA: Oh, totally. You're going to get me in trouble. Perfect. (Laughter.)

Q: Serge Duss, International Medical Corps, international NGO – since my question is regarding Congress, I'll direct it away from Secretary Nides to the other panelists –

MR. NIDES: Thank you.

Q: – who were involved in writing this excellent report. What makes you think that the Republicans in Congress, particularly the House, will be much more sympathetic to diplomacy and development, just because this budget now comes in a new packaging?

MR. KORB: Miriam, do you want to –

MS. PEMBERTON: (Inaudible.) (Laughs.)

MR. KORB: I'll go ahead while you're thinking.

MS. PEMBERTON: OK.

MR. KORB: I think what you're seeing is a change in – the Republican Party is not the Republican Party of the neocons and George Bush, OK? You're beginning to see the Republican Party go back to some of its roots with the so-called tea party in many senses there, you know, Robert Taft Republicans. And remember it was – the Republicans back in the late '40s, Vandenberg and company, that supported the Marshall Plan when only 13 percent, you know, of the Americans – the Americans did.

I think the fact of the cost of doing it with Defense, as opposed, as the secretary said, in terms of, you know, what you can get for the – from the State – I think a key thing is going to be – assuming we get out, you know, and Maliki yesterday said he wants us out, you know, completely – when people take a look at how much we're spending in Iraq next year as compared to what we've spent this year, people say, why, that's not a bad – you know, that's not a bad – that's not a bad deal.

So I do think, you know, you're seeing, you know, differences. Now, you still have the neocons whose answer to everything is more military force, OK? But they're becoming, I think, a smaller and smaller portion of the – of the federal budget, and if you look at, you know, some of the candidates, you know, some of the things that they've said in terms of, you know, using military forces.

Now, you know, is there any guarantee? No, there isn't. But I do think – you know, this – you know, the very fact that the Republicans agree to lump security spending together – remember this is a bipartisan agreement – shows that people are beginning to think in those terms.

Miriam, do you want to –

MS. PEMBERTON: I guess I'd just add that, you know, we've all expressed the dangers of doing it this way, you know, as have you. And I just think we have to make the case that – you know, that the military increases unbroken for 13 years, that's unsustainable; that the deficit has been in part created by those increases, and that international affairs had nothing to do with

it; that if these people are really concerned about our security, we need to be looking at and they need to be looking at, you know, what is the most effective way to achieve security with limited dollars; and that those who are basically just concerned with the bottom line of defense contractors, you know, they are not deficit hawks and they are not security hawks, and we just need to call them out.

MR. VERMA: Can I add one point to that?

MR. KORB: Go ahead.

MR. VERMA: I think what the House did – if you talk to the House leaders, they'll say in their – even in their FY '12 mark, they'll say, look, we gave you everything – almost everything you wanted in your OCO. And so we gave there but we cut everywhere else. And so I think there's a little bit of risk to OCO, too, which is that becomes the category of wars and exigencies, and everything else – the Somalias, the Yemens, the Sudans – start to fall off the radar screen.

So maybe a question back to you, Tom, is, can – do you see OCO as being something beyond those three frontline states at some point down the road in order to maybe bootstrap some of the other programs?

MR. NIDES: You know, the OCO's got very clear parameters because – since you helped write it. And Jack Lew, who is a Boy Scout, he, you know, wrote it – the way in which was very defined about the frontline states. And we're obviously sticking to those parameters.

The biggest fear I have, which is yours, which is – you know, you can't – you know, talk about robbing Peter to pay Paul. You know, you give us the money because these are war costs that we all believe we need to spend. You know, for the transition in Iraq, we all believe we need to get the troops out. We need to do our diplomatic presence in Afghanistan. We need to get the troops out. Over a period of time, we need to transition. Pakistan is what we have talked about for our national security purposes.

If we find ourselves in a situation, which is we get fully funded OCO, which has been funded in the House and in – quite frankly, will be in the Senate, but if they just take those dollars and take it out of our base budget, that is a disaster for us, OK? That is a disaster. And we are making that case very clearly to the Hill that that can't be done. I think people understand that, will hopefully be focused on increasing that base budget.

What I don't want to see happen is, is put money out of our base budget – if we can help that – into a – the OCO account, because the OCO account is temporary by its nature. And as you start shrinking your base budget over time, you're going to wake up here – you know, I'll be long gone from this job, but for whoever has this job, you know, three or four years from now or five years from now or whenever it is, I don't want them to see a – they turn around and they have no money to do our diplomatic missions around the world. And so we have a crisis. You have the – you know, you have what's going on in Egypt and Tunisia and the Middle East. And I look around and I say, oh, I've got to take it of our base, but we have no base left. It's all being

funded there. So that's the balance we're working in. But we have clear-defined mission set of what the OCO needs to be, but we must, must make sure that the base budget is at a reasonable level to fund the activities for the – for the rest of the world.

MR. KORB: OK, we got three to five minutes depending on when you have to leave. What I'd like to do is get for the secretary – because Rich, Miriam and I will be staying until 11:00, when the program ends – succinct questions – you know, three to five, and you can answer whichever ones you want and also use your remarks to sum up.

OK, yeah, quickly.

Q: Hank Gaffney from CNA – worked 11 years in all this business. So just to clarify, we have the committee of 12, which is going to work the 684 (billion dollars) and make the division. And that's just for the year 2012, and then it all reverts to the usual 302(b) acquisition appropriation divisions.

MR. NIDES: No, let me just – let me clarify that. I know I'm supposed to let everyone speak, but – so I don't – remember your question. The committee of 12 has one task, which is to basically get a trillion and a half dollars out for – between '12 and the year 2020. That is – that is the goal of the committee, because remember they basically kick – not kick the can. They basically got enough to get the \$900 billion to get the debt ceiling raised, which they did. The supercommittee's role is to come up with that extra billion and a half – trillion and a half dollars.

If they do not achieve that, if they do not achieve that by Thanksgiving, a rescission takes place in 2013, which is 50 percent for DOD and 50 percent for domestic, OK? For that particular rescission, that does not have – the State Department is back in the – is back in the domestic pile, OK, for that rescission. And the whole idea behind that was to put pressure on everyone, right, including, you know, Republicans and Democrats. So that is the role.

Now, they could – and hopefully they'll think about a much broader, bigger deal than just trying to get the trillion and a half dollars that they're required to do by Thanksgiving and hopefully that they'll think about other – you know, other things that they possibly could do. But that is – for the sake of that conversation – I haven't screwed that up, did I, Rich? Is that right? OK.

MR. VERMA: (Inaudible) – the 684 (billion dollars) is still going to be managed by the Appropriations Committee.

MR. NIDES: By the – that has nothing to do – the 684 (billion dollars) has nothing to do with the supercommittee. They are not involved in that. That's the deal of the – of the – so that is totally disconnected.

MR. KORB: OK.

MR. NIDES: I'm sorry. I didn't follow your rules, Larry.

MR. KORB: I got to – I got to try and make it easy.

MR. NIDES: Well, I've got a – I've got a few – I've got a few more – I've got a few more minutes.

MR. KORB: All right. OK, go ahead. Please ask your questions.

Q: Karrye Braxton, Global Business Solutions, Inc. – as one of the companies from the taxpaying side of the development business, I wanted to let you know about the Coalition of International Development Companies. We have been putting together success stories to show how certain countries have been able to phase out of international assistance from the U.S. government. So you might want to take a look at what they're offering in terms of pictures, as opposed to words, because as we know, actually these days a picture's worth 10,000 words.

And also particularly with regard to small businesses that are doing work in international development, the Small Business Association of International Contractors are also putting together success stories to show the American people how much the increases in American assistance are helping bring down the deficit on this side. So I would take a look at those groups to help provide some pictures. Thank you so much.

MR. KORB: Thanks. Thank you. Over here then right there in the back, the gentleman in the back, and you will have the last question, sir.

Q: Larry Nowels with the Hewlett Foundation – a couple of weeks ago, OMB issued new guidance on agencies putting their 2013 budgets together, requiring options for 5 percent and 10 percent reductions from FY '11. Two questions – one, some agencies appear that they will be exempt from that exercise. I'm just wondering if you can comment on the position of the State Department.

MR. : (Laughs.)

And regardless of that, you do have for 2013 now a new reality of a hard cap for the security agencies that was not there a month ago. Is this going to change how you utilize these last few months in preparing the 2013? Will it be more collaborative working with these agencies so that you come – you come at that cap, rather than putting together a budget that you feel the State Department and USAID needs and then later engage in that discussion at OMB over how you make it all fit?

MR. NIDES: OK, yeah, I – let me just answer quickly. I think that the – I think the game of, you know, what your number is (and told ?) and what gets delivered to OMB, I'm learning that there's a little – sometimes it slips between the cup and the lip between what you're told and what happens. So how the guidance is given to the departments and what they expect – I mean, here's a dirty little secret.

You know, we don't know what will come out of the supercommittee. You know, who knows exactly what the Congress will do on '12 beyond what's currently put in place? So we're actually forming – formulating right now our '13 budget, and listen, I don't think you can

assume that you're going to be getting any more money than you got in '11, right? That's a pretty good assumption, right? So that's not – I think most people would wake up and say, that's probably assumption. And quite frankly, out of the – out of the '12 negotiations, they've obviously thought about this over the next five to seven years as to how they got there, quite frankly, how they got to \$900 billion – (inaudible) – future savings as well.

Listen, I think we're working closely with our colleagues over at the Pentagon and Veterans Affairs. I should tell you, we're not sitting around in meetings every day and dividing up the pie. I think – I think it was the question that was asked earlier. I think there's better coordination. How it all works – this is the first time it's happened. We hope there will be more coordination and more conversation. But again, the good news is the cooperation between certainly our departments and Defense has never been better, and I think that will help, I think, in these discussions.

MR. KORB: Mr. Secretary, on behalf of the audience and my colleagues here at CAP, thank you very much for coming and sharing your thoughts with you (sic). (Applause.) We wish you the best of luck as you deal with this.

MR. NIDES: All right. Thank you very much. And Miriam and Rich, thank you. I just would make one last comment. The one thing that I have been enormously impressed with was the quality of people at the State Department, and not just the foreign service officers but the civil service officers, the locally engaged folks that I meet around the world. And for those of you – not to get sappy, but for those of you who haven't had an opportunity to spend time and look at the – what goes on at AID and State, it really makes my job that much more – not only more important, but it's actually – it makes me feel like I'm actually doing something good to support the men and women who are, quite frankly, putting their lives on the line and wake up every day trying to make the United States a better place for the American people, but quite frankly – and how we are looked upon around the world. So I'm honored by being invited, and thank you all very much.

MR. KORB: Thank you. (Applause.)

All right. For those of you that would like to stay, we can get into more of these particular issues that we did in the – in the unified – Jonathan, thank you very much.

All right. Miriam, do you want to add anything? You've heard the secretary talk and, you know, you've been sort of the person who's pushed this idea for a long time – things that you might have said that, you know, the secretary wasn't able to say?

MS. PEMBERTON: What he wasn't able to say – well, what I was hoping to ask was – referring to one of the recommendations in the report, we talked about, you know, the extreme challenges of trying to change the congressional budget process. So I was more thinking of focusing on our recommendations having to do with the executive branch.

One of the most important, I think, of our recommendations for the executive branch would be the creation of a quadrennial national security review, which would include all of the

partners in the security portfolio that we've talked about. And it would also incorporate – you know, we've talked about the importance of OMB, so it would be a joint NSC/OMB process that would really do what the QDDR doesn't do, what the QDR doesn't do, which is to connect strategy and budgets and to really think about the kinds of trade-offs that we've talked about in this report, among different – you know, different ways of securing the nation.

So for example, you know, we talk about, you know, a trade-off between, you know, funding missile defense, as opposed to funding the Coast Guard and, you know, container security. So if – so if this body could look at, you know, how do we protect the country from, you know, a nuclear bomb, you know, that group would then look at, you know, what is the expert opinion on what's the most likely way that a bomb is going to come to the United States. And lo and behold, most experts believe that, you know, a missile threat is much less likely than, you know, a bomb coming in on a ship.

So with that in mind, that kind of idea in mind, then that group might look at, you know, shifting some of the budgetary resources, you know, from missile defense toward beefing up the Coast Guard's capabilities and the Homeland Security Department's capabilities to do container inspections. And so those are the kinds of trade-offs that we are – we think that – you know, are really at the heart of this – of this proposal. And I think that sort of agency within the federal government to link the budget people with the security people and to link strategy with budgets would be – you know, it's surprising that that really doesn't happen, and this would be a useful way to get it to happen, I guess.

MR. KORB: Let me add something to that, and the example – because we were talking, you know, with the secretary – obviously the things in terms of aid that you can do in particular countries. But when you take a look at this particular thing with the Coast Guard versus the Department of Defense, last year the Coast Guard budget went down. Why? Because they're in the Department of Homeland Security and they're competing against, you know, the 22 other agencies there, but there was nobody to say, well, you know, if we're worried about a nuclear attack on the United States, is somebody going to shoot a missile with a return address, which is what you're spending on missile defense, as opposed to more – putting it in a container? Well, the fact of the matter is we spend more on missile defense than the entire Coast Guard. And that does not get – it does not get in. And so if you're trying to, quote-unquote, “get more bang for the buck,” this is really what you need to think about.

Similarly, the Defense Department says one of the major threats to national security is climate change, OK? Well, if climate change is a threat, which agency can help you deal with that? It's not going to be the Department of Defense. You know, the Marines aren't going to change the climate. But if you're taking a look, for example, at other ways you might fund that – and until you start thinking holistically like that – and everybody says, well, the Congress will change. Well, maybe it will. Maybe it won't. But the executive can do that. They can sit down and say, OK, we got 684 billion (dollars). All right, let's sit down and see what we recommend here, you know, in terms of these – of these – of these trade-offs.

The problem has been basically after – toward the end of the Clinton administration and then after 9/11, it was very easy to just fund the military without thinking, whereas these other,

you know, programs had to, you know, fight for – you know, fight for every dollar. And as you go into this period of austerity, the fact of the matter is the defense budget has so much more room for reductions than the baseline State budget.

You know, for example, if you take – if the Defense Department should take the whole trillion dollars in cuts, the 350 billion (dollars) in the first thing plus – worst case, the – you end up with sequestration, and it's like \$950 billion, you would be back to where you were in real terms in 2007.

So I mean, when – and yet I don't remember too many people complaining about George Bush's next to last defense budget. And we need to do that and rather than go after the sort of the baseline – the baseline budget. And unless I – and it ought to be tough with the Congress, but unless the executive branch takes the lead in this when they send up the budget, I – you know, I don't think you're going to have these – have these things happen. And it will be fascinating to see what – you know, what they do with this first phase here. And I think that's the – you know, that's the – that's the key.

Rich, you want to have anything before we ask people in the audience?

MR. VERMA: Yeah, just a comment on this – having lived through the QDDR process at the State Department, it is a fairly internal process at State and USAID. Meanwhile, the Defense Department just finished its QDR, and the Department of Homeland Security finished its own quadrennial review. And so you had three different QDDRs, QDRs and other review at three major security agencies. The NSC of course tries to bring the agencies together at the conclusion for sign-off. And then there's also the National Security Strategy of the United States.

But I think what you're recommending, Miriam, is to bring those three agencies together in a more holistic way but also assign budget priorities to the policies that are recommended in the – in the particular reviews. And that really doesn't happen holistically. OMB does the best it can, but it – it's really hard to make those kind of trade-offs because it is still stovepiped; then we get to the Congress, and it's even more stovepiped.

MR. KORB: All right. (Inaudible) – the floor is open.

Yes, sir. Wait for the mic, if you will.

Q: Thank you. Michael – (2:05 inaudible) – also a former Hill rodent. Talking about the holistic approach and exigencies that are not yet foreseen but some that may be emerging and also referring to the sparkling intellects on the Hill, recently a number of Chinese officials have privately expressed amazement that national leadership, particularly in the House, was willing to sacrifice what most people would consider national security interests or certainly national standing for ideology. Now, in Chinese history in the '60s and '70s that's a familiar exercise that they're trying to get away from. So that surprise is very likely to play out in ramifications in their own policies.

So as the tea party – as you mentioned earlier, the revision – the sort of recidivism to the Taft era, if there is in fact a new profile on the Hill regarding priorities regarding China, as they perceive China, how did you find it? Whether some dimensions of it are a threat or whether or not the more consensus Republican view that it should be stability through business at all costs, how would a holistic approach survive the emergence of a virulent new, ideologically driven attitude, particularly in the House?

MR. KORB: Go ahead, you --

MR. VERMA: Yeah, I kind of lived through this a little bit, too, so I think – look, I think for those people that care about diplomacy and development, we have to do a better job making the case. And for a lot of the House of Representatives, there are a lot of new members that have no understanding or experience of what the State Department or USAID or NGOs around the world might be doing with U.S. taxpayer money. They've got bases in their district. They've got National Guardsmen and Reservists in their districts. They have – they may have military service. They have a much better appreciation for what DOD does. They know what boots on the ground does. But still, we have to admit that we're dealing with remnants of kind of foreign aid, of the past. And when people see State Department funding and AID funding, they think, foreign aid – it's going down a rat hole. It's going to some dictator in some third-world place, and that's an easy place to cut.

When we actually go in and talk to new members and explain what the money's actually for – and when you sit next to, say, someone from the joint staff or someone from the intel community, it's – they are surprised and shocked that you would be here together talking about the national security case. And what we try to talk about is national security as a continuum; not just the offensive part where actual combat is taking place. But we've been trying to talk about national security, as these guys do in the report, about a pre-conflict – a preventive – a preventive phase and a post-conflict phase.

And that pre-conflict part of the continuum, where you put diplomacy and development dollars at work, will hopefully save you lots of money down the road. And that's the investment case we've been making, and we – frankly, we need to do a better job of it. I think we can – we can make that case, but it's going to take a lot of work. And hopefully – you know, I understand there's a lot of ideological battles taking place right now. Hopefully, this is one that can penetrate the ideology.

MS. PEMBERTON: I'd just – I'd just add that I suspect that the Chinese have also been sitting back and looking in amazement as the U.S. for years has been looking at China as, you know, our next Cold War adversary and, you know, seeing it as this emerging military threat. Meanwhile, China is spreading its influence economically and, you know, kind of beating our time with its – with its economic influence, which I think has far more importance than its – than its military influence. And you know, I think they're, you know, kind of chuckling to themselves as each new person stands up in Congress and starts ranting about the specter of the Chinese military threat.

MR. KORB: Yeah. Yes, ma'am.

Q: Ashley Stover, Joint Economic Committee. On that point – on the previous two comments, it’s been said that the State Department has to show how it can save money but also how it makes money for the United States in terms of what our economic officers are doing on the ground. And in the report, there’s a part where you say there’s not enough staffing of Foreign Service officers. And can you speak to the issue of staffing in the economic space in terms of making sure that our global footprint when it comes to economics is felt? Because I don’t think that is something that is identified as a – not just preventative measure but keeps the United States and our national security at the top, where it is.

MS. PEMBERTON: (Inaudible) – defer to you.

MR. VERMA: Yeah, no, I’m – yeah, it would have been a great question for the deputy secretary, because he’s got the actual specifics on where we’re short, but I can tell you, you know, the plan was to grow the foreign service by about 20 (percent) to 25 percent, grow USAID by – I think the number was somewhere around a thousand additional foreign service professionals in AID. And Secretary Clinton is very good about making the case as to how – when we don’t have an adequate number of people on the ground fighting for those kind of economic opportunities for our companies, for our businesses in very competitive environments in the world, where the Chinese, where the Russians, where the Europeans are out very aggressively pushing their companies and their products, it does impact U.S. business.

I mean, you talk to any small-business owner in the United States, it’s very likely they have some international connection. Either they have a supply chain that comes internationally or they have a customer internationally. And it is the kind of quiet, behind-the-scenes work that economic case officers do every day for U.S. businesses around the world. It’s an untold story. I think we have to do a better job telling that story and really beefing up that capability and that capacity.

MR. KORB: Yeah, we – you know, in the report, we try and get into this. We still have 80,000 troops in Europe. The Cold War ended 20 years ago. And so we say, “Take 800 out.” And you could do that, 800 – (laughs) – out of the 80,000. And that’s the type of thing, I think, where you need to get, you know, people’s – you know, people’s attention because if that base State Department budget goes down, that’s going to hurt, make it more difficult to – you know, to hire those folks. And remember this OCO money basically is to cover their operations, not to hire, you know, extra FSOs over there.

So, yeah, I mean, that’s the type of thing – I mean, when you tell the American people – go back to the question I was asked before -- and even Republicans, you know: 80,000 troops in Europe 20 years after the end of the Cold War? People say, what, are you kidding? Europeans are cutting their defense budget because they know we’re there. So they can do that to deal with their – you know, their deficit and put the money into other things.

MS. PEMBERTON: And I’d just add – back to the OCO issue, I thought – I thought the secretary did a good job of explaining, you know, the problems with this being where the money for the State Department is going. It’s also, it seems to me, creating a different set of capacities

and a different set of skills to deal with, you know, mopping up after this – after this disaster. And, you know, so I worry that we're building capacities that are going to be of limited value to, you know, preventing conflicts to, you know, expanding, you know, economic ties and influence and all the sorts of things that you've been talking about. I don't see the people coming out of – out of Iraq as particularly having those kinds of skills that can be, you know, plugged right into the broader conflict prevention, you know, kind of engagement with the world that we need and that we're trying to build.

MR. KORB: Okay. Yeah, back there, and then up here.

Q: Hi, thanks. Ben Freeman with the Project On Government Oversight – we do a lot of work on contractors, and so I was sort of curious to not hear a lot about that so far and then get your thoughts on that. The DOD's budget, the majority of it actually, goes to contractors, and even some individual contractors actually get more taxpayer dollars every year than the entire State Department. So I was just curious to hear your thoughts on the contractor issue.

MR. KORB: Well, you know, if you read today – the report of the commission on, you know, contracting came out, and they talk about the big waste and lack of control and the fact that the Department of Defense didn't plan for this. And you know, and I – you know, that's a really key issue, you know, going forward: how much you want to rely on the government, how much you want to rely on the private sector, and have we crossed the line, I mean, you know, with the private sector, giving them inherently governmental – you know, governmental, you know, functions, not to mention the waste but the problems they've caused by – they basically have ignored the directives of the people they're working for.

Remember the big incident you had in Iraq were State Department contractors that, you know, basically started, you know, shooting. And I remember when I was there in 2007 doing some work for the State Department, they had this private security firm, and I had these two fellows in front of their SUV driving us around, and they were former South African military people who my guess is left when, you know, apartheid ended. And basically, you know, they would shoot first and ask questions later. You know, I mean, it was really – I mean, and I do think that's a whole separate issue, and that goes back to the fact that if you cut government people, which we did in the '90s when Senator Helms was, you know, ravaging the State Department, then you're going to have to – you know, have to do this when these emergencies come up. And I think, you know, that that is – is a – is a key issue that until you get your budget where it needs to be, you're going to have to do that every time you have an emergency.

MS. PEMBERTON: I'd just add, the other issue with relying so much on contractors is the political contributions that they put into our – you know, influencing the state of our politics and, you know, the influence they have had and can have on, you know, shaping the budget; preserving, you know, new increases in military spending that may not be in our – in our security interest or our financial interest.

MR. KORB: OK, this young lady up here –

Q: Ellen Milhiser, editor of Synopsis newsletter – I am very fascinated by the cuts you suggest in the defense budget. And I just have two questions. First, the personnel you pull out of Europe, you still have those people to deal with. You still have to pay for them here, you know, also. An increasing portion of the defense budget has nothing to do with weapons, and it's personnel costs. It's retirement. It's health care, all of those costs. Do you have any suggestions on dealing with that and on actually making our defense spending pay for defense and not taking care of all the people who, thankfully, gave us their service but, you know –

MR. VERMA: Well, we put out other reports and we've done two things: One on the – on you know, the – cutting defense. And we're going to take half of those people out of Europe and take them out of the force. That's how you would save money. We've also – and we had a very contentious meeting here with the head of the Military Officers Association in terms of doing something about the military – you know, the military health care system. So, yes, we do get into that.

And if you go on our website, we have compared our proposals to Tom Coburn, who by the way – really very, very radical proposal; and the deficit commission, Simpson-Bowles; and the Gang of Six, and we've shown all of the things that, you know, we have in common. But you know, we do – we do – and your point is well-taken because, yeah, if you take them home from Europe, you're not going to save any money. You've got to – you've got to take them out of – out of – out of the force.

Yes, sir. And you get the last question, and –

Q: My name is Jonathan (sp) – (inaudible) – from the Osgood Center for International Studies. Mr. Korb, you mention that a trillion dollars in defense cuts over the next 10 years is doable without significant harm to the – to the prowess of our national defense. Secretary Gates critiqued that and said that anything over 350 (billion dollars) would harm it. And the main argument – and I've seen it floated in sources such as The Weekly Standard – was that those kinds of cuts on that scale don't take into account the need to replace hardware that was purchased in the '80s during the Reagan defense buildup. Do you mind commenting on that?

MR. KORB: Yeah, and of course – and Secretary Panetta's also said the same thing, that these cuts would be, you know, devastating. The problem with the Pentagon and in the procurement area has not been the amount of money; it's how well it has been managed. You realize when we – you know, we pointed that out in our – in our recent report that you've had \$50 billion of – that they've spent on weapons systems, which they've cancelled, OK? They also have cost overruns of three (hundred billion dollars) to \$400 billion on the existing. That's the reason they're not replacing it. It's not a question of money, and I want to -- and I think it's very important to keep in mind, if you want to run the Pentagon well, it's not the secretary because that man and hopefully someday soon a woman, you know, has an awful lot of things, you know, to – you know to do; it's the deputy. And we've done studies and we showed how with a good deputy, you can do this without it.

Nixon came in and basically he hired Melvin Laird, who was a political person, a congressman from Wisconsin, as secretary. Who was the deputy? David Packard. Harold

Brown came in under Carter. Brown was a scientist. Who was his deputy? Charlie Duncan from Coca-Cola, OK? Dick Cheney – you know, and after reading his book here, I hesitate to say anything nice about him, but I think the fact he was a very good secretary of defense. And you know why? Because before he took the job, the White House said, Don Atwood, the vice chairman of General Motors is going to run the place. We haven't had that. Wolfowitz – OK. Gordon England was pretty good but he wasn't there that long. And that's what you need: a big-time business executive to go in there and – that's been the problem -- not the amount of money -- because when the money was there, they didn't have to make any – well, we'll do this; we'll do that, you know; we'll build this with – you know. And that was the – and that was the problem.

So I know – I've heard all the arguments: Well, they haven't replaced it, you know, since the Reagan years, and all of that. The problem is that in fact you haven't handled your money well, and go – and that's so to say, you go back and you look at those periods where the declining – a defense budget that was \$200 billion in real terms than you are now, and we seem to do it.

Well, on that – OK, Rich and Miriam, you have any thoughtful words here?

MS. PEMBERTON: (Laughs.)

MR. VERMA: No, thank you very much for this – inviting me --

MR. KORB: Listen, I want to thank you all, A, for coming; and B, for staying – (laughter) – after the secretary left. And I want to really thank my colleagues, particularly Miriam, who has really – you know, started this, you know, program seven or eight years ago when nobody was thinking about it and really has persevered, you know, to get this. And I think we're making some progress.

So thank you all very much. (Applause.)

(END)

EXHIBIT 10
SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AND THE BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

ISP-I-13-44A

Office of Inspections

September 2013

Special Review of the Accountability Review Board Process

IMPORTANT NOTICE: This report is intended solely for the official use of the Department of State or the Broadcasting Board of Governors, or any agency or organization receiving a copy directly from the Office of Inspector General. No secondary distribution may be made, in whole or in part, outside the Department of State or the Broadcasting Board of Governors, by them or by other agencies or organizations, without prior authorization by the Inspector General. Public availability of the document will be determined by the Inspector General under the U.S. Code, 5 U.S.C. 552. Improper disclosure of this report may result in criminal, civil, or administrative penalties.

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED**Implementation of the Benghazi Accountability Review Board Recommendations**

“All of us—from senior Department leadership setting strategic priorities to supervisors evaluating the needs of individual posts to congressional committees appropriating funds and providing oversight—have a responsibility to provide the men and women who serve this country with the best possible security and support. Most of all, it is my responsibility as Secretary of State.” - Secretary Hillary Clinton

The Department wasted no time addressing the recommendations of the Benghazi ARB. It enlisted numerous bureaus and offices to assist in developing plans for implementation. It formed working groups and committees, established panels of experts, and convened special review boards. Senior Department leadership has been involved through information memos, action memos, and the chairing of review committees. In seeking to fulfill the ARB recommendations, the Department issued instructional and guidance cables, made changes to the FAM and *Foreign Affairs Handbook* (FAH), and modified position descriptions and organizational structures.

The Benghazi ARB recommendations, when implemented, should significantly improve the Department’s ability to provide better security for U.S. diplomatic missions and employees. Although nearly half of the recommendations are directed at high-risk, high-threat posts, such as Benghazi, the recommendations have worldwide applicability. Implementation of some recommendations has only required reiteration of existing guidance cables or issuance of new guidance. Other recommendations resulted in the establishment of special review panels, which in turn offered more recommendations. The more difficult recommendations require researching and developing new policies and practices, exploring the application of new technologies, and entering into new or revised agreements with other agencies. A number of Benghazi ARB recommendations, especially those that require expansion of existing programs or creation of new programs, require new funding and an assured funding stream. The recommendations requiring significant funding relate to construction, hiring of additional personnel, expansion of information technology or other systems, enhanced language training, enhanced security and other training, and the procurement of new equipment and technologies.

Department Action

The Department’s handling of the Benghazi ARB recommendations represents a significant departure from the previous norm in that Secretary Clinton took charge directly of oversight for the implementation process. She designated the Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources as the coordinator for implementation with strict guidelines for a reporting schedule. Initially, the Deputy Secretary held weekly meetings with under secretaries and assistant secretaries to track implementation. Implementation continues, albeit on a less regular schedule now that many of the recommendations have been addressed.

This high-level oversight of the Benghazi ARB implementation process has been sustained through the transition from Secretary Clinton to Secretary Kerry. This level of attention from both secretaries and their senior staffs is a reflection of their personal concern in this matter and the unique scope of the Benghazi ARB recommendations. Approximately 90 percent of the recommendations (26 of 29) in the Benghazi report focused on systemic management reforms.

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

Most senior officials interviewed by the OIG team have expressed their view that high-level attention is essential to carrying out the institutional changes recommended in the ARB report. Furthermore, they say that the gravity of the issues in the ARB report demanded a much more robust implementation process. A number of Benghazi ARB recommendations mirror previous ARB recommendations, further underscoring a need for the involvement of Department principals to ensure that implementing actions are sustained.

High-level leadership has been critical in driving and sustaining implementation of the Benghazi ARB recommendations, and this approach establishes a model for how the Department should handle future ARB recommendations. The Department needs to change the FAM to formalize the responsibilities of the Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources in overseeing the implementation process and clarify that M/PRI, in continuing to perform its coordinating function, will report directly to the Deputy Secretary on matters involving the implementation of ARB recommendations.

Recommendation 10: The Bureau of Administration should amend 1 FAM 30 to institutionalize the Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources' responsibility for oversight of implementation of the Accountability Review Board recommendations. (Action: A)

Recommendation 11: The Bureau of Diplomatic Security should amend 12 FAM 032 to reflect the Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources' oversight responsibility of the Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing and Innovation for implementation of Accountability Review Board recommendations. (Action: DS)

There has been some confusion because of the parallel process established in the Benghazi case, with bureaus and offices in the Department reporting alternately to the Office of the Deputy Secretary of State, the Office of the Under Secretary of State for Management, or M/PRI, sometimes regarding the same tasking, without proper coordination or communication.

Informal Recommendation 5: The Office of the Deputy Secretary of State should work in tandem with the Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing and Innovation to streamline the Benghazi Accountability Review Board implementation process.

Implementation Challenges

As previously noted, the Department attempted to comply with the Benghazi ARB recommendations by breaking each down into individual actions. The Department divided the 29 recommendations of the Benghazi ARB report and assigned them to offices for followup. DS was the most heavily tasked bureau, charged with taking the lead on 25 of the 64 tasks, with a supporting role for 23 others. Additionally, the Office of the Under Secretary of State for Management and M/PRI have significant roles in the implementation process. Actions on a number of recommendations continue, with planned implementation of some not due until December 31, 2013, or later, as requested funding becomes available.

In some instances, the Benghazi ARB recommendations are worded in a way that leaves latitude for interpretation. While the Department has taken implementation seriously, some actions taken do not get to the core of the recommendation's intent. For example, the Department's interpretations of the recommendations and its parsing of them into multiple tasks do not always align with the ARB's intent.

EXHIBIT 11

From: [REDACTED]@state.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2012 4:32 PM

To: Kennedy, Patrick F <KennedyPF@state.gov>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]@state.gov>

Subject RE: the ARB Members?
:

Just FYI --

I mentioned to [REDACTED] that I was asked to meet with [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] is concerned that she will need additional people to make appointments, take notes from the interviews and write the report. She believes that Steve Mull will support her request for additional people. She also wants a single entry point to EX for their support – I suggested [REDACTED] since most others are in NY. She asked me to verify that for her.

I also suggested she take the offer from [REDACTED] who was the Exec Sec from the last ARB, for Pakistan. All of the Board members were impressed by her work and she “gets” the process. She just completed a detail with our friends and would be a real asset. I gave [REDACTED] her contact information.

[REDACTED] mentioned they are still shooting to start the first of October.

[REDACTED]

SBU

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: Kennedy, Patrick F

Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2012 10:08 AM

To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: the ARB Members?

[REDACTED]

Understood

My ref was to being "of course!" to them

Regards

pat

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2012 10:04 AM
To: Kennedy, Patrick F
Subject: FW: the ARB Members?

Pat --

Further to our conversation before about the ARB. We do not typically provide staff to the ARB. My position is called the ARB officer since I do the work to stand up the ARB and write the report to Congress.

Please let me know if this one be anything different.

Thank you --

[REDACTED]

SBU

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2012 9:59 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: the ARB Members?

That is what I told [REDACTED] I think you need to discuss this with her. Apparently, she says the regs indicate M/PRI provide staff to ARB. It really would be best for you to discuss this with her.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2012 9:53 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: the ARB Members?

[REDACTED]

There is no one from M/PRI detailed to help the ARB. Once they convene, we let them do their work after a morning of briefings. The Exec Sec is the bridge between the ARB and the Department, otherwise it would appear that we are guiding the review.

S/ES-EX does provide logistical support and a contract OMS is being procured by [REDACTED] [REDACTED] which is why she needs a start date. L/M advises the Board as necessary.

[REDACTED]

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2012 9:42 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: the ARB Members?

I just spoke to [REDACTED]. She will be in touch with you. She wants to know who from M/PR I will be detailed to help the ARB carry out its functions, and has questions re a staff assistant and an OMS, too.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2012 9:27 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: the ARB Members?

Okay -- we're standing by to help. Just keep us in mind.

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2012 8:35 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: the ARB Members?

[REDACTED] We don't yet have the final names, unfortunately. Steve will raise it with the key decision makers. I am happy to talk at your convenience but won't have much to share. [REDACTED] will be the executive secretary for the ARB, so if we meet, we should include her. Thanks, [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2012 7:58 AM

To: [REDACTED] Mull, Stephen D
Subject: the ARB Members?

Dear Colleagues:

Just a reminder -- the Federal Registry notice takes three work days to be published which means that I will need the names of the ARB members and the rest of the information by Wednesday morning if they will be starting work on Monday October 1.

I would appreciate knowing how this ARB is going to work since it is not going in the normal way. Can we talk this morning or tomorrow morning about the roles/responsibilities?

Thanks - [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Managing Director

Office of Management Policy,

Rightsizing and Innovation

HST Room 5214

202-647-0768

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

EXHIBIT 12

C05562028

Mills, Cheryl D

m: Sullivan, Jacob J
t: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 7:21 PM
o: 'Bash, Jeremy CIV SD'; Sherman, Wendy R; Nides, Thomas R; Mills, Cheryl D
Cc: Miller, James HON OSD POLICY; Winnefeld, James A ADM JCS VCJCS; Kelly, John LtGen SD; martin.dempsey [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Libya

Thanks Jeremy. + Cheryl.

We are joining a SVTC with NSS colleagues at 730pm -- believe your team will be on as well. We should work through this issue in that venue.

From: Bash, Jeremy CIV SD [mailto:Jeremy.Bash [REDACTED]]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 7:19 PM
To: Sullivan, Jacob J; Sherman, Wendy R; Nides, Thomas R
Cc: Miller, James HON OSD POLICY; Winnefeld, James A ADM JCS VCJCS; Kelly, John LtGen SD; martin.dempsey [REDACTED]
Subject: Libya

State colleagues:

Just tried you on the phone but you were all in with S.

After consulting with General Dempsey, General Ham and the Joint Staff, we have identified the forces that could move to Benghazi. They are spinning up as we speak. They include a SOF element that was in Croatia (which can fly to Suda Bay, Crete), and a Marine FAST team out of Roda, Spain.

Assuming Principals agree to deploy these elements, we will ask State to secure the approval from host nation. Please advise how you wish to convey that approval to us. Burns/Nides/Sherman to Miller/Winnefeld would be my recommended course.

Jeremy

EXHIBIT 13

This exhibit was not cleared for public release.

EXHIBIT 14

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: Nides, Thomas R </O=SBUSTATE/OU=SES/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=NIDESTR>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2011 7:06 AM
To: [REDACTED]@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Libya Update, April 14 (am)

Thanks

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2011 06:48 AM
To: Nides, Thomas R
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Libya Update, April 14 (am)

This is in lieu of my message last night, but a few things you should be aware of for today. You'll have your regular update tonight as well.

Situation Update: Still fighting in Misrata and Brega/Ajdabiya areas. We continue to watch Ajdabiya closely. There are stories about Q forces adopting more "rebel-like" fighting posture, including dressing in plain clothes and traveling by car/truck around the country.

Stevens Update: Trip continues to go well, although the security situation in Libya means that Stevens et al are basically limited to staying in Benghazi. There is a push for the mandate of Stevens' trip (and the DART, see below) to expand; the current mandate is for Stevens to stay in Libya for up to 30 days, situation permitting, so that he can "get to know the TNC." NEA will be drafting a paper for Steinberg, which essentially will ask for an expanded scope of work for Stevens – which will allow him to stay in Libya for longer (90 days or more). Once NEA has some policy guidance about what Stevens should be seeking to accomplish in Libya, it will devise a plan for a new footprint on the ground – this will require needed resources, and could shift the mission from an envoy situation to a more permanent presence. We will need to watch this closely and I've flagged for P and D(S) staff that you and Pat should be included in these discussions.

DART Update: The DART's mandate – which is to conduct a humanitarian assessment in Western Libya – will end on April 18. DART is looking to 1) expand its mandate similar to Stevens, which will allow them to stay indefinitely in Benghazi; 2) expand its numbers from 2 to 4 (which then requires an increase in DS agents). The DART team expansion memo will be sent to Pat this week, in parallel with the Stevens mandate memo process. I believe that Pat will hold on it until Steinberg makes a decision about what sort of presence we want on the ground in Libya. Timing is the key concern – USAID is paying for the ferry, which is scheduled to depart on April 18. Should USAID have permission to stay longer, it will extend the ferry contract – but this runs approximately \$250K a week and can't go on indefinitely. DS has concerns about the USG footprint getting too big; how we can extract everyone with DoD assets if needed. Raj may want to talk about this in your meeting today.

AFRICOM Assets Moving: As the U.S. winds down its full-on participation in the NATO strikes, AFRICOM assets in the region will move from offshore Libya to Italy on April 18 – from 3 hours to 6 hours away from Libya. This has implications on extraction capabilities, if needed.

Non-lethal Assistance – as of last night, POTUS still hasn't signed the package allowing the \$25M drawdown.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

Contact Group/NATO - I believe there will be some updates today; I'll pass them to you in hard copy, given classification.

Jabril Trip: TNC leader Jabril cancelled his trip to the U.S., scheduled for today, due to flight problems. He will likely reschedule in May.

████████████████████
Special Assistant
Office of Deputy Secretary Thomas Nides
U.S. Department of State
HST 7240
202-647-5094

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

EXHIBIT 15

From: Kennedy, Patrick F <KennedyPF@state.sgov.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, March 30, 2011 12:50 PM
To: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.sgov.gov>; Macmanus, Joseph E <MacmanusJE@state.sgov.gov>
Cc: Steinberg, James B <SteinbergJB@state.sgov.gov>; Nides, Thomas R <NidesTR@state.sgov.gov>; Burns, William J <BurnsWJ@state.sgov.gov>; Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.sgov.gov>; Mull, Stephen D <MullSD@state.sgov.gov>; Boswell, Eric J <BoswellEJ@state.sgov.gov>; Feltman, Jeffrey D <feltmanjd@state.sgov.gov>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@state.sgov.gov>
Subject: Liaison Officer into Libya

Jake/Joel - PLEASE SHARE WITH SECRETARY

After over a week of joint planning, JCS has now advised that Admiral Mullen has decided that the "no boots on the ground in Libya" policy precludes DOD assisting us getting Stevens into Libya.

I tried invoking an obscure section of the Omnibus Diplomatic Security Act, which authorizes other agencies to assist DS, but the "no boots" decision has prevailed.

They will let us call upon them for emergency extraction using assets they have in the Med for other purposes should the need arise.

We are moving ahead to see if we can advance the arrival of a commercial ship we are chartering. It was to go in later to bring vehicles, supplies, and equipment. It will now be the primary.

[REDACTED]

Regards

pat

EXHIBIT 16

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

September 28, 2011

NOTE FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY BURNS AND DEPUTY SECRETARY NIDES

FROM: S/P – Jake Sullivan
 NEA – Jeffrey Feltman
 D(B)/MET – Bill Taylor

SUBJECT: Parameters for U.S. Engagement in post-Qadhafi Libya

As the Transitional National Council (TNC) consolidates its control over Libya, the U.S. needs to determine the parameters that will guide our engagement with post-conflict Libya. While progress in Libya has thus far exceeded public expectations, we should expect political transition to proceed in fits and starts. We should also expect that the post-conflict stages will face waning support from the public and the Congress—and that overly intensive U.S. efforts, if not supported by the Libyans, could over time erode the goodwill we have built within Libya.

We have several broad goals for Libya. We would like to see a Libya that is unitary and democratic, that denies access to extremists, that has effective control over its weaponry including WMD, and that maintains peaceful relations with its neighbors. We also have an interest in ensuring that Libya can sell its oil and gas on the global market. But post-conflict stabilization in Libya, while clearly a worthy undertaking at the right level of investment, cannot be counted as one of our highest foreign policy priorities. Strategically for us, Libya does not loom as large as Egypt or Syria.

This means that, for the United States, Libya must not become a state-building exercise. The Administration has a primary interest in ensuring that others—the Libyans, the UN, the EU, and NGOs—take overall responsibility for post-conflict stabilization. We should not allow the momentum of our involvement to date in the Libyan revolution to determine our strategy for longer-term assistance. We need to judiciously consider priorities for our support to Libya in light of our interests, our other priorities, and our very scarce resources. ***The most difficult task will be deciding what not to do and resisting impulses to attempt to engineer Libya's transition through U.S. engagement.***

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

-2-

Toward that end, this memo lays out some criteria for assessing U.S. assistance priorities and uses those criteria to prioritize the main areas of proposed transition assistance to Libya.

CRITERIA

Any assistance that we give to post-conflict Libya needs to meet most, if not all, of the following criteria (listed in order of importance):

Promotes Specific U.S. Interests – The primary criterion is that U.S. assistance should be tightly linked to specific U.S. interests. While the U.S. clearly has a broad interest in Libyan stability and democratic transition in general, *assistance should promote specific U.S. interests* such as preventing terrorism or creating a level playing field for U.S. businesses in Libya.

- **Unique -- U.S. assistance should provide goods and services that are not available elsewhere.** Other governments, multilateral organizations, and non-governmental organizations have substantial post-conflict capabilities. We expect that the UN and the EU will take the lead in many areas. Libya's own substantial wealth means that the Libyan government will be able to self-fund certain types of technical assistance, and that the private sector will be intensely interested in providing such assistance. *Post-conflict assistance in Libya is not a prize* and we need not compete for post-conflict roles if they are not necessary to support core U.S. interests.
- **Core Competence -- U.S. assistance should capitalize on core U.S. competences and be cost-effective.** *We should only provide assistance in areas where we have a proven track record of success and to which Congress is willing to devote resources.* Congress has made clear that it will support little, if any, supplemental funds for U.S. assistance to Libya and limited reprogramming.
- **Requested -- Assistance must be requested by the Libyan interim authorities or by Libyan civil society.** Even if we feel the Libyan government or its people are making a mistake in not seeking our help, *we should not ordinarily provide assistance which the Libyans do not actively request.* On the other hand, while the UN will play

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

-3-

a critical role in coordinating international community assistance to Libya and we should channel requests and offers through them, we should not allow the UN a veto over U.S. assistance that makes sense to the United States and to Libyans.

PRIORITY AREAS FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE

The above criteria imply the following areas of priority **longer-term assistance** in rough order.

High Priority

- **Securing Weapons** – The United States has a clear interest in making sure that Libyan weapons, especially chemical weapons and man-portable air defense systems, do not fall into the wrong hands. We have substantial and unique capabilities in this regard that we have already begun to deploy and Congress has evinced support for this assistance. The Libyans have also requested our help.
- **Democracy and Governance** – The U.S. has an important interest not only in ensuring an effective democratic transition in Libya, but also in fostering Libyan civil society and maintaining U.S. links to non-governmental Libyan actors. Other actors will play an important role in this area, but U.S. government programs have proven uniquely effective in developing the non-government social institutions and processes necessary for democratic functioning: political parties, monitoring elections and other political processes, and supporting civil society. The Libyan interim authorities have indicated support for the small U.S. efforts underway and some interest in getting help in the initial stages of their transition, but they are very sensitive to the possibility that such efforts will be seen as foreign interference.
- **Counterterrorism** – The U.S. has a clear and strong interest in ensuring that violent extremists do not seize control of the Libyan revolution or otherwise use Libya as a platform for international terrorism. Libya's long and unsecured borders are a particular area of concern. We have worked with other governments throughout the world on this issue and have substantial, unique capacities for securing borders, tracking movement, and training and countering extremist ideology and

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

-4-

recruitment. While extremist ideology does not appear to be an immediate problem within Libya and not something for which the Libyans are requesting immediate help, we can expect challenges in this area over time and we should take steps to get ahead of the game.

- **Public Financial Management** – A level playing field for U.S. businesses in Libya requires transparent and honest government processes. While other international actors and private sectors have an important role in fostering transparency, ensuring a level-playing field for U.S. businesses will require some direct U.S. involvement. In part because of international prompting, the Libyans have recognized that PFM will help their international and domestic credibility and help them unlock OPIC and other support. The Libyans also have the financial resources to hire outside expertise for this function, so U.S. involvement in this area should be limited to what is necessary to satisfy our own requirements and to ensure a level-playing field for U.S. business.

Medium Priority

- **Transitional Justice and Reconciliation** – Effective Libyan-owned reconciliation and justice processes will be critical to a stable transition. If the interim authorities fail to get buy-in from a broad array of Libyan stakeholders, including former regime elements, a gradual break-down of political order becomes much more likely. The Libyans have recognized that they need international assistance in this area in general terms, but have not as yet been able to formulate any specific requests. The TNC has not yet made clear how highly it will prioritize this objective. Despite its overall importance, however, the U.S. does not have a core competence in this area relative to other international actors and U.S. interests do not require that the U.S. be directly involved.
- **Security and Justice Sector Reform** – Libya needs to create a judicial system, effective police forces and a national army that can integrate the various militias and provide law and order. While the U.S. has substantial and unique experience in this regard, it is not clear that U.S. efforts have always been cost-effective or that U.S. interests requires us to be directly involved in a major way. Some models of past U.S. experience, such as our intensive efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, are likely to be untenable in Libya, while others, such as in the Palestinian

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

territories, might be more applicable. SSR assistance is expensive and implies a deep involvement in Libyan society that the U.S. may not be prepared to undertake. We may instead prefer to allow the UN or other countries to take the lead, with the U.S. providing some IMET funds.

Lowest Priority

- Economic Revitalization** – Libya clearly needs to undertake a broad program of economic reconstruction and diversification. Ultimately, the new Libyan authorities may be judged on their ability to provide economic growth and employment for their population. But the U.S. lacks unique expertise or a direct interest in this area. Libyan resources, moreover, are adequate to this task, in contrast to many other post-conflict situations.
- Essential Services** – In the short-term, the new Libyan authorities will be judged on their ability to maintain delivery of basic services (food, water, electricity, security) to all residents of Libya. So far, however, the Libyans have done surprisingly well in this area without substantial U.S. assistance and this may be an area in which the UN and other actors can provide any needed assistance.

The chart below summarizes the discussion above. Green implies that the given area satisfies the criteria, yellow that it does so with some important caveats, and red that it does not.

	U.S. Interests	Unique	Core Competence	Requested
HIGH PRIORITY				
Securing Weapons	Green	Green	Green	Green
Democracy and Governance	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow
Counterterrorism	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow
Public Financial Management	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow
MEDIUM PRIORITY				

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

-6-

Transitional Justice and Reconciliation	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Security and Justice Sector Reform	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
LOWEST PRIORITY				
Economic Revitalization	Red	Red	Red	Yellow
Essential Services and Infrastructure	Red	Red	Red	Red

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

Approved: S/P – Jake Sullivan
NEA – Jeff Feltman ok
D(B)/MET – Bill Taylor ok

Drafted: S/P [REDACTED], ext. 7-9517 an [REDACTED]

Cleared: NEA/FO – EDibble ok
NEA/FO – RMaxwell ok
NEA/FO [REDACTED] ok
D(B)/MET [REDACTED] ok
NEA/MAG [REDACTED] ok
NEA/MAG [REDACTED] ok
S/P [REDACTED] ok

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

EXHIBIT 17

C06122373 UNCLASSIFIED U.S. Department of State Case No. O-2016-10902 Doc No. C06122373 Date: 12/07/2016

C05578764-MOU



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECL: 05/10/2021

ACTION MEMO FOR DEPUTY SECRETARIES STEINBERG AND NIDES

FROM: NEA – Jeffrey Feltman

SUBJECT: The Way Forward on the Future Near-Term U.S. Presence in Benghazi

Recommendation

That you approve the concept of a phased approach, as described below, for any decisions to expand the mission of U.S. Special Envoy to the Libyan Transitional National Council Chris Stevens and his team in order to increase reporting and coordination.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

That you approve the first and second phases – set out in this memo and attachments – for implementation. (The third, more ambitious phase is included merely for planning and informational purposes. It will be presented for decision at a later date, subject to policy developments and security conditions.)

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

Background

U.S. Special Envoy to the Libyan Transitional National Council (TNC) Chris Stevens has been in Benghazi since April 5. He and his team, including one political officer and eight Diplomatic Security (DS) agents, were given approval by the Under Secretary for Management to travel to Libya for the specific purpose of establishing contact with the TNC to conduct activities related to information gathering, liaison, and humanitarian assistance, after announcement of his appointment and mission by the President. Under Secretary Kennedy's initial assessment was for 30 days. Four USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) members also are in Benghazi, bringing the total number of Americans in

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~Classified by: Assistant Secretary Jeffrey Feltman
E.O. 13526, Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

Benghazi to 14. As demands increase on Stevens and his team for more reporting and coordination and as we seek ways to increase our engagement with the TNC, we face an immediate need to increase the size of his mission, including addressing the need for secure communications. In order to manage the security challenges of this highly fluid environment, we recommend a phased approach. This memo sets out three phases, but we are only seeking approval for the modest staffing increases in Phases One and Two. We will seek approval of implementation of Phase Three at a later date, when the policy environment and assistance levels – not currently evident – would justify establishment of a full Representative Office. We will seek separate approval from the Under Secretary for Management for any increase in the mission's staffing, as Embassy Tripoli remains on ordered evacuation status.

Phase One, to be implemented in mid-May, would include a modest increase to improve Stevens' reporting abilities. It calls for the addition of an IMO/Management Officer (primarily to facilitate establishment of secure communications) and an Arabic-speaking economic officer. Phase One responds to and addresses currently identified demands of the mission, within the conditions of our current policy posture towards the TNC. In the wake of two Contact Group meetings, a NATO ministerial, three meetings between the Secretary and TNC Prime Minister-equivalent Mahmoud Jibril, as well as Jibril's May 10-13 Washington visit, it is time now to slightly plus up our size and enhance our ability to coordinate on in-kind assistance through donor coordination on the ground, and by using the Libyan Information Exchange Mechanism, and to increase coordination on non-humanitarian stabilization assistance in the east. We have an immediate need to send an Information Management Officer (IMO) to Benghazi to provide secure communications. [redacted] could be sent to Benghazi with a vehicle shipment, which is planned on/about May 12. We also need to increase Stevens' reporting abilities and propose sending an Economic Officer to Benghazi. DS advises that the current team of ten agents could support the modest increase of one IMO and one Economic Officer. The maximum number of personnel that could be supported in Phase One is 18, of which 10 would be DS agents. Based on very preliminary and notional numbers, NEA estimates the cost of Phase One is \$1.265 million (see Tab 2 for a detailed budget). This includes \$174K in recurring costs for 30 days and \$1.191 million in one-time costs. The one-time costs include \$950K for the shipment and purchase of four fully-armored vehicles. It also includes \$100K for the potential purchase of a [redacted] which is currently on loan from Embassy Kathmandu.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

At the conclusion of the second thirty days on-the-ground for the Stevens mission, o/a June 12, we recommend moving to Phase Two. The mid-May visit to Washington of TNC Foreign Affairs co-Coordinator Mahmoud Jibril will serve to further solidify U.S. support for TNC efforts and could be an appropriate event to use as a catalyst for moving to Phase Two in June. Phase Two would likely presage an increase in both assistance and reporting responsibilities. If the security environment continues to be permissive, Stevens will need more staff to conduct the detailed assessments and analysis required to inform the Washington policy process. Phase Two would require adding eight new staff, including three DS agents, two DART members, one additional Management Officer, one political officer and one PD/Consular Officer. Phase Two would also require the hiring of approximately eight locally engaged staff to provide support services for the expanded team. It is likely that the team in Benghazi also will be asked to host a larger number of visitors, including short-term assistance from other USG agencies and Congressional Delegations.

This plus-up is not contingent on dramatic changes on policy and assistance fronts, but will strengthen the team to address anticipated incremented increases in workloads, visitors, and assistance to the TNC. The current mission cannot handle even a modest number of visitors without a more robust management platform, including a full-time contracting officer capable of local procurement and contracted local staff. The estimated cost of Phase Two is \$1.9 million. This includes \$928,000 in recurring costs (\$231,000 per month for four months) and \$972,000 in additional one-time costs. The one-time costs include another shipment and purchase of an additional four armored vehicles.

Phase Three is included here merely for future planning purposes. It would entail establishment of a Representative Office, which would be dependent on policy decisions at the Principals' level in favor of a more forward and robust diplomatic presence in Benghazi. It would make sense when Principals have determined that the level of diplomatic outreach and assistance to the TNC, particularly during the stabilization phase in the east before the end of the conflict, has reached levels that the light staffing and relatively ad hoc arrangements in Phases One and Two can no longer address effectively. **As the political situation shifts from stabilization in the east to include ceasefire implementation and eventually post-conflict diplomatic transition, the Benghazi mission will need a sustainable critical mass, in terms of management platform and personnel, to address a widening range of contingencies, which among others could include a rapid in flux of visitors, TDY personnel, burgeoning demands of support for expanding assistance programs, and a possible decision to use the Benghazi**

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

mission as a base for exploring the reopening of the embassy in Tripoli. As the situation in Libya continues to develop, the USG may wish to further bolster the TNC through the establishment of a U.S. Representative Office in Benghazi. This will require an expansion of our political engagement and technical assistance to the TNC. This wide array of engagement likely would be supported by a high volume of TDYers from other USG agencies and would require a more sizable administrative platform to support these visitors. It may also be preferable to move a mission of this size into a residential villa or oil company compound that could be more easily secured. The Department would complete congressional notification procedures before establishing a new post in Benghazi. The U.S. Representative Office and American personnel assigned there would not have diplomatic privileges and immunities normally granted under the Vienna Convention.

With this footprint, security demands would require transitioning from a protective detail to a traditional Regional Security Office (RSO) setup. Establishing a RSO for the Special Envoy's mission will require identifying and funding FTE positions for both Direct Hire American Citizens (RSO and ARSO) and Locally Employed Staff for the local guard force, Foreign Service National Investigator, [REDACTED] and protective security to supplement or replace the Dignitary Protection team. Appropriate equipment will need to be procured and delivered. A reliable method of emergency evacuation must be established, as well as determining appropriate physical security requirements. Numbers of staff and quantities of equipment needed cannot be determined until the scope of the task is defined and a full and comprehensive on-the-ground assessment is conducted.

The total estimated cost to State of Phases I and II is \$3.09 million. Given the tight fiscal environment and the limited Diplomatic and Consular Programs (D&CP) resources available to the Bureau, NEA will have to examine closely what funding Phases One and Two within available resources will mean for other NEA priorities. However, FY 2011 costs to NEA could be decreased should reimbursement for certain aspects of the vehicles not be sought and by continuing to borrow rather than purchase [REDACTED] from Embassy Kathmandu. Travel and vehicle costs are currently shared between DS and NEA. NEA is reallocating funds from Embassy Tripoli's allotments to offset costs for activities in Benghazi. As we move towards Phase Three, Full Time Equivalent (FTE) for a full-time presence in Benghazi would initially come from Embassy Tripoli. Additional funding would then be required at Phase Three. We cannot realistically estimate the cost until we have management officers on the ground.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

Attachments:

Tab 1 – Expansion Platform

Tab 2 – Budget Estimates for Phases One and Two

CONFIDENTIAL

Approved: NEA Jeffrey Feltman

Drafted: [redacted] NEA/MAG, ext 7-4674 and [redacted]

Cleared:

NEA/FO - [redacted]	
NEA/MAG - [redacted]	ok
D(S) - [redacted]	
D(N) - [redacted]	
P - [redacted]	ok
S/F - [redacted]	info
M -	
NEA/EX - [redacted]	ok
USAID - [redacted]	ok
Emb Tripoli - [redacted]	ok
F - [redacted]	info
DS - [redacted]	ok
PM - [redacted]	ok
Emb Tripoli - [redacted]	ok
RM/BP - [redacted]	ok
L/FA - [redacted]	ok
DGHR	

**INTERVIEW OF
BERNADETTE MEEHAN**

BEFORE THE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, DECEMBER 16, 2015

APPEARANCES

FOR THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI

DANA CHIPMAN, *Chief Counsel*
CRAIG MISSAKIAN, *Deputy Chief Counsel*
SHERIA CLARKE, *Counsel*
SUSANNE SACHSMAN GROOMS, *Minority Staff Director/General Counsel*
HEATHER SAWYER, *Minority Chief Counsel*
PETER KENNY, *Minority Senior Counsel*
DANIEL REBNORD, *Minority Professional Staff*
ERIN O'BRIEN, *Minority Detailee*

FOR BERNADETTE MEEHAN

JAMES WALSH, *Special Assistant to the President and Associate Counsel to the President*
NICHOLAS MCQUAID, *Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy Counsel to the President*
ZAID ZAID, *Special Assistant to the President and Associate Counsel to the President*

Mr. Missakian. Ms. Meehan, my name is Craig Missakian. I'm one of the lawyers for the majority staff on the House Select Committee on Benghazi. Before we begin the questioning, I'm just going to go over some ground rules. First, we're conducting this transcribed interview pursuant to a resolution of Congress, and I just wanted to make sure that you understand when you're answering our questions or answering questions from Members of Congress, that you're subject to the penalties provided for in 18 U.S.C. 1001 that requires to provide truthful testimony, and if you don't, you could be subject to criminal penalty. Do you understand that?

Ms. Meehan. I do.

Mr. Missakian. Is there any reason why today you can't give us your best, most truthful testimony?

Ms. Meehan. No reason.

Mr. Missakian. Now, this is going to be a little different, and I don't know if you've ever had your deposition taken before, but it is going to be a little different than a deposition would occur in the context of a Federal District Court proceeding, for example. Here, there are no objections other than for privilege. To the extent that an objection is raised for privilege and we can't resolve it here, it will then go to the chairman of the committee, Trey Gowdy, and it will be resolved at that level. So just to clarify, are you represented here today by counsel?

Ms. Meehan. I am accompanied today by members of the White House counsel staff. I do not have personal counsel here.

Mr. Missakian. So to the extent that Mr. McQuaid or the other lawyers here from the White House counsel staff intends to raise objections based on privilege, we can deal with those as they come up.

Ms. Meehan. Okay.

Mr. Missakian. The ground rules for this interview, it's also a little different than a deposition. What happens is the majority staff will begin the questioning, and we will go for an hour. Then once we're finished, the lawyers from the minority staff will step in, and they will go for another hour; and we'll go back and forth until everyone is finished asking all their questions.

If at any time in the middle of an hour or at the end of an hour if you want to take a break for any reason or no reason, just let us know, and we'll do our best to accommodate that. Have I left anything out?

Mr. Chipman. Perhaps if you could get a record of those who are in attendance.

Mr. Missakian. Yes. Typically we go around the room and introduce people. As I said, I am Craig Missakian from the majority staff.

Ms. Clarke. Sheria Clarke from the majority staff.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. I'm Susanne Sachsman Grooms from the minority staff.

Ms. Sawyer. Heather Sawyer from the minority.

Ms. O'Brien. Erin O'Brien, minority.

Mr. Walsh. James Walsh, White House counsel's office.

Mr. Zaid. Zaid Zaid, White House counsel's office.

Mr. McQuaid. Nick McQuaid, White House counsel's office.

Ms. Meehan. And Bernadette Meehan, witness.

Mr. Chipman. Dana Chipman with the majority staff.

EXAMINATION

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Let's begin. Ms. Meehan, let's start with where did you work and what was your title in September of 2012?

A In September of 2012, I was a foreign service officer on detail to the White House National Security Council. My title was assistant press secretary in the National Security Council Press Office.

Mr. Missakian. For the record, we just had two additional people join us. Gentlemen, could you state your name for the record?

Mr. Kenny. Peter Kenny for the minority staff.

Mr. Rebnord. Dan Rebnord for the minority.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q And when did that detail begin?

A My detail began in July of 2012.

Q How long did it last?

A I was a member of the NSC press team until June of 2015, though my position within the NSC press office changed over those 3 years.

Q How did it change?

A I eventually became the deputy spokesperson and then

eventually the spokesperson for the National Security Council.

Q When did that first change in your title occur?

A I became the deputy at some point in 2013, summer of 2013, I think.

Q And when were you promoted to be the spokesperson of the National Security Council?

A In the summer/fall of 2014.

Q I've seen the National Security Council referred to sometimes by a different acronym, NSS, sometimes NSS, sometimes NSC. What do you prefer? What is it?

A It is currently NSC staff. When I started it was NSS staff, but it has since gone back to being officially called NSC staff.

Q So if I refer to it as NSC, we'll all know what we're talking about?

A Yes.

Q Prior to becoming a detailee to the NSC in July of 2012, what were you doing at the State Department?

A I began my career as a foreign service officer in 2004. I served a 2-year assignment at the U.S. Embassy in Bogota, Colombia, from 2004 to 2006. In 2006, I volunteered to serve in Iraq. So from September 2006 until September 2007, I was at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq. I, then, returned to Washington and studied Arabic full-time at the Department of State's Foreign Service Institute in Virginia. That was about 10 months. I, then, was deployed to the U.S. Consulate General in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates. That was from

the summer of 2008 until the summer of 2010.

In the summer of 2010, I returned to Washington and began a detail, or an assignment, I should say, in the Department of State's Executive Secretariat. That was approximately 10 months. I, then, became the foreign service officer filling a special assistant position in the Secretary of State's office. I did that for approximately 15 months, until I was detailed over to the National Security Council in July of 2012.

Q And once you got to the National Security Council in July of 2012, what were your duties?

A My responsibility, at that particular point in time, was to handle press inquiries related to administration policy in the Middle East and North Africa.

Q Could you give us a little bit of an idea what the structure of the office looked like?

A Sure. At that point in time, we were four press officers on detail from various national security agencies. We reported to both the spokesperson at the time, and the deputy national security advisor for strategic communications.

Q Who was the spokesperson at the time?

A At that time, it was Tommy Vietor.

Q Tommy Vietor was the spokesperson for the National Security Council?

A That's correct.

Q And the deputy spokesperson you mentioned, who was that?

A The deputy spokesperson at the time was Caitlin Hayden.

Q Can you spell her name, please?

A C-a-i-t-l-i-n, and her last name is H-a-y-d-e-n.

Q Was Ben Rhodes employed at the NSC at that point?

A He was. He was the Deputy National Security Advisor that I referred to.

Q Oh, okay. And where was Ben Rhodes in your chain of command?

A I reported both to Tommy and to Ben. So Ben was Tommy's direct boss, and the four press officers in the NSC press office reported to Tommy and to Ben.

Q Physically, where were you all located?

A At this particular point in the time, the four press officers were in the Executive Office Building, the Eisenhower Executive Office Building. Tommy and Ben were located in the West Wing.

Q Did that change?

A When I became the spokesperson of the National Security Council, I, then, took a desk in the West Wing where Tommy used to sit.

Q Focusing on September of 2012, were you in the Old Executive Office Building at that point?

A I was.

Q And what was your relationship, if any, to Denis McDonough at that point in time?

A At that point in time, Denis McDonough was the Deputy

National Security Advisor handling policy, as opposed to Ben Rhodes, who did strategic communications. So I would see him in meetings. He was obviously sort of the deputy of the overall NSC, so I would see him in meetings, but no direct reporting line to him.

Q Give us an idea of your day-to-day life in September of 2012 prior to the attacks.

A Sure. Well, I had been there for approximately 7 or 8 weeks at that point in time, so was still new to the NSC. We would field requests from reporters, both domestic and international, throughout the day. We were also responsible for coordinating press guidance throughout the interagency to help prepare any of the spokespeople at national security agencies that would hold daily press briefings. That would include, at the time, Jay Carney, the spokesperson for the White House; Toria Nuland at the State Department; George Little at the Department of Defense; and attend meetings as required to help fulfill those duties.

Q Did anybody sit you down and explain the process of coordinating the interagency messaging that you just talked about?

A So generally, when someone joined the press office, we had a few days with our predecessor, so I had time to shadow that individual, and then we have time, obviously, with the other members of the office. It's often a staggered start, so I was the only person starting at that particular point in time, and was able to work with the other members of the office to understand how we were expected to carry out those duties.

Q Okay. What did you learn?

A Well, I learned how we coordinate, usually on a daily basis, with other national security agencies to try and determine what we feel will be, quote-unquote, "news of the day," that may be raised in any of the daily press briefings across the interagency. We coordinate across the interagency press offices to work on incoming stories. There's usually multiple equities involved and multiple agencies will have a part of what a reporter is inquiring about, so we want to ensure that every agency that has an equity is aware of that and is working together to respond to an inquiry. So that is generally what I was taught when I came in.

Q In the process of coordinating a message with the interagency, does somebody have the final word on the message?

A It's a case-by-case basis. It depends on what the topic is, whether the inquiry is, what the various equities are of each of the agencies, so it would be a collaborative process among the interagency to determine who will field that inquiry and what input other agencies will have into it.

Q Can you give us an example of something in practice that might shed some light on who has the final word on a particular issue?

A Sure. So, you can look at multiple scenarios that would, perhaps, be different, but an example would be if there is military action going on in Iraq, for example, and a reporter has an inquiry, they may have an inquiry that has multiple parts. They may say, for example, can you discuss what targets were struck in a particular

military action, and how does that relate to the President's overall strategy to combat ISIS in Iraq.

We would then coordinate among the different agencies and say, DOD, you would be best placed to handle inquiries about what the military targets were, what the military action was in that instance; whereas, the White House would be most appropriate, from the NSC staff, to handle questions related to the President's overall policy with regards to combating ISIS in Iraq. And if there was a role for the State Department, we would draw them into that as well.

Q Okay. Aside from who would be the best agency to address an issue, would it be fair to say that NSC has the final word on the content of a message, or is that going too far?

A It's dependent. It's a case-by-case basis again. You know, the military would be best placed to make a final decision on how they're going to characterize military action, for example. The intelligence community would be the provider and the final decisionmaker on anything related to an intelligence assessment, for example. Generally the NSC would have the final word on anything that is characterizing the President's feelings, thoughts, or policy. So, again, it's a case-by-case basis.

Q Speaking of the intelligence community, how would you describe the relationship between the NSC and the intelligence community?

A Well, I can only speak to the communications part, since that was the channel that I worked in.

Q Yes.

A But we had an excellent relationship. They were a part of the daily coordination that we had across the interagency for news-of-the-day items. I was in daily contact usually with my counterparts at both the CIA and the DNI.

Q Were there any other members of the intelligence community that you had this daily contact with, besides CIA and DIA?

A On occasion, NCTC. At this particular time related to Benghazi, there were no other agencies that I was in direct contact with the spokespeople. I can't speak to what the coordinating role of the DNI and the CIA were in that.

Mr. McQuaid. Craig, I think you said DIA. I'm not sure if that's the same.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q I'm sorry. You said DNI.

A DNI.

Q I did say DIA. Thank you. Who were your contacts at CIA? This was in September of 2012.

A Right. I can't recall who the spokesperson was at that particular time at CIA.

Q In talking about the CIA, are we talking about the office within CIA that has the acronym OPA?

A Yes, that would be correct, the Office of Public Affairs.

Q Within the Office of Public Affairs, there was, obviously, a spokesperson whose name you can't recall. Is that the person you

dealt with on a daily basis?

A It would be, generally from CIA, each member of their team would participate in daily coordination. They had a relatively small team.

Q Do you remember the name of anybody on the team?

A At that particular time, there was an individual named Preston who was working there at the time. He's the one that comes to mind. I don't recall who the other members of that team were at that time.

Q Do you recall dealing with anybody in particular on the issue of the attacks in Benghazi?

A On CIA, I don't. Most of the coordination was done through the DNI, on the intelligence side.

Q In communicating with Preston or anybody else in the CIA, OPA shop, was that done by phone or was it done by email?

A Both.

Q Both. And with regards to DNI, did they have their own press office?

A They did.

Q Do you recall the names of anybody in the DNI press office?

A I do. The spokesperson at the time was Shawn Turner, and he generally was the person that we coordinated anything related to intelligence with.

Q Was there anybody else in that press shop that you recall?

A There were other members of the press shop. Shawn was my

primary point of contact. At that point in time, I don't recall who was working with him.

Q Do you recall dealing with Shawn with regard to the attacks in Benghazi?

A I do.

Q Why don't we just go into that a little bit. What do you recall about your interaction with Shawn Turner with regard to the Benghazi attacks?

A He was a member, as I said, of the interagency communications team, so I remember on a daily basis he was part of any meetings that the interagency communicators convened, whether it was email chains, SVTCs, conference calls; and he was, as I said, our conduit for information that the intelligence community felt was relevant as we formulated a public response to the attack.

Q Do you recall anything specific about your interactions with Shawn Turner, or do all those meetings and email exchanges and conversations just blend together?

Mr. McQuaid. Can we go off the record for one second?

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q During the off-the-record discussion, I want to make it clear to the witness that the questions I'm asking you are really focused on the period around the September 11, 2012 attack. To the extent you remember events that occurred on a specific day, you can provide that information to us. To the extent you don't and you just

have a generalized recollection of events during that time period, the time period of the attack or the immediate aftermath, that's fine to provide that information as well. But I'm not asking for your recollection of events about Benghazi that may have occurred more recently. We're just focused on that time period. Is that clear?

A Yes.

Q Okay. So back to the question about Shawn Turner, do you recall any specific interaction you had with him during that September 11, 2012 time period?

A This is obviously more than 3 years ago at this point. I remember lots of interactions with him. I am happy to answer questions if there are questions about specific interactions, but I would sort of need a little bit more context to be able to answer the questions.

Q Let's go in. What specific interactions do you recall, and we'll start there?

A Well, again, I remember that Shawn was a participant on daily conference calls that we would have, even prior to Benghazi as a general rule that we held across the interagency to determine what would news-of-the-day topics be that spokespeople or other agencies would need to deal with. During the time period that we're discussing, Benghazi obviously was the focus of most of the press during that time, so I do recall that Shawn was the DNI representative on those calls.

Q Let me jump in to make it a little easier. I want to ask you if you have any specific recollection. An example of that would be on such-an-such a day, you remember getting on the phone with a Shawn

Turner and discussing a specific topic. I know this was a few years ago, so it may be difficult to recall that, but if you have any recollections of any conversations that stick out in your mind or any meetings that may stick out in your mind or any email exchanges, where you can, not word for word, but give us the essential substance of what was discussed, that's kind of what I'm asking for now. Does anything stick out in your mind during that period, or does it all kind of blend together in a more general way?

A It all kind of blends together in a more general way.

Q Okay. That's fair, so we'll try to get at it in a different way. A couple background questions. At the time, did you have a security clearance?

A I did.

Q To what level?

A TS/SCI.

Q And in your office, did you have a secure computer system in your own office?

A I did.

Q Was there also a SCIF in the area where you worked?

A There was.

Q And during the period between 9/11, 2012 and the attacks and the end of that week, do you recall reading any classified information?

A I don't recall specific classified information, but as a general rule, I would have access to classified information during that

time, yes.

Q As you sit here today, you can't recall anything specific that you read? And I'm just talking about physical pieces of paper that you read.

A I do not recall specifically what classified information I was reading at that time, no.

Q Do you recall if you read any classified information, other than your general practice?

A Again, as I sit here today, I couldn't say with certainty.

Q Do you recall having any classified briefings during that period?

A I don't recall having any classified briefings by the intelligence community, for example. I would, as a general rule, have been involved in meetings where classified information was discussed.

Q As a general rule, that may have occurred, but during that period, do you recall anything specifically where you participated in a classified briefing?

A I recall that in that period, there would have been communicator SVTCs that are not necessarily classified in and of themselves, but would have been held in a secure facility in the WHSR at a TS/SCI level, and it is possible that classified information would have been discussed in those meetings, yes.

Q Do you recall any of those SVTCs in particular?

A I don't.

Q We have seen evidence that there was a SVTC at 7:30 p.m.

on the night of the attacks on September 11. Did you take part in that? Do you recall?

A I don't recall as I sit here today.

Q Do you recall taking part in any specific SVTC during that week?

A Specifically I don't. I know that I did, but if you're asking for a specific sort of date, time, and topics, I don't recall.

Q When you say you know that you did, is that just based on your own understanding of your own general practice, or does something specific stand out in your mind? For example, did you review a calendar prior to this interview today that jogged your memory?

A I did not review any calendars in preparation for my appearance here today. It's a combination of as general practice, we would hold those types of meetings among the interagency, classified SVTCs, and I do recall that there were communicator SVTCs that were held that week. I don't recall specific dates and times.

Q Did you review any documents prior to the interview here today to prepare?

A I was shown less than 10 documents by White House counsel in preparation for this appearance today, documents that they thought might be raised during the questioning that they wanted me to familiarize myself with, but, no, beyond that, I did not.

Q Let's talk a little bit about the night of the attacks on September 11. Do you recall how you first heard about the attacks?

A I do not.

Q Do you recall whether somebody told you, whether you saw it on the news, whether you got an email, anything?

A I don't, unfortunately. I'm sorry.

Q Do you recall where you were at the time when you heard?

A I was at the NSC.

Q Do you recall about what time you heard?

A I do not.

Q Do you recall any discussions with anybody, and I'm not talking about the whole night. I'm just talking about in relationship to your first hearing about what had occurred?

A I can't say whether this is the first I heard, but I do specifically remember receiving an email from Toria Nuland, who was the spokesperson at the State Department at the time, wanting to ensure, on her part, that I was aware that something was happening, and asking that we remain in close touch as the situation developed in anticipation of press inquiries.

Q In response to that email, did you do anything?

A I don't recall.

Q Take us through the night, as best you can reconstruct it now a few years later, from the point where you heard about the attacks until you went home that night.

A I recall being in contact with the State Department, Department of Defense, the intelligence community, conversations with Ben and Tommy. I would have been in touch also with policy members of the NSC who had responsibility for Libya as well. I don't recall

what time I left that evening, but I know it was quite late, and when I returned home, I continued to work for a good portion of the night on BlackBerry.

Q Let's start with the conversations you may have had with people at the NSC that night. I think you mentioned Ben Rhodes and Tommy Vietor. Aside from those two, did you speak to anybody else about the attacks that you recall?

A I don't recall specifically. As a general matter when there is something that occurs that I will need to be prepared to respond publicly to, I would be in touch with whoever the policy person is at the NSC that has responsibility for that particular issue.

Q Who was that?

A At this time, it would have been Ben Fishman, who was the director for Libya.

Q During that night, can you say how many conversations you had with Ben Rhodes?

A I don't recall.

Q Was it one, a dozen?

A I really couldn't say. I don't remember.

Q Do you have a best estimate? Was it at the point where you were talking to them constantly, or were they all blending together?

A I wouldn't want to speculate.

Q That's fair. What, if anything, do you recall about any of the conversations you had with Mr. Rhodes that night?

A I recall letting him know that I was in touch with my

counterparts at the various national security agencies, that I was working with MENA, which was the Middle East-North Africa Directorate at the NSC, the policy side, which was customary and standard practice, and discussing with him how we were going to work with the interagency to determine what the press response, the public response, to this would be.

Q And how did you first communicate with him? Was it by email, by phone? Did you walk over to the West Wing? How did you do it?

A I don't recall.

Q When you had your first conversation with Mr. Rhodes, did you get the sense that he was aware of the attack?

A I don't recall that first conversation, so I couldn't say.

Q Do you recall whether you told him about the attack or whether he was already aware of it?

A Again, unfortunately as I don't remember the first conversation, I wouldn't want to speculate as to who told who.

Q As best you can recall, what did he say to you during that evening about the attacks?

A I don't recall specific conversations. As a general matter, it would have been conversations about what the public response would have been. That would have been the responsibility of the press team and the rest of the communicators in the interagency, so discussions would have centered around that topic.

Q You phrased your answer by saying what would have occurred.

I don't want you to speculate. If you don't have a specific recollection, that's fine, but do you recall, generally, anything that he said that night?

A I do not.

Q So as you sit here today, you can't recall anything that he said?

A On that specific day, no, I could not with certainty.

Q What about Tommy Vietor, did you have any conversations with him the night of the attack?

A I don't recall specific conversations. Again, as a general matter, he would have been involved in helping to determine what the public response was.

Q Generally, do you recall anything that he said to you that night?

A I do not.

Q Do you recall anything that Mr. Fishman, Ben Fishman, said to you that night?

A I do not.

Q I believe you said that you communicated with the State Department as well. Who at the State Department other than Victoria Nuland, who you already identified?

A I was in touch with press counterparts in the Department of State's Bureau of NEA Affairs. Specifically, I recall being in touch with Aaron Snipe throughout that day. He was a press officer.

Q What do you recall discussing with Mr. Snipe?

A I recall that Aaron was the first person that morning to inform me of an incident outside the U.S. Embassy in Cairo early in the morning Washington time, having discussions with him about that, and being in touch with him throughout the day as we were waiting for more information about what was happening in Benghazi.

Q What did he tell you about Cairo?

A To the best of my recollection, he told me that there had been an incident in Cairo outside the Embassy with individuals who were protesting the production of an anti-Muslim video, and that there were attempts to reach the compound walls.

Q What, if anything, did you do with regard to Cairo?

A Me personally?

Q Yes.

A I told him to keep me apprised. I asked him if the State Department had already issued a comment. And to my recollection, they had already publicly spoken and addressed what was going on in Cairo.

Q The State Department, or the Embassy in Cairo?

A The State Department said that the State Department had responded, whether that referred to the Embassy in Cairo or the Main State Department, I couldn't say.

Q Okay. Did you have any conversations with Tommy Vietor or Ben Rhodes about what was occurring in Cairo?

A Not that I can recall at that point in time. I do recall that what had happened in Cairo certainly came up once we were aware that there was an incident outside of the facility in Benghazi, but

I don't recall speaking to them in the morning about it as a separate matter.

Q Okay. So you do recall there was a time between what occurred in Cairo and what occurred in Benghazi? They were not happening at the same time?

A That is my recollection, yes.

Q And what, if anything, do you recall discussing about the relationship, if any, between what was occurring in Cairo and what was occurring in Benghazi?

A I don't recall the specifics of those conversations, simply that there was a discussion that there had been an incident in Cairo earlier in the day as we were learning about what was unfolding in Benghazi.

Q Beyond that, do you recall anything else that was said?

A I do not.

Q Did you do anything with regard to Cairo? In other words, did you prepare a draft message or anything like that? Did you do anything?

A To the best of my recollection, before I was aware of what was happening in Benghazi, we deferred to the State Department to address what was happening in Cairo, which would have been standard practice at that point.

Q It sounded like your conversation with Mr. Snipe was focused on Cairo. He was giving you a heads up on that incident. Is that fair?

A That's my recollection, yes.

Q Did you have any conversations with Mr. Snipe or anybody else at the State Department about Benghazi?

A I do recall that I was in touch with Aaron and his office, the NEA press office, again, as we became aware that there was an incident in Benghazi, yes.

Q Was it just Mr. Snipe that you communicated with or was it other people in his office?

A I don't recall specifically. Generally it would be more than one person in that office.

Q And you've told us what you and he discussed about Cairo. Do you recall what you and he discussed about Benghazi?

A I do not.

Q Did you take any notes of any of your conversations with him that we could look at, anything like that?

A I don't recall taking notes. I, generally, as a practice, wouldn't. Most of my conversations with him probably took place over email.

Q Do you recall any of your conversations with anybody else at the State Department besides Ms. Nuland and Mr. Snipe about Benghazi, the night of the attack?

A Specifically September 11?

Q Yes.

A I do recall later that night, very late that night, emailing Jake Sullivan to ask him whether Chris Stevens was dead.

Q Did you ever have any conversations, like phone

conversations, with Mr. Sullivan?

A I don't recall whether I did on that day.

Q Do you recall generally having any conversations with him that week? Or in the immediate aftermath of the attack, that general period of September 2012?

A I do recall having one phone conversation with him. I don't know whether it's in the scope of the 4 to 5 days that we're discussing.

Q Okay. What was discussed in that conversation?

A He raised that he had been unaware before Matt Olsen testified on the Hill, that Matt Olsen was going to make a link publicly to Al Qaeda in reference to the Benghazi attack.

Q Why did he raise that issue with you?

A I can't say why I was the individual that he called. I don't know.

Q Did he ask you to do anything?

Mr. McQuaid. Craig, as I think you're aware, I think that is postdating what we were here to talk about.

Mr. Missakian. No, it's not. Let's go off the record.

[Discussion off the record.]

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Let's go on the record for the conversation.

Mr. Missakian. Let's go on the record.

Mr. McQuaid. So on the record, we had a very clear understanding that's memorialized in an email that we were here to talk about September 12 through the 16, and that what you're talking about, again,

Ms. Meehan wouldn't know those exact dates, but I know from being aware of the record of the investigation, that it's the 18th, so I'd ask you to, again, direct your questions to the 12th through the 16th.

Mr. Missakian. Can we go off the record.

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Alright. Let's go back to the list of people you communicated with that night. You also mentioned you communicated with the Department of Defense, I believe?

A Correct.

Q Describe that for us.

A That would have been George Little and/or other members of his team that would be the press office at the Department of Defense, again, as part of the interagency coordination efforts to determine what the initial press posture would be.

Q Again, you say it would have been George Little and/or. I'm just asking you about what you recall. If you don't recall who you communicated with, that's fine. That's an acceptable answer. So do you recall specifically communicating with anybody from the Department of Defense that night?

A I do not recall specific conversations, no.

Q So would it be fair to say that the communications you had with DOD were email communications where they may have been on an email chain?

A Certainly, email would have been one method of

communications, yes.

Q Do you recall having phone conversations with anybody at the Department of Defense?

A I recall that we had an interagency conference call. DOD was a party to that call. I don't remember who specifically represented DOD on that call.

Q Do you recall when that conversation occurred?

A I do not.

Q What do you recall about that interagency phone call?

A Again, only that it was to coordinate what the initial press response would be.

Q What do you recall generally about what was discussed?

A I don't want to speculate, per your instructions. I don't recall specifically what that conversation was.

Q Okay. Do you recall anything generally?

A It would have been a determination. It was a determination of which agencies had equities, and that it was basically a decision about whether the State Department or the White House would be the first to speak about what was occurring.

Q What do you recall about how that decision was made as to whether or not it should be the State Department or the White House to speak initially?

A I don't recall specifically.

Q What do you recall generally?

A Generally, I recall that Toria Nuland had drafted holding

lines that she recommended on behalf of the State Department. I couldn't speak to who was involved in that decision at the State Department, but that Toria, in communicating it to us, recommended that the State Department put out initially as holding lines.

Q What is a holding line?

A A holding line is generally information that we put out to the press when there's great interest in a particular issue, and we don't have a complete understanding of what is occurring at a particular point in time, but there is a need to provide a response, so that is generally something that acknowledges what the issue is, and saying that as we have more information, we will make it available.

Q And do you recall when during the evening that phone call occurred?

A I do not.

Q Was there any information that was being provided back and forth about what was going on in Benghazi during that call?

A I don't recall.

Q As best you can recall, how did you get the information about the attack that you had that night?

A Again, I don't recall how I initially found out about the attack.

Q Now I'm going to break my own rule. How would you have learned about it?

A There are multiple possibilities. It's possible that I heard from someone internal to the NSC. It's possible that I heard,

first, from someone at the State Department who knew about it directly from the Mission in Benghazi, but I just don't recall who it was that first told me.

Q Okay. If you had received information that was being passed from the Mission in Benghazi or the Embassy in Tripoli, how would that chain have looked?

A So without saying that that's what occurred --

Q Sure.

A -- generally, on matters that contain information that's coming from a post overseas, I would receive that through the communicators office at the State Department. That was my primary channel of communication, so it would have come either through Toria Nuland in the spokesperson's Office of Public Affairs, or through the press office in the NEA Bureau.

Q And sitting here today, as best you can recall, what did you personally believe had occurred in Benghazi on the night of September 11?

A As I recall, there was a great deal of confusion about what was occurring in Benghazi. I remember that there were questions in my mind about whether this was related to what had happened earlier in Cairo, which was a result of protests based on this video that we knew had been put out in the public sphere.

So I recall, you know, when I went home and went to sleep that night not having a clear understanding really of what had happened.

Q How did you come to the conclusion that the protests in Cairo

occurred over the video?

A As I recall, that was publicly stated by people that were protesting and acting out against the Embassy at the time.

Q So you were relying on open media reports?

A Well, certainly there were open media reports stating that, and that, as I am a press officer, is something that I would be watching throughout the day, yes.

Q But would you have relied on that, in other words, accepted it as truthful?

A I would not have made any public comment without receiving information about a U.S. Government assessment, no.

Q Why is that?

A Because as a general rule, we don't speculate when we speak to the public. We rely on an assessment developed by members of the interagency community to provide facts. We are driven in any public response by factual information, not speculating on what we personally think may have happened in a particular instance.

Q So would it be fair to say that if you read something in an open media news report, you would not have relied on it because it may not be true?

A That's correct.

Q Do you have a specific or general recollection of anything you discussed with anybody at the Department of Defense, either that night or that week up to the 16th?

A I do not.

Q I think you also mentioned that you had communications with the IC or the intelligence community. Tell us what you meant by that?

A So during that broader period that we're discussing, the 12th through the 16th, the IC was responsible for feeding into the drafting of press items that would be used by members of the U.S. Government in public response, and they would have been responsible for providing us the assessment of what the U.S. Government believed to have happened in the attack in Benghazi.

Q So you would have been interacted with them for them to provide the assessments that would have then been used in, I think you said, statements by members of the U.S. Government?

A They would have fed in information to the press guidance that was then provided to people like Jay Carney, for example, Victoria Nuland, Department of Defense spokespeople, others in the U.S. Government who would be speaking publicly about the attack, yes.

Q So to specifically focus on your interaction with the intelligence community, what do you recall about that?

A So I recall that in the days that we are speaking about, I played my standard role of coordinating the interagency communicators group, so I would have been one of the repositories for gathering inputs from different agencies related to their equities and their responsibilities as it relates to what occurred in Benghazi. And I recall interacting with Shawn Turner at DNI in that regard, receiving information from him that represented the assessments of his building and others that DNI would have coordinated with, and feeding that into

the overall press guidance package that would have been provided.

Q Can you remember any specific days when you received an assessment from the DNI or the CIA?

A I can say that the DNI and the CIA, every single day, would have been part of the drafting, clearing, and approving process of press guidance. Whether they were providing new material each day, I can't say specifically.

Q Tell us a little bit about that. How does the NSC work with the DNI and the CIA to review, vet, and approve press guidance? How does that work?

A So as a general rule, the NSC helps to coordinate among the interagency, so on a case-by-case basis, depending on what the issue or the topic is, there are various people who would have a hand in drafting press guidance. Because there were so many equities involved in what had happened in Benghazi, there would have been original inputs coming from multiple agencies, so the NSC generally takes on the role as compiling those and circulating them to ensure that any agency that has an equity in what happened has an opportunity to provide input into the drafting, has an opportunity to review during the clearance process, and ultimately gives a final approval before that is used by any member of the U.S. Government publicly.

Q Let me give you an example that might give a little more context. Let's say both the DNI and the CIA provide an assessment of what occurred in Benghazi. Do those assessments come to you, to the NSC, initially?

A Are you talking about press guidance or the actual intelligence itself?

Q Right. My understanding of what you said, and I may have misunderstood was the intelligence community, the DNI, the CIA, they provide intelligence assessments. That information is then used to provide press guidance. That press guidance is, in turn, then sent back to the DNI or the CIA to review and approve?

A Uh-huh.

Q Is that the process? In other words, are they doing the press guidance first then sending it along with the assessment, or do you, at the NSC, take the assessment and use that to prepare the press guidance, which you then send back?

A I wish it was a linear process. The truth is, it's not, and that's not just in the case of Benghazi. It's often the scramble of just how the interagency works when we're responding to queries. It's not linear in the sense that it's not that DNI provides something, CIA provides something, State Department provides something. Often those agencies are working simultaneously on various parts of press guidance. It would come together in one document, and oftentimes be circulated multiple times before we have a clear product. It's not something that would sort of come over once and then be cleared.

To answer your more specific question, anything that we use publicly that refers to an intelligence assessment would use the exact language that the intelligence community provided. We would not generally fiddle with that type of language. We may put context around

it, but the intelligence community would provide what they believe to be an unclassified assessment suitable for public use.

Q So the intelligence community would have the final word on that language; are we talking about the analyst side at the CIA, or are we talking about the press shop at the CIA, if you know?

A I do not know. My counterpart, obviously, is in the press shop. They would be responsible for sending me a DNI- or a CIA-cleared product, but what their internal process is for clearing that with policy folks and senior leadership, I couldn't speak to that.

Q Let's try to dig in a little bit on the specifics of how it played out with regard to Benghazi. Do you recall receiving any specific intelligence assessments from the DNI?

A So are you asking about press guidance related to intelligence assessments or actual?

Q No, actual intelligence.

A I don't recall that I had access to those.

Q Do you recall if you had access to the actual intelligence assessments provided by the CIA?

A I don't recall.

Q Did anybody, to your knowledge, at the NSC, receive it and review the actual intelligence assessments that were being provided during this period?

A I wouldn't want to speak to what access other people had at the NSC.

Q So you don't know?

A I don't know.

Q But you did not -- well, it sounds like you would have had access, but you don't recall if you actually reviewed it that week?

A That's correct. It is possible that I would have had access. I can't say either way, because I don't recall.

Q And when you said "for use by members of the U.S. Government," I mean, there's been a lot of talk about the CIA talking points that were prepared ostensibly for use by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. In your answer, when you referred to the members of the U.S. Government, were you including those talking points and HPSCI as well?

A Yes, that would go through the same review process that press guidance for members inside the administration itself would use, yes.

Q We'll get into that a little more specifically later. I'm sure you said this already, but who was your contact at the DNI?

A Shawn Turner.

Q Shawn Turner, okay. You did say that. Thank you. Did you ever have any conversations with Ben Rhodes or Tommy Vietor about the content of any of the intelligence assessments that were being provided about the attack in Benghazi during that period?

A I do recall that I did ask Tommy and Ben to review the press guidance as part of the clearance process, and the intelligence assessments that were cleared for public use, if you will, as part of the press guidance, would have been part of what they reviewed.

Q Do you know one way or the other whether they reviewed the actual assessments, like the raw assessments that were coming from the intelligence community about the attacks?

A I don't know.

Q Did you have any interaction with the White House situation room on the night of the attacks?

A We did convene an interagency conference call. I can't recall whether we used WHSR to set up the call or not.

Q What is WHSR?

A Sorry. The White House situation room.

Q If you had used it, would the call have occurred in the situation room?

A Yes, it would have been a SVTC. It would have been a video screen SVTC.

Q Do you recall having any conversations with anybody in the situation room that night about what had occurred in Benghazi?

A No.

Q Is that something you would have done?

A No.

Q Take us through the process of how you personally collected information about the attacks in Benghazi?

A During this period of time, I would have had several channels that I would work through. One would have been the communicators at each agency who are receiving information from multiple sources within their own buildings on the policy side

generally, about what had occurred. We often shared information within that channel with each other. I would have had conversations, and I recall having conversations with Ben Fishman, who would have been the person responsible, or one of the people responsible for dealing with Libya policy within the NSC.

And the others would have been Tommy Vietor and Ben Rhodes, because both were more senior to me at the time and sat in the West Wing. It would not be uncommon that they would have more information from other channels that I was not privy to, so I would check in with them to ensure that I was, in any of my work, had access to the most updated information and the most accurate information. Those would be the general three channels.

Q That night, do you recall receiving any information from Ben Rhodes or Tommy Vietor that was new information to you, that you had not heard from those other channels you just described?

A I don't recall.

Q Do you recall, generally, that they were, essentially, on the same page with you when it came to understanding what had occurred in Benghazi?

A I do.

Q And if I understood you correctly, that was just confusion about what had occurred?

A In the early hours of the attack, yes, absolutely. And as people gathered more information, people, you know, the thinking sort of advanced with the information as it was collected.

Q Describe that process for us, going from confusion to collecting more information to the evolving understanding. Over what period of time did that play out, what did you learn? How did the assessments change?

A Well, that's a process that went on for several days, if not weeks. I couldn't say specifically, but as a general rule, and this was the case with Benghazi as well, when there was updated information from any agency, that was fed in through the communicators at each agency, so that press guidance could be updated to ensure that anything that we were saying publicly represented the most factual assessment at that given point in time. We also tried to make clear that initial information in these situations is frequently incorrect or incomplete, and that it was likely that assessments would evolve over time as more information was available.

Q Focusing on the night of the attacks, do you recall the understanding of what had occurred in Benghazi evolving that night, or was it essentially confusion from the beginning to when you left that night?

A Well, I can only speak for myself, and obviously, I'm not privy to all of the information that policymakers and senior leadership would have had access to, so I can only say that when I went home that night, there was still confusion about exactly what had occurred. When I left the NSC to go home, I still was not aware that Chris Stevens had been killed, nor that others had been killed. So it is accurate to say that when I left, there was not a full understanding in my mind

of what had occurred. I can't speak for what anyone else was thinking at that point.

Q So your best recollection as you sit here today is you learned of Mr. Stevens' death after you had left for the day?

A Yes.

Q Did you work on anything? I think you said you were working on your BlackBerry throughout the night. What were you working on?

A I was, as I said, in touch with Jake Sullivan, asking if he knew whether Chris had been killed. So that was one particular chain that stands out in my mind, and in communication with Ben and Toria Nuland at various points to see if there was any change in posture and to begin preparing for the next day.

Q Do you recall taking part in any statements that were issued by the State Department on the night of September 11?

A I don't recall specifically.

Q Do you recall generally?

A I don't. I mean, as a general matter, I would be on chains related to the clearance of such statements, but I don't recall specifically whether I provided edits or other comments on those.

Q Do you recall any discussions about any military response to the attacks in Benghazi the night of the attacks?

A I don't recall being party to any such discussions.

Q Were you a party to a discussion about whether or not the State Department should issue a statement about Benghazi and issue a statement about Cairo? Let me be more specific. Eventually, the

State Department issued a statement a little after ten o'clock that night, and the statement covered both -- we'll get to the statement. I don't want to characterize it. Did you ever recall any discussions about issuing two statements, one about what had occurred in Benghazi, and one about the video?

A I don't recall specific conversations. As I said earlier, there was, when we became aware of the attack in Benghazi, of course, discussion about whether it was related to what had occurred in Cairo, given that there had been a large protest and an attempt to breach that compound that same day.

Q What do you recall about that discussion, about whether it was connected to Cairo?

A Well, I recall that that was a discussion that was simply that, a discussion about whether it was possible that those two events were related, that it would seem irresponsible to not consider the possibility given what had occurred in Cairo earlier that day.

Q Were there people just speculating: I wonder if these two are connected; obviously there's a relationship in time, or were they discussing specific items of fact from which you might draw an inference that there was a connection?

A I cannot speak to what policymakers or intelligence officials were discussing. I was not a party to those conversations. On the press side --

Q Yes.

A -- we were certainly discussing how we would have questions

about both, and certainly, it was pretty obvious that the press would likely ask about whether there was a connection, so we would have to be prepared to answer that question. But, again, we would not be the ones to provide the answer to that question. That would come from others inside the interagency.

Q I'll show you a document that I'll mark as exhibit 1 to your interview transcript.

[Meehan Exhibit No. 1
was marked for identification.]

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Okay. Now this is an email from you sent at 9:32 p.m. on September 11 to a number of people. Do you recall sending this email?

A As I sit here today, I don't recall sending it, but I certainly don't doubt the authenticity of it.

Q Is this one of the emails you reviewed in preparation for your interview here today?

A It is not.

[11:05 a.m.]

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Now to focus first on the first paragraph, it says, the second sentence there, "The State Department will release a statement tonight regarding the events and we ask that . . ." sentence. Seeing that, does that refresh your memory at all regarding the discussion about who would be issuing a statement that night about the attacks, the White House, the State Department, anything like that?

A It does not. Only that there were conversations throughout the day that Toria earlier had sought approval for the use of holding lines, while we were figuring out what sort of the more formal response would be, but no, not beyond that.

Q And the folks in this recipient list, there are a number of them. Did you select this list at the time or is this a list that existed in your Outlook address book? Looking at it, who are these people and how did they end up on this email?

A Sure. So would you like me to go individually?

Q You don't have to go individually. Let's start with, did you compile this lists on the spot, or is this something that existed at the time?

A This, from what I can tell from looking at this now, would have been a list of the primary communicators within the interagency. I would have, in compiling this list, pulled from a larger list based

on the agencies that had an equity. So for example, Treasury is often included on interagency communicator emails. I don't, at first glance here, see Treasury listed, and that would be because there wasn't necessarily a Treasury link at this point in time. So it would have been culled from a bigger list.

Q Take a look at the second paragraph, it begins, "on an important note." And the last sentence there says, "Please do not refer anyone to the Embassy Cairo statement, which is causing significant negative backlash." Do you recall the statement that you are referring to this in this email?

A I do generally, yes.

Q What do you recall?

A I recall that Embassy Cairo released a public comment. I cannot recall what the format of that was. And this was, again, going back to what I said earlier what Aaron Snipe had apprised me of earlier in the day.

Q And what did you mean by "significant negative backlash"?

A As I recall from where I am sitting today, that statement made -- used language that some folks construed to be the United States Government apologizing -- apologizing for a video that the U.S. Government had not produced, and it had generated some negative backlash.

Q Do you recall how you became aware of that negative backlash?

A From Aaron Snipe, who was my point of contact on the press

response and anything related to Embassy Cairo throughout the day.

Q What did Mr. Snipe tell you?

A Again, that there had been some negative response to what was released by Embassy Cairo, the statement in whatever form that was released. That there was some concern about it within the State Department and that it had not been cleared by the State Department before the Embassy released it.

Q Did you have any conversation with either Mr. Vietor or Mr. Rhodes about the negative backlash that the Embassy Cairo statement had caused?

A I don't recall specific conversations.

Q Alright.

Mr. McQuaid. Just for ease of record, do you want to just put the Bates number or something about the document, the time stamp, things like that.

Mr. Missakian. Sure. For the record, this document has a document control number of C05390724.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. And for the record, it says at the bottom that it was produced to the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee in August of 2013.

Mr. Missakian. I have been told I am at the end of my hour so I will go off the record.

[Recess.]

[Meehan Exhibit No. 2

was marked for identification.]

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q I have just given you a 1-page document which we have marked as exhibit 2. It is a series of emails, the document control number is 05578259. When you have had a chance to read it over, please let me know.

A Okay.

Q And when we were off the record after last session, we had a little bit of a discussion related to my asking you whether or not you had seen any of these documents that I am now showing you. And the agreement we reached is that if you are asked a question during the interview, and you are able to answer that by the fact that you had reviewed a document that was shown to you by one of the lawyers from the White House, that you will then say, yes, I saw this document, and this helped me remember certain things that are part of your answer. Is that fair?

Ms. McQuaid. Yes. I think what we agreed is if you don't -- if there is something that Craig asks you that you -- otherwise you would not have had a recollection but you do have a more recollection because you had seen the document that has shaped, kind of influenced that recollection, then you should reference that that is part of what your memory is based on is the document.

Ms. Meehan. Okay.

Ms. McQuaid. Or represent whatever the role that had and that is appropriate.

Ms. Meehan. Okay.

Mr. Missakian. Is that understood?

Ms. Meehan. Yes.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q So let's get back to exhibit No. 2. This is a series of emails. The first one at the bottom is from Victoria Nuland on September 11th, 6:10 p.m.; you are one of the recipients. Can you tell us what we are looking at in that bottom email?

A Sure. So for the record, I don't recall this email chain. I certainly don't doubt its authenticity. So my answer will be based on the context as I read it now, versus a recollection of sending the chain at the time.

So from the context of this, this is from Victoria Nuland who was the spokesperson at the State Department at the time. These would have been some of the holding lines that I referred to earlier, based on numerous inquiries seeking sort of an initial response to what was unfolding in both Cairo and Benghazi at the time.

Q When you say these are the hold lines, you are referring to the statements in the bottom email? And I will just read them into the record. "We can confirm that our office in Benghazi, Libya, has been attacked by a group of militants, we are working with the Libyans now to secure the compound. We condemn, in the strongest terms, this attack on our diplomatic mission." And then below a series of dash lines. It says, "In Cairo, we can confirm that Egyptian police have now removed the demonstrators who had entered our embassy grounds today." And then below that, another series of dashes "For press duty

guidance, if pressed whether we see a connection between these two."

Then below that, the sentence reads, "We have no information regarding a connection between these two incidents."

A Correct.

Q So what are the hold lines in what I just read?

A So the hold lines would have been the sentence that begins with "we can confirm."

Q Okay.

A And ends with the second sentence, "We condemn in the strongest terms." The second hold line would be the sentence that begins with "In Cairo" and ends at the end of that sentence. The third sentence that you read with the instruction for press duty guidance would not have been something that was proactively put out with the other two, but would have been in response to that specific question, if asked.

Q Okay. Do you have any understanding of why that last sentence, the third sentence, would not have been included in the hold lines above?

A I don't recall what the conversation was regarding that at this time, no.

Q And to the best of your recollection, did the statements made in this email, were they accurate as of 6:10 p.m. that night?

A These would have been accurate, yes. This would have reflected the best information that the U.S. Government had at that time regarding what we understood to be the situations in those

locations at that particular moment in time.

Q Did you get any information, either that night or later that week to call into question the truth of the statement, "We have no information regarding a connection between these two incidents"?

A Can you repeat that?

Q Sure. Focusing on the third sentence, "We have no information regarding a connection between those two incidents."

A Uh-huh.

Q Assuming that you believe that statement to be true as of September 11th at 6:10 p.m., did you get any information later that night or later that week to call into question the truth of that statement?

A I don't recall as I sit here. If we did, we would have amended the statement to update -- to reflect an update in the assessment that was presented here.

Q So if there was no amendment, can we conclude from that that there was no information to call into question that statement?

A If there was no publicly updated information, you can draw the conclusion that the U.S. Government assessment had either not changed, or the information that was available in an unclassified setting and was therefore usable with the public had not changed.

Q Let's move up the chain a little bit. Victoria Nuland, in the second email from the top says, and I will quote, "We are holding for Rhodes clearance, BMM please advise ASAP." I gather the BMM is you?

A From the context of this email, yes.

Q You don't recall being referred to by those initials back in September of 2012?

A Generally, I prefer not to use my initials, so, no, but it is not uncommon. I have a long name and I know Toria well, so.

Q So you gave her a pass.

Then at the very top you write back, "Ben is good with these and is on with Jake now too." Having read that, does that refresh your memory at all as to the interaction between the NSC and the State Department with regard to these hold lines?

A Again, I do recall that there was coordination throughout the day on what the public response would be, but no, it does not jog any more recollection of what the specifics of those conversations were, only that there were frequent conversations between the agencies on how we would -- how we would make the first public comment.

Q So the fact that you are saying that Ben is good with these and is on with Jake now too, I assume, tell me if I am wrong, that when you said Ben is on with Jake, that they are on the phone together?

A From the context of this email, yes, that is how I interpret this.

Q How do you think you knew that if you were in one building and Mr. Rhodes was in another building? Is it possible at this point in the evening, you were in the same location in the West Wing with Mr. Rhodes?

A No, because I wouldn't have access to email if I was in the

West Wing, so it could be that I emailed Ben and he said I am on the phone with Jake. It could be that I called down to Ben's office, and his secretary answered the phone, and he said he's on the phone with Jake, he can't take your call. It could be that Tommy told me that he was on the phone with Jake. There are multiple reasons I could have known that, but I don't recall specifically how I knew.

Q Do you have any understanding of what the two discussed, Mr. Jake Sullivan and Mr. Ben Rhodes?

A I do not recall.

Q Going back down to the bottom portion, did you get any information to call into question the truth of any of the statements made in the press hold lines that are reflected there?

A Again, I don't remember the specific discussions around these lines. What I can say is as a general matter, we would not release anything to the public that we did not believe should be truthful or accurate at the particular time that we released it.

Q A few questions ago you said that if there was no amended public statement, that we could take from that either that the information did not change, and the statements were still true, or there might be some classified information that could be shared publicly. Would that analysis hold true with these two statements at the bottom as well?

A Yes, it would. We, as a rule, would go back on any issue, and Benghazi was no exception, multiple times throughout the day, when we are answering inquiries, to ensure that any agency that has new

information or feels that press guidance should be updated for any reason, that that agency has an opportunity to weigh in and make the appropriate edits so the press guidance reflects the most updated and accurate information at that point in time.

Q Thank you. You can put that aside.

[Meehan Exhibit No. 3

was marked for identification.]

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Ms. Meehan, I just handed you a document that has been marked as exhibit 3. It is a one-page document with document control number C05578215. Once you have had a chance to review it, please let me know.

A Okay.

Q Do you recall this email?

A As we sit here today, I do not recall this email chain, but, again, I certainly don't doubt its authenticity.

Q The bottom of email chain contains what I believe to be a draft of the statement that the State Department issued at about 10 o'clock p.m. on September 11th. Were you involved at all in the drafting or the review of the statement that was essentially put out by the State Department?

A I was involved in reviewing it. I am a party to the second part of this email chain asking for a review of this statement.

Q And do you recall anything specific about that review process?

A I do not.

Q Do you recall having discussions with anybody inside the NSC, outside the NSC, anywhere, about the content of this statement?

A I do not recall specific discussions about this statement, no.

Q Now this statement, in the second to last paragraph, refers to inflammatory material originating in the United States, which I believe to be the video that you referred to earlier. Do you recall any discussion about putting out two statements, one essentially condemning the video, and one explaining or condemning or addressing the attacks in Benghazi?

A I do not recall any such conversations.

Q Do you recall any conversation either with Mr. Vietor or Mr. Rhodes about the content of this statement?

A I do not recall any specific conversations at this time.

Q Do you recall generally?

A I do not, again, other than to say I was in communication with them throughout the day and the evening regarding public response, but specific comments about this statement I do not recall.

Q As you sit here today, did you have any role that you can recall in drafting the statement issued by the State Department?

A Not that I recall, no.

Q Did you take part in drafting any statement that was issued about Benghazi? For example, on the morning of the 12th, the very next day, the White House issued a written statement. And then after that statement went out, the President made some remarks in the Rose Garden.

Do you recall that?

A I do.

Q Were you involved in drafting, reviewing, commenting on the initial written statement issued by the White House?

A I recall being involved in the clearance process for that statement. I do not recall whether I had a drafting role.

Q How did you participate in the clearance process?

A The clearance process would have been done, or was done, I should say, over email. It would have been circulated to relevant parties within the NSC who would have had some knowledge that would have been brought to bear in ensuring what the President was going say was accurate as we understood it to be at that point in time.

Q Were you receiving information about what had occurred so you could take that information and then marry it up to the statement? I mean, how were you analyzing the accuracy of the statement?

A Well, again, consistently and continuously throughout those days, I was in contact with my counterparts at other agencies.

Q Let me stop you right there: if you want to finish, you can.

A Sure.

Q I just want to make this is an efficient as possible. You said throughout those days, I am really just focused now on the next morning, September 12. There was the written statement by the White House, and then the Rose Garden remarks that the President, which were also in writing, but the President delivered orally.

From that night, from the moment you left your job the night before

on the 11th, to the moment that the first statement went out from the White House, I mean, were you receiving information about the attacks in Benghazi that you would then use to evaluate against the accuracy of the statement or, were you just essentially reading the statement for grammar?

A Again, I don't recall specific conversations or email chains from that specific, very, very precise period of time, as it was more than 3 years ago at this point. So if you are looking for a specific answer as to who I had conversations with, or what email chains I was on, and what information was contained in those email chains, I couldn't say, because I don't recall.

Q Well, it would be fair to say that you weren't receiving any classified information on your BlackBerry, if that's how you were getting information. And I assume you don't have a secure telephone at your residences?

A That is correct.

Q Do you recall making any trips to a SCIF that night to receive information about what had occurred?

A Well, again, are we talking about the night of September 11th?

Q Yes. Into the morning of the 12th?

A I was there quite late and would have returned very early the next day, but, no, I would not have made separate trips back to the office after I left and before I arrived the next day.

Q Do you recall getting any classified information prior to

your review of that first White House statement?

A I don't recall.

Q And what do you recall, specifically or generally, about the review process of that first statement?

A Again, I don't recall.

Q Do you recall conversations with people? Do you recall making specific changes? Take us through the process of what you, personally, did to review the statement?

Ms. McQuaid. When you ask the question, please let her finish the answer. You keep stepping on it.

Mr. Missakian. That is fair.

Ms. Meehan. Again, as I said, I don't recall specific email chains or conversations from that morning regarding this statement, this written statement and verbal statement that the President delivered that you asked about.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Do you recall anything that you did with regard to that first statement?

A I do not.

Q Do you recall the second statement that the President read from the Rose Garden?

A I recall the statement, yes.

Q And there is one part of it that I want to ask you about. I read both statements, unfortunately I don't have them here, but it has been well -- well, not reported, but in the second statement that

the President read in the Rose Garden, he used the phrase "act of terror." Do you recall that?

A I do.

Q Now that phrase does not appear in the first written statement. Do you recall any discussion about including that statement in the second Rose Garden statement?

A Again, I don't recall specific conversations related to these two statements.

Q Do you have any understanding of how that phrase made it into the second statement?

A I do not.

Q Do you know who put it in?

A I do not.

Q Do you know when it was put in?

A I do not.

Q Do you know anything about that second statement?

A Again, if you are asking me to recount specific conversations, how it was cleared, what my role was, the answer is, as I sit here, no, I don't recall the specifics of that.

Q Do you recall generally anything? Like, for example, were you at your job when you were reviewing it? Were you still at home doing it on your BlackBerry, anything about it?

A I do not recall.

Q You can put that aside.

[Meehan Exhibit No. 4
was marked for identification.]

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Just so we are clear here, not your lawyer, but Mr. McQuaid asked me to allow you to finish your answers. I cut you off at one point. Was there anything you wanted to add to that answer that you weren't able to?

A No. I am fine with what I have said.

Q It happens occasionally, where we will talk over each other. It is not intended to cut you off, it is just intended to make sure that you understand the question.

A Yes, no problem, thank you.

Q Alright. What I have given you is a multipage -- a 2-page document with document control number C05578242. Once you have had a chance to review it, please let me know.

A Okay.

Q Let's kind of start with the basics here. We have got a couple of emails, actually three that are part of this 2-page document. The first one from you on September 14, 2012, at 3:46 p.m. to Benjamin Rhodes and Tommy Vietor, the subject is "Libya for Toria." What is the purpose of this email?

A So I will start by saying in regards to the earlier conversation, that this is one of the emails that I did review in preparation for my appearance here. So my memory has been jogged by

having the opportunity to see that. It is not otherwise an email chain that I recall. So if you could just repeat the question.

Q Sure. What was the purpose of the first email that appears at the bottom where the subject is "Libya for Toria"?

A So as I look at this today, through the context of the email, the purpose of this would have been, as I mentioned earlier, one of the responsibilities of the NSC press office is to help coordinate press guidance throughout the interagency, especially as it relates to press briefings that different agencies may give. The White House, for example, has a daily press briefing, as does the State Department, and Toria was the spokesperson for the State Department at the time.

So it would be normal for Toria to reach out before she briefs to ensure she has the most recent and updated information, and it would be the NSC that would generally have that collated from among the interagency.

So from the context of this email, it looks like, based on the timing of it, that Jay Carney would have briefed probably at his normal time in the middle of the day, and Toria was gagging at 4:30, which would have been later in the day than usual for her. And her office would have either reached out to me to ensure they have the most updated, or I proactively wanted to ensure that she had the most updated.

So this represents the press guidance from that day related to this topic. And I sent it to Tommy and Ben to ensure that there was no information that they had through channels that perhaps I was not privy to that would have necessitated an update of the press guidance.

Q And did you draft the body of the very first email on page 1?

A I don't recall who the drafter of that information was.

Q Having read through it, do you have an idea whether you drafted it, does it have your style?

A So I would say this press guidance is often a compilation of inputs from across the interagency. So there are certain things I would have drafted. For example, I can tell the third paragraph where it makes reference to a conversation that the President had with President Hadi, that would have come from me, because I would be responsible for drafting something that refers to the President. And the rest, likely a compilation of other agencies.

When I look at, for example, on the second page, the first question on the second page, the second question overall, where it talks about intelligence 48 hours in advance of the Benghazi attack having been ignored. That would have been provided by the intelligence agency, because it represents a comment on intelligence received in an intelligence assessment, so that language would have been provided by the intelligence agency.

Q When you say "the language would have been provided," you are talking about the answer to the question?

A That is correct. Where it says "We are not aware of any actionable intelligence indicating that an attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi was planned or imminent. We also see indications that this

action was related to the video that has sparked protests in other countries."

Q Who came up with the question? Let's use that one as an example. Your best belief is that statement came in some form from the intelligence community?

A Uh-huh.

Q I assume it is possible that it could have been revised at the NSC?

A The NSC generally would not revise anything related to an intelligence assessment. It is certainly possible that the NSC added the first phrase, this story is absolutely wrong, but we would, as a rule, generally not tweak language provided by the intelligence community related to an intelligence assessment.

Q And, I mean, if we were to go look at all the emails out there, would we expect to find an email from someone in the intelligence community that has that language in it, beginning with we are not aware of, that would have come from someone in the intelligence community; is that your best belief?

A Yes, that is my best belief. And may I just go back and answer your other question also, about where the questions came from?

Q Yes.

A So this is part of the process that I described earlier where the interagency coordinates throughout the day, not only in press guidance, but in sharing information about what we believe will be questions related to news of the day. So someone in the interagency

was likely contacted by the Independent, or would have seen that story and flagged for the rest of the interagency that this is something that we are likely to be asked about.

Q So not only the information that goes into answering the questions could have been the end product of the interagency process, but the questions as well?

A That is correct.

Q As you sit here today, you can't really tell one way or the other where any of the questions or information came from, other than what we spoke about specifically where you said it came from the intelligence community?

A And again, references in the first question and then in the question on the second page, can you explain to us again the President's comments about why Egypt was not an ally? That would have been likely drafted by me, because, again, it is characterizing the President's comments and that is generally something the NSC would have the lead on. There are other answers here that look to me like they reflect State Department input in addition to NSC input.

Q Let's go to the very first paragraph of your email to Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Vietor. I will read into the record, "I think a lot has been spinning down there that I might not be looped into, especially after the discrepancy between Jay's points and the Hill comment, Toria gaggles at 4:30, so I want to make sure she is on point with us."

Let's break that down a little bit. First who is the Jay that you refer to in that sentence?

A From the context of this email, I believe that would refer to Jay Carney, who was the White House spokesperson at the time.

Q Do you know any other Jays that it might refer to?

A I do not.

Q What points were you referring to when you referred to Jay's points?

A I don't recall specifically. My best guess from the context of this is that it refers to comments made by Jay Carney during the White House press briefing that day.

Q This would have been on Friday, September 14th?

A It could have been that day, it could have been the day previous, I can't tell, which it would have referred to, but generally, it would have referred to the White House press briefing.

Q And I know you said this, but what time does he typically do his press briefing?

A He typically briefs sometime between 12:00 and 2:00 p.m., it would depend on whether the President was traveling. If the President was traveling, it is possible that they gaggled instead of having a full briefing earlier in the morning, or a little bit later in the information. I don't know where they were on that particular day.

Q And what did you mean when you said "the Hill comments"?

A I do not know which comments that refers to. I don't recall.

Q What did you mean when you said "the discrepancy between Jay's points and the Hill comments"?

A From the context of this email, that there obviously was a discrepancy, as I wrote, between something that Jay Carney said, and something that someone on the Hill said, but I don't recall specifically what that was.

Q When you say "someone on the Hill said," what do you mean by that?

A Well, Members of Congress are out in the media quite frequently, so it could have been something that someone, a Senator or a Representative said in an interview, or in comments to the press.

Q Is it possible that you could have also been referring to a briefing provided by somebody to Members of Congress? For example, we have information to suggest that Patrick Kennedy gave a briefing about the Benghazi attacks on the evening of September 12th.

A Uh-huh.

Q Do you recall knowing about that?

A I do not recall that briefing, no.

Q So as you sit here today, you are not, if I understand you correctly, you are not sure what you meant by "the Hill comments"?

A That is correct.

Q Is there anything you could review to help you remember what you meant?

A No. I mean, I would have to look back over any public comment, or testimony, or anything related to the Hill over a period of several days to be able to make a judgment on that.

Q If somebody had given a briefing to the Hill, for example, Mr. Kennedy, would you have been aware of that possibly?

A Possibly, yes.

Q How would you have become aware of it?

A It depends, it's a case-by-case basis. I generally am made aware when there is going to be open testimony on the Hill, because we want to ensure that spokespeople are prepared to handle questions about what is discussed in an open session. Generally, if there is a closed session, I am made aware in case there are leaks from a closed session on the Hill, and the press has inquiries about that as well.

Q What role, if any, would the NSC play in preparing for a Hill briefing? Would that be based on the subject matter? Would that automatically involve someone like Mr. Rhodes or Mr. Vietor? Was there any pattern or practice to that?

A Well, again, I can only speak to the role that the press office plays. If there is preparation on sort of the policy or the leg side, that is not something I can speak to.

Q I apologize, I meant on the press side.

A But on the press side, it is common practice that we would receive a copy of an opening statement, for example, to act as the logistical coordinator to clear those remarks within the NSC with policy folks, legal folks, leg folks as appropriate.

Q Aside from an opening statement that would be typically given at a formal congressional hearing, would the NSC be involved in reviewing or vetting any other information that another agency would be providing to Congress?

A Generally, from the press point of view, in my experience, not related to Benghazi, but other general experience at the State Department, individuals who go up to testify up on the Hill often have a hard Q&A packet, or most recent press guidance, things like that. So that would often be pulled in part, if not wholly, from products coordinated from among all the agencies, sometimes through the press office.

Q As you sit here today, you don't remember anything specifically about the attacks in Benghazi and any statements that may or may not have been to Members of Congress about the attacks?

A As it relates to this particular email, that is correct.

Q Just putting the email aside, do you recall any information about the statements that were made, either by the White House, the NSC, anybody in your interagency about the attacks to Congress?

A I recall that there was the provision of what is commonly known to as the HPSCI points from the CIA, I believe, to Members of Congress who requested them.

Q We will get into that in a little bit. But beyond that, during this period from September 11th through that weekend, do you recall anything about providing information to Congress about the attacks?

A During this period of time, no.

Q Let's work our way up to the next one. This is an email from Tommy Vietor to you and Benjamin Rhodes, September 14th, at 3:50 p.m. Mr. Vietor says, "No changes. Jay leaned further into the premeditated stuff." Do you have any understanding of what Mr. Vietor meant by the second sentence in that email?

A No, I do not recall.

Q Do you recall any discussion involving whether or not the attacks in Benghazi were either spontaneous or premeditated during that period of time?

A Generally, yes. Can I recall specific conversations? No. But generally, yes. As I said earlier, there were questions about whether this could have been related to what had occurred earlier on the morning of September 11th in Cairo. I think generally in conversations, people were looking at all possibilities as they sought to figure out what had happened.

Q Do you recall there ever being a resolution of that issue during that period about whether or not the attacks in Benghazi were spontaneous, or whether they were premeditated?

A Well, I recall initial assessments indicated, as you've seen in some of the other materials that you have provided to me, were that this was a protest that had grown out of a reaction to what had occurred earlier that day in Cairo, yes, and that that assessment evolved over time.

Q What document, just so the record is clear, what document are you referring to?

A So I think from some of these earlier -- for example, deposition exhibit 3, where it refers to, in this statement from the State Department, "Some have sought to justify this suspicious behavior as a response to inflammatory material." It references our commitment to religious tolerance. And then in the holding statement in deposition exhibit 2, where Toria is putting out information, or the State Department is putting out information related to the attacks in Benghazi and the attacks in Cairo.

Q Let's flip to page 2 in the exhibit you have in front of you. The paragraph that begins "Fourth," the last sentence of that paragraph says, "The President has personally spoken to the leaders of Egypt, Libya, and Yemen and also sent a personal message to Prime Minister Erdogan." Assuming this is something that would have come from the NSC because it involves statements by the President. Do you recall any detail about how you obtained this information if you are, in fact, the person who wrote that portion of it?

A Sure. So when the President has spoken to a foreign leader, the press office is generally aware that such a conversation has taken place, either so we can prepare a written readout, or provide a readout to the press and the public, or if that is a conversation that is not going to be made public, we are aware of it in case it happens to leak so that we are aware that the conversation has taken place.

I will say that I do recall, if you look at the date of this

particular press guidance -- this is Friday, September 14th -- and just sort of give a little clarity around why we would have felt it was important to include that the President had spoken to these leaders.

Q You know, just for the clarity of the record, anything you write on the document is going to end up in the record, because this is the actual exhibit. You can do it, but I just want to let you know --

A Okay, thank you.

Q -- that it will be preserved for all of all time.

A Thank you, I appreciate it. So just to provide a little context, this press guidance was compiled on September 14th, and at that particular point in time, we had seen following the incident in Cairo on September 11th, the incident in Benghazi on September 11th, that there were violent attacks against multiple diplomatic outposts, and against personnel, in, off the top of my head, remembering Tunisia, in Yemen, in Sudan, a protest in Pakistan. So this press guidance does not solely address what occurred in Benghazi or Cairo for that matter. It reflected, on September 14th on that Friday, a series of attacks against diplomatic facilities overseas, and a very real worry that we had that on that particular Friday, that there would be more violence in that region in particular, in the Middle East-North Africa region, since Friday after prayers is often a time when we see increased demonstrations and violence in the region.

So just for the context of it, I wanted to make clear that the reason we would have included calls that the President made to those leaders is because we were incredibly worried about attacks against

diplomats in multiple areas, not just what had happened in Benghazi at the time.

Q Just to clarify the statement, was intended to include Benghazi as well?

A This press guidance addresses what occurred in Benghazi, but it is broader than that. So it also takes into account what we had seen in terms of violence against multiple diplomatic facilities throughout the region.

Q Okay. I think I know the answer to this, but in that next section, the paragraph that begins the story is absolutely wrong. The last sentence there said, "We also see indications that this action was related to the video that has sparked protests in other countries." Do you have any idea what indications are being referred to in that statement?

A I do not.

Q You can put that aside.

[Meehan Exhibit No. 5

was marked for identification.]

Mr. McQuaid. I will give Bernadette a non-exhibit copy that she can doodle on.

Ms. Meehan. That is my inclination is to highlight.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Ms. Meehan, I have just handed you a 2-page document, the control number is C05562051. It is a series of emails. Once you have had a chance to look it over, please let me know.

A My second page is blank.

Q So is mine. I am not sure why that is, but my best belief is the document is complete.

A Okay.

Q Let's start at the top this time. So you have got an email from you to Edgar Vasquez, Patrick Ventrell, Aaron Snipe, this is your reaction to receiving the tragic news about Ambassador Stevens. And this is -- you have an 11:07 response to Mr. Vasquez, 11:07 email, 11:07 p.m. Does this help you place in time where you were on that night, because I believe you said you were already at home when you heard the news?

A I don't know where I was when I received this email. I do know that I was at home when I received the email from Jake Sullivan confirming that Chris was dead.

Q So in your mind, you had pegged the time you were at home versus at the office based on Mr. Sullivan's information. Do you believe that information came before? It seems like it would come after.

A I believe it came after, yes.

Q Okay. So then looking at this, you can't tell where you were at this point in the evening?

A I cannot by looking at this, no.

Q You may have still have been at the office?

A It is possible, yes.

Q Let's look at the email you sent. This is 11:04 p.m., and

I will quote, "Just the opening of what I think we will get tomorrow, there is a SVTC at 7:00 a.m. As I mentioned earlier, we will need fully State-cleared guidance here by about 9:00 a.m." And then there is a series of lines that begin with a Q: And they appear to be a series of questions that you, or somebody, is anticipating getting from the press about Benghazi and Cairo. Is that a fair characterization of what we are looking at here?

A Yes, it is.

Q Looking at this now, do you recall whether or not you were the person that drafted these questions?

A I don't recall specifically. But it is likely that I probably drafted these questions, yes.

Q Let's drop down to the fourth question. "Is the U.S. repositioning U.S. military assets in response to the attacks in Benghazi?" Do you recall why you included that question?

A Because this is a question, one of the first questions we would get from the press. They often inquire about military action when there is a threat against embassies.

Q And the next question is, "Were the attacks in Cairo and does Benghazi link/coordinated," and the next question is "Can you confirm reports that Egyptian Copts were involved in the projection of the video?"

A Uh-huh.

Q And you are sending this email to Edgar Vasquez, Patrick Ventrell and Aaron Snipe. Why were you sending the questions to them?

A Eddie Vasquez and Aaron Snipe were press officers in the Department of State's Bureau of -- NEA Bureau, so they would have been my primary contacts into that bureau at the State Department; and Patrick Ventrell at this particular point in time, was one of Toria Nuland's deputies in the spokesperson's office, and would have been one of my points of context there if I wasn't going directly to Toria.

Q Did you view Mr. Vasquez and Mr. Snipe as subject matter experts in the area of Libya and Benghazi?

A Aaron Snipe was a foreign service officer who had served in the region, but no, they would have been my contacts because they were press officers, and they would have been responsible for circulating this to policy and substantive experts within the State Department as they saw it to be appropriate.

Q I guess what I am trying to understand is why were you including Mr. Ventrell -- I'm sorry, Mr. Vasquez and Mr. Snipe both in the NEA Bureau at the State Department?

A Correct.

Q Why were you including this versus sending this straight to Victoria Nuland's office?

A Because press guidance within the State Department isn't generally compiled by the spokesperson's office; it is compiled by the bureaus who have responsibility for the policy that is being discussed. So they would be the action officers on circulating this for drafting, clearing, and approving within the State Department.

Q Where did you get the information about the Egyptian Coptic

Christians as referred to in the question that I read? Do you recall?

A I do not recall.

Q Do you recall any discussions generally about that video and trying to get YouTube to take it down?

A I do recall, generally, that there were discussions related to concerns of the outbreak in violence in Cairo, yes.

Q And you refer here to SVTC at 7:00 a.m., I assume that means the morning of the 12th, do you recall attending or participating in that SVTCs?

A I don't recall that specific SVTCs, but I would have been there, yes.

Q You can put that document aside. We talked a little bit about what we both refer to as the HPSCI talking points, the talking points that were prepared primarily by the CIA for purposes of distribution to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. Have you ever reviewed those talking points?

A At the time, I do recall being on email chains during the drafting, clearing process, yes.

Q Have you reviewed them since then?

A I have, in preparation for this appearance here today, reviewed one document related to that email chain, yes.

Q Just take us through your role in preparation, review, and circulation of those HPSCI talking points.

A My recollection, as I sit here today, is that the CIA had the lead on drafting those talking points, but they were circulated

within the interagency for input review clearance. I remember in this particular instance, Tommy Vietor having more of a lead role at the NSC than I did on this particular set of points, but that I was on many of the email chains related to, as I said, the drafting of the clearance.

Q How did you first hear that the talking points were in the works?

A I don't recall.

Q And do you recall having any discussions with Mr. Vietor about the talking points?

A I don't recall.

Q And whenever I use the term "talking points," I am referring to the HPSCI talking points, just so we are clear.

A Understood.

Q What was the nature of Mr. Vietor's role with regard to the talking points?

A As I recall today, Tommy took the lead on the NSC side in clearing them in our building, with people who would have had an equity in taking a look at ensuring that the information was accurate and factual as we understood it to be at that point in time.

[12:14 p.m.]

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Okay. And do you have any understanding of how Mr. Vietor took the talking points and ensured that they were accurate?

A From what I recall, in terms of email chains, he would have circulated them, or he did circulate them on email. Whether there were other channels of communication he had with people in the NSC, I don't know.

Q Okay. Do you know if he reviewed any documents in the process of ensuring the talking points were accurate?

A I don't know.

Q Did you have any conversations with anybody in the Office of Public Affairs at the CIA about the talking points?

A I don't recall.

Q Do you recall having any conversations, putting aside email, about the talking points with anybody during that period of time?

A I don't recall.

Q Do you recall having an understanding of what the purpose was of the talking points?

A I do. My recollection is that members of the HPSCI had requested points from -- from the U.S. Government, in this case, directly the CIA, for use when they spoke to the public or the media about what had transpired in Benghazi, and that is not an unusual

request. We get requests from the Hill on a frequent basis for -- for requests like that.

Q Can you give me any other examples of such request?

A Outside of that timeframe, yes. One example would be during the Iran deal, we would frequently receive requests from Members of Congress for talking points that they might use when discussing the deal publicly or in TV interviews. Cuba would be another example where we would have Members of Congress reach out to ask for press guidance or talking points that they could use to discuss the administration's position on that particular policy.

Q Are these requests coming to the NSC, or those requests are going directly to the CIA as in this instance?

A It depends. It depends on who the Member of Congress is, it depends on what the policy is. It's a case-by-case basis.

Q Okay, do you recall being part of any discussion about the talking points in any way?

A Aside from remembering that I was on emails, email chains related to the clearance of the HPSCI talking points, no, I don't remember any specific conversations.

Q Do you have any understanding of whether or not those talking points were used by Ambassador Rice to prepare for her appearances on the Sunday talk shows?

A I can say that press guidance that would have been provided to Secretary -- or to Ambassador Rice at that time would have been based on press guidance developed throughout the week and updated at the time

that it was presented to her. And as the HPSCI points would have reflected what the administration was saying publicly, yes, those would have been part of the same process for creating the points that eventually went to Ambassador Rice.

Q Okay. So if I understand you correctly, it sounds like you are saying as a general practice, you believe that HPSCI talking points would have ended up in a package given to Ambassador Rice. Is that fair?

A They would have been part of the process, but they would have been -- I can't recall what date the HPSCI talking points were provided to the HPSCI, versus the date that Ambassador Rice received her press guidance. But whatever Ambassador Rice received would have reflected the press guidance that was updated and accurate at the point in time she received it. And if the HPSCI points were before that, yes, they would have been part of that package. But I don't recall the specific dates.

Q Right. So as you sit here today, you don't know one way or the other whether or not Ambassador Rice ever saw those HPSCI talking points?

A I do not.

Q Were you involved in any way in preparing Ambassador Rice for her appearances on the Sunday talk shows?

A I was, again, part of the interagency process that compiled press guidance that would have been used in a preparation package for her as she prepared for the Sunday shows.

Q Okay. Let's break it down a little bit. Do you have any firsthand knowledge, again, not what would have been done, but do you have any firsthand knowledge of the stack of information that Ambassador Rice received to prepare for the Sunday talk shows?

A Yes. The package of press guidance that she received was the product of interagency coordination and reflected the updated talking points at that point in time as cleared by all agencies with an equity.

Q Okay. So now I'm a little bit confused. I thought you said you don't know one way or another whether or not Ambassador Rice received the HPSCI talking points?

A That's right.

Q I think you just said, unless I misheard you, that the talking points, the updated talking points would have been -- were included in the material she received?

A So let me take a step back.

Q Please.

A I am not familiar with what date the HPSCI talking points were finalized and provided to the HPSCI. Secretary, or Ambassador Rice, received press guidance that was worked through the interagency, and cleared by any agency that had an equity in what had occurred in Benghazi on September 11. Those points that Ambassador Rice received would have overlapped in some way, if not have been identical to the HPSCI talking points, depending on when they were developed. I don't

know what the difference in dates was, so I can't say with certainty whether they were the same or different.

I have no idea whether Ambassador Rice received the final HPSCI talking points in that form. I have no idea. But she did receive press guidance that would have been developed the same way the HPSCI talking points were, and would have reflected the same information, but updated for the date that she received them.

Q How do you know how the HPSCI talking points were developed?

A Well, as I have been saying, I was on the email chain where they were cleared and drafted.

Q But you said HPSCI talking points followed the same process as all of the other press guidance that we -- how do you know that? I mean, how do you know what the CIA did to prepare those talking points?

A I was on the interagency chain.

Q Right. Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt you. Go ahead.

A I was on the interagency chain for the clearance of press guidance used by Toria Nuland, by Jay Carney, by George Little, by others in the administration during that week. I was also separately on the chain where the HPSCI talking points were going through drafting and clearance. That was a similar process, meaning that any agency that had an equity was involved in drafting and/or clearing, and/or approving any public points that were provided on the topic of Benghazi.

Q You would agree with me, wouldn't you, that the process of drafting and revising HPSCI talking points, I mean, only a portion of that, maybe a very small portion of that is reflected in the email

exchange is about it. And much of that work may have occurred within the four walls of the CIA. Is that fair?

A Yes, absolutely. The same way with --

Q Okay, how did you --

A -- with press guidance --

Q I'm not finished with my question.

A -- is developed inside an agency, and then once an agency has a compiled answer or product to provide, it's then fed into the interagency process.

Q I understand that, but you said HPSCI talking points were developed using the same process as the press guidance. How do you have an insight into what was going on at the CIA with regard to the HPSCI talking points?

A I don't. I can only talk to the interagency process writ large, and the interagency process was the same in both cases.

Q And going back to Ambassador Rice. It sounds like you know exactly the documents she was given to prepare. Is that true, or am I just --

A I am familiar with one of the documents that she received. If she received other materials from her spokesperson as part of her preparation, I would not be privy to that.

Q Okay. What is the one document that you know she received?

A It was the compiled press guidance that was the result of the interagency clearance process. I recall that it also had top lines

that were added in at the end of that process to give it sort of an overall frame.

Q And how do you know she received that?

A Because I received -- was forwarded in an email that contained that press guidance.

Q Was she included on that email?

A It was the email that went to her spokesperson. I can't recall if Susan specifically was on that email personally.

Q So do you have any -- I will just ask this: Were you in the room when she was prepared for her talk shows appearances?

A I was not.

Q So you don't know, one way or the other, what document she actually reviewed, or the people that prepared her were using to prepare her, you just know what was sent to her?

A Correct.

Q Did you have any discussions with anybody about that preparation?

A I don't recall.

Q Okay. Did you have any discussions with anybody about her appearance and the statements she made on the Sunday talk shows?

A Following her appearance?

Q Yes.

A I don't recall.

Q You don't recall any such discussions?

A I don't. You're asking me to recall discussions on a

specific day more than 3 years ago, and I don't recall those discussions now.

Q No, I'm certainly not doing that. I'm asking you if you recall any discussions about her appearance on the talk shows, whether it occurred on that Sunday, or another day. Do you recall any conversations?

A I don't recall specific conversations, no.

Q Do you recall generally anything that was discussed about her appearances on the talk shows?

A Well, we would, as a general rule, on a Monday, have to prepare Jay Carney and Toria Nuland and other spokespeople across the U.S. Government for their daily press briefings. And we would anticipate that appearances of U.S. Government officials on Sunday shows would often be asked about in those press briefings, so yes.

Q I don't want to get into like the next day, because that's outside the timeframe that was discussed. I'm just talking about conversations about her appearance on that Sunday.

A Right, and I'm sorry if I'm unclear, but as I've said, I don't recall specific conversations on that day about Susan's appearances.

Q Again, I'm not talking about that day. I'm talking about her appearance on that day.

A Uh-huh.

Q So we understand she appeared on the Sunday talk shows. She made certain statements about Benghazi?

A Uh-huh.

Q Do you recall generally any conversations about statements she made, whether you had the conversation on that day, or another day, we are not going to know that because you can't remember. But do you recall the conversations?

A No, as I've said, I do not recall specific conversations related to Ambassador Rice's appearance on the Sunday shows.

Q Do you recall anything generally that was said in conversation about the appearance?

A I do not.

Q Do you recall being involved in any way in preparing the President for his appearance, his interview with Steve Kroft on September 12?

A I do not recall being part of any of that preparation, no.

Q Okay. Who would have been involved in that?

A Generally, Ben Rhodes from the NSC press side. I can't speak to who from other offices would have been involved.

Q Do you recall that appearance, that interview with Steve Kroft on the 12th?

A I do not.

Q Do you recall any discussions about statements Jay Carney made during that week from September 12 to the end of the week?

A Specific discussions, no.

Q Do you recall that week being informed that the FBI had opened up an investigation into the attacks in Benghazi?

A As a general rule, I'm aware that the FBI always opens an investigation into a suspicious death of an American citizen abroad. I was familiar with that from my time at the State Department, so --

Q So as you sit here today, you don't recall a specific investigation being opened that week?

A Again, I would -- I have that general knowledge, so I don't -- I don't know whether I was informed specifically with regards to Benghazi, or whether that's just something I would have assumed.

Q Fair enough. Do you recall being told by anybody that in light of the FBI investigation that you should or should not say anything about the Benghazi attacks, in other words -- that was a bad question.

In other words, were you told by anybody that the pendency of the investigation should, I think, affect, in any way, the public statements about the attacks?

A I do recall, at least one email chain where either someone from the FBI or DOJ did ask whether folks within DOJ and/or FBI were involved in clearing guidance because of equities related to the investigation, yes.

Q Do you recall ever being told that you could not make a statement about the attacks in Benghazi because of the pendency of the FBI investigation?

A I don't recall.

Mr. Missakian. I understand I'm at the end of my hour. I just have one last document. Should I mark it and question her and then

I can turn it over to you?

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. That's fine with us. Are you okay?

Ms. Meehan. I'm okay, yeah.

[Meehan Exhibit No. 6
was marked for identification.]

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Ms. Meehan, I have just marked as exhibit No. 6, a multi-paged document, with document control number C05415285. Once you have had a chance to review it, just let me know.

Mr. McQuaid. You are not marking the one that is the exhibit.

Ms. Meehan. No. Okay.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Okay?

A Yep.

Q Alright. Let's start with the basics. We are looking at what appears to be one email. Well, no, multiple emails. Start at the back and work our way forward. The email beginning on the second to last page, this is an email from Dag Vega, dated September 14, 2012, at 7:11 p.m. I don't see you being a recipient on this email. Having read it, do you recognize it as something you received back then?

A I can see that I'm not a party to the email. I do recall being forwarded a copy of this email from one of the recipients, but do not recall ever being added in as a participant on the chain.

Q Okay. Do you recall being forwarded a copy of Mr. Vega's email?

A Of the overall email in some form or another.

Q Okay. And how do you recall that?

A In my preparation to appear today, I was provided a copy of an email that appears to be this email that was forwarded to me by one of the recipients of the email, if that makes sense.

Q It does make sense. Who forwarded the email to you?

A Erin Pelton.

Q And do we have that email?

Mr. McQuaid. I don't know.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q And did you have any conversation with Ms. Pelton about the email prior to you receiving it?

A Prior to her forwarding me the email?

Q Yes.

A Not that I recall, no.

Q Do you know why she sent it to you?

A My recollection, my recollection based on the context of the email, as I was able to review it, was that she noticed that I was not included on the email and was forwarding it for situational awareness.

Q I see. Alright, let's go through the sender and the recipients here in a little more detail. This email -- now we are on the first page. This email is coming from Ben Rhodes on September 14, 2012, at 8:09 p.m.

A Uh-huh.

Q And let's just go through the recipient list. Who is Dag Vega?

A Dag Vega was a member of the White House communications staff who was the liaison between the White House and the networks as it related to things like Sunday shows appearances and interviews.

Q And then there is what appears to be a title or possibly a group, NSC Deputy Press Secretary. Who is that?

A At this particular point in time, I believe that would have been Caitlin Hayden.

Q Is there a reason why her name wouldn't appear, as opposed to her title?

A That's a technical question. I don't know.

Q And who is David Plouffe?

A David Plouffe at the time was a member of the White House staff. I didn't have any interaction with him and don't know what specifically his job was.

Q Did you have any interaction with him at all regarding Benghazi during the period we have been talking about?

A I did not.

Q We know who Jay Carney is. Jennifer Palmieri, who is that?

A At this point in time, she was the Deputy Communications Director within the White House Communications Office.

Q And Joshua Earnest, what was his title at the time?

A At the time, he was Deputy Press Secretary.

Q Okay. And then the next name, and I'm sure I will mispronounce it, Ferial Govashiri.

A Yes, that's actually spot on. At the time, Ferial was Ben Rhodes's administrative assistant.

Q And Howli Ledbetter?

A At the time, I believe that Howli was Jay Carney's administrative assistant.

Q And Dawn Selak?

A I don't know who that is.

Q Daniel Brundage?

A I don't know who that is.

Q And we know who Erin Pelton is, and Mehdi Alhassani?

A Mehdi Alhassani, I believe at the time, was one of the administrative assistants in Denis McDonough's office.

Q To your understanding, what are we looking at in this email from Mr. Rhodes?

A Well, again, just for the record, I'm not a party to the email. But based on the context, it appears to be the press guidance that would be provided to Ambassador Rice to use as the basis for preparation for her appearance on the Sunday show.

Q And you're basing that on the fact that the subject line reference to "prep call with Susan Saturday at 4 p.m. Eastern"?

A Yes, and the context of what is included in the email, and the originating email from Dag Vega, which includes all of the logistical information for her appearance on the Sunday shows.

Q Do you have any insight as to how Ambassador Rice was selected to appear on the Sunday talk shows as opposed to Secretary Clinton or anybody else?

A I do not. I do not believe I was a party to those discussions.

Q Do you recall reviewing this document at the time? I mean, you recall it being forwarded to you, but do you recall doing anything with it once you received it?

A I certainly don't recall doing anything with it once I received from it Erin Pelton, no.

Q And prior to this going out, would there have been a discussion with Ambassador Rice about the types of questions that she could be expected to receive on the Sunday talk shows, or was that just assumed based on the course of events that week what would be talked about?

A I wasn't part of any prep that Susan did, so I can't say specifically, but generally, when we are prepping for the Sunday shows, yes, we would, much like I had described in the process earlier, when coming up with and compiling press guidance, we would discuss what we think are likely questions to be asked.

Q Would those, the likely questions that would be asked, would those be informed by the actual questions, for example, Jay Carney had been receiving at his press conferences during the week?

A They could be, yes.

Q So you folks would be aware of what he was asked and what

he was saying, and would you all have transcripts of those press conferences?

A Transcripts are available. Whether Ambassador Rice had them, I couldn't say.

Q In the first section, "goals," is this a typical format for this type of document where you have goals and I know you had used the term "top lines" previously in the interview. And then you've got Q&A that follows. Is this a typical format that the NSC press office would follow in this kind of circumstance?

A Yes, it is.

Q Okay. So what does the "goal" section mean?

A So, generally, goals would be the purpose of why the individual is appearing on the Sunday shows, what sort of the end goal is of the appearance, and what you're trying to convey.

Q And what are the top lines? How do you define top lines?

A So top lines, the best way to describe them is to also reference the Q&A. Q&A would be specific questions that we think an individual may be asked. Top lines are more general, sort of context for the overall issue at large.

Q And let's look at the goals section. One part of this that has received quite a lot of attention is the second bullet point there. And I will quote it: "To underscore that these protests are rooted in an Internet video, and not a broader failure of policy."

Do you have any understanding of what Mr. Rhodes meant to convey by that statement?

A I certainly don't want to speak for Ben. I can say more generally, looking at the date, this was Friday, September 14, and looking, again, as I reviewed the press guidance here, that the context of this particular point in time is that, again, we had seen multiple outbreaks of violence against multiple diplomatic facilities in Cairo, in Benghazi, in Tunisia, and Yemen, and Sudan, and Pakistan, and elsewhere, so this would have been -- this entire package would have been designed to address not only what had happened in Benghazi specifically, but the administration response to these outbreaks of violence and threats against American citizens more broadly across the region.

Q And from the context, do you have any understanding what he was referring to when he says "and not a broader failure of policy"?

A Again, from the context of this, yes, that this would have been to say that there was a specific reason that there was an outbreak of violence in these particular areas. And that it was not a broader failure of the President's policies in the region.

Q Okay, what policies do you believe he was referring to? In other words, for example, this could be referring to the policy behind going into Libya in the first place. It could be the policy relating more generally to the war on terror. Do you have a sense of what policy he was referring to here?

A I don't want to speculate because I don't know what Ben was referring to in particular.

Q Okay. Thank you. I don't have any further questions on

this document. And if you give me a moment to go over my notes, I may be done completely.

A Sure. Of course.

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Just one followup question. My colleague wanted me to clarify something, and it's a good point. I believe you testified that you know for certain that Ambassador Rice at least received one document for her preparation for the talk shows. Is this what we have marked as exhibit 6, that one document you know she received?

A So to clarify, to the point that you and I discussed, I can confirm that Erin Pelton, who was her spokesperson, received this document. In looking at the document, I do not see Ambassador Rice personally listed in the recipient line. And Rixon, who was also on her staff, obviously received this document, as he is the person that produced it. So I can't say whether this was presented to her, but I would have a hard time believing that this wouldn't have been passed on to her by her staff.

Q Okay. Thank you. Anything else?

Ms. Clarke. No.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Off the record.

[Discussion off the record.]

EXAMINATION

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

Q Let's go back on. Just to reintroduce myself, my name is

Susanne Sachsman Grooms. I'm with the minority staff, and we wanted to thank you for coming in voluntarily for the transcribed interview.

I want to start by going through a couple of these exhibits that you have already been through.

A Okay.

Q So let's start with exhibit 3.

A Okay.

Q And for the record, exhibit 3 contains an email from Jacob Sullivan to Ben Rhodes, you, and various others from September 11th of the night of the attacks at 9:32, with a statement which was a proposed statement for Secretary Clinton for that evening.

A Uh-huh.

Q I want to call your attention to the language that was discussed in the previous round. "Some have sought to justify" -- and I'm quoting -- "Some have sought to justify this vicious behavior as a response to inflammatory material originating in the United States. The United States deplors any intentional effort to denigrate the religious beliefs of others. Our commitment to religious tolerance goes back to the very beginning of our Nation."

When Secretary Clinton testified before the committee on October 22, she testified about that language, which was included both in that statement the night of the attacks, and in the following day. And she said, and I quote -- and I will just quote a long thing. "During the day on September 11, as you did mention, Congressman, there was a very large protest at our Embassy in Cairo. Protesters breached the

walls, they tore down the American flag, and it was of grave concern to us because the inflammatory video had been shown on Egyptian television, which has a broader reach than just inside Egypt. And if you look at what I said I referred to the video that night in a very specific way. I said, quote, " -- and she is quoting -- "Some have sought to justify the attack because of the video." I used those words deliberately not to ascribe a motive to every attacker, but as a warning to those across the region that there was no justification for further attacks."

Is Secretary Clinton's explanation consistent with your understanding of the time -- at the time of what that statement was meant to mean?

A It is.

Q Okay. And what did you think the purpose of the language was, and what do you think it conveyed?

A I think, as I sit here today and recall, it was in response to the fact that there had not only been the attack against the facility in Benghazi, but a large and frightening attack against our Embassy in Cairo. There was also, as I recall it now, a great deal of worry inside the administration that there would potentially be further attacks, or protests, or incidents outside of other diplomatic facilities in the region. It's, obviously, a very volatile region. And part of what we were doing in our public language was seeking to tamp down inflammatory rhetoric in the region and do everything we could to ensure that there was an environment that would not lend itself to

further attacks based on this video or people using this video as an excuse.

Q I'm going to move off of that exhibit.

A If I could just note one thing for the record.

Q Sure.

A You know, as we sort of discussed in one of the earlier sessions, I think that was somewhat prescient in the sense that there were, in fact, quite violent attacks against multiple other diplomatic facilities in the region as that week went on, and that was, you know, always a concern in our mind was how do we do everything that we can to ensure that there wasn't further loss of life, you know, of American life in these other areas.

Q Let's talk for just a couple of minutes and I know we have gone through it in great detail, about the night of the attack. I understand that you don't have specific recollection at this point of detailed conversations, but can you give us a sense of the feeling that was in the building on the night of the attacks, and sort of the sentiment, your primary focus, the focus of your colleagues?

A Sure. So I will sort of break that down into a couple of separate answers. My responsibility and my primary responsibility was to help coordinate among the interagency what the public response would be to incoming inquiries from the press, and then as time went on and it became clear how serious the situation was, at that point, it becomes not an issue of simply responding to incoming inquiries, but, you know,

the need for the President and others to proactively go out and address the American people.

So my primary role would be to interact with my counterparts at various national security agencies that had an equity in what was occurring, and to work with others internally to ensure that as there were public products, that the appropriate people had the opportunity to review them. With regards to the sentiment overall, you know, there was a lot of anguish and sadness.

There was a lot of confusion in the sense that you have a lot of information coming in. You had two foreign service officers who were unaccounted for -- for a period of time, trying to track down where they were and what had happened to them. For me personally, you know, I interact, obviously, with the press secretaries at the State Department. Those were individuals who worked in the same bureau as the two foreign service officers who were killed. So there was a lot of sadness, anxiety, confusion, anger on that end as well.

Q Was there -- and perhaps your role was really more on the communications side, but was there a sense of urgency within the building to make sure that the United States, as a whole, responded in a way that was quickly to save the people who were there and to protect human life?

A Yes, absolutely. I can say that as I noted earlier, I don't recall specific meetings and conversations, but I do recall very clearly that the sentiment passed down from Ben was that everything that could be done was being done; that there was an urgency, again,

in not only trying to resolve the situation in Benghazi, but doing everything that we could as a government to look across the region to see if there were other facilities that would be in need of assistance, and doing everything we could to ensure that we would not be faced with the same situation, you know, at other diplomatic facilities across the region.

Q And we saw your emails from the night of the attacks. They -- it's clear that the deaths impacted you personally, emotionally. I don't want to go into that in detail. But is that a fair description?

A Yes.

Q And once you learned of those things, you, despite an emotional reaction, you continued to work. Is that right?

A That's correct.

Q And I know there were a lot of questions about what time you went home. Certainly, we saw emails from you well into the night and the early morning until maybe 12:42 a.m. on September 12, and then it looks like the email traffic started back up again around 5:00 a.m. on September 12. Does that sound right?

A Yes, I don't recall specific times, but yes, the general timeframe sounds accurate.

Q So I don't want there to be a misimpression that you weren't, you know, still working. You were working very hard and diligently that night. Is that accurate?

A That is accurate, and thank you, yes. I think it was part

of the difficulty in recollecting specific conversations and affixing them to certain moments in time is that there was very little sleep across, you know, an extended period of days, as I mentioned. There was a lot of concern and a lot of action being taken to prevent similar occurrences at other places across the region. So it was pretty much a nonstop effort for an extended period of time, and that tends to bleed together when you look back 3 years ago.

Q And you're speaking for yourself on that, but was that sort of a shared feeling that you have about all of the -- all of your colleagues?

A Based on, you know, what I observed, yes. That would be accurate.

Q I want to shift to exhibit 4. And exhibit 4 is, just to remind the record, is an email from you on Friday, September 14 at 3:46 to Ben Rhodes and Tommy Vietor with Libya -- subject line, "Libya for Toria." We spent a lot of time on this before, so I don't want to belabor the point, but there, in that first sentence you say, "I think a lot has been spinning down there that I might not be looped into." I know sometimes people hear the word "spinning" and they start wondering what exactly that means. Can you maybe explain to us what you meant by that?

A Sure, in looking at this now from the context what I was referring to, as I said earlier, Ben Rhodes and Tommy Vietor, to whom this email is addressed, both sat in the West Wing, whereas I sat in the EEOB, you know, sort of across the street, if you will. So, by

nature, of both of their positions and their physical location, they would have had access to information, people perhaps stopping by their office that I would not have had access to. So when I said I think a lot has been spinning down there, that simply means meetings, information, conversations that they would be aware of that I wasn't. And wanting to ensure that before any information was passed back to the State Department, that I had done my diligence in ensuring that people who had access to information that I may not have had access to, had an opportunity to review this to ensure that there was nothing that, based on their prerogative, needed to be updated.

Q And there is a line in here that says "Especially after the discrepancy between Jay's points and the Hill comments." I understand you can't remember what exactly that's about. I'm going to show you a document. We will see if this refreshes your recollection, or if it's not the right thing. We are marking this exhibit 7.

A Okay.

[Meehan Exhibit No. 7

was marked for identification.]

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

Q And for the record, exhibit 7 is State Department document number C5579559.

A And just so I am clear for the record, the second page is blank.

Q Yes.

A Okay.

Q I believe we will never fully understand all of the State Department's document production, but it does seem to have some kind of a --

A Identifying number.

Q Something on it, yes. Gibberish language.

A Okay.

Q This is an email from Kimberly Dozier from AP to Shawn Turner at ODNI on Friday, September 14, at 10:34 a.m. The subject line is: "Representative Jeff Duncan, R-North Carolina said State Department had warnings of the attack 48 hours."

And it appears that it gets forwarded to you by Shawn Turner at DNI, as well as some other individuals. The question from AP was, and I'm quoting, "Hey there -- at a hearing on Fort Hood just now, Rep. Jeff Duncan, R-N.C., said State Department had warnings of the attack 48 hours -- apparently repeating the claim in the Independent, but he didn't source it to the Independent -- just said it as if it were fact. Can you clarify again?"

It says, underneath that, "Also, I understand you guys reached out to Matt Lee last night telling him the Independent report was wrong. Unfortunately, that didn't get to me until I wasted some time chasing it, so please loop me in too." And then that was sent on to you by Shawn Turner "FYI," he says, "Trying to find out where this is coming from."

So this appears to me to be a reference to a statement that Representative Jeff Duncan had said repeating the claim in the

Independent story about the State Department having warnings of the attack 48 hours beforehand. Does that seem right?

A Yes, that's an accurate characterization of the email, yes.

Q Does this refresh your recollection as to what you were talking about when you referenced Hill comments?

A Unfortunately, it does not. I don't -- I truly don't recall what I was referring to. It's possible this was it, but I just don't remember.

Q The --

A I would say that it does appear that in the email chain that you're referring to, the one where I emailed Ben and Tommy, there is a question in that press guidance that does specifically address the email chain from the AP reporter.

Q Yeah, so in exhibit 4, in that press guidance below where you say "Especially after the discrepancy between Jay's points and the Hill comments." There is a question, and the question is: "What's your response to the Independent story that says we have intelligence 48 hours in advance of the Benghazi attack that was ignored?"

And then answer, and I believe you said in the previous round, that you would have obtained the answer to that question from DNI?

A That's correct.

Q Okay. I'm going to -- we spent a fair amount of time in the previous round talking about the HPSCI talking points, so I just want to introduce exhibit 8, which is on that vein.

[Meehan Exhibit No. 8
was marked for identification.]

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

Q Exhibit 8 is a long chain of emails. I'm mostly going to point to the beginning ones, but why don't you read through the whole thing.

A Okay.

Q It is Bates Stamped STATE-SCB65819.

A Okay. Thank you.

Q And so this is, at its beginning, an email from John Tomczyk, T-o-m-c-z-y-k, Chief of Media Relations from the CIA Office of Public Affairs to Tommy Vietor, Ben Rhodes, you, Caitlin Hayden, cc'ing Shawn Turner. The subject is the "Revised HPSCI Talking Points for Review." It was sent at 5:09 p.m., and it has HPSCI talking points with a line, "The currently available information suggests that the demonstrations in Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by the protests at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, and evolved into a direct assault against the U.S. consulate and subsequently its Annex."

In a subsequent chain, Tommy Vietor sends an email around at 6:21. His statement is: "John, I know you're trying to move these fast, so here's an initial round of edits. One small tweak in sentence 3 of bullet 1 for added clarity. Denis would also like to make sure the highlighted portions were fully coordinated with the State Department in event that they get inquiries." And it -- and then the response from the CIA is: "Thanks very much for your prompt response. Tommy,

we will send over to State." And then the exchange continues.

When you were discussing in the previous round that Tommy Vietor took the lead on the NSC side in clearing the HPSCI talking points for the building to ensure that they were accurate and factual at that time, is this what you were referring to?

A Yes, it is. And for the record, per the early agreement, I did see a version of this email chain in advance of this hearing.

[1:17 p.m.]

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

Q And so, from this, it appears that what happened was that Tommy Vietor got in a version at 5:09 and then that he edited it, and that was his initial round of edits at 6:21. Is that an accurate reading?

A Yes, it is.

Q The email exchange goes on. And, at some point, Ben Rhodes, now on the first page, at 9:34 p.m., sends an email around that says, "All, sorry to be late to this discussion. We need to resolve this in a way that respects all of the relevant equities, particularly the investigation." And, at that point, they decide to loop in Department of Justice on this email.

Is that a good description of what the NSC's role was in this process?

A Yes. In fact, the first line that Ben writes -- well, the second line -- "We need to resolve this in a way that respects all of the relevant equities, particularly the investigation." The NSC takes a coordinating role to ensure that anyone throughout the interagency who, as I said earlier, has an equity is able to review, to provide input, to clear on it.

In this case, you know, DOJ was eventually looped into it because

they obviously have equities as related to the investigation. So, yes, that is an accurate representation of the NSC role.

Q Let's go to the Ben Rhodes email. It's going to be exhibit 6.

[Meehan Exhibit No. 6
was marked for identification.]

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

Q The email that came in with the HPSCI white paper talking points for use with the media comes in at 5:09. On September 14, it looks like Ben Rhodes sends out the email that's exhibit 6, subject line, "RE: PREP CALL with Susan, Saturday at 4:00 p.m. ET," at 8:09 p.m.

And it looks like in the second page there's a question: "What's your response to the Independent story that says we have intelligence 48 hours in advance of the Benghazi attack that was ignored? Was this an intelligence failure?"

And the answer to that question says, "We are not aware of any actionable intelligence indicating that an attack on the U.S. Mission in Benghazi was planned or imminent. The currently available information suggests that the demonstrations in Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by the protests at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and evolved into a direct assault against the U.S. consulate and subsequently its annex."

My read is that the sentence was cribbed in some version of the first sentence from that HPSCI talking points. Does that look right to you?

A Yes, it does. Uh-huh.

Q And that wasn't the final version of the talking points, but it was, in fact, the one that was the most recent one at the time.

A That's correct, yes.

Q And is that the process that you've been basically explaining to us throughout the day, right? You would get in additional information from different agencies that was substantive, and you would then add that additional cleared information into whatever was the most recent updated version of the guidance that was going out?

A Yes, that's absolutely correct. We would incorporate any updated information from anyone in the interagency who had relevant information and requested to make an update. And it would be our responsibility to ensure that that information is included in any of the multiple versions of press guidance or talking points that are being circulated at any given point in time.

Q And once information like a talking point gets cleared through the interagency, do you then need to reclear it every time you use it, or do you just use the cleared information until you have an update?

A So, in an instance like this where there's rapidly changing information, we would clear, certainly, at a minimum, on a daily basis

before each of the daily press briefings. That would be recirculated to everyone within the interagency that had a role in initially drafting, editing, or clearing, even if they did not provide inputs the last time around because they may now have information that's relevant. And, generally, before individuals are doing an appearance, for example, the Sunday shows, that's information that we would ensure is up to date before someone uses it in that capacity, yes.

Q Now, I'm going to assume that there were very often during this whole time period time constraints and you all were working very quickly to get out press guidance. Is that accurate?

A Yes, that is accurate.

Q And sometimes the news had stories and you were responding, and that would accelerate your timeframe?

A Yes, absolutely, particularly in cases like the Independent story, which was referenced earlier, where there is information that we know to be incorrect or believe to be incorrect at a certain period of time. We do everything we can to correct that so it doesn't, sort of, harden in the minds of people, when we know that it is not accurate to the best of our knowledge at that point in time.

Q And that Independent story -- you know, we have seen email chains where DNI, Shawn Turner was pushing back very aggressively against that. Is that accurate? Does that reflect your recollection?

A Based on, sort of, the emails that I've seen today and my recollection, yes.

Q As you were working quickly, how seriously did you

personally review the accuracy of the statements and the talking points that you were working on with respect to the attacks in Benghazi?

A Well, I take my work very seriously. It's ultimately my responsibility to ensure that anyone who has knowledge or an equity has an opportunity to review it. So, certainly, I do a close review, but I rely on policy experts, on intelligence experts, substantive experts, to ensure that the underlying substance of whatever we're saying publicly is accurate and factual.

Q And so is it fair to understand that your role is not in personally determining whether the information is accurate but instead in making sure the information gets to the relevant agency so that they can check on whether the information is accurate?

A Yes, to an extent. Certainly, if I see things within a statement or a press guidance that contradicts information I've seen in another area, it would be my responsibility, not necessarily to be the arbiter of that, but to raise the contradiction to someone's attention and say, there appears to be a difference of opinion, or, this does not appear to have kept up with changes I've seen in other documents. And someone would need to ultimately weigh in and provide a decision based on their substantive knowledge.

Q So you would flag things, but would you rely on the agencies that were providing the information pursuant to their, sort of, substantive areas for the overall substance of the information ultimately?

A Yes. Each agency would be responsible for clearing

whatever the overall package is. That does include substantive experts from the NSC who would have an opportunity to weigh in on it, as well. But, yes, there would have to be clearance from each of those relevant agencies.

Q Did you have a concern or any concern that anyone else at the NSC was not adequately concerned about ensuring the accuracy of any statement or speech that was related to the attacks in Benghazi?

A Absolutely not. In fact, every sort of instruction that we received -- you know, the instruction always when we're dealing with the public is that information needs to be factual, it needs to be accurate. If we think that things might influence what an assessment is leading to a change, we should be up front and say that this is likely to change as we gather more information.

But I do recall, on that particular day and in the days after, there was a sense of not only urgency with regards to what was happening on the ground but also, sort of, an extra-meticulous look at everything that we were putting out. Because there was a lot of information coming in; you know, there were contradictory press reports, information coming from all sorts of sources. And we had a particular responsibility to ensure that what we were putting out was an accurate reflection of what the U.S. Government believed to have happened and not, sort of, based on open sources and other information.

Q In any of the statements and the talking points related to the attacks in Benghazi that you cleared on or drafted, did you ever

intentionally insert information that you knew to be inaccurate or misleading?

A No.

Q Were you ever asked or ordered to intentionally insert information that you thought would be inaccurate or misleading?

A No.

Q Did you ever remove any accurate information that you knew caused the remaining information to be inaccurate or misleading?

A No.

Q Were you ever asked or ordered to remove any inaccurate information that you knew caused the remaining information to be inaccurate or misleading?

A No.

Q It's been alleged that the administration created a false narrative, that the YouTube video mocking the Prophet Mohammed played a role in the attack in Benghazi. What's your response to that allegation? Did the administration create a false narrative?

A No, absolutely not. I can say that, from my time working there, you know, this was a situation where you had a lot of information coming in; there were a lot of emotions. You had had a large demonstration and penetration of the compound wall in Cairo. As the days went on, there were, as I said, violent attacks against multiple other diplomatic facilities in the region.

And this was a group of people throughout the interagency, across multiple agencies, doing their best to provide accurate information,

updating that information as new information became available. And to the extent that there were comments that needed to be updated based on new information, that was a result of the situation and certainly not any deliberate attempt to mislead. Nothing could be further from the truth, in fact, based on what I saw.

Q And with specific respect to Ben Rhodes and his role in messaging around the attack, there have been allegations that he crafted a false narrative or tried to mislead the American public. From your communications with him the night of the attack and the days following, can you speak to that?

A Sure.

I would say, as a general matter, I've worked for Ben for 3 years and have never, in any experience on any issue I've worked on, had him ask me to do anything other than produce accurate, factual information.

I can also say that, specific to Benghazi, the information that was provided regarding the assessment of what had occurred in Benghazi was information that was provided by the interagency, specifically the intelligence community, as a result of their efforts. What information they put into that I can't speak to, but Ben Rhodes was not the creator or the origin of that information. So any allegation that Ben was creating a narrative that was false or misleading, it just doesn't hold up.

Q And you were at the NSC, but you are a career foreign service officer. Is that right?

A That's correct. I was on detail to the NSC from the State Department at the time.

Q So you are not a political appointee for this Administration?

A I am not.

Q I'm going to keep belaboring the point. Did you or anyone else -- that's what we do here. Did you or anyone else you worked with on any statement, talking points, or any other remarks about the Benghazi attacks make any changes that were known at the time to be false?

A No.

Q Did anyone ever pressure you to make any changes to any statement, talking points, or other remarks about the Benghazi attacks that you believed to be false?

A No.

Q And did anyone else working on any statement, talking points, or other remarks about the Benghazi attacks ever tell you that they had been pressured into making changes that they believed to be false?

A No.

Q Do you have any reason to believe that anyone, yourself included, working on any of the speeches, talking points, or remarks about the Benghazi attacks did anything other than convey as clearly and completely as they could the facts based on the best available information at the time?

A No.

Q At this point, I'm going to switch over to asking you a series of questions that we ask every witness that comes in. As you know, this is the eighth congressional investigation into the Benghazi attacks, and there have been a number of allegations about the attacks. Since we continue to investigate them, we continue to ask these questions to everyone and see if they have any evidence to support them.

There is a long series of them, so I'll apologize in advance and ask you to bear with me. If you don't have any evidence, then you can just say that; we'll move on. If you have any, obviously, please speak up.

A Okay.

Q It has been alleged that Secretary of State Clinton intentionally blocked military action on the night of the attacks. One Congressman has speculate that, and I quote, "Secretary Clinton told Leon Panetta to stand down," end quote, and this resulted in the Defense Department not sending more assets to help in Benghazi.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary of State Clinton ordered Secretary of Defense Panetta to stand down on the night of the attacks?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that Secretary of State Clinton issued any kind of order to Secretary of Defense Panetta on the night of the attacks?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that Secretary Clinton personally

signed an April 2012 cable denying security to Libya. The Washington Post Fact Checker evaluated this claim and gave it Four Pinocchios, its highest award for false claims.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security resources to Libya?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton was personally involved in providing specific instruction on the day-to-day security resources in Libya?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risk posed by Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for military operations in Libya in spring 2011.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risk posed by Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for military operations in Libya in spring 2011?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that the U.S. Mission in Benghazi included transferring weapons to Syrian rebels or to other countries. A bipartisan report issued by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence found that, quote, "the CIA was not collecting and shipping arms from Libya to Syria," end quote, and they found, quote, "no support for this allegation," end quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict the House Intelligence Committee's bipartisan report finding that the CIA was not shipping arms from Libya to Syria?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that the U.S. facilities in Benghazi were being used to facilitate weapons transfers from Libya to Syria or to any other foreign country?

A No.

Q A team of CIA security personnel was temporarily delayed from departing the Annex to assist the Special Mission Compound, and there have been a number of allegations on the cause of and the appropriateness of that delay.

The House Intelligence Committee issued a bipartisan report concluding that the team was not ordered to, quote, "stand down," end quote, but that, instead, there were tactical disagreements on the ground over how quickly to depart.

Do you have any evidence that would contradict the House Intelligence Committee's finding that there was no stand-down order to CIA personnel?

A No.

Q And putting aside whether you personally agree with the decision to delay temporarily or think it was the right decision, do you have any evidence that there was a bad or improper reason behind the temporary delay of the CIA security personnel who departed the Annex to assist the Special Mission Compound?

A No.

Q A concern has been raised by one individual that, in the course of producing documents to the Accountability Review Board, damaging documents may have been removed or scrubbed out of that production.

Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department removed or scrubbed damaging documents from the materials that were provided to the ARB?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department directed anyone else at the State Department to remove or scrub damaging documents from the materials that were provided to the ARB?

A No.

Q I'm going to ask the questions also for documents that were provided to Congress. Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department removed or scrubbed damaging documents from the materials that were provided to Congress?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that the CIA Deputy Director, Michael Morell, altered unclassified talking points about the Benghazi attacks for political reasons and that he then misrepresented his actions when he told Congress that the CIA, quote, "faithfully performed our duties in accordance with the highest standards of objectivity and nonpartisanship," end quote.

Do you have any evidence that CIA Deputy Director Mike Morell gave

false or intentionally misleading testimony to Congress about the Benghazi talking points?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that CIA Deputy Director Morell altered the talking points provided to Congress for political reasons?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that Ambassador Susan Rice made an intentional misrepresentation when she spoke on the Sunday talk shows about the Benghazi attacks. Do you have any evidence that Ambassador Rice intentionally misrepresented facts about the Benghazi attacks on the Sunday talk shows?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that the President of the United States was virtually AWOL as Commander in Chief on the night of the attacks and that he was missing in action.

Do you have any evidence to support the allegation that the President was virtually AWOL as Commander in Chief or missing in action on the night of the attacks?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that a team of four military personnel at Embassy Tripoli on the night of the attacks who were considering flying on the second plane to Benghazi were ordered by their superiors to stand down, meaning to cease all operations. Military officials have stated that those four individuals were instead ordered to remain

in place in Tripoli to provide security and medical assistance to their current location.

A Republican staff report issued by the House Armed Services Committee found that, quote, "there was no stand-down order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi," end quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict the conclusion of the House Armed Services Committee that there was no stand-down order issued to the U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that the military failed to deploy assets on the night of the attack that would have saved lives.

However, former Republican Congressman Howard "Buck" McKeon, the former chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, conducted a review of the attacks, after which he stated, quote, "Given where the troops were, how quickly the thing all happened, and how quickly it dissipated, we probably couldn't have done more than we did," end quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict Congressman McKeon's conclusion?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that the Pentagon had military assets available to them on the night of the attacks that could have saved lives but that the Pentagon leadership intentionally decided not to deploy?

A No.

Q Thank you very much. Let's go off the record.

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Ms. Meehan, I just have a few followup questions based on what you were just asked. Let's start with exhibit 3, if you could find that somewhere.

Counsel asked you a series of questions about this document, which began with her reading you a portion of Secretary Clinton's testimony from her recent hearing before Congress. And, in that testimony, Secretary Clinton offered an explanation of the purpose for this statement. And I think you were then asked about your understanding of the purpose, and you gave one.

What is your understanding of the purpose of this statement based upon? Did you have a conversation with the person who drafted it, Jake Sullivan?

A I don't recall having a conversation with Jake Sullivan, but, certainly, it is indicative of the general sense of purpose of what we were trying to convey in those initial remarks.

Q Okay. And this general sense of purpose, where did you get that from? Was it in a phone conversation the night of the attacks? Was it in a meeting? Where did that come from?

A It would have been a --

Q Again, not "would have been." Do you have a specific recollection?

A It was a compilation of what we had been working on throughout the day. I could not point to any specific conversation or any specific individual who would have said it in these exact terms. As I said, I don't believe that I was a party to drafting the specific language. But, certainly, it is an accurate reflection of what I recall to be the sentiments at that point in time.

Q Right. And I understand the sentiment that is expressed in the document. But you were asked about the purpose of issuing the statement that included that language. What is your understanding of the purpose based upon?

Like, for example, the person that drafted the statement may have had a purpose in his mind at the time he was drafting it. Do you have any insight into the purpose that Jake Sullivan had in his mind at the time?

A I certainly can't speak to what was in Jake Sullivan's mind. But, as I have said several times throughout this interview, something that was in the back of all of our minds at that time, following on not only what had happened in Benghazi but, again, the attack or the protest, the incident at the embassy in Cairo earlier that day, was a concern that there was the potential for further violence and a spreading of this violence to other facilities in the region and that there was a general need to do anything we could to tamp down the rhetoric and prevent that from happening in the region.

Q Okay.

You were also asked some questions about whether or not you

believe that the United States Government or Ben Rhodes perpetuated a false narrative about the attacks, and you said that you didn't believe that occurred.

A Correct.

Q In my mind, in order to reach the conclusion that you reached, you would have to know everything that Ben Rhodes knew about the attack or you would have to know everything that the State Department knew about the attack to reach that conclusion. Were you privy to all the information about the attacks?

A So I would say a couple things about that.

Number one, I don't know whether I was privy to all the information about the facts because I don't know what that universe of all the information is, so it would be impossible for me to say.

Certainly, it is accurate to say Ben would have been privy to conversations and briefings that I may not have been privy to. But I would also say that, again, my responsibility as one of the coordinators of the interagency means that I would see anything that was being provided by other agencies. So when we received assessments from the intelligence community, that was given from their public affairs officer directly to me. That's not something that went from Shawn Turner to Ben Rhodes and then I received a version from Ben Rhodes. I saw those direct inputs from the agencies.

So I don't see any circumstance that would make it feasible for Ben Rhodes or anyone else, frankly, at the NSC or the White House to

have made up information or modified information in a way that you're suggesting.

Q I don't believe I suggested that. If you heard that, then you misunderstood what I was saying. I'm not suggesting that anyone made up information.

I'm just saying you reached a conclusion that neither Ben Rhodes nor the U.S. Government had perpetuated a false narrative. And, in my mind, maybe not in yours, in order to draw that conclusion, you would have to know all of the information that Ben Rhodes had or that the U.S. Government had. And I'm asking you if you were privy to all that information. You said you don't know.

A Uh-huh.

Q Okay. Let's focus on some specific items.

Were you privy to all of the information that was being conveyed from the facility in Benghazi to the Embassy in Tripoli and then back to the State Department?

A I have no way to know.

Q Were you privy to any of that information?

A I was certainly privy to information that was incorporated in talking points and press guidance and other materials that would have been passed to me by my counterparts at the State Department.

Q Okay. So would it be fair to say that the information you were privy to would be circumscribed by the information you were receiving via email?

A I would have received it via email; perhaps during the SVTCs

that we've referred to in the past, where the interagency communicators gather on the same SVTC just for ease of process; or phone conversations -- any of those methods.

Q Okay. But as you sit here today, you can't say one way or the other whether you were privy to all the information known about the attacks in Benghazi.

A Correct.

Q And you were asked some questions in the litany of questions at the end about the President's actions the night of the attack. Do you have any firsthand knowledge of the President's actions or movements the night of the attack?

A The only firsthand knowledge I have is that he, if I remember correctly, conducted a very lengthy phone call with Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel that evening.

Q This is on the evening of September 11.

A I believe, to the best of my recollection.

Q Okay. Were you present for that conversation?

A I was not, but I was responsible for helping to coordinate the drafting of the public readout of that conversation.

Q Were you present to witness any of the President's movements or actions during the night of the attack?

A I was not.

Q Alright.

Mr. Missakian. I don't have any further questions.

Okay. Great. Off the record.

[Whereupon, at 1:47 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

EXHIBIT 1

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: Meehan, Bernadette [mailto: [REDACTED]]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 09:32 PM
To: Rhodes, Benjamin J. < [REDACTED] >; NSC Deputy Press Secretary; Nuland, Victoria J; [REDACTED]; Sullivan, Jacob J; Reines, Philippe I; george.little [REDACTED]; Woog, Carl R Mr
 OSD PA ([REDACTED]); 'bryan.whitman [REDACTED]';
 [REDACTED]; 'hammerma@state.gov' < [REDACTED] >;
 'shawns [REDACTED]'; [REDACTED]@state.gov' < [REDACTED] >;
 < [REDACTED] >; [REDACTED]@state.gov' < [REDACTED] >; [REDACTED];
 [REDACTED]; 'DAVID.A.LAPAN.MIL [REDACTED]';
 < [REDACTED] >; 'PATRICK.W.MCNALLY.MIL [REDACTED]';
 'patrick.r.selber.mil [REDACTED]'; Pelton, Erin; 'steven.warren [REDACTED]';
 [REDACTED]; 'tara.rigler [REDACTED]'; Andy,
 Adora (OPA) [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]
Subject: USG Public Response to Events in Libya and Egypt

All,

Starting a chain with the interagency communicators regarding the USG's public response to the events today in Benghazi and Cairo, so we're all on one chain. State Department will release a statement tonight regarding the events, and we ask all other agencies to refer to that statement as you receive press inquiries. We will work on detailed guidance for all briefings and gaggles tomorrow, which we will circulate to ensure everyone is on the same page.

On an important note, the press statement released by Embassy Cairo this morning was not coordinated with Washington. We need to do everything we can to emphasize that the USG's views are represented by the (forthcoming) State Department statement, and not the Embassy Cairo statement. Please do not refer anyone to the Embassy Cairo statement, which is causing significant negative backlash.

Please use this chain as needed to ensure everyone is on the same page with updates and guidance going forward, and don't hesitate to reach out.

Thanks,
 Bernadette
 [REDACTED]

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

EXHIBIT 2

This exhibit was not cleared for public release.

EXHIBIT 3

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

Smith, Dana S (PA)

From: Smith, Dana S (PA)
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 9:34 PM
To: Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: Re: STATEMENT

It's perfect

From: Sullivan, Jacob J
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 09:32 PM
To: Rhodes, Benjamin J. <[REDACTED]>; NSC Deputy Press Secretary; Meehan, Bernadette <[REDACTED]>; Smith, Dana S (PA); Jones, Beth E; Sherman, Wendy R
Cc: Kennedy, Patrick F; Mull, Stephen D; Reines, Philippe I; Mills, Cheryl D; Nuland, Victoria J; Nides, Thomas R
Subject: STATEMENT

Please review quickly:

I condemn in the strongest terms the attack on our mission in Benghazi today. We are working to secure our facilities and personnel. We have confirmed that one of our State Department officers was killed. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and all of those who have suffered in this attack.

This evening, I called Libyan President Magariaf to coordinate additional support to protect US diplomatic facilities and personnel. The President expressed his condemnation and condolences and pledged his government's full cooperation. In light of the events of today, the United States government is working with partner countries around the world to protect our missions, our personnel, and American citizens worldwide.

Some have sought to justify this vicious behavior as a response to inflammatory material originating in the United States. The United States deplores any intentional effort to denigrate the religious beliefs of others. Our commitment to religious tolerance goes back to the very beginning of our nation.

But let me be clear: There is never any justification for wanton acts of this kind.

EXHIBIT 4

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: Meehan, Bernadette [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 3:54 PM
To: Nuland, Victoria J
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Libya for Toria

For T

From: Vietor, Tommy
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 3:50 PM
To: Meehan, Bernadette; Rhodes, Benjamin J.
Subject: RE: Libya for Toria

No changes. Jay leaned further into the premeditated stuff

From: Meehan, Bernadette
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 3:46 PM
To: Rhodes, Benjamin J.; Vietor, Tommy
Subject: Libya for Toria
Importance: High

Ben and Tommy,

I think a lot has been spinning down there that I might not be looped into, especially after the discrepancy between Jay's points and the Hill comments. Toria gaggles at 4:30, so I want to make sure she is on point with us.

The most recent guidance I have is from this morning (pasted below). Can you review and tweak as required? I just want to make sure she isn't ambushed.

Q: What are you guys doing today to monitor and mitigate the situation in the Middle East?

We've obviously had our eyes on today since the unrest began, and we've been monitoring the situation very closely. You saw that following the incidents in response to this video, the President directed the Administration to take a number of steps to prepare for continued unrest.

First, we have significantly increased security at our diplomatic posts around the globe, with additional resources from across the government. The safety and security of our personnel is paramount and something we constantly review.

Second, we have reached out to governments in the region to make sure they are cooperating closely with us, and meeting their obligations to protect diplomatic facilities as best they can. So for instance the President had a good conversation with President Hadi of Yemen yesterday, who has deployed additional security forces around our Embassy.

Third, we've made our views on this video crystal clear to people around the world. I'd specifically point you to strong statements out of the White House and from Secretary Clinton yesterday. To reiterate what Secretary Clinton said, the United States government had nothing to do with this movie. We reject its message and its contents. We find it disgusting and reprehensible. America has a history of religious tolerance – and respect for

religious beliefs – that goes back to our nation’s founding. But there is absolutely no justification at all for responding to this movie with violence. And we are working to make sure that Muslims around the globe hear that message.

Fourth, we’ve also encouraged leaders around the globe to speak out against the violence, and you’ve seen very important statements in the Muslim world by people like Prime Minister Erdogan of Turkey, President Morsi and the Freedom and Justice Party in Egypt, and President Hadi condemning violence and calling for a peaceful response to this movie. The President has personally spoken to the leaders of Egypt, Libya, and Yemen, and also sent a personal message to Prime Minister Erdogan.

Q: What’s your response to the Independent story that says we have intelligence 48 hours in advance of the Benghazi attack that was ignored?

This story is absolutely wrong. We are not aware of any actionable intelligence indicating that an attack on the U.S. Mission in Benghazi was planned or imminent. We also see indications that this action was related to the video that has sparked protests in other countries.

Q: What about the claim that documents were taken from the compound that may endanger our Libyan partners?

I’d refer questions about what documents were in specific buildings to my State colleagues.

Q: Can you explain to us again the President’s comment about why Egypt was not an ally?

I think you heard me answer this yesterday. Egypt is a critical partner of the United States. As you know, the President had an important conversation with President Morsi very early yesterday morning about the need to protect our embassy and personnel in Cairo, and the need to denounce the violence.

President Morsi expressed his condolences for the tragic loss of American life in Libya and emphasized that Egypt would honor its obligation to ensure the safety of American personnel.

This was not an effort to change our relationship with Egypt in any way. We have had a long-standing partnership with Egypt, and have supported their transition to democracy. We are now working to build our relationship with what is obviously a new government.

Q: Are you concerned that our relationship with Egypt and other Muslim countries is quickly deteriorating? Is the Arab Spring now about hatred of America?

I think we need to step back a bit. The Arab Spring was about people across the region rising up to demand their basic rights.

The protests we’re seeing today were sparked by a disgusting and reprehensible video.

I would also remind everyone that though protests are what you see on the news, there are millions of Muslims around the world that are simply trying to go about their day and raise their families.

EXHIBIT 5

REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: Meehan, Bernadette [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 11:07 PM
to: [redacted]
Subject: RE: Qs for tomorrow

Oh my God, no. No. No. No. oh my God.

From: [redacted]@state.gov
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 11:07 PM
To: Meehan, Bernadette; [redacted]
Subject: Re: Qs for tomorrow

We just got the confirmation we were dreading on Ambassador.

From: Meehan, Bernadette [mailto:[redacted]]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 11:04 PM
To: [redacted]
Subject: Qs for tomorrow

Just the opening of what I think we will get tomorrow. There is a SVTC at 7:00am, but as mentioned earlier, we will need fully State-cleared guidance here by about 9am.

- Q: Are all USG personnel in Libya accounted for? Is Ambassador Stevens alive?**
- Q: Who was the Department of State officer killed?**
- Q: How was the Department of State officer killed?**
- Q: Is the US repositioning military assets in response to the attacks in Benghazi?**
- Q: Were the attacks in Cairo and Benghazi linked/coordinated?**
- Q: Can you confirm reports that Egyptian Copts were involved in the production of the video?**
- Q: Has anyone in the US government reached out to Terry Jones?**
- Q: What is the status of the US mission in Benghazi?**
- Q: What is the status of the US embassy in Tripoli?**
- Q: What is the status of the US embassy in Cairo?**
- Q: Were any Americans hurt in the Cairo attack?**
- Q: Why did the US apologize for the attack on its own embassy in Cairo?**
- Q: Is the GOL cooperating with the US?**
- Q: Is the GOE cooperating with the US?**

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE

EXHIBIT 6

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMM.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

C05415285 Date: 10/20/2015

C05415285-MOU

From: Rhodes, Benjamin J. [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 8:09 PM
To: Vega, Dag; NSC Deputy Press Secretary; Plouffe, David; Pfeiffer, Dan; Carney, Jay; Palmieri, Jennifer; Earnest, Joshua R.; Govashiri, Ferial; Ledbetter, Howli J.; Selak, Dawn; Brundage, Daniel; [REDACTED] Alhassani, Mehdi K.
Subject: RE: PREP CALL with Susan: Saturday at 4:00 pm ET

Goals:

- To convey that the United States is doing everything that we can to protect our people and facilities abroad;
- To underscore that these protests are rooted in an Internet video, and not a broader failure of policy;
- To show that we will be resolute in bringing people who harm Americans to justice, and standing steadfast through these protests;
- To reinforce the President and Administration's strength and steadiness in dealing with difficult challenges.

Top-lines:

- Since we began to see protests in response to this Internet video, the President has directed the Administration to take a number of steps. His top priority has been the safety and security of all Americans serving abroad.
- First, we have significantly increased security at our diplomatic posts around the globe, with additional resources from across the government. The safety and security of our personnel is paramount and under constant review.
- Second, we have reached out to governments in the region to make sure they are cooperating closely with us, and meeting their obligations to protect diplomatic facilities as best they can. For instance, we've seen cooperation from Yemen and Egypt cooperate significantly after President Obama called those leaders.
- Third, we've made our views on this video crystal clear. The United States government had nothing to do with it. We reject its message and its contents. We find it disgusting and reprehensible. But there is absolutely no justification at all for responding to this movie with violence. And we are working to make sure that people around the globe hear that message.
- Fourth, we've encouraged leaders around the globe to speak out against the violence, and you've seen very important statements in the Muslim world by people like Prime Minister Erdogan of Turkey, President Morsi of Egypt, and others who have condemned the violence and called for a peaceful response.
- I think that people have come to trust that President Obama provides leadership that is steady and statesmanlike. There are always going to be challenges that emerge around the world, and time and again he's shown that we can meet them.

C05415285 Date: 10/20/2015

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMM.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

C05415285 Date: 10/20/2015

Q: Are you concerned that our relationship with Egypt and other Muslim countries is quickly deteriorating? Is the Arab Spring now about hatred of America? Did President Obama lose the Arab World?

I think we need to step back a bit. The Arab Spring was about people across the region rising up to demand their basic rights. The protests we've seen these last few days were sparked by a disgusting and reprehensible video.

The fact is, this is a time of extraordinary change in the Arab World. But we've been able to build cooperative relationships with these new governments.

You saw that in Libya, where there's been full cooperation with the United States and an outpouring of support for Chris Stevens and the work that he did.

You saw that in Egypt, where President Obama was able to call President Morsi directly, which led to the Egyptians calling for calm and providing much more security at our Embassy.

So this part of the world has been faced with unrest many times in recent decade. But we're going to keep moving forward, and we believe that strong U.S. leadership can lead to a region that is more stable and more responsive to the people.

Q: Have you failed to articulate a policy for dealing with the Arab Spring?

You have heard the President articulate a very consistent set of principles and support for universal rights as the Arab Spring has unfolded. We support the process of nonviolent political and economic change and reform in the region. Of course, that process will look different in different countries.

There are countries where that transition has occurred, like Egypt, Yemen and Tunisia, and we're working to help them consolidate their democracies, deal with security needs, and stabilize their economies.

In other places like Syria that are still in throes of revolution, we have opposed the brutality of the regime and are supporting the aspirations of the people.

While this process unfolds, this President has left no doubt that he will continue to protect our other interests - destroying al Qaeda, bringing our men and women in uniform home from Afghanistan, and strengthening our leadership in the world.

But the Arab Spring is going to take time to play out. This is an enormous change. And that is why we need to stay focused and firm on behalf of our principles, as the President has done.

Q: What's your response to the Independent story that says we have intelligence 48 hours in advance of the Benghazi attack that was ignored? Was this an intelligence failure?

We are not aware of any actionable intelligence indicating that an attack on the U.S. Mission in Benghazi was planned or imminent. The currently available information suggests that the demonstrations in Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by the protests at the US Embassy in Cairo and evolved into a direct assault against the US Consulate and subsequently its annex.

Q: Can you explain to us again the President's comment about why Egypt was not an ally?

C05415285 Date: 10/20/2015

Egypt is a critical partner of the United States. As you know, the President had an important conversation with President Morsi about the need to protect our embassy and personnel in Cairo, and the need to denounce the violence.

President Morsi expressed his condolences for the tragic loss of American life in Libya and emphasized that Egypt would honor its obligation to ensure the safety of American personnel. The President is very appreciative for the statement President Morsi made and for the actions he's taken to date to secure our Embassy.

This was not an effort to change our relationship with Egypt in any way. We have had a long-standing partnership with Egypt, and have supported their transition to democracy. We are now working to build our relationship with what is obviously a new government.

If Pressed: I'm not here to get into a long exchange about diplomatic terminology. The President has made it clear that Egypt is a close partner of the United States, and that we have expectations that the Egyptian government will meet its obligations to protect our facilities.

Q: Romney's advisor said that these protests wouldn't have happened under President Romney?

Well I'm not here to talk politics. Events abroad are unpredictable, Foreign policy challenges emerge no matter who is President. And I think that people have come to expect steady, statesmanlike leadership from this President on national security, and his response to these protests is no different

Israel / Iran

IRAN

Q: Is there a split between the United States and Israel on redlines? What are the U.S. redlines with Iran?

The President has been clear that he is determined to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon and that all options are on the table in pursuit of that goal. We share the same objective as the Israelis, and there is no daylight between us on that matter of stopping Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

The question of when we would consider a resort to military action involves multiple variables and would be shaped by conditions on the ground. We will continue our unprecedented security consultation and cooperation with the Israelis as we move forward.

This President is not going to take military action unless it is absolutely necessary. But I think the Iranians know full well that he is committed to preventing them from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

Q: Did the President rebuff Prime Minister Netanyahu's request for a red line?

The President has always been clear about his red line. He is determined to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon and that all options are on the table in pursuit of that goal. We share the same objective as the Israelis, and there is no daylight between us on that matter of stopping Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

Q: Why did the President refuse to meet with Prime Minister Netanyahu at UNGA?

President Obama is in frequent contact with the Prime Minister, as you would expect given his commitment to Israel's security and the range of challenges in the region. And when they need to speak to each other - they do so. We also talk regularly to our Israeli counterparts at all levels of government.

C05415285 Date: 10/20/2015

Just the other day, when reports of tension came up in the press, the President was able to pick up the phone and call the Prime Minister and speak to him for an hour. They agreed on their commitment to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. And they agreed to stay in close contact in the days to come.

They did look at whether it would be possible to meet. But the fact is, they're just not going to be in New York at the same time – the President will be there at the beginning of the week, Bibi will be there at the end of the week. So their schedules just don't match up.

If pressed: Did he seek a meeting in Washington?

My understanding is there wasn't a request to meet in Washington. What I know is that they're not in New York at the same time during UNGA. I don't have any other scheduling updates, but I am certain that they'll remain in close contact.

From: Vega, Dag
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 7:11 PM
To: Rhodes, Benjamin J.; Vietor, Tommy; Plouffe, David; Pfeiffer, Dan; Carney, Jay; Palmieri, Jennifer; Earnest, Joshua R.; Govashiri, Ferial; Ledbetter, Howli J.; Selak, Dawn; Brundage, Daniel; PeltonE@state.gov; Alhassani, Mehdi K.
Subject: PREP CALL with Susan: Saturday at 4:00 pm ET

We plan to hold a call on Saturday at 4:00 PM ET to help prepare Susan for her interviews on the Sunday shows. She will appear on all of them.

Here are the numbers:

Phone Number:
Asscode:

Here are the promos.

NBC MEET THE PRESS

Obama's Foreign Policy Test

The race between President Obama and Governor Romney has entered new territory as the deadly attack on a U.S. consulate and the continuing anti-American protests overseas have forced foreign policy back into the spotlight. How does the Obama administration plan to respond? Plus, is the U.S. still a reliable ally to Israel against Iran? U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice will join us.

ABC THIS WEEK

After four Americans were killed Tuesday, including U.S. ambassador to Libya Christopher Stevens, in an assault on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, questions remain about what sparked the violence – a controversial anti-Islamic film, or a planned attack by Al Qaeda militants? As American embassies throughout the region remain under fire, did the U.S. do enough to prevent attacks in Libya, Egypt, and Yemen? How will the ongoing protests and violence across the region impact U.S. relations and standing in the Middle East?

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice speaks to ABC News senior White House correspondent Jake Tapper, Sunday on "This Week."

CBS FACE THE NATION

U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Susan Rice

The latest on what's happening abroad and what it means for the region and the international community with U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice.

C05415285 Date: 10/20/2015

FOX NEWS SUNDAY

Anti-US protests are spreading across the Arab world days after a deadly attack on the consulate in Libya. What should the US involvement be in the trouble region? Chris Wallace discusses the situation with Susan Rice, the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N.

EXHIBIT 7

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: Vietor, Tommy [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 10:39 AM
To: Shawn.Turner [REDACTED]; Nuland, Victoria I; Sullivan, Jacob I; Rhodes, Benjamin J.; Reines, Philippe I; Meehan, Bernadette [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Rep. Jeff Duncan, R-N.C., said state department had warnings of the attack 48 hours
Attachments: image001.png

Several folks out on TV this AM stating this as fact. AP has an obligation to as the Congressman, not the administration, where his information is from. Obviously Shawn is on the record here saying something different. We will have Jay reiterate what you said, if asked Shawn.

From: Shawn.Turner [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 10:37 AM
To: Vietor, Tommy; [REDACTED] nulandvi@state.gov; SullivanJJ@state.gov; Rhodes, Benjamin J.; ReinesP@state.gov; Meehan, Bernadette; [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Rep. Jeff Duncan, R-N.C., said state department had warnings of the attack 48 hours

FYI – Trying to find out where this is coming from.

From: Dozier, Kimberly [<mailto:KDozier@ap.org>]
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 10:34 AM
To: Shawn S Turner
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Rep. Jeff Duncan, R-N.C., said state department had warnings of the attack 48 hours

Hey, there – At a hearing on fort hood, just now, Rep. Jeff Duncan, R-N.C., said state department had warnings of the attack 48 hours – apparently repeating the claim in the Independent, but he didn't source it to the Independent – just said it as if it were fact.
 Can you clarify again?

Also,, I understand you guys reached out to Matt Lee last night, telling him the Independent report was wrong...unfortunately, that didn't get to me until I wasted some time chasing it, so please loop me in too.

AP

Kimberly Dozier | Intelligence Writer
 AP, Suite 700 | 1100 13th St. NW | Wash, D.C. 20005
 o: +1 202 641 9590 www.kimberlydozier.com

The information contained in this communication is intended for the use of the designated recipients named above. If the reader of this communication is not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that you have received this communication in error, and that any review, dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify The Associated Press immediately by telephone at +1-212-621-1898 and delete this email. Thank you.
 [IP_US_DISC]

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

msk dccc60c6d2c3a6438f0cf467d9a4938

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

EXHIBIT 8

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 9:44 PM
To: [REDACTED] 'Benjamin J. Rhodes [REDACTED] NSC Deputy Press Secretary <Thomas_F_Vietor [REDACTED]>; Nuland, Victoria J <NulandVJ@state.gov>; 'Shawn.Turner [REDACTED] 'Bernadette M Meehan [REDACTED]; 'Caitlin M Hayden [REDACTED] 'tBradser [REDACTED] [REDACTED]@state.gov>; Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>; Adams, David S <AdamsDS@state.gov>; [REDACTED] Schmalzer, Tracy (OPA) (JMD) < [REDACTED]>; Boyd, Dean (NSD) (JMD) < [REDACTED]>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Revised HPSCI Talking Points for Review

Including DOJ on the e-mail- Tracy Schmalzer and Dean Boyd.

From: [REDACTED]
To: Benjamin_J_Rhodes [REDACTED]; Thomas_F_Vietor [REDACTED] < [REDACTED]>; NulandVJ@state.gov <NulandVJ@state.gov>; Shawn.Turner [REDACTED] < [REDACTED]>; Bernadette_M_Meehan [REDACTED] < [REDACTED]>; Caitlin_M_Hayden [REDACTED] < [REDACTED]>; tBradser [REDACTED] < [REDACTED]>; SullivanJJ@state.gov <SullivanJJ@state.gov>; AdamsDS@state.gov <AdamsDS@state.gov>; [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Sent: Fri Sep 14 21:36:15 2012
Subject: RE: Revised HPSCI Talking Points for Review

Thanks, Ben. Looping in [REDACTED]

From: Rhodes, Benjamin J. [mailto: [REDACTED]]
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 9:34 PM
To: Vietor, Tommy; [REDACTED]; 'NulandVJ@state.gov'; Shawn S Turner; [REDACTED] Meehan, Bernadette; Hayden, Caitlin; 'tBradser [REDACTED] < [REDACTED]>; 'SullivanJJ@state.gov'; 'AdamsDS@state.gov'; [REDACTED]
Cc: Media
Subject: Re: Revised HPSCI Talking Points for Review

All -

Sorry to be late to this discussion. We need to resolve this in a way that respects all of the relevant equities, particularly the investigation.

There is a ton of wrong information getting out into the public domain from Congress and people who are not particularly informed. Insofar as we have firmed up assessments that don't compromise intel or the investigation, we need to have the capability to correct the record, as there are significant policy and messaging ramifications that would flow from a hardened mis-impression.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

We can take this up tomorrow morning at deputies.

From: Vietor, Tommy
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 09:26 PM
To: [REDACTED]; 'nulandvj@state.gov' <nulandvj@state.gov>; 'Shawn.Turner' <Shawn.Turner@state.gov>; [REDACTED]; Rhodes, Benjamin J.; Meehan, Bernadette; Hayden, Caitlin; 'tBradser' <tBradser@state.gov>; [REDACTED]@state.gov' <[REDACTED]@state.gov>; 'SullivanJJ@state.gov' <SullivanJJ@state.gov>; 'AdamsDS@state.gov' <AdamsDS@state.gov>; [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Revised HPSCI Talking Points for Review

Given the DOJ equities and States desire to run some traps, safe to assume we can hold on this until tomorrow?

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 09:19 PM Eastern Standard Time
To: [REDACTED]; 'nulandvj@state.gov'; Vietor, Tommy; 'Shawn.Turner' <Shawn.Turner@state.gov>; Rhodes, Benjamin J.; [REDACTED]; 'tBradser' <tBradser@state.gov>; 'SullivanJJ@state.gov'; 'AdamsDS@state.gov'; [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Revised HPSCI Talking Points for Review

Just a question- but separate from the FBI concerns, has DOJ, provided input? They will have to deal with the the prosecution and related legal matters surrounding the federal investigation.

From: [REDACTED]
To: nulandvj@state.gov <nulandvj@state.gov>; [REDACTED]; 'Shawn.Turner' <Shawn.Turner@state.gov>; Benjamin J. Rhodes; Bernadette M. Meehan <Bernadette.M.Meehan@state.gov>; Caitlin M. Hayden <Caitlin.M.Hayden@state.gov>; tBradser@nss.eop.gov <tBradser@nss.eop.gov>; [REDACTED]@state.gov <[REDACTED]@state.gov>; SullivanJJ@state.gov <SullivanJJ@state.gov>; AdamsDS@state.gov <AdamsDS@state.gov>; [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Sent: Fri Sep 14 19:52:25 2012
Subject: RE: Revised HPSCI Talking Points for Review

On that very issue, Toria, we are waiting to hear back from the Bureau. Didi

From: Nuland, Victoria J [mailto:nulandvj@state.gov]
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 7:39 PM
To: Nuland, Victoria J; NSC Deputy Press Secretary; [REDACTED] Shawn S Turner; [REDACTED]; Rhodes, Benjamin J.; [REDACTED] tBradser [REDACTED]; [REDACTED] Sullivan, Jacob J;

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

Adams, David S

Cc: Media

Subject: RE: Revised HPSCI Talking Points for Review

I just had a convo with [REDACTED] and I now understand that these are being prepared to give to Members of Congress to use with the media.

On that basis, I have serious concerns about all the parts highlighted below, and arming members of Congress to start making assertions to the media that we ourselves are not making because we don't want to prejudice the investigation.

In same vein, why do we want Hill to be fingering Ansar al Sharia, when we aren't doing that ourselves until we have investigation results... and the penultimate point could be abused by Members to beat the State Department for not paying attention to Agency warnings so why do we want to feed that either? Concerned...

+Jake Sullivan, Dave Adams here

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: Nuland, Victoria J

Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 7:16 PM

To: NSC Deputy Press Secretary; cynthlr [REDACTED]; Shawn.Turner [REDACTED]; [REDACTED] Rhodes, Benjamin J.; Meehan, Bernadette; Hayden, Caitlin; tBradse [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: Revised HPSCI Talking Points for Review

Are these for open or closed hearing? If open, the line about "knowing" there were extremists among the demonstrators will come back to us at podium – how do we know, who were they, etc... So I'll need answers to those if we deploy that line, tx.

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: Vietor, Tommy [mailto:[REDACTED]]

Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 6:48 PM

To: [REDACTED] Shawn.Turner [REDACTED]; [REDACTED] Rhodes, Benjamin J.; Meehan, Bernadette; Hayden, Caitlin; tBradse [REDACTED] Nuland, Victoria J; [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: Revised HPSCI Talking Points for Review

FYI, Brennan will have edits. Im waiting for those.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 6:43 PM
To: Shawn Turner [REDACTED]; Vietor, Tommy; Rhodes, Benjamin J.; Meehan, Bernadette; Hayden, Caitlin; tBradser [REDACTED]; nlandvj@state.gov; [REDACTED]@state.gov
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Revised HPSCI Talking Points for Review

Looping in State. I think that's a good adjustment.

From: Shawn S Turner
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 6:41 PM
To: [REDACTED]; Vietor, Tommy; Rhodes, Benjamin J.; Meehan, Bernadette; Hayden, Caitlin; tBradser [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Revised HPSCI Talking Points for Review

I've been very careful not to say we issued a warning. Any concerns with adjusting the first highlighted line to say:

- On 10 September we notified Embassy Cairo of social media reports calling for a demonstration and encouraging jihadists to break into the Embassy.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 6:24 PM
To: Vietor, Tommy; Rhodes, Benjamin J.; Meehan, Bernadette; Hayden, Caitlin; tBradser [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]; Shawn S Turner
Subject: RE: Revised HPSCI Talking Points for Review

Thanks very much for your prompt response, Tommy.

Will send over to STATE.

From: Vietor, Tommy [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 6:21 PM
To: [REDACTED]; Rhodes, Benjamin J.; Meehan, Bernadette; Hayden, Caitlin; tBradser [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]; Shawn S Turner
Subject: RE: Revised HPSCI Talking Points for Review

[REDACTED] I know you're trying to move these fast so here's an initial round of edits. One small tweak in sentence 3 of bullet 1 for added clarity. Denis would also like to make sure the highlighted portions are full coordinated with the State Department in the event that they get inquiries.

HPSCI White Paper Talking Points for Use with the Media
14 September 2012

- The currently available information suggests that the demonstrations in Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by the protests at the US Embassy in Cairo and evolved into a direct assault against the US Consulate and subsequently its annex. This assessment may change as additional information is collected

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

and analyzed and currently available information continues to be evaluated. On 10 September we warned of social media reports calling for a demonstration in front of Embassy **CAIRO** and that jihadists were threatening to break into the Embassy. (this is ok as changed above...)

- The crowd almost certainly was a mix of individuals from across many sectors of Libyan society. The investigation is on-going as to who is responsible for the violence. That being said, we do know that Islamic extremists participated in the violent demonstrations.
- Initial press reporting linked the attack to Ansar al-Sharia. The group has since released a statement that its leadership did not order the attacks, but did not deny that some of its members were involved. Ansar al-Sharia's Facebook page aims to spread sharia in Libya and emphasizes the need for jihad to counter what it views as false interpretations of Islam, according to an open source study.
- The wide availability of weapons and experienced fighters in Libya almost certainly contributed to the lethality of the attacks.
- The Agency has produced numerous pieces on the threat of extremists linked to al-Qaeda in Benghazi and eastern Libya. These noted that, since April, there have been at least five other attacks against foreign interests in Benghazi by unidentified assailants, including the June attack against the British Ambassador's convoy. We cannot rule out that individuals had previously surveilled the US facilities, also contributing to the efficacy of the attacks.
- The US Government is working with Libyan authorities and intelligence partners in an effort to help bring to justice those responsible for the deaths of US citizens.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 5:09 PM
To: Vietor, Tommy; Rhodes, Benjamin J.; Meehan, Bernadette; Hayden, Caitlin; tBradser [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED] Shawn.Turner [REDACTED]
Subject: Revised HPSCI Talking Points for Review

Colleagues:

Apologies for the delay.

Please review this revised version:

HPSCI White Paper Talking Points for Use with the Media
 14 September 2012

- The currently available information suggests that the demonstrations in Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by the protests at the US Embassy in Cairo and evolved into a direct assault against the US Consulate and subsequently its annex. This assessment may change as additional information is collected and analyzed and currently available information continues to be evaluated. On 10 September we warned of social media reports calling for a demonstration in front of the Embassy and that jihadists were threatening to break into the Embassy.
- The crowd almost certainly was a mix of individuals from across many sectors of Libyan society. The investigation is on-going as to who is responsible for the violence. That being said, we do know that Islamic

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

extremists participated in the violent demonstrations.

- Initial press reporting linked the attack to Ansar al-Sharia. The group has since released a statement that its leadership did not order the attacks, but did not deny that some of its members were involved. Ansar al-Sharia's Facebook page aims to spread sharia in Libya and emphasizes the need for jihad to counter what it views as false interpretations of Islam, according to an open source study.
- The wide availability of weapons and experienced fighters in Libya almost certainly contributed to the lethality of the attacks.
- The Agency has produced numerous pieces on the threat of extremists linked to al-Qaeda in Benghazi and eastern Libya. These noted that, since April, there have been at least five other attacks against foreign interests in Benghazi by unidentified assailants, including the June attack against the British Ambassador's convoy. We cannot rule out that individuals had previously surveilled the US facilities, also contributing to the efficacy of the attacks.
- The US Government is working with Libyan authorities and intelligence partners in an effort to help bring to justice those responsible for the deaths of US citizens.

Thanks,



Chief, Media Relations
CIA Office of Public Affairs



STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

**INTERVIEW OF
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF
MAGHREB AFFAIRS**

BEFORE THE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, DECEMBER 17, 2015

APPEARANCES

FOR THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI

CRAIG MISSAKIAN, *Deputy Chief Counsel*
SHERIA CLARKE, *Counsel*
HEATHER SAWYER, *Minority Chief Counsel*
PETER KENNY, *Minority Senior Counsel*
RONAK DESAI, *Minority Counsel*
DANIEL REBNORD, *Minority Professional Staff*
ERIN O'BRIEN, *Minority Detailee*

FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ERIC SNYDER, *Senior Counsel*
LAURA E. DECK, *Attorney-Adviser*

FOR DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF MAGHREB AFFAIRS

RAEKA SAFAI

Ms. Clarke. Good morning. This is a transcribed interview of Ms. [REDACTED] conducted by the House Select Committee on Benghazi.

This interview is being conducted voluntarily as part of the committee's investigation into the attacks on the U.S. diplomatic facilities in Benghazi, Libya, and related matters pursuant to House Resolution 567 of the 113th Congress and House Resolution 5 of the 114th Congress.

Could you please state your name for the record?

Ms. [REDACTED]. My name is [REDACTED].

Ms. Clarke. Thank you. And, again, the committee appreciates your appearance at this interview today.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Yes.

Ms. Clarke. My name is Sheria Clarke. I'm with the majority staff. And we'll just take a moment to go around the room and have everyone introduce themselves.

Mr. Missakian. I'm Craig Missakian. I'm also with the majority staff.

Mr. Desai. Ronak Desai with the minority staff.

Ms. Sawyer. Heather Sawyer with the minority staff.

Mr. Rebnord. Dan Rebnord with the minority staff.

Mr. Kenny. Peter Kenny with the minority staff.

Mr. Snyder. Eric Snyder, State Department.

Ms. Deck. Laura Deck, State Department.

Ms. Safai. Raeka Safai, AFSA.

Ms. Clarke. Okay.

Before we begin, I just want to go over the ground rules and explain how the interview will proceed.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Sure.

Ms. Clarke. Generally, the way the questioning proceeds is that a member of the majority will ask questions for up to an hour, and then the minority will also have an opportunity to ask questions.

Questions may only be asked by a member of the committee or designated staff members. We'll rotate back and forth, 1 hour per side, until we are out of questions, and that's when we will conclude the interview.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Okay.

Ms. Clarke. Unlike a testimony or deposition in Federal court, the committee format is not bound by the rules of evidence, and the witness or their counsel may raise objections for privilege, subject to review by the chairman of the committee.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Okay.

Ms. Clarke. If these objections cannot be resolved in the interview, the witness may be required to return for a deposition or a hearing. Members and staff of the committee, however, are not permitted to raise objections when the other side is asking questions.

This session is going to begin in an unclassified setting.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Okay.

Ms. Clarke. We have arranged a classified setting for this afternoon should there be questions that the answers to those questions

call for a classified setting.

Ms. [REDACTED]. I understand.

Ms. Clarke. You're welcome to confer with counsel at any time throughout the interview. And if something needs to be clarified, just let us know. We'll do our best to clarify the questions.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Okay.

Ms. Clarke. If you need to discuss anything with your counsel, just let us know. We can go off the record and give you a moment to do so.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Thank you.

Ms. Clarke. We'd like to take a break whenever it's convenient for you. This can be after every round of questioning or whatever you prefer. If you need anything, a glass of water, coffee, just let us know, and we'll take a break and allow you the opportunity to get that.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Thank you.

Ms. Clarke. We just want to make this as comfortable a process as possible.

As you can see, an official reporter is taking down everything you say today to make a written record. So we ask that you give verbal responses to all questions, yes and no, as opposed to nods of the head.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Uh-huh.

Ms. Clarke. And I'm going to ask the reporter to jump in if you do respond nonverbally.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Got it.

Ms. Clarke. Also, I'd ask the reporter to remind us, if we begin

talking over each other, not to do so so that we'll have a clear record.

If you have a question, again, or if you don't understand any of our questions, let us know. Again, we're happy to clarify or repeat the questions. And we just want you to -- if you don't honestly know the answer to a question, we just ask that you give us your best memory, but we don't want you to guess. If there are things you do not know or can't remember, just say so, and please inform us who, to the best of your knowledge, may be able to provide the answer to our questions.

Ms. [REDACTED]. I understand.

Ms. Clarke. You are required to answer questions from Congress truthfully. Do you understand that?

Ms. [REDACTED]. I do.

Ms. Clarke. This also applies to questions posed by congressional staff in an interview. Do you also understand that?

Ms. [REDACTED]. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Clarke. Witnesses that knowingly provide false testimony could be subject to criminal prosecution for perjury or for making false statements. Do you understand that?

Ms. [REDACTED]. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Clarke. Is there any reason you are unable to provide truthful answers to today's questions?

Ms. [REDACTED]. No.

Ms. Clarke. Thank you.

That's the end of our introduction. Does the minority have anything they'd like to add?

Ms. Sawyer. We just thank you for being here. We appreciate your willingness to appear voluntarily.

It is my understanding, are you currently posted in the United States?

Ms. [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]. I had to fly back this week.

Ms. Sawyer. Okay. So you flew back in order to be able to appear before the committee?

Ms. [REDACTED]. I did.

Ms. Sawyer. So we appreciate that very much.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Of course.

Ms. Sawyer. We also appreciate the work of the State Department to help make that happen.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Thank you.

Ms. Sawyer. Thank you for being here.

Ms. Clarke. Thank you.

The clock now reads 10:09, so we'll go ahead and get started.

EXAMINATION

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q If you could, Ms. [REDACTED], could you just give us a brief overview of your career at the State Department?

A Okay. Sure. I am a foreign service officer, ma'am. I joined the State Department as an FSO in 1999. I am a political officer by specialization, but, like all foreign service officers, I've done a variety of assignments both in Washington and overseas.

I began my career as a consular officer in Thailand; then we moved on to Kosovo. My early Washington assignments were as a country desk officer for Armenia and Georgia. Then I worked for an office that no longer exists called -- it was in the Office of the Secretary for stabilization and reconstruction operations that's since become the SCO Bureau, Conflict and Stabilization Operations. I was then a special assistant to the Deputy Secretary when it was Bob Zoellick.

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to be sent back for Arabic language training for 2 years and then served in Cairo and Baghdad, then the State Department Operations Center as a senior watch officer. Following that assignment, I was the Deputy Director for Maghreb Affairs, 2011 to 2013, as you know.

Then I went up to Boston as the diplomat in residence for New England, where I spent a year. It was, you know, an academic and recruiting assignment.

And, since June of 2014, I have been [REDACTED] as the Deputy Director of our [REDACTED]. That's right. And I'm assigned to be [REDACTED] [REDACTED].

Q How long were you a senior watch officer in the Ops Center?

A Thirteen months, ma'am. That's the normal Ops assignment.

Q Okay. Did your time overlap with [REDACTED]?

A It did. Yes, ma'am.

Q Was it concurrent time? Or how much time did you overlap?

A If I recall correctly, we probably overlapped for about

9 months, 9 or 10 months.

Q And when you began as the Deputy Director of the Maghreb Affairs, was that at the beginning of 2011, or was it --

A No, ma'am. It was in middle of August 2011.

Q So your time in the Ops Center ended sometime in July-August 2011?

A Right. Right at the beginning of August, yeah.

Q So I want to talk to you in a little bit of reverse chron order, so --

A Okay.

Q -- I want to talk with you -- we are going to start with what you were doing, what you heard, what you learned on the night of the attacks. So if you could just walk us through what you recall about the night of the attack. When did you first learn about it? How did you learn about it? What did you do in response to what you learned?

A Okay.

On September 11 of 2011, I was in my office that afternoon in NEA/MAG, and the first I recall of hearing about the attack was late afternoon around 4 p.m. I got a call from a friend and colleague who's the Deputy Director of the Executive Office of NEA. She called me and she's like, "Hey, I saw something in the press. Sounds like there is an attack on the mission in Benghazi. What are you hearing?" And I said, "Look, nothing yet. I'll get back to you."

So I shouted out to the office. I sat kitty-corner from the Director of the office and the Libya desk officers. And, like, "Hey,

guys, have we heard anything from post? You know, [REDACTED] is hearing this in the press."

We started checking all the news sources, and that's when the information from different press sources started coming in about what appeared to be an attack on the special mission in Benghazi.

Q And did you receive any alerts from the Ops Center or any other alerts from within the State Department?

A I recall receiving an alert from the Operations Center, but I don't recall exactly what time that came in, ma'am. So it was sometime late afternoon, early evening.

Q And once you became aware of the attack, what did you do?

A It was a very trying day. So we, as a team, kind of huddled and were like, okay, how do we want to approach this within NEA/MAG. And my director went up to work with Assistant Secretary Jones in her office. They were reaching out to our DCM in Tripoli.

The team in our office, not just the Libya desk officers but the desk officers for our other three countries in Maghreb Affairs, started looking at the press, started pulling information from Twitter, you know, Arabic language social media, et cetera.

We were all fielding calls. People across the State Department and friends of ours who knew Ambassador Stevens started calling us. They're like, "What's going on, guys? Do you know anything?"

In the early evening, I suggested that [REDACTED] go upstairs, go back up to the Operations Center since she and I were both experienced with the practices of the Operations Center. One of the key

responsibilities of the Ops staff is to help conduct the Secretary's telephone diplomacy.

Ms. Clarke. Thank you. We'll pause right there. Just for the record, let it reflect that Mr. Westmoreland has joined us.

Mr. Westmoreland. How are you?

Ms. [REDACTED]. I'm well, sir. Thank you.

Mr. Westmoreland. Thanks for being here.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Thank you, sir.

So [REDACTED] went up to the Operations Center to help the team there prepare what we call a call sheet. We were aware that the Secretary of State would want to start calling Libyan officials as soon as possible, reaching out to get clarification from them, seek assistance, et cetera. And so she helped prepare the call sheet for the Secretary's phone call to Magariaf.

And she was on the call. It's the practice of the Operations Center to be -- several colleagues on the floor listen to the Secretary's phone call. We don't participate, obviously, in her conversations, but just help with the notes and the notes for the record.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q And did you also listen in on the call?

A No, ma'am. It's not appropriate. You must be on the Operations Center floor --

Q Oh, understood.

A -- to be part of that.

Q Okay.

And was [REDACTED] in the Ops Center for the remainder of the night?

A I don't recall how long she was up there. I mean, frankly, a lot of what I was doing was fielding calls from -- and reaching out also. You've got to recall, this was a really, really tough week. The region was generally in turmoil during the Arab Spring. I was reaching out to my other three embassies in the region to find out if they were okay, if they were concerned about security developments.

And one or two of those DCMs and ambassadors reached out to me proactively to be like, hey, you know, good luck with what's happening. Let us know if we can help in any way from the region if the team needs help, if there's going to be any evacuations, if we can provide any support, et cetera.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

So it was just that kind of -- so it's a little bit foggy, exactly -- but I was there until early hours of the morning. I think my office director and a couple of desk officers went home and showered and ate, so I stayed behind. And then we swapped out so everybody could freshen up and come back.

Q So was there someone from the office there throughout the night?

A Yes. Absolutely. Yeah.

Q Once you were alerted to the attack, did you reach out to

anyone outside of the State Department? Did you talk to anyone with the White House or the NSS?

A I don't recall. Our focus was internal, our team in Libya and my other posts in the region. I did have a number of emails from friends around the world, you know, friends, other diplomats from around the world, not Americans, people who were reaching out that were like, "Are you okay? We're just hearing this in the press." Or, "Do you happen to be in Libya right now?" They weren't sure what my role was. So yeah.

Q After you received the initial alert or the initial information that there was an attack, did you receive subsequent updates from the Ops Center or from [REDACTED] about what was happening on the ground?

A Frankly, a lot of the updated information was coming in from the media. And then we started receiving information, as well, from our DCM in Tripoli, Mr. Hicks, as well as information was coming in on the classified system, not very much. But colleagues, different agencies were checking on different avenues to look for more information on the Ambassador's whereabouts.

Q And did you have access to that? Is it classified information?

A Ma'am, we -- yes. For -- I don't want to say most, but as the Deputy Director of NEA, I had two computers on my desk. I had access to unclassified email and classified email. And we were receiving, you know, updates or questions on both sides.

Q I think earlier you mentioned that the Director, Mr.

██████████, went upstairs to the Assistant Secretary's office --

A Yes.

Q -- and that at some point during the night she began to have conversations with the DCM in Tripoli?

A I believe so. Yes, ma'am.

Q Did you receive any information about the substance of those conversations? Were they providing updates to the rest of the NEA staff about what they were learning from the people on the ground?

A If I recall correctly, yes. You know, Mr. Hicks and our team were trying to figure out what was happening in Benghazi, trying to engage with Libyan officials, engage with contacts across Libya, and seek the assistance of the Libyan authorities.

Q And, if you recall, at that time in the evening, what was your understanding of what was transpiring and what had transpired at the mission in Benghazi?

A Ma'am, at that time in the evening, that evening was very unclear. I mean, there was conflicting information in the press and on social media. We were just trying to figure out exactly what was going on. I had no definitive understanding that evening.

Q And did the reports that were coming in from Tripoli on the ground, was there anything relayed by those individuals about what they thought had occurred?

A I don't recall that. I think I and my colleagues in the field were trying to figure out what was happening. I don't think

anybody ventured a specific guess. It was just, let's figure out what's happening.

Q Did you personally talk to anyone that was in Libya that night?

A I don't think I did, ma'am.

In my role, I mean, we had thought about, okay, how do we divvy this up. You know, I'll field the calls from Washington and from our colleagues, and I'll focus on email. [REDACTED] went up to Ops. Other desk officers were looking at media. [REDACTED] was up helping Assistant Secretary Jones and reaching out to post.

So I don't recall calling anyone in Libya. And they were pretty much flat out, so --

Q And when you say you fielded calls from others in Washington, was that from other agencies? Or who were you fielding calls from?

A A lot of the calls were from friends of Ambassador Stevens and other colleagues who were in Libya at the time, as well as other friends in NEA or, you know, friends who had once been a foreign service officer. Just people calling to see how we were doing. "I just heard this in the press. How are you guys doing?"

A lot of calls with the Executive Office in NEA that work on, you know, remembering, okay, we have this many folks here, you know, thinking about how do we do the best we can for this post. Do we need to think about an evacuation? Is there a security concern in Tripoli, as well? Do we need to worry about our colleagues there? Do we need

to evacuate? Once folks come out of Benghazi to Tripoli, how do we get them -- so a lot of the practical, like, what are our next steps, what are our checklists for our next steps.

Q And so that was kind of your responsibility that evening, to field those types of calls?

A Yes. And just in general, I mean, we were all trying to support one another. And we had a wider concern, you know, [REDACTED] and I, for what else was happening in the region with our other posts, but primarily for Libya that evening.

Q Did you have any discussions within NEA about whether to and how to evacuate the individuals in Benghazi?

A That was already underway. I mean, DCM Hicks and our regional security professionals in Tripoli had already made a game plan for how folks were going to come out and come back to Tripoli.

And then we were looking at the, you know, core diplomatic staff we had in Tripoli, like, okay, who should we send out? Does everybody still need to remain here while we assess the circumstance? Do we need an order of departure to get them out? So those were some of the conversations we were having.

But, again, I'm on the policy side. I was not directly involved with decisions about planes or -- I was there to help the resources people think about, okay, if we had, like -- I don't recall exactly how many, ma'am, but if we have -- okay, the DCM is going to need this person. He's got really good Arabic; he can engage with the press and do the reporting support. These other people are not emergency staff

for this -- you know, kind of helping that discussion.

Q So I just want to understand, were you a part of the discussions to determine who were going to be evacuated and at what point? Or were you just relayed that information and then you would relay it on?

A No. I was explaining, kind of, the different roles of the staff there to the Executive Office folks, the guys who were doing resources and planning. And I was not -- it was the DCM and the NEA leadership who ultimately made the call, like, who do we evacuate at this time, who do we get to Germany, and who stays to support the DCM -- who, unfortunately, became charge the next day.

Q And when you say the NEA leadership, is that at --

A The Assistant Secretary.

Q Okay.

A Yeah. Yeah.

Q Thank you.

During that night, did you participate in any conference calls, interagency conference calls?

A I don't remember participating in those. I'm sorry.

Q Okay. Do you remember participating in any SVTC calls?

A I don't remember that that evening, ma'am.

Q There was a SVTC around 7 p.m. on the evening of September 11, and do you recall hearing about the SVTC or being updated about what was discussed during that SVTC?

A No, I don't. I don't. No, I don't.

Q Okay.

I want to show you an exhibit. We'll mark this as exhibit 1.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 1

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q And just take your time to read it.

A Okay. Do you have copies for --

Q Yes.

A Thank you, ma'am.

Q For the record, this is exhibit 1. It has a document number SCB 000029, and it's an email chain on September 11, 2012. And it begins with an email from Ben Fishman to you and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] about a statement from the GNC.

And, for the record, who is Ben Fishman?

A Ben was our Libya director at the National Security Council at the time.

Q And we've seen other emails on this evening where you're corresponding back and forth with Ben Fishman about various aspects of the attack. Does this refresh your memory about some of the people that you may have corresponded with on that night?

A Yes, it does. It looks like Ben and I had several exchanges that evening.

Q And can you explain to us, kind of, your relationship, working relationship, with Mr. Fishman and what would have prompted his reaching out to you and your reaching out to him on that evening?

A Well, in general, you know, as the Deputy Director of NEA/MAG, my role was to kind of mentor our country desk officers for the four countries, you know, as having some Washington experience, having been a desk officer myself, and helping make sure they were supporting our posts properly in the field, writing the right paper to support our Assistant Secretary and the State Department principals, and occasionally you know, weighing in on particular substantive areas in support of the Director if he needed my help in a particular area.

So Ben, as the director for Libya, was responsible for coordinating all of the USG agencies working on that country on those issues, so calling meetings, et cetera. He would occasionally reach out to the desk informally or to me informally and say, "Hey, how are things? I saw that cable from post. That was interesting. Do you guys have further" -- so, you know, it was very informal.

In this case, I don't recall reaching out to him. It looks like he wanted to make sure we were aware of information he got from this contact.

Q Okay.

About halfway down on the first page, he emails you and asks if there has been any thought to reach out to Turkey about what they may have present in Benghazi.

A Sure.

Q And then your response was, "I'll check in with Ops."

Do you recall checking in with Ops about Turkey or any other countries that were in Benghazi and what their presence was like and

whether or not they could provide any information or provide assistance?

A I don't remember in depth. What I remember is, internally, in our team, in NEA/MAG, and then Ops asking what other countries have diplomatic missions there, who else might know what's happening on the ground. So it was just a very brief -- and I didn't pursue it further after that.

Q Did you have any other discussions with anyone, with [REDACTED] or Assistant Secretary Jones, about the other diplomatic presence in Benghazi?

A I imagine -- and I don't recall exactly -- but I imagine I probably forwarded this chain to [REDACTED], as well, and to consider -- I had not visited Benghazi myself, but we were aware that the Turkish Government had several consulates, several commercial facilities in Libya.

Q And I will note for the record, at the very top you do actually forward it to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

Outside of this email, do you recall any other interaction with Mr. [REDACTED] about the presence of other countries in Benghazi and the resources or information that they may have had about what was happening?

A I don't recall that, ma'am.

Q At the very top, you write, "Ops tells us Jeff is already on the phone with Beth." I assume this is referring to the Assistant Secretary, Beth Jones?

A Yes, that would have been Beth Jones.

Q And who is Jeff?

A If I recall correctly, it would be Jeff Feltman, who had been our Assistant Secretary recently and who had moved on to the U.N. I'm pretty sure that's what I was referring to.

Q And it indicates that she had gleaned some information from him, and it also indicates that Qatar might be a good avenue.

Do you recall any further discussion with [REDACTED] or with Assistant Secretary Jones about the information that Mr. Feltman provided?

A I do not. I do not.

Q If you look back on the first page, at the very, very top, it's an email from Ben Fishman to you. And on the first page, it says, "I don't know why Pat Kennedy is so concerned about what extra security folks are wearing. Does that come from Greg?"

And then your response is, "I bet Kennedy is worried about further repercussions and attacks if U.S. military is too obvious."

What did you base your response to Ben Fishman on?

A I based my response on the recent historical context. So, in Libya, as with many other countries, we're very sensitive to host-nation concerns about whether U.S. military are in uniform or not. And Libya, if I recall correctly, they were -- the folks who were there were not in uniform. They wore civilian dress suits to sort of blend in.

And I think that's what I was referring to, you know, people were blending in more.

Q So it was based off of recent events, and it wasn't necessarily a conversation that you had had with Secretary Kennedy --

A No, no, no.

Q -- or any discussion that you may have?

A No. Certainly not. My role was not to have special conversations with the Under Secretary about that, yeah.

Q So it wasn't a remark that he made during a meeting or anything that you were privy to.

A No, ma'am. Well, if there was, I wasn't privy to it. I was referring to the historical context of what our military -- you know, how people looked in the field at that time.

Q And, within NEA, did the individuals within NEA share Under Secretary Kennedy's concern about whether or not these individuals that evening were dressed in military attire versus civilian attire?

A I wouldn't necessarily know.

Q Did you share the same concern?

A I'll be honest with you, ma'am; that wasn't my focus that evening. My focus was are our people okay, what exactly is happening, you know. So I don't recall having that conversation with anyone.

Q Okay.

During the evening, were you aware or were you updated on any deployment of any military assets to assist in Benghazi?

A I'm not comfortable discussing that here. Is it possible to discuss that in a different setting?

Q Yes.

A Okay.

Q Can you share with us here how you became aware of that information?

A If I recall correctly, I received an email on my classified email beginning to discuss that issue -- not in great depth, again, as I was the policy person, I was not the military advisor. So, yeah.

Q And did you participate in any phone calls discussing that issue?

A I don't recall being on a phone call. I apologize. I don't recall that. No.

Q Later in that evening, there was a subsequent attack on the CIA Annex in Benghazi. And were you made aware of that incident, as well?

A Yes, I was, ma'am. I believe I and my team first heard of it through the media because it was very public very quickly. Yeah.

Q And what did you do in response to that information?

A I don't recall exactly what I did in response to that information. People knew about it very quickly throughout our building because every press outlet -- it was widely covered.

Q Did that change any of your responsibilities for the evening? I think before you said you were fielding calls and email requests about, kind of, the people who were there and who might need to stay and who might need to be evacuated. Once you learned about the attack on the Annex after all of the State people had been moved to the Annex, did that change any of your responsibilities for the

evening?

A I think the immediate goal was to figure out what the heck is going on and who's still around to help. That was sort of the immediate goal. Once we saw that news, I saw that news, I'm like, okay, let's keep focused on what we've been doing and see what else transpires.

Q And so did you reach out to any additional people for more information, anybody within the interagency? Did you brief Assistant Secretary Jones about any more information you gleaned? I am just trying to understand, once you received this information, what were you doing following that?

A We continued, ma'am, what we continued to do, was track different local media sources and international media sources to try to figure out what we could piece together about what happened.

I did not personally need to reach out to other agencies for information because, if I recall correctly, that started feeding in to the Assistant Secretary and to NEA, like, "Here is what we're hearing from different sorts of people in the field."

Q Were you privy to that information?

A I don't recall exactly what -- I don't remember what I was privy to. I mean, I -- I apologize.

Q Throughout the evening, what -- what I'm trying to understand is kind of how the evening progressed in NEA. So, throughout the evening, did you all have subsequent meetings where you gathered and said, "This is what we're learning"? How were people

updated in NEA throughout the evening about what was happening on the ground, what were the decisions being made about the people on the ground, et cetera?

A If I recall correctly, what we were doing was the folks in -- you know, our desk officers and others who were tracking the media were feeding that information, help the Ops Center pull together alerts on what was being heard and what was being learned through the media.

And that information was coming in. The DCM, the defense attache, and others in Tripoli were sending back information to Assistant Secretary Jones, so we were receiving information on what the Libyans were doing and on what they were seeing on the ground in Tripoli.

I mean, any bit of information we were receiving was, you know, forwarding that back up to, kind of, the NEA command center, to Assistant Secretary Jones and to [REDACTED]. NEA/EX, our Executive Office, was doing, kind of, the logistics to help people as they needed to be moved.

Q Are you familiar with the FEST?

A Can you remind me? Is that an acronym for a military team?

Q I think it's a State Department asset, the Foreign Emergency Support Team?

A Okay. So it's a Diplomatic Security team?

Q I believe it has --

[Discussion off the record.]

Ms. [REDACTED]. Okay. Yeah, I'm not completely familiar with it.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q Okay. Do you recall if you were involved in any discussions that evening regarding deploying the FEST in response to the attack?

A I recall -- it was probably with Executive Office colleagues -- the discussion of, we'll post requests for additional Diplomatic Security or other resources for Tripoli once people have left Benghazi that are in Tripoli and then for the remaining presence in Tripoli. But I don't recall exactly how those conversations went.

Again, I'm not a DS professional, so our Executive Office folks would have consulted directly with -- like, we're expecting to get this information, if we get this request from post or people in Washington are thinking this is a good idea. So I would not have been privy to all of those discussions.

Q Do you know who Mark Thompson is?

A If I recall correctly, he was a colleague in the Counterterrorism Bureau.

Q Do you recall having a discussion with him that evening about whether or not the FEST should be deployed?

A I don't recall a specific conversation. I believe that I exchanged several emails with him or with others in the CT Bureau that evening about the situation in Benghazi.

Q In the days following the attack, what was your awareness of or any role that you played in helping to put together what has come to be known as the "talking points" -- the talking points that were issued by the CIA and that were subsequently used by Ambassador Susan

Rice on the Sunday morning talk shows? Did you have any input into that process?

A No. No role.

Q During that timeframe, did you draft any other type of talking points for the Director or for the Assistant Secretary regarding NEA's view about what happened that night?

A No.

So, ma'am, as the Deputy Director, normally our press office colleagues in the regional bureau took a lead on directing press points. Our role in NEA/MAG, my role and my desk officers' role, would have been making sure they had accurate information, the latest information we have, to make sure the talking points are as complete as they could be, keeping in mind -- or flagging sensitivities like, hey, we don't want to put that out to the press yet because it's sensitive, you know.

So that would have been our role. It's unlikely that I would have been drafting talking points directly.

Q Okay.

A Yeah.

Q All right.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q I think you just said, you described generally what your role would be in giving information and guidance to the NEA press shop. Do you recall specifically what occurred in this instance with regard to any press points they may have drafted about the Benghazi attacks?

A No, I don't remember exactly. Really, press guidance and

talking points are, at that time and in general, a very small part of what we were responsible for. I know we were barraged, our press office was barraged with questions from the media. So I recall we were constantly passing them updates, and they were sending us language to clear, to look at, like, do you think this is accurate. But I don't recall drafting anything myself.

Q What updates did you send them?

A Any information we were receiving from post that was -- you know, just making sure that our colleagues in NEA who were responsible for every aspect of this were -- you know, we were all on the same page about what we were hearing from post, from Libyan contacts.

Q Take us through that, just the process of getting information from post and then passing it on to your press people. How did that work on September 11?

A On the day of?

Q Yeah.

A On the day of, our press colleagues were -- if I recall correctly, they were cc'd on, they were copied on -- either they were copied on or I or one of our desk officers would have forwarded -- if I recall correctly, would have forwarded them updates from post, including from the public affairs officer in Tripoli at the time, who was, himself, beginning to receive questions from press outlets, local and Western.

Q Again, you used the term "would have."

A Yeah.

Q I'm asking what you specifically recall.

A I don't recall specifically, sir. I'm sorry. It was a very traumatic day.

Q I understand that.

So, for example, do you recall information being passed by somebody on the phone in Tripoli to somebody on the phone in the State Department and having that information put into an email and then sent to the press people in NEA? Do you recall that happening?

A I do not recall exactly how we engaged the press shop that night.

Q Okay. So, as you sit here today, you have no general or specific recollection of how information that was received from field was conveyed to the press shop in NEA. Is that fair?

A It is fair, sir.

Q Okay. Thank you.

Ms. Clarke. On September 16, Ambassador Susan Rice appeared on the Sunday morning talk shows. Did you watch those talk shows when they first aired?

Ms. [REDACTED]. I remember we were working all weekend. And so all I recall is scrolling through, you know, kind of, the channels that morning. I noticed that she was on, and then I turned off the TV and tried to get some rest before I went back to office. So I didn't watch the shows.

Mr. Westmoreland. Excuse me. I've got to go vote.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Thank you, sir.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q And, following the shows, did you receive and read the transcripts of the shows?

A I remember seeing not full transcripts but, kind of, just snippets the next day. They were excerpted by either our press office or some State Department, like, here's what the principals said on the Sunday morning talk shows.

Q Do you recall having any discussions with NEA about the substance of what was said on the talk shows and whether there was an agreement or disagreement with what was conveyed?

A Yes, ma'am. I recall that I was a little bit surprised. The description of what was said -- and, again, I didn't watch the program myself -- it just sounded more definitive of what potentially had happened. But, again, I didn't watch the show myself, and I didn't read the full transcript. I was too busy that day to do that.

Q When you say you're a bit surprised, what were you surprised regarding?

A I was surprised in the way that they were described in the press clips, that there was an indication that there was some connection to the anti-Muslim video of concern that had been circulating online, that there was some connection to that. In the press clips that I read, I remember seeing, like -- okay.

Q And I think, before, you just said that that was a pretty definitive statement.

A In the way that I saw it excerpted in the press clips, it

seemed like the connection had been made to the video more definitively.

Q Were you concerned about there being a definitive connection to the video?

A Ma'am, at the time, what I was most concerned about was that we didn't know exactly what had happened and that there was an ongoing investigation. We knew the FBI was about to have an investigation. So I think our job as, you know, kind of officers in NEA and my job, specifically, is to be like, okay, let's not speculate, let's let the professionals do their jobs, the intel and the law enforcement folks. So we were very, you know, mindful of that.

Q Did you feel that, based on what you had seen in the clips, the press clips, and the description that had been given to you about what was said, that that was a bit of speculation that Ambassador Rice had stated on the talk shows?

A Ma'am, I can't speak for other people. I can just speak for what -- you know, I was a little bit surprised. And, at the time, I remember thinking, "Oh, maybe there's other information I'm not privy to." But that was just my reaction at the time.

Q Right. And my question was, did you think there was speculation?

A At the time, I thought there was some speculation going on.

Q Thank you.

I'm going to mark this as exhibit 2.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 2

Was marked for identification.]

Ms. Clarke. And just take your time to read through it.

And just for the record, this is document number C05580617.

And for the witness, I believe it's an email chain of some language that was forwarded. I don't think that you are on the email chain until the second page, near the top, when it's forwarded to you.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Okay. I got it. Okay.

Ms. Sawyer. Just a moment. Just to double-check, I mean, the first email is NEA Libya desk. Would you have received that?

Ms. [REDACTED]. No, I would not have received NEA/Libya desk. That was just the desk officers.

Ms. Sawyer. Okay. Thanks.

Ms. [REDACTED]. If I remember correctly, yeah, I don't think I know about this. We all got way too many emails.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q All right. So just to take you back to the second page, it's an email response that you -- you respond to this chain. You address it to [REDACTED]. And you said, "[REDACTED] -- per my call. Not sure we want to be so definitive. What does Assistant Secretary Jones say?"

And do you recall, when you say, "per my call," do you recall what your discussion with [REDACTED] was that evening?

A I don't remember exactly what we said on the call, but I suspect, just based on, you know, this chain and what would have been in my mind at the time, just trying to figure out, you know, are we ready to be this definitive, you know, should we walk it back a bit,

make it more -- because we didn't have the investigation yet. We didn't know exactly what had happened.

Q And for the purpose of the record, who is [REDACTED], or [REDACTED] [REDACTED]?

A [REDACTED], ma'am, I think he was the Deputy Director of the NEA press shop at the time. He worked for [REDACTED].

Q You also ask him what the Assistant Secretary had to say about such a definitive statement. Do you recall whether you received a response or whether you were made aware of her view of a statement as definitive as the one that had been made?

A I don't remember, ma'am. I don't remember.

I'm going to be frank. There was so much going on; press guidance, talking points was the least of our worries on the regional desk. We had awesome press colleagues. We trusted them to kind of get the guidance they needed. We helped with information and let them run with it.

Q So, previously, when we were having our discussion, you said that, based on the press clips you received, that you were concerned about there being such a definitive statement, and then you also used the same word in this email. Could you explain to us what you were referring to when you said, "Not sure we want to be so definitive?" What part of the press guidance that was forwarded to you were you concerned about?

A I don't remember exactly at the time. But, in looking at it now, I mean, it's good that we say that information is being collected

and analyzed. The first point would have been the point of concern, "The currently available information suggests the demonstrations were inspired by the protests at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo." The investigation was just beginning at the time. I don't think we knew enough to say that at the time.

Q At the time, did you have any information to indicate that this statement may not have been true? In other words, at the time, did you have any indication that there was something other than what had occurred in Cairo that may have --

A At the time, we weren't sure what was true. We didn't know exactly what had happened. And, again, I'm a cautious person. I'm like, let's let the FBI, let's let the intel guys do their investigation. That wasn't my role.

Mr. Missakian. I just want to ask a followup question.

This is now September 17, 2012.

Ms. [REDACTED]. That's right.

Mr. Missakian. Did you have any information by that date to suggest there was a protest in Benghazi prior to the attack?

Ms. [REDACTED]. No. No.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q Do you recall around this time there being a disagreement amongst agencies, the interagency, about whether or not the attack was preplanned or spontaneous?

A I don't recall an argument. I recall discussions about what happened and people feeding in information, not speculating in

press but speculating amongst us about what could have happened. But I don't recall an argument about this. I recall a normal kind of debate about it.

Q When you say "amongst us," do you mean amongst the individuals within the NEA Bureau?

A Within NEA and with colleagues at -- you know, kind of, the normal interagency colleagues we'd work with -- the DOD, et cetera.

Q And was this discussion via email? Was this discussion during a meeting? How was this discussion conducted?

A There was a lot of email. Of course, you know, we love email in this profession.

I don't recall. We must have had -- I don't recall what meetings we were having, but we must have been having meetings at that time to kind of hash out, like, here's the information we have. You know, we would have been keeping updated on the intel that was coming in, reading the stuff from our colleagues across the river.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q I just want to make sure I understand your answer.

Regardless of whether it rose to the level of a fight, do you recall a disagreement within the intelligence community about whether or not the attack in Benghazi was preplanned or spontaneous?

A No. No, not the intelligence community. What I recall -- and if I may provide a bit of other context, sir.

In the region, the day of Benghazi and throughout the region, there were protests in other places. There were demonstrations.

There was violence. There was an attack on several of our missions around the world, in Yemen, in Cairo, et cetera. So there was a lot of speculation in the press and a lot of speculation about what various extremists groups in all these countries were doing.

So I think -- I don't recall -- if there was an argument in the intel community, I, as Deputy Director of MAG, would not have been privy to it. But what I was seeing was, you know, in, kind of, the intel book that I had access to and, kind of, the various emails, information about what potentially could have happened. I don't recall seeing an argument.

Q Again, don't get hung up on the word "argument" or "fight."

A Sure.

Q I'm just talking about, did you see a disagreement in the opinion within the intelligence community over whether or not the attack was spontaneous or preplanned. I believe you said you were not aware of any disagreement within the intelligence community.

A No, I was not aware. I was not aware.

Q So how about within the State Department? Were you aware of any disagreement between individuals or factions of individuals as to whether or not the attack in Benghazi was spontaneous or preplanned?

A No. I don't remember a disagreement.

What I remember was we were all sifting through a lot of information from our posts, you know, different Libyan contacts offering their speculation and theories about what had happened to our defense attache, to our political officer, to Greg, et cetera, and

different folks speculating in the media and elsewhere about what had happened.

I think it was that barrage of information, with an inability to go back and see exactly, you know, what had happened that night in Benghazi.

Q So you got this barrage of information that you and others within the State Department are receiving and sifting through, as you say.

A Yeah.

Q Do you recall people coming to different conclusions about whether or not the attack was spontaneous or preplanned among the people in the group that you were communicating with?

A I can't speak for the wider group. I think my position was, okay, we've got a lot of information coming in. We were doing our best at the time to try to get the FBI out to Libya and try to get the professionals who were going to do the investigation to do the investigation. That was our focus at the time, not making a decision ourselves.

Q That's fair. I'm not asking you to speak for others. But to the extent you were involved in the discussion --

A Yeah.

Q -- about what the information you received meant, do you recall a difference of opinion among the people that you were discussing it with about whether the attack was spontaneous or preplanned?

A I don't recall disagreements.

Q Okay. So what was the opinion?

A My opinion, sir, or --

Q No, no, the opinion of the people that you were talking about it with. If there was no disagreement, what was the opinion?

A I mean, again, my opinion at the time was -- I did not have information that indicated there was a demonstration at the special office, so my opinion was some terrorist group has targeted us. That was my opinion at the time.

Q Okay. Did anybody else express an opinion? Again, I know you can't speak for somebody. I'm not asking you to read their mind. But to the extent you participated in discussions --

A No.

Q -- where they expressed an opinion about the information they had received, do you recall any of those?

A I don't recall that.

Q Okay.

A I don't recall that.

Q Thank you.

A Thank you.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q Okay. Switching to a different topic, a somewhat related topic, did you play any role in assisting the FBI in their investigation, whether that's helping them get into Libya or helping them get visas or any type of clearance that they may need to get into Libya?

A So, ma'am, I did not help them with the investigation proper. What I did was, early on, the Libya desk and I both helped them figure out, okay, you need visas; what else do you need from the Libyan Government to get in, and how do you coordinate with Embassy Tripoli once you were there. So we helped facilitate -- connected them with the DCM. [REDACTED] and the desk helped with, you know, figuring out how to apply and get their visas from the Libyan embassy.

So it was really the logistics of getting them in. I did not participate in their investigation.

Q And were there any issues with them getting their visas from the Libyan Government?

A As I recall, we wanted to get them there as soon as possible, and I think -- I don't recall exactly. [REDACTED] might have asked the Libyan embassy to open on the Sunday. That was the 16th, I think. But I don't recall exactly. I remember there was just the logistics of it. The timing was tough to make it work with the Libyan embassy in Washington. So trying to push, you know, to make the logistics work as quickly as possible.

Q And was there any delay in the FBI arriving into Libya?

A I don't recall exactly.

Q Was there any delay in them obtaining their visas to travel to Libya?

A I don't recall exactly. I think that we pushed pretty hard. I believe, if I recall correctly -- again, this was a very busy time -- there was a discussion -- I think the FBI had to figure out

who they wanted to send, and that took them a few days, as well. So it was, you know, which experts from where, which field offices. So that took a couple days to sort out, for them to get back to us.

Q After you assisted and some of the other individuals in your office assisted in them obtaining their visas and other logistics of actually getting to Libya, did you provide any other assistance to the FBI team that went to Libya?

A No. No. That would not have been my role.

Q Would that have been anyone in NEA's role?

A I don't recall that. I don't recall that.

Q I'm going to mark exhibit 3.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 3
Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q For the record, this is document number C05580192. And it's a chain of emails that begins on September 14 from Greg Hicks to the witness and other individuals. And he's discussing several matters, including the FBI's trip to Benghazi -- or trip to Libya.

A Right.

Q What I wanted to focus on was the top half of the first page. Well, first, he makes note in his information that he relays to you that when individuals visited the compound from the Libyan Government, they indicated a safe had been removed.

And then [REDACTED] -- you're still on the chain -- follows up and asks if he knows of what classified information or any sensitive information

had been taken from Benghazi. His response was that an individual was heading to Washington today or tomorrow and that he believed that person was most likely to know what was contained in the safe.

My question is, first, do you know who the person was that he is referring to?

A No, I don't know.

Q Do you recall whether [REDACTED] may have known about the contents of the safe?

A No.

Q Do you recall whether or not there was any information obtained subsequent to this email about the contents of the safe?

A I don't recall that, ma'am.

Q Would that have been something -- [REDACTED] indicates that there is great interest here on what computers and classified or sensitive information might have been taken from Benghazi.

A Yes.

Q Was that something you all would have followed up on?

A I believe that's something the Diplomatic Security would have followed up on with the agents.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q Okay. And why is [REDACTED] relaying that information to Greg Hicks versus Diplomatic Security?

A Because -- again, I can't put words in her mouth, but this was -- we were all very concerned about, obviously, the people had been lost but also what was left behind. So, since we had received this email from Greg, she relayed that. That is the only reason why I can imagine she relayed that information with "we're concerned, do you know."

Q And so when she says "we're concerned," is she referring to NEA or is she referring to Diplomatic Security?

A I don't know.

Q In the normal procedure of responding to information like this, would she have been responding on behalf of Diplomatic Security?

A No. No. She would not have been responding on behalf of them.

Q So, typically, she would have been expressing concerns that were held within NEA?

A If I may be frank, this would have been all of our concerns. You know what I mean? You want to make sure you know what was left behind. So it was the State Department's concern what was left behind, but it would have been DS's responsibility to follow up.

Q And once DS had followed up, would they have provided that information to anyone within NEA about what information was contained in the safe?

A Ordinarily, I think that they might have in the course of duties if they required our help in identifying, like, what were these documents, were they personal records, whatever the case may be. I just don't recall learning what was in the safe.

Q Thank you.

Ms. Clarke. I see that I am close to the end of my hour. I think now is a good time to take a break. So we can go off the record.

[Recess.]

Mr. Kenny. The time is 11:23.

And, Ms. [REDACTED], again, thank you for appearing here today, just on behalf of the select committee minority staff, the ranking member and our Democratic members. Thank you for your appearance for coming voluntarily to speak with us today. We appreciate your willingness to appear, both voluntarily and, again, want to thank you for your continuing service to the country.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Thank you.

Mr. Kenny. This may have been mentioned at the outset of the last hour, as well, but we do understand that appearing before Congress is a daunting process. So we just want you to be sure that we want to work with you to make this as simple and as straightforward as possible.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Thank you.

EXAMINATION

BY MR. KENNY:

Q So, while the discussion is still fresh, I would like to return to exhibit 2.

You were asked a series of questions in the last round about your specific response to this threat, which was an email that you wrote at 1:59. It appears at the bottom of the first page and continues on the top of the second page. And I thought you'd very helpfully explained for us what your understanding was at the time of what you wrote.

A Right.

Q But one of the things I was hoping to return to and

clarify -- because there was both a discussion about what appears to be press guidance included in this email, as well as Ambassador Rice's statements and some other talking points that may have been generated over the course of that week.

And I would just like to ask if we can connect up your comments here, where you say, "Not sure we want to be so definitive," whether that was specifically in reference to the points that were included in the email two emails previous in the chain.

A Yes, sir, I was referring to what was offered earlier in the chain as NEA press guidance.

Q Okay. And so that would be the 12:36 p.m. email --

A That's right.

Q -- where it says "Libya: Update."

A That's right.

Q Okay.

And specifically, then, there are three key points that are listed there. Do you see that?

A I do.

Q Okay. And I think you had also indicated that your specific concern had to do with the first point here. Is that correct?

A That's right, sir.

Q Okay.

And you were asked also in the last round about your awareness or familiarity with what has been referred to as the HPSCI talking points. Those were talking points requested by and prepared for

Congress by the intelligence community.

A Yes.

Q Do you recall that discussion?

A I do.

Q Okay. And I had it noted here, but I just wanted to make sure that the record was absolutely clear on this, but you did not participate in any way in the drafting --

A No.

Q -- or preparation of those talking points?

A I did not. I did not.

Q Okay.

And, at this point in time -- so this is September 17, so this is several days, actually, after those talking points had been prepared, or, as we understand it, they were prepared at that time -- did you have an awareness at this point in time that the IC had provided an assessment to Congress?

A No. I was unaware of that.

Q Okay.

Ms. Sawyer. With regard to that language in the email, that "key point" language, did you have an understanding of where that language came from, who had crafted that language?

Ms. [REDACTED]. No, I was not aware of where that specific formulation came from.

Mr. Kenny. I think that is all the questions I have on this particular exhibit. I think we would like to move our discussion

forward, and, in order to do that, we will introduce exhibit No. 4.

[██████████ Exhibit No. 4

Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q I will give you a moment to review this document.

A Yes, sir.

Q Okay. And, just for the purposes of the record, I am going to read some identifying information.

A Yes.

Q So exhibit 4 is an email from ██████████ to you. It's dated February 9, 2012. The subject is, quote, "RE: draft email for your clearance: (SBU) Lack of Security Staffing at Benghazi undermining mission." The document ID here is C05390170-MOU.

And this is an email that was used as an exhibit at the select committee's October 22nd hearing with Secretary Clinton. It's also a document that now appears on the majority's Web site.

Do you recall this email?

A I do.

Q Okay.

And, again, this is February 2012. I would just like to clarify at the outset here, Ambassador Cretz was the Ambassador to Libya at this time?

A He was, sir.

Q Okay.

And I would like to focus the first part of the discussion on the

beginning of this email chain, where you wrote to [REDACTED]. And I'd just like to ask generally if you could describe for us what this email is.

A My email to [REDACTED] you mean?

Q Yes.

A My email to [REDACTED] was just suggested points for him to use with the NEA front office and with the Executive Office with regard to the needs for a temporary mission in Benghazi, sort of a justification about why we were there, some of the things that we would like to try to do from there, and some concerns that post had expressed about their ability to pursue their mission.

Q Okay. And so, just to summarize, this is a draft note that you had prepared --

A For my director.

Q -- for Mr. [REDACTED]?

A That's right, in case he wanted to move that discussion forward.

Q So, just to summarize, this is an email with a cover, and then there appear to be hashmarks. Below the hashmark are a draft note that you prepared for your director to send to either NEA/EX or the NEA front office. Is that correct?

A That is correct, sir.

Q And you mentioned that you raised some concerns in this draft note, and we'll get to those in a moment. I would just like to begin, though -- you had mentioned that you started with a

justification, and I'd like to just discuss or walk through that with you.

I note that in the first paragraph here there is some language -- and I would just like to ask -- and I will preface this by saying that there have been some lingering questions about the purpose or the role of the special mission in Benghazi --

A Yes, sir.

Q -- in 2012. And, at least here, there appears to be some, as you described it, justification. And I was hoping you could just explain for us why it was important to be in Benghazi in 2012.

A Yes, sir.

It was our opinion in 2012, in early 2012, that even with the move of the Libyan interim government to Tripoli there was an important need to understand both halves of the country. The revolution had begun in eastern Libya. A lot of the key people, the key actors who led the revolt against Qadhafi remained in the east. A lot of the grievances that led eastern Libyans to seek to overthrow Qadhafi lingered, such as the lack of resources for eastern Libya and the preponderance of natural resources like oil and gas in the east.

So the United States had an interest in understanding the political actors in eastern Libya, the economic issues, particularly because we had a lot of American companies who were interested in doing business in eastern Libya, American oil and gas companies who had been there before and who wanted to go back.

It is very hard to cover such a big country from just the capital.

You know, it is very hard to meet all the people that you need to meet.

In addition, there were some other national security issues, such as nonproliferation concerns because of the issue with various types of weapons that Qadhafi had stockpiled for years.

So we wanted to make sure we understood what the various weapons concerns were and what the concerns of the civil society were, as well, whether this attempt at a new political process was moving forward. So that was our justification for remaining in the east.

Q All right.

And we have heard eastern Libya described, to us at least, as it's separate. Historically --

A Yes.

Q -- it's part of Libya, eastern Libya being very much different from western and southern Libya. But we've also heard it described as sort of a barometer of sorts for Libya writ large. And I was wondering if had you a similar sense of eastern Libya, the role or influence that it played to the country writ large?

A Yes, I would agree with that assessment. And because a lot of the key actors or the key phenomena that would shape Libya writ large came from the east. So a lot of the most educated Libyans, a lot of the universities, a lot of the core -- I won't say institutions, but, you know, there's a very strong lawyers' association that sort of formed in revolt to Qadhafi over time. That was centered in eastern Libya, and they were one of the key players in the revolution. A lot of the oil and gas resources were in eastern Libya. So the presence of a lot

of very strong tribes was in eastern Libya, who had grievances with tribes in western Libya.

So you had to understand -- you had to take the pulse in eastern Libya to kind of have a sense of what was, like, going to happen across the wider country.

The eastern Libyans had a lot of connections with Egypt, as well. So, I mean, there were other relationships they were cultivating, as well.

Q And you mentioned a few moments ago that it was something that would have been difficult to observe or measure, I think, from Tripoli.

A That's right.

Q Could you just explain that dynamic for us?

A Yes, sir.

The responsibilities of an embassy are frequently to make sure they understand what is happening with the host government and, kind of, the new interim institutions that were centered in Tripoli. However, a lot of the important actors in Libya's future that pushed for the revolution, that were important in the future, remained in Benghazi and remained in eastern Libya, cities like Tobruk, Derna, et cetera. A lot of the weapons depots that we were concerned about were in eastern Libya.

So, with a very small -- because we had evacuated in February of 2011, we went back in September of 2011, we had a very small embassy in Tripoli. We didn't have a big, robust mission where we could send

a bunch of public diplomacy officers and political officers, economic experts, defense attache personnel to Benghazi on a regular basis. It was skeleton staffing in Tripoli, as well.

So if you wanted coverage in the east, if you wanted to engage contacts in the east, if you wanted to be influential and shape developments in the east, it was more appropriate and more feasible to do it with a presence in eastern Libya, in Benghazi.

Q You had also mentioned nonproliferation concerns coming out of eastern Libya.

A Yes, sir.

Q And, at a very high level, could you just explain for us why it would have been important for the U.S. Government to pursue nonproliferation objectives in Libya?

A Yes, sir.

The United States had been quite interested in weapons and nonproliferation concerns in Libya for many years prior to the Libyan revolution in 2011 because Qadhafi's government had possessed chemical and other forms of nonconventional weapons and had stockpiled weapons throughout the country. The United States Government was always concerned about the ability of Qadhafi's security services to store and control these weapons.

So, following the revolution and, sort of, the dissolution of Qadhafi security services, the question was, who's got eyes on these things? Who's controlling them? Can we help make sure they don't fall into the wrong hands?

And the interim Libyan Government didn't have one national army, one good national police force. So various security groups were forming and coalescing. So the same concerns we had about nonconventional weapons in the early 2000s and conventional weapons flowing out of Libya to other groups in the region we continued to have in 2011 and 2012.

Q Okay.

And, again, this is February of 2012 --

A That's right.

Q -- at the time of this draft note. Do you recall at this time whether there were discussions or any expectations about a planned or upcoming national election in Libya?

A If I recall correctly, sir, the plan was for a parliamentary election to happen in the spring, early summer of 2012.

Q Okay. Did that have any implications for eastern Libya?

A It did, sir. It had implications for eastern Libya because it was very important to the success of a democratic and kind of a secure transition for all parts of Libya to be appropriately represented -- minority groups, tribes, all of the major cities. And so there had to be an ability for the nascent political parties and groups to campaign, to get their message out, to caucus with one another.

And so what our colleagues -- one of things we were doing in eastern Libya at the time was trying to meet with new political groups, meet with political candidates, encouraging civil society to play a

good role as watchdogs to the process, election monitors, talking to women's groups, like, you know, encouraging -- you know, there should be minorities, women, others running for this new legislative assembly. So that was one of the roles we were taking in the east, as well.

Q Were there any concerns that if eastern Libya were disenfranchised, say, in the national election that that would have implications for the future of the Libyan state?

A Yes, sir, it did. Since the impetus for overthrowing the Qadhafi government came from the east, eastern Lib is -- one of their grievances and one of the reasons why they revolted against Qadhafi was the lack of resources, the lack of jobs, the lack of money, the lack of opportunity in eastern Libya and for the groups traditionally from eastern Libya. So there with a worry that western Libya and the areas around Tripoli and Misrata would be disproportionately represented in new government institutions such as a legislature. That was a very particular concern of easterners.

Q Okay.

In the draft note below the hashmarks, it starts off, "We determined early on that it was important to make a presence in Benghazi to engage with the TNC and keep an eye on political and security developments in the east," close quote.

I would like to ask just for your personal opinion on whether you felt it was important for the U.S. Government to remain present in Benghazi in 2012.

A Yes, sir, very much so. So, as a foreign service officer

and a diplomat myself and a person with a long interest in the Middle East, from my shoes, I understood what Ambassador Cretz and what Special Envoy Stevens and others were saying at the time, which is there is so much happening across this country; if we don't have eyes on what's happening in the east, we're going to miss something, we're going to miss an opportunity to influence these actors, get to truly understand what the security situation is as well.

So I know, having served in Iraq and other places like this, it is very hard to understand what is happening outside of the wire if you don't get out and actually meet people and be open to hearing what's going on. So I agreed 100 percent.

Q And "outside the wire" in this context would mean outside of Tripoli?

A Outside of Tripoli, outside of the capital.

Q Do you recall Ambassador Cretz's views on a continuing U.S. presence in Benghazi at this time?

A He agreed with continuing the presence to some extent. I mean, the question that we all had was what should it look like. You know, he agreed, as did I, that it needed to be open from the short to medium term. Nobody had decided at that point what the needs would be very long term because things were still evolving.

Q Okay. That's helpful.

And can you just help us understand, because State Department planning processes might be slightly different --

A Sure.

Q -- how far out those discussions were going, in terms of time?

A At the time, our discussions were going through the end of 2012, early 2013, to get us through the elections that were anticipated that summer and 6 months out to see, okay, will the election be successful, will a legislature be seated, you know, what happens as a result. Are these remaining revolutionary institutions that have been set up in Derna and Benghazi and other parts in the east, will they move to Tripoli? Will these different Libyan actors who were opposition, who opposed Qadhafi, but who aren't necessarily tied together, will they be tied together by the end of 2012 or early 2013?

Q I see. So the discussion to extend through 2012 and into 2013 or discussions about continuing the presence for that time period, those incorporated or had some build-in for some sort of buffer? Is that right?

A Exactly, following the election.

Q Okay. Just in case things didn't go exactly as planned?

A Exactly, sir.

Q Okay.

I would like to return to exhibit 4, and this will be on the second page here.

A Okay.

Q And, actually, before we move on to the exhibit, I did just want to ask one more question about discussions about the mission.

A Yes, sir.

Q Though he wasn't in Libya at the time, were you aware of Chris Stevens' views on whether the U.S. should continue its presence in Benghazi?

A Yes, sir. He had left Libya in November, but he was very much involved in discussions within NEA about the region and about Libya specifically.

Q And what do you recall of his views?

A His views were very much in favor of maintaining a presence in Benghazi.

Q All right.

So, within at least your office, NEA/MAG, it sounded like there was a general agreement that -- and please correct me if I --

A Yes, sir.

Q There was some agreement -- I just want to summarize -- some agreement that the U.S. should maintain a presence in Benghazi, but it was unclear exactly what the staffing footprint would look like.

A Exactly. That's right.

Q Okay.

And so now on the second page here, the second paragraph down reads -- and I am going to read a portion of this into the record.

Quote, "Unfortunately, DS staffing is becoming a recurring problem in Benghazi. At the current security threat level, Benghazi needs a minimum of four agents to support moves out of town (3 to accompany the Principal Officer or TDY officer, and 1 to remain on compound with the IRM/management person). Post needs a minimum of

three agents to facilitate one movement at a time in town, and one to remain on compound.

"DS staffing has dropped to two agents several times over the last few months between rotations, which has prevented the PO from leaving the compound," close quote.

And I would like to first ask, why was it at this time that you felt that DS staffing was becoming a recurring problem in Benghazi?

A Sir, I'm not completely sure. I'm not responsible for DS staffing at this post or any other post.

What we heard from DS -- again, this was a temporary mission, and, you know, in my role in NEA/MAG, as Deputy Director, you know, I helped ensure, kind of, the assignment process and filling assignments for our normal posts across the region in the normal Foreign Service personnel cycle.

We didn't have a normal Foreign Service personnel cycle for Benghazi. So we had to pull -- we, as policy, wanted to pull temporary duty, you know, Foreign Service officers from other posts to support the mission. And it was my understanding Diplomatic Security had to do the same thing, but I don't want to speak for them.

Q Okay. But that was a concern that was conveyed to you at some point in time?

A Yes, you know, that it was the same situation we were facing on the policy side they were facing on the DS side.

Q Okay.

Again, there's an indication here that DS staffing had dropped

two agents several times in the past few months. There is a line at the very end that reads, quote, "There is very little reason to maintain the expense if our people are going to be trapped on the compound and unable to get around," close quote.

And I'd just like to ask, from a mission perspective, why was the ability of the principal officer to leave the compound a concern?

A From a mission perspective, the principal officer had responsibility for keeping in close touch with contacts -- the Benghazi security services, the people campaigning for office, various political parties, the civil society leaders such as the head of lawyers association, who was one of the people who was a driving force behind the revolution, business contacts, you know, American and other business contacts who sought meetings. Some of those meetings could happen on the compound; some, more appropriately, would happen outside of the compound.

So if the principal officer did not have a security detail, they would not be able to leave the compound.

Q Sure. Okay. And that makes sense.

And this appears to us to capture some sort of reality that if the mission is only staffed with two DS agents at a time that the principal officer wouldn't be able to leave the compound to conduct that outreach that you just described. Is that accurate?

A According to my -- again, I'm not a security expert, so this information -- I didn't make up the number four. So that information I would've received from an RSO colleague from DS.

Q Okay.

A So that was their assessment.

Q Okay. But that assessment, again, you would have received from somebody within Diplomatic Security, not, for instance, NEA or --

A No, we would not -- I mean, I do not have the expertise to determine how many agents you need to secure a road, for example.

Q Okay.

And then, by the flip side, you're not expressing a concern here that while on the compound the principal officer lacks adequate security coverage. Is that --

A No, that's not what I was expressing here. That was not a concern that we had at the time.

Q Okay. But if it was a concern you had time at the time, do you think you would have acknowledged it in this note?

A Again, I -- perhaps. I don't recall exactly. I can't speak for what -- you know, what I did at the time, my recollection is I packaged together our core justification, our core concerns to move forward to the NEA front office.

Q Okay.

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q And is it a fair characterization to say that the justifications that you are expressing there about the mission and the importance of the mission and the desire to have a presence is something within the core expertise of your bureau?

A Yes, ma'am, I would agree with that. NEA is the regional

bureau with responsibility for guiding and developing the policy towards the Middle East and the policy recommendations to the Secretary on the Middle East.

Q And then both the factual information that you're providing as well as the assessment as to the security needs would have come to you from the experts within the Diplomatic Security Bureau?

A Yes, ma'am. The language that I put together here was derived from, you know, conversations with post, kind of, discussions in Washington with the Executive Office of NEA, and DS and other colleagues who are responsible for how we were staffing the mission on the ground.

The last sentence is my assessment. That was my opinion at the time. That was purely my analysis and my commentary. So when I figured there is little reason to maintain the expense if our people were going to be trapped on the compound, that was purely my commentary.

Q Your commentary as to the potential negative impact on the mission.

A Exactly. Exactly. So you could have a mission where everybody stays inside, or you could have a mission where people can get out.

Q And having a mission where everyone was required to stay inside and have meetings solely on compound, as you have indicated earlier, from your perspective, would have made it more difficult to do the outreach that individuals within the bureau, including Ambassador Cretz, including Special Envoy Stevens, believed was

critical to be able to conduct out of Benghazi.

A Yes, ma'am, that is right.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q So you had indicated that you didn't have a lot of visibility into the DS staffing side of things. And I'd just like to ask, I mean, you are here preparing a note to send onward, to send up to your superior, raising these concerns. And I appreciate you had discussed some of the TDY staffing challenges, I think, across the board. Do you recall preparing any similar note related to staffing challenges for the IRM position, for instance?

A No, I do not.

Q Okay.

A I do not.

Q And is that because, while they may have had their own challenges staffing an IRM position on a TDY basis in Benghazi, was your sense that DS had a more acute problem with staffing at this time period than, say, other bureaus that were also staffing on a TDY basis?

A The IRM requirement was only one individual, which is less of a burden on the IT experts to provide. So the DS was required to provide more individuals, so a heavier lift.

Q Okay.

I'd like to move just to the top portion, your cover note to [REDACTED], where you write, quote, "[REDACTED], let me know if this works and whether you want to consult with [REDACTED] or EX before sending this to the FO," close quote.

And, again, just for the record, does "[REDACTED]" here refer to DCM [REDACTED]?

A Yes.

Q And "the FO" here refers to the front office?

A That's right.

Q Okay.

Do you know if [REDACTED] ever consulted with DCM [REDACTED] regarding the concerns raised in this note at this time?

A I don't recall if they discussed this language, but he did have a few phone calls a week with our DCM, with [REDACTED]. But I don't know precisely.

Q Okay.

And do you know whether he would have also had some conversations with [REDACTED] in EX around this period regarding these concerns?

A I don't know.

Q Okay.

Do you know whether [REDACTED] sent this note to -- there is a reference to "JDF" here.

A Right.

Q I assume that means the Assistant Secretary?

A That's right, at the time.

Q Okay. Do you know whether [REDACTED] sent this note to the Secretary?

A I don't recall, sir. I don't recall.

Q Do you know whether the Assistant Secretary raised this

issue to -- there's reference here to "M" -- to the M Bureau?

A I don't recall. I don't recall.

Q Okay.

And, in a circumstance like this, why would it have been useful -- you make the proposal to possibly go to M, but why would that have been useful, to appeal directly to the M Bureau regarding a DS staffing concern?

A Okay. The rationale for putting this together and making the suggestion to [REDACTED] was because ultimately Under Secretary Kennedy and the M world are responsible for our resources and big-picture strategy and policy on human resources, on personnel cycles, on facilities. That's within their bailiwick.

So the idea was to kind of remind our colleagues we're responsible for resources, here's our policy justification again, here's what seems to be lacking on the resource side, can we square the circle, if possible. So you have responsibility for policy, you have responsibility for resources, let's try to make the best of it.

Q Okay. And, again, you don't recall if Assistant Secretary Feltman did raise this issue with the Secretary?

A I don't know if he did. I don't know.

Q Okay.

Do you recall whether there were any other steps in this timeframe taken that were designed to address the concerns raised here? For instance, do you recall if DCM [REDACTED] was back in Washington, D.C., and may have set up meetings, met with the DAS in DS?

A I believe [REDACTED] did come back to Washington that spring, you know, for normal consultations. And she did include meetings with Diplomatic Security, as well as our Executive Office, as well as other agencies, like USAID, while she was in Washington.

Q Do you recall anything specific about her discussions with DS when she was back for consultations?

A I do not. I do not.

Q Okay.

And, again, referring to the sentence that you indicated that you had included at the bottom of the draft note -- I'm sorry, the sentence before there, where it reads, "If there is no recourse, we should reconsider whether we keep the mission going," close quote, do you recall whether that conversation was ever had?

A No. I don't remember. I don't remember.

Ms. Sawyer. And, again, with regard to that particular sentence, was that because of the concern that, with regard to the policy objectives, you would not be able to fulfill them in the way that you had hoped and others had hoped in Benghazi?

Ms. [REDACTED]. Yes, ma'am. And to reiterate, that is my commentary, that is my opinion that I am expressing there, if there is no recourse. It was driven by a concern that we would not be able to meet our objectives with the staffing situation being what it was.

Ms. Sawyer. It was not intended to reflect and it did not reflect a belief that it was unsafe otherwise for individuals on the ground in Benghazi to remain there and you should reconsider the presence

because just simply being there was too dangerous?

Ms. [REDACTED]. No. It was purely reflecting my opinion. As a diplomat, I want to get out and meet people and shape policy and be influential on the ground and show the flag, because that's what we're there for. That reflected my firm opinion on that.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q So if I could just direct your attention to the top email here, the discussion seems to shift in a slightly different direction, and I would just like to ask you about that.

This specific portion of the email, again, was discussed during the select committee's October 22nd hearing with the Secretary, and Ms. [REDACTED] was also asked for her recollection of what are, in effect, her words here and not yours. But I would just like to read it for the record.

Ms. [REDACTED] wrote, quote, "Also, the Secretary asked last week if we still have a presence in Benghazi -- I think she would be upset to hear that yes we do but because we don't have enough security they are on lockdown, "close quote.

And just first I would like to ask you if you recall having a conversation about this with Mr. [REDACTED] at this time.

A I do.

Q Okay. And what do you recall about that conversation?

A What I recall is that this email was -- again, I don't want to put words in [REDACTED] mouth, but my recollection of this was this was a slightly sarcastic email, this was a slightly sarcastic

conversation -- ha ha, you know? Of course the Secretary knows we have a presence in Benghazi, you know? I mean, so it was a slightly sarcastic exchange.

I think we were all frustrated working long hours and that that came out a little bit in the tone of this email.

Q Sure. And so when you say that there was some sarcasm that you perceived here, that refers to the first sentence, that the Secretary asked last week if we still have a presence in Benghazi?

A Yes, exactly. Yes.

Q Okay. And do you recall just the basis for your belief? You said of course the Secretary knew that we had a presence there.

A Again, so I can't put myself in the Secretary's shoes at that time, but there was a lot of information coming from our team in Benghazi and from Tripoli reporting back to Washington. There was a lot of information that we know was filtering up to senior officials.

So it was my opinion at the time, my assumption, that the Secretary knew that we still had a physical presence in Benghazi because of all of the information that our team was sending forward back to Washington from Benghazi.

Q And do you recall how that reporting was received in Washington, at least within your office, reporting specifically from the special mission? Was it viewed as generally helpful --

A Yes. So --

Q -- to policymakers?

A I'm sorry to interrupt.

Q Please.

A Yes, sir. It was viewed as very helpful because it was giving us eyes on kind of a situation and a range of contacts -- political contacts, civil society contacts, business folks, you know, folks with opinions of what different militia groups and tribes were up to.

People were commenting -- we were asking, you know, do you think this election will be a success? Do you think this political process will succeed? What are your thoughts on whether there is going to be a constitution, and what should be in this constitution? What are your thoughts on the economic circumstances?

And so there was a lot -- the reporting that was feeding back was, you know, people still have legitimate concerns, and they were really worried that with the TNC and, kind of, institutions moving to Tripoli that they were going to be left behind again. So, you know, that was a big concern on everybody's mind.

So the reporting was considered very helpful to piece in everything we were hearing from the media and other sources.

Q Thank you. I think that's a helpful clarification for us.

This email, again, it seems to have become a little bit of political fodder --

A Right.

Q -- and, at least to us, appears that it's been used or cited as evidence that the Secretary's level of interest in Libya dropped or fell off in 2012. And I would like to just ask you, was there a

drop in the Secretary's interest level in Libya and Benghazi in 2012?

A Sir, I don't know.

What I know is that the seventh floor, what we refer to as the seventh floor, keep asking NEA/MAG for memos and for reporting on what's happening across North Africa, particularly in Libya and Tunisia, which were the states that had undergone revolutions in 2011.

So, from my perspective as the NEA/MAG Deputy Director, it seemed that the Secretary and all the senior officials were still very focused on Libya. But I can't put myself in her shoes.

Q Okay. So, referring to the seventh floor writ large, though, was it your sense that they were closely following Libya matters?

A Yes, it was.

Q Okay. And that continued in 2012?

A Yes, very much so.

Q Okay.

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q Just that portion of the remark there that says, "I think she would be upset to hear that yes we do but because we don't have enough security they are on lockdown," you know, there has been some implication -- and it was certainly was raised at the hearing with the Secretary -- that the Secretary was either disregarding or disinterested in resource issues with regard to Benghazi.

Was that the sense from where you were sitting, that there was a disinterest in whether or not adequate resources -- both to be able

to do the mission, which we have already talked about, but certainly with a deeper question of just sufficient security for personnel on the ground?

A May I ask you to clarify? Was it whose concern that the --

Q Was it just your impression? You know, the implication was been that the Secretary was either disregarding or disinterested in whether or not her post, in particular Benghazi post, had sufficient resources. We've talked about resources to be able to do the mission.

A Right.

Q You know, the deeper question is even just security resources at all.

A Yes.

Q Was it ever your sense, just from where you sat, that the Secretary was either disregarding or disinterested in making sure the post had resources?

A No, it was not my sense.

Q Were you aware of any specific requests on the resource front that went to the Secretary?

A No, I'm not aware of resource requests to the Secretary. As NEA/MAG Director, my responsibility on resources was limited, but resource requests normally went through the chain to M.

Q But certainly there was nothing in your experience that would have led you to believe that she would have ignored or disregarded any requests, had they gone to her?

A No. I have no information to that regard.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q I'd just like to ask one clarifying question based on a discussion I was having with you.

A Yes.

Q So you had mentioned you didn't have any specific knowledge of the Secretary's level of involvement or interest in Libya, but you had an understanding that the seventh floor was closely tracking it. Is that correct?

A Yes, sir.

Q Okay. And when you say "seventh floor," who does that refer to?

A When I say "seventh floor," I mean the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, definitely the Under Secretary for Management, the special assistants for -- we use acronyms at the State Department -- so P, M. The deputy secretaries were very key on the cables and the emails that came from post.

People were tracking it very closely. And, in particular, they were interested in all of North Africa because it was a sensitive region, but Libya was getting a lot of requests for information all the time.

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q So I would just like to briefly, if I may, return to the discussion we were having about the days and weeks following the attacks and some of the public statements, the press statements, and some of

the press guidance that was developed during that time.

I had written down in my notes that the press guidance was one focus, not the only focus, of what you were working on in the days and weeks after the attack. I was wondering if you could just elaborate for us, for those countries in your portfolio, what was happening during this time period and how busy was that period for you and your office.

A Sir, the September and October, particularly following the Benghazi attack, September and October were extraordinarily busy. You'll recall on September 14 there was a very violent attack on Embassy Tunis, where our colleagues were in the safe haven for hours while they were waiting for additional Tunisian security services to come to their assistance. There were violent demonstrators that had crossed the walls into the embassy.

The Tunisia desk officer and I were unable to go to the ceremony at Andrews Air Force Base on September 14 to welcome home Ambassador Stevens' and our other colleagues' remains because Tunis was literally on fire and we were working to figure out what was happening and then supporting the Secretary and senior officials on that day.

There were demonstrations in Morocco and Algeria. We didn't cover Egypt per se, but I had served in Cairo, I had good friends in Cairo at the time. So the wider region was of deep concern to us, and the security of our colleagues across the region was a deep concern. So there were daily meetings to talk about what do we know about is happening; do our other posts, meaning, you know, Tunisia, have what they need to protect our personnel; do we need to think about drawing

down staff in those places, as well.

On Libya, we were extraordinarily busy because we had evacuated the bulk of civilian colleagues from Tripoli up to Germany, and one of the issues I was dealing with in the aftermath of the attack was figuring out what to do with our personnel in Germany. Do we bring them back to Washington and give them temporary assignments here while we wait out and see what happens in Tripoli? Do we keep them in Germany a little bit longer and have them work remotely from the consulate in Frankfurt, you know, give them assignments, have the political officer keep working on the human rights report, for example, remotely?

You know, so I was closely involved in, kind of, giving them taskings, keeping people busy, you know, waiting for the security colleagues and others to be like, okay, some people can come back, or better to break some assignments and give people new assignments.

So the immediate personnel picture for the traditional diplomatic stuff and then the security situation of those other posts were, kind of, my overwhelming focus.

Q Okay. So it sounds like it was an incredibly busy period.

A It was a very busy period, yeah.

Q Okay. And so the responses to press inquiries and the development of press guidance, that was only a portion of the work that you were working on.

A That was a very small portion, honestly. In general, as I mentioned to your colleagues earlier, we had a very strong press office in NEA. They did a good job of recommending the best way to

respond, you know, to kind of be prepared for press inquiries in as fulsome a way as possible.

So they would turn to us for help in understanding what is too sensitive. Should we include that, or is that too sensitive for whatever policy reason? So that was our role.

And, frankly, the desk officers, Libya, Tunisia, other desk officers, were very good. They did the bulk of it themselves. It was rare that it needed to come back to [REDACTED] or myself. Sometimes we would take a quick look at it to make sure we were aware of what was going forward.

Q Thank you. That's helpful.

Part of the reason why I'm asking that question is, you know, we're more than 3 years removed from the attacks, and there has been a significant amount of attention and scrutiny paid to some of the public statements, the press statements, made by the administration in the days and the weeks after the attacks --

A Yes, sir.

Q -- and to include Ambassador Rice's comments on the five Sunday talk shows on September 16. I would just like to ask you a series of questions about that period generally.

Did you have a sense or ever get the sense that State Department spokesperson Ambassador Nuland or anyone else in her press shop was trying to conceal facts for political advantage?

A No.

Q Did you ever have the sense that they were concealing the

truth in order to avoid embarrassment or perpetuate a false narrative about the attacks?

A No.

Q Okay.

What about press officers in the White House? Did you get a sense that they were trying to conceal facts for political advantage?

A No.

Q Did you ever have the sense that they were concealing the truth in order to avoid embarrassment or perpetuate a false narrative about the attacks?

A No.

Q Were you ever pressured to conceal facts about the Benghazi attacks?

A No. And I'd like to add that I'm not particularly easy to pressure. So I just wanted to put that on the record.

Q That's certainly admirable.

Were you ever asked or pressured to conceal the truth about the attacks?

A No. No.

Q Okay. Were you ever asked to perpetuate a false narrative about the attacks?

A No.

Q With specific regard to some of the statements made by Ambassador Rice, you had raised some concern about what was said or your reading of excerpts of what was said. Did anyone ever instruct

you or tell you to be quiet about any of those concerns?

A No.

Q Okay.

Do you have any reason to believe that anyone else in the press shop, whether in NEA or the White House press office, was doing anything other than their best, good-faith effort to determine the truth and convey that information accurately without divulging sensitive information?

A No.

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q Just returning to something you were explaining to us about the region and you indicated -- you specifically mentioned Tunis and the attack on the 14th where personnel were in a safe haven for hours. I think you mentioned Morocco, you mentioned --

A Algeria.

Q -- Algeria.

A Uh-huh.

Q What was your understanding and the understanding within the Department as to what was causing the unrest and what -- you know, we can speak specifically to Tunis -- what caused that, you know, what happened there, what was the cause of what happened there?

A Our understanding in those early days was that there were a lot of grievances in Tunisia, as well, following that revolution. And there were a lot of complaints about the interim government and about the role of the United States, in particular, some Islamist groups

that felt the United States was playing an inappropriate role or that the West was playing an inappropriate role in Tunisia's political transition.

In Tunisia and across the region, there was a lot of discontent because of the anti-Islam video that had been posted, I believe it was the previous week, online and a lot of anti-Muslim propaganda and messages that were floating around online. That created a lot of anger. If I recall correctly, there was a protest that was inspired by a burning of Korans. They harkened back to Pastor Jones in one of those incidents, which was deeply offensive to people.

And there were emerging -- you know, kind of the political changes. And Tunisia, in particular, had weakened security services. I mean, the security services had been singled out for abuse -- police and army -- abuse of citizenry. So they were far more cautious. You know, they were being reorganized, and they were far more cautious about responding. So there was a concern about the rise of Islamist extremist groups like Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia, as well.

Q And then, in Egypt and Morocco, what was the sense of the unrest there? And what had sparked or triggered the unrest, in particular, you know, kind of, that week of September 11th through the 16th?

A Again, ma'am, I didn't have specific responsibility for Cairo. It was not in our portfolio. I kept an eye on it because I had served there. I had good friends in Cairo, and we are friends to this day.

My understanding of what sparked the specific attack on the embassy was a demonstration fueled, in part, by that video. People were very upset about the anti-Islamic video.

In Morocco, there were smaller protests -- you know, much stronger security services, much more organized government. But there were protests about the lack of an Arab Spring response in Morocco. You know, do we need more reform in our country? Do we need more help for young people in our country?

So there was some concern about the anti-Muslim propaganda online, but there was also concerns about, are we getting anything out of the Arab Spring ourselves? You know, have we had the constitutional reforms? Have we had the jobs, the economic growth that we needed?

So it was just a morass of good and bad things that were motivating people to be very angry in that period.

Q And in discussing that generalized regional unrest, would it have been surprising to you that, in discussing the region in general, that there would have been discussions of protests and protests related to the anti-Muslim video?

A That did not surprise me. That did not surprise me.

Mr. Kenny. With that, I think that concludes our round. We'll go off the record.

[Recess.]

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q Ms. [REDACTED], I wanted to continue our discussion that in the last hour we left off in early February 2012 talking a little bit about the mission in Benghazi. I just wanted to talk with you a little bit more about the spring of 2012 and the summer of 2012.

A Yes, ma'am.

Q And some of the events that occurred in Benghazi and in Libya.

A Yes.

Q Were you aware of some of the incidents that occurred at the mission in Benghazi. For instance, the April 5 incident, IED attack, and then the June attacks in Benghazi?

A Yes, ma'am. Our colleagues -- excuse me.

Q Go ahead.

A Our colleagues reported those incidents to us.

Q By "colleagues," are you referring to the principal officer?

A To the principal officer in Benghazi, yes.

Q And when you became aware of those incidents, were there any actions taken within NEA regarding what was happening on the ground?

A Insofar as Washington was concerned, insofar as NEA MAG was concerned, we ensured that kind of our leaders in the NEA office and

the operations center had all of the updates we received as well to ensure there was a familiarity with what had happened on the ground.

Q And were you concerned about the violent incidences that had begun to occur in Benghazi?

A Yes, ma'am. I was concerned, and we kept in very close touch with our colleagues in Benghazi and with Tripoli to keep a close eye on what happened at those times and of the mood on the street following all those incidents.

Q And following those incidents, did you ever have a discussion with an NEA MAG about whether or not there needed to be a pause in the mission or whether or not the mission should close, given the number of incidences that had occurred in Benghazi?

A Ma'am, could I ask you to specify which incident?

Q Following -- so you have the April attack, and then subsequently there are additional incidences that aren't necessarily against the mission, but then there is the June attack against the mission as well as the U.K. Envoy attack. Following that particular incidence, were there any discussion between yourself and others in NEA MAG about whether or not the mission should pause to assess the security environment or whether or not the mission should close?

A Yes, ma'am. We had discussions within my office. So, as you know, there were a series of incidents, and in June we had an talk on the U.K. Ambassador and some damage to the wall at our mission in Benghazi, and we asked the question -- you know we had a 2- or 3-week break between principal officers, and I recall my boss at the time

asking Ambassador Stevens the question like is this a good time to take a break, reassess, see how security is playing out in Benghazi. So that discussion was had, or there was an email exchange with post about that issue in June.

Q And did you take advantage of the natural pause in the break between the principal officers?

A As I recall, we did, ma'am, for several weeks.

Q And was there an assessment done regarding the security environment and the decision to determine whether or not the principal officer should return?

A I don't recall specifics, ma'am. I would direct you to Diplomatic Security for specifics of an assessment. I don't remember.

Q Was there anything relayed to you that you were aware of was relayed to Mr. [REDACTED] about whether or not the concerns had been, the concern that there was a decline in the security environment had changed, whether that had improved? Since you had asked for a pause, why was there a decision to continue to send the principal officers to Benghazi?

A Yes, ma'am. Our understanding, my understanding of the situation at the time and what we were getting from our colleagues in Libya was that the east was very unpredictable. There were security incidents, but they weren't tied to one specific focus, or they weren't tied to anti-Americanism. It was a degraded security environment in part because the whole country was undergoing a lot of uncertainty following -- you know, there was an interim government; there was an

election, you know; figuring out what next steps were. Again, I don't recall specifics of a security assessment at the time.

Q Do you recall any other discussions within NEA MAG about whether or not there should be any additional pauses or breaks in between the principal officers to again reassess the environment in late July or early August?

A No, ma'am, I don't recall that.

Q Did you express your concerns about the security environment to anyone outside of NEA MAG? Following the June attacks, did you relay any of your concerns to maybe Diplomatic Security counterparts or anyone outside of NEA MAG?

A I don't recall.

Q Did you have any concerns about the number of Diplomatic Security agents that were going to Benghazi during that timeframe?

A I don't recall specifically.

Q Following, we discussed exhibit 4, which was in the February timeframe, and there was some discussion in that exhibit about Diplomatic Security not providing the number of DS agents that had been indicated would be provided. Did that issue continue to occur throughout the remaining of the spring and the summer of 2012?

A I recall that -- again, I don't remember specifically. I recall that throughout that entire period, that summer, the issue of staffing both on the DS side and on our side, on the policy side, remained a challenge because of the TDY nature of the assignments, but I don't recall specific numbers.

Q If there were concerns by the principal officer regarding whether or not they were able to conduct movements, et cetera, because of the number of DS agents that were present, they would have relayed those concerns to you, correct?

A Yes, on several occasions, principal officers replayed concerns to NEA MAG about their ability to move.

Q And outside of exhibit 4, where you are proposing talking points to [REDACTED] about the information that could be shared to the front office and potentially to M, did you have any discussions with your counterparts in DS about the number of TDY DS agents that were going to Benghazi?

A I don't recall specifically, no.

Ms. Clarke. I'm going to mark this as exhibit 5.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 5
Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q And if you'll take a moment to look at this?

A Yes. If I could have a moment to read through this, ma'am.

Q Sure.

A Yes, ma'am.

Q For the record, this is document No. C05390124, and it's an information memo for the Secretary, dated August 17, 2012. Do you recall this memo?

A I do recall this memo, ma'am.

Q And did you participate in drafting this memo?

A No, I did not draft this memo. One of my colleagues did, and I cleared the memo.

Q And when you say "you cleared the memo," what does that mean?

A What that means in our context is that we review the information in the memo and make sure the drafters included all the relevant information and also that it reflected, you know, kind of our priority concerns. Information memos for the Secretary are not meant to be laundry lists or exhaustively long. They are meant to be key issues, priorities, topic information the Secretary needs to know.

Q And what were your priority concerns expressed in this memo?

A Our concerns here was making sure that there was an understanding of the, you know, kind of the spike in violence in the east, but also kind of the context. You know, the lack of the new government's ability to consolidate security services, competing elements still present in the country, you know, causing some instability. It was key to kind of convey it is an unsettled situation, but there is not one specific driving factor driving instability. There are many sources that are contributing to this, following the election.

Q And do you recall what prompted this memo to be drafted?

A No, I don't recall specifically.

Q Was it typical to send an information memo? Was that a recurring type of way you relay information on a quarterly or a monthly basis, or were they sporadic and usually prompted by some event or some request by the front office in NEA perhaps?

A Yes. So, in general, information memos are not like decision memos where you're asking the Secretary or another Under Secretary to take a specific action. We sent them fairly regularly on countries where there is a lot of change. So it is very normal to send an information memo to update the Secretary and senior leaders after an election when there is a significant change in a political or security situation. So this is in line with that. We had an election that had happened in early July, and we wanted to make sure the Secretary was aware of the different elements in place following the election. The security services had not consolidated. The government was still struggling to pull things together following the election.

Q Following the election, did you have any discussions with post about their view of how the security situation was shaping, given the government's inability to kind of coalesce the different security elements?

A May I ask you to specify? You're asking me if I had conversations with Tripoli?

Q With anyone in Tripoli or even anyone in Benghazi about their view of what was actually happening on the ground.

A So what our -- I recall that throughout the summer that both Benghazi and Tripoli were sending frequent updates, frequently daily emails and occasional cables on what their context, what different influential people in Libya were thinking about the security situation, about the political situation, so that post was updating us really

regularly with their reporting.

Q Were there any additional requests for security equipment or security personnel as a result of this information?

A I don't recall specific requests for equipment or additional personnel.

Q Would you have been aware of such requests?

A Yes. Ordinarily, I would have been copied by email, of course, because we love email in this institution, on requests that would have gone to the executive office of NEA.

Q Once this memo was submitted, did you receive any requests from seventh floor principals or even from NEA office to follow up on the information that was provided?

A I don't recall a specific request, ma'am.

Q I think in the last hour there was a discussion about your view of whether or not it was necessary to have a presence in Benghazi, and you talked about at least through a short-term and a midterm presence.

A Yes, ma'am.

Q In August or in the fall of 2012, was there any discussion within NEA MAG or between NEA MAG and post about the view of whether or not the presence of the mission in Benghazi should continue past 2012?

A Yes, ma'am, there was. There was an email, a communication with Ambassador Stevens, laying out the case for continuing the mission in Benghazi beyond the end of 2012, and I don't recall exactly the full

depth of kind of all of the elements of why, but there was a concern that because the government was not consolidated, there were still a lot of factions in the south, in the east, in the west. There were a lot of -- there was a lot of churn across Libya. There were a lot of U.S. interests that we wanted to make sure we could effectively represent on, and the Ambassador made the case at the time that we needed to remain present and very involved in Benghazi to understand what's happening in the east. It's not enough to cover it from the capital.

Q Did you and others within NEA MAG agree with his recommendation?

A Yes, we did agree with his recommendation. At the time, he laid out a very good case. I think that and my opinion as the Deputy Director was there's a lot of resources involved in setting up a permanent presence anywhere or asking for or figuring out how long you needed to be somewhere, so my opinion was really important now that we're there, that we can be there, that we can do this important work. Not sure how long we're going to need to be there. It may be in 5 years, things will be very settled, and we can work very effectively out of an embassy. So my thing at the time was the Ambassador is absolutely right. There is so much happening now; we need to understand this and be present, and I'm going to keep saying, show the flag, because it meant a lot that we were there, and we were present and trying to influence events. It was my personal opinion that we couldn't predict into the long term how long we would need to have a presence there.

Q So once Ambassador Stevens had laid out the case for a more

permanent presence in Benghazi, what would be the natural next steps for there to be a decision whether or not to actually approve a permanent presence in Benghazi?

A There's no one process, ma'am, but his request would have prompted and did prompt, I believe -- I don't recall exactly -- but should have prompted a discussion with our executive office and with the Bureau leadership and then moving on to the other relevant parts of our team, obviously Diplomatic Security, obviously the intelligence community and the interagency parts that would be involved in deciding, do we need to be there in the longer term, and how do we do it?

Q And do you recall if there was a discussion with Diplomatic Security about extending the presence of the mission in Benghazi?

A I don't recall that, ma'am.

Q Do you recall if anyone within NEA MAG or the larger NEA Bureau disagreed with having a more permanent presence in Benghazi?

A I don't recall a disagreement.

Q So fast forwarding in time to after the attacks, were you ever asked to provide documents to the Accountability Review Board that was stood up to look into the attacks?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q And did you, in fact, provide those documents?

A Yes, yes.

Q And were you ever asked to review documents of any other individuals who provided documents to the Accountability Review Board?

A May I ask you to clarify your question?

Q Were you asked to look, to review, or sift through documents that other individuals may have gathered to provide to the Accountability Review Board?

Ms. Safai. So you're specifying only to the Accountability Review Board? Can you give us a timeframe maybe that you're thinking about?

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q So just to step back, did you ever collect documents that you may have had possession of in response to requests for documents?

A I responded to the request for documents, and I sent that forward.

Q And then did you ever assist other individuals in collecting documents and reviewing those documents in response, the request for documents?

A I never assisted in collection of other documents. I did assist in a document review in early October. It was my understanding this was the document production for the ARB.

Q And you said that you recall that this happened in early October, and your understanding was that this was a document production for the ARB?

A Yes. If I may clarify, I believed it was for the ARB and potentially other subsequent purposes, but I wasn't sure kind of the length of what exactly the document production was going to be used for.

Q And how do you recall that happened in early October?

A So, yes, I received a call from our Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in NEA. It was Columbus Day weekend. I recall it because I changed my plans for the weekend very quickly as a result of her request. And she noted that I believe it was a group in H, was the Legislative Affairs Bureau, was reviewing all of the -- was preparing documents to be provided for, I thought it was the ARB, and then whatever subsequent use, presumably congressional review or whatever the case may be. But I wasn't sure. They were going through the documents for release, and she said could I join the group the following day and look at, you know, kind of looking whether we needed to redact any sensitive information. That was my role to help in the release of those documents, and she indicated that night, you know, depending on how big of a task it is, could you help me setting up a work flow like other officers from NEA who could be involved in, you know, going through and looking for sensitive information that we might recommend for redaction.

Q And you said, you recall that it was Columbus Day weekend?

A Or close to Columbus Day weekend, because I had plans [REDACTED] that I cancelled.

Q And so you cancelled plans. Did this document review occur on the weekend, during the weekend?

A Yes. It had started before that weekend, but DAS Dibble learned of it, or she realized there wasn't an NEA participant on that Saturday, so she called me and I went in the following morning, yeah.

Q And did you go any other days other than that Saturday

morning? Were you also there on Sunday? Did you continue on Monday?

A I went in on Sunday and Monday and then through that first week, and then I helped develop a rotation schedule for other colleagues from NEA to kind of make sure we had an NEA colleague. There were colleagues from DS and IRM. You know, other subject matter experts were in the room as well, kind of looking and looking at documents for I can't recall how long that lasted, but I helped develop the work schedule.

Q So when you arrived on Saturday --

A Sunday, Sunday, ma'am.

Q So you did not go on Saturday?

A Saturday night is when Deputy Assistant Secretary Dibble called. I remember because I had plans [REDACTED] the following day.

Q Okay. So you arrived on Sunday. Do you recall the number of people that were participating in this document review?

A I don't recall.

Q Do you recall any particular individuals that were participating in this document review?

A No. Just that I knew there were colleagues from DS. There were colleagues from IRM. There were colleagues from H.

Q And you said that you helped assist in putting together sort of like a workflow to ensure that there was always an NEA representative during this process?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Do you recall how long the process of reviewing those documents took?

A I know that it lasted into November. I don't recall how long overall it lasted.

Q And did you ever have another opportunity, other than the first Sunday on Columbus Day weekend, to participate in reviewing those documents?

A Yes. I believe, if I recall correctly, I was there the whole first week, through Friday or the next Saturday.

Q And then following the whole first week, did you participate in this document review following that?

A I might have one or two times after that, but I was so busy in NEA MAG, our other colleagues throughout NEA stepped up. Every other NEA regional director stepped and offered us desk officers to help us cover that duty so that myself and NEA MAG could focus on our core job.

Q Can you explain when you arrived on that first Sunday, can you kind of walk us through how the process was developing? Was there someone who was in charge of reviewing and did they provide instructions to you and to other people about what specifically you were reviewing?

A If I recall correctly, and it's my understanding that H was in charge of this, we were doing this down in the A Bureau, and my guidance was, you know, we're going through -- my guidance was we need an NEA subject matter expert to explain to folks in the room who were not Foreign Service officers what do certain things mean, like what

is a SITREP? Literally, what is a diplomatic cable? Why did post send this email? So it explained, okay, the political officer met with a representative of an American company who was interested in doing business in Libya. He didn't know how to go about it because there is an interim government. He was asking for mission's thoughts on, is there an economic ministry? Who does one engage to get whatever, start a new business, for example, or to resuscitate what they had before? So I would tell them, this is perfectly normal. It's something we do all around the world is meet with American business representatives and talk about local conditions, risks of doing business in a country or whatever. That was partly my role, was explaining like: Here is what we do at an embassy. Here is what this post was doing. And, you know, recommending like: Okay, this is a private American business person, or this is a Libyan activist. These are names that I would recommend be redacted if materials are going to be made public because you don't want to endanger people who continue to live in Libya or need to do business in Libya.

Q And you said it was your understanding that H was in charge. What were you basing that understanding on?

A To be honest, I knew it wasn't the A Bureau that normally does FOIA requests. I thought there were staffers from H that were helping organize us. That's what led me to believe that it was H who was organizing.

Q You also said you received guidance about looking for things that should be redacted. Who gave you that guidance?

A I don't recall exactly who. It was when I arrived, you know, people like: Here, this is the document production. We want your expertise on what things mean, and if there's issues here that you have with if something is publicly released, what would you be concerned about being publicly released? That was my role.

Q You said that you arrived on Sunday morning?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Was it your understanding that this document review had already been taking place, or was Sunday morning the first day that everyone had begun reviewing the document?

A It was my understanding from PDAS Dibble the previous evening. She's like: You know, this has started. They just realized they didn't have an NEA person.

And of course, they called me, and of course, I said yes. Of course, you need an NEA person to explain if there's substantive questions and to help determine what's sensitive, what should be redacted if it's publicly released.

Q Do you recall whether there was an indication about how long this process had been going on before the NEA person arrived?

A I don't recall, but it was my sense that it was pretty new. "New" meaning a couple of days. I didn't have the sense that it was, you know, really well-established, but I'm not sure.

Q So you worked from, you indicated you worked from Sunday through the following Friday?

A Or the following Saturday up to the next weekend, if I recall

correctly.

Q And that was my question. Did the document reviews continue throughout the weekend to your knowledge through the rest of the process?

A I don't recall. I think there were limited hours. I think they did long days during the weekday and limited hours during the weekend. It was mainly on the weekdays.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Just a few followups. I just want to understand the chronology. If I understood you correctly, Liz Dibble gave you a call on Saturday night and asked you to participate in this document review?

A That's correct. Yes, sir.

Q As best you can recall, what did she tell you about the nature of the review and your role in it in that first call?

A I think she wasn't completely clear. She was like: This is, they're looking at the documents that everyone has contributed for the document production, and they realized they didn't have an NEA person in the room, and they realized we need subject-matter experts from the kind of people that would be at post. And they wanted expertise of people who work in NEA, in DS, and IRM. She's like: Can you start it off tomorrow and then help me if this has got to continue? Let me know what you recommend in terms of any representation. I'll back you up. I'll make sure we have a roster of people to help carry this task on if it needs to continue. I don't recall, and understanding initially was that I likened it to a FOIA request in that when we're

reviewing, when the A Bureau sends us things for FOIA review, we look at documents, and we say, okay, what has national security or sensitivity, or what would we recommend be redacted before public release of a document?

Q Did she give you any specifics about the type of information that would be considered sensitive in the documents you were going to be reviewing, or did she rely on your past experience?

A I think she relied on, you know, trust your judgment. I do recall calling on her the following day or my DAS, who was Ray Maxwell, speaking to them the following day to say one of my concerns personally was that I thought it was appropriate to redact the names of drafting officers of junior officers at post, everybody below the level of Ambassador. Ambassadors are confirmed by the Senate. They're a very senior rank. They have a public presence. Other more junior people at post from the State Department, I thought their names and phone numbers and titles should not be included and should be redacted. That was my recommendation, and it continued to be my recommendation. I don't know if that's ultimately what happened or not.

Q So did anybody, putting Ms. Dibble aside, did anybody give you any guidance on what type of information would be considered sensitive and that should be redacted or protected as well?

A No. We looked at the FOIA guidance, and I forget exactly what that is now, but to the best of my recollection I was going over what is sensitive in terms of where it would compromise U.S. interests,

what is deeply sensitive because the individual mentioned is a private citizen, whether they're American or Libyan. We knew that the security situation following Ambassador Stevens and our other colleagues, the attack on the mission, was very difficult. So like these were, there were cables and emails that included information from our contacts who were still in Libya. You don't want to expose people to harm if it's known that they're talking to American diplomats, right. There's a sensitivity there, like we saw after WikiLeaks. So it is what can harm us, U.S. interests, and what could harm individuals, or what is not germane as well.

Q Explain that to me. Did you on your own initiative go get the FOIA guidelines and apply those guidelines in your review of the documents, or was it somebody that was part of this broader team provide those guidelines to you and say, "This is what we should be following"? How did the FOIA guidelines make its way into this review?

A I don't recall exactly. It was either -- honestly I don't recall. I don't recall if I looked at it that morning on my own volition or if it was provided in that first day.

Q One thing I'm just not understanding is if your belief was these documents were going to the ARB, in other words, this was an internal panel constituted by the Secretary of State, the documents were not going to be released publicly, why would the FOIA guidelines be relevant to what you were doing? Why would you use those guidelines to protect information that was going to the ARB?

A Sir, if I can recall my --

Ms. Safai. Do you want to clarify?

Ms. [REDACTED]. As I clarified, I didn't know what the ultimate document production, whether it would be just ARB or subsequent to other investigations, other government investigations.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q If you disagree with me, just tell me. If they were just going to the ARB, then the FOIA guidelines would not be relevant. Correct?

A That's right, because presumably the ARB would keep it in house.

Q Correct. So were you preparing two sets, one for the ARB, and one that might potentially be released to the public?

A No, not to my knowledge were we preparing two sets. I was not completely clear on the purpose of this document review, but my limited understanding was this was a document review for ARB and any other investigations of the incident.

Q To your knowledge, did the documents that the ARB received, did they have FOIA redactions in them, or were they clean?

A I don't know, sir.

Q You don't know one way or the other?

A I don't know.

Q Okay. Take us through the process of how you did this review physically. In other words, did you look at documents on a computer? Did you have a stack of physical documents? How did you do the review?

A To my recollection, I had a stack of physical documents and highlighters, and I highlighted any information that I thought should be redacted, and then I wrote on a sticky note, if I recall correctly, the reason for the redaction, either name of private citizen, name of junior USG official, not germane. And there were a lot of emails in these piles of paper that were a cable about, you know, I can't remember exactly, but things that were not relevant to Benghazi in any way. There was a cable from Tripoli about, you know, economic roundtable in Tripoli, whatever, a few months before the attacks. It didn't seem germane to our operations in Libya.

Q So when you suggested that information should be redacted that wasn't germane, were you, again, applying your own personal standards, or were there common standards that everybody was applying?

A I was applying my understanding as the NEA person.

Ms. Safai. Can we get one second? I apologize.

Mr. Missakian. Sure. Do you recall the question?

Ms. [REDACTED]. I believe if you could repeat the question.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Sure. It sounded like at some point you suggested that information should be redacted based on what I would refer to as relevance?

A Yes.

Q So, in your mind, relevant to what?

A And, again, my responsibility was just recommending production. There wasn't anything else.

Q I understand.

A It was my standard as the NEA person at the table was, is this relevant to the way we operated in Libya, to kind of embassy and special office operating to attacks of the security situation, and there were documents in there, there was an email of, you know, holiday closing schedule for example, or the kitchen; somebody had copied someone on kitchen equipment for the Embassy. There were things like that that did not seem germane.

Q Did not seem germane to the issue --

A To me as an NEA MAG officer.

Q These are documents that you're not going to be using. These documents are going to be going to the ARB and possibly to others?

A Right.

Q I'm just trying to understand how you decided what was relevant and what wasn't. Was it as broadly as saying you were going to suggest redacting everything that did not relate to security at the facility, or was it some other standard?

A My recollection, sir, of the standards was anything to do with embassy and mission operations, day-to-day operations, anything to do with the wider security situation in Libya at the time, and anything to do specifically with the attacks in Benghazi. If I recall correctly, because I haven't thought about this in some time, those were the standards I was applying.

Q Right. And where did you get those standards?

Ms. Safai. If you remember.

Ms. [REDACTED]. I don't remember, no. I'm sorry.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Do you have a sense of whether you personally reviewed all the documents that were being produced, or did you just review a subset of all the documents that were being produced?

A I reviewed a subset.

Q Approximately how many documents?

A It felt like millions at the time, millions of pages of email. I don't know, sir. I was there for about a week.

Q Okay. As best you can, can you recall the types of information that you suggested should be redacted from the documents that was --

A Yes, sir. I was primarily focused myself on redacting names and titles of individuals who were private citizens, either Libyan, American, U.N. staff, other internationals who were in Libya doing work, because they were talking to American diplomats. That's a sensitive thing that could endanger people if that's generally known in some circumstances. So that's primarily what I was recommending redacting. And then I also recommended redacting the names of junior people who were drafting emails or cables as well.

Q I'm sure you're aware of some allegations made by a gentleman by the name of Ray Maxwell regarding the review of documents that were produced to the ARB. Are you familiar with those allegations?

A If I could specify, sir, what you're referring to.

Q You're not aware of any allegations that he has made with regard to the review of the documents produced at the ARB?

A I'm aware of an article with an interview with DAS Maxwell, but I don't recall specifically what the content of the article was.

Q Have you ever read the article?

A I did, about a year ago, but I don't recall anything specific.

Q I haven't read it in a while either. My best recollection is that his allegation is that you participated in a review of documents that were being produced to the ARB, and in the course of that review, removed documents that might be, for lack of a better word, embarrassing to the State Department?

A That is not accurate. People can correct me if that's not an accurate summary.

Mr. Snyder. I don't know if he specifically alleged that she removed.

Ms. Safai. Right. I don't know if there were any names in there.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q If there weren't any names, I'll withdraw that part, but that's the allegation, that documents were removed from documents produced to the ARB. So you are aware of that allegation generally?

A I recall reading the article. I recall that he touched on document production. I don't recall exactly what was in his statement.

Q Let's just go into some of the specifics then.

A Sure.

Q In the course of the review of the documents you did, did Raymond Maxwell ever, was he ever there with you during that review?

A Yes, sir. He visited on the Sunday. I let him and [REDACTED] and the Libya desk officers -- [REDACTED] was the office director. He was in Libya at the time. He was on temporary duty in Libya helping after the attack. I let them know, look, Liz asked me to do this. I'm going to start helping, and I'll probably call on the desk officers and others to help as time goes by. He's like, can I help in any way? Can I drop by? I'm like, yeah, please. He dropped by to see what was going on, [REDACTED] [REDACTED], so he was checking in with me to see how I was doing.

Q Is that the Sunday immediately after the Saturday where you spoke to Liz Dibble and she asked you to do this?

A Right. I got in on Sunday morning, as I recall. He stopped by during the day on Sunday.

Q Again, I'm not familiar with the layout of the State Department. Where were you doing this review?

A It was a room somewhere in the basement of the State Department. I believe it was somewhere in the A Bureau.

Q Can you give me any more details about the room?

A It was a large room with a bunch of computers and desks in it, coffee pots, like a big conference room sort of thing with a lot of computers.

Q Approximately how long did Mr. Maxwell stay with you that

day?

A I don't recall. It wasn't very long, maybe an hour.

Q About an hour?

A Maybe half an hour, maybe an hour.

Q Under an hour?

A Yeah, if I recall correctly.

Q Was there anybody there with you at the time when Mr. Maxwell showed up?

A I mean, there were other people around us, but I don't remember who exactly.

Q Do you know the name [REDACTED] (ph), I believe his name is?

A Yes. [REDACTED] was one of my colleagues in NEA MAG.

Q At any time did Mr. [REDACTED] (ph) take part in this document review?

A I don't recall.

Q It's possible, but you don't recall?

A It's possible because we set up an NEA roster of desk officers to come in and help, but I don't recall if he was one of the people that supported.

Q Was he in NEA at the time, Mr. [REDACTED] (ph)?

A Yes, he was.

Q What was he doing at the time?

A He was our regional desk officer in NEA MAG, meaning he was supporting all four country desks and looking at transnational issues.

Q After you reviewed the documents that you reviewed and you made your highlights and wrote your notes, did you see them after that?

A No, I did not.

Q Where did they go, to your knowledge?

A I'm not sure. I don't know where they went.

Q Did you ever review documents on a computer as opposed to a physical copy of the document?

A I don't recall reviewing documents on a computer, only in hardcopy.

Q Tell us the process by which you personally collected the documents that you contributed to this project?

A There was a request to produce documents, and I don't recall exactly. I think that we were given, you know, kind of the general search terms to look for and scan in our computer and files.

Q So you eventually, did you produce a PST file, or did you produce hard copies in response to that request?

A We produced hardcopies in response to that request.

Q So you physically would have identified the documents that were responsive, printed them out from your computer, and then handed that stack over to somebody?

A That's what I recall.

Q Do you believe that's how the document collection occurred for everybody, if you know?

A I'm not sure. I don't know.

Q Do you recall any conversation that you had with Mr. Maxwell

on that Sunday when he stopped by the document review?

A I don't recall our conversation.

Q At any point during the time that Mr. Maxwell was there with you, do you recall either Cheryl Mills or Jake Sullivan stopping by?

A I recall seeing them at other times in the document review room. I don't recall seeing them on that day.

Q So it's possible that they did show up that day. You just don't know as you sit here today. You can't remember?

A Right. Right.

Mr. Missakian. Thank you.

Ms. Safai. Sheria, can I ask you how much you guys anticipate?

Ms. Clarke. Not much longer. In fact, we're finished. I think those are all the questions that we have. Thank you. We can go off the record.

[Discussion off the record.]

Mr. Kenny. Back on the record. The time is 1:17 p.m.

Ms. [REDACTED], again, thank you for your patience today. We're hoping we can conclude with this round, at least our portion of the questions, and then have you back on your way, return you to your post as quickly as possible.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Thank you.

Mr. Kenny. I'd like to pick up where we left off in the last round of discussion about a document review session, a series of document review sessions that is you participated in in the weeks after the attack, and there was a reference to an article that you indicated you

may have read a year or so ago, and we thought it would be helpful if we just went ahead and introduced that article into the record.

This is going to be exhibit 6. There you go.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 6
Was marked for identification.]

Ms. [REDACTED]. Thank you.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q I'll give you a moment to review the article.

A Thank you.

Q Just for the purposes of the record, I'm going to identify this document. This is exhibit No. 6. This is an article dated September 15, 2014 that appeared in the online publication The Daily Signal. It's entitled, quote, "Benghazi Bombshell: Clinton State Department Official Reveals Details of Alleged Document Review," close quote. And according to this article, Ray Maxwell, former DAS for Maghreb Affairs, came forward with a, quote, "startling allegation," close quote, and this is from the first paragraph specifically that, quote, "Hillary Clinton confidants were part of an operation to separate damaging documents before they were turned over to the Accountability Review Board," close quote. You indicated again that you are familiar with this article. Is that right?

A Yes, I am.

Q I just would like to read a portion of it into the record and ask for your response because there are some fairly specific allegations in here. The article describes the document review

session from the perspective of Mr. Maxwell, and I'm going to read from the middle of the page under the section "Basement Operation." The second paragraph there begins, quote, "When he arrived, Maxwell says he observed boxes and stacks of documents. He says the State Department office director, whom Maxwell described as close to Clinton's top advisers, was there. Though the office director technically worked for him, Maxwell says he wasn't consulted about a weekend assignment. She told me, 'Ray, we are to go through these stacks and pull out anything that might put anybody in the [Near Eastern Affairs] front office on the seventh floor in a bad light,' says Maxwell. He says "seventh floor" was State Department shorthand for then Secretary Clinton and her principal advisers. I asked her, 'But isn't that unethical?' She responded, 'Ray, those are our orders,'" close quote.

And I'd first like to ask, there is a reference here to an office director. It indicated that your office director at the time was in Libya?

A That's right.

Q Backfilling at Embassy Tripoli, is that accurate, as the CDA?

A Yes.

Q Is your understanding of this article that Ray Maxwell or that this article is referring to you when it refers to the office director?

A That's my understanding. That's what it appears to be.

Q Okay. And there's a direct quote from Mr. Maxwell that's included in here where he states that you told him that the purpose of the document review was to, quote, again, quote, "go through these stacks and pull out anything that might put anybody in the [Near Eastern Affairs] front office of the seventh floor in a bad light," close quote. Is that accurate?

A No, it is not accurate.

Q And do you know what may have given him this impression that you said these words to him?

A I don't know.

Q Okay. Did anyone ever order you to pull out any information that might put the NEA front office or the seventh floor in a, quote, "bad light," close quote?

A No.

Q And was this review process part of any effort to withhold or conceal information from the Accountability Review Board, to your understanding?

A That was not my understanding.

Q Okay. And we discussed in the last round your understanding of what the purpose of this document review was. You indicated that you were somewhat unclear, but you applied some standards that I think you had through your experience in performing FOIA reviews. Is that accurate?

A That's right, sir.

Q So you had performed document reviews in the past?

A A few limited ones with regard to FOIA requests.

Q Okay. And in those types of document reviews, what sorts of information were you asked to review and flag?

A In the FOIA reviews, you're referring to?

Q Yes.

A We were looking for, as subject-matter experts, information of sensitivity that would be damaging if it was released publicly.

Q So that would include information like the names of Libyans that might be working with the U.S. Government?

A Exactly, or pre-decisional information. If it was information about something that was, the deliberations between government officials before a decision was made.

Q Okay. And you indicated that you applied some of that guidance to this document review, which started on a Sunday and I believe ended within that week for you personally?

A For my purposes, yes. I believe it extended beyond that.

Q And did you apply any other guidelines other than the ones that you describe for us in conducting that review?

A No, that's basically what I was relying on. That's my recollection, but that's it. There was nothing such as what is being implied here.

Q And you mentioned that you had raised a concern that one type of information be redacted, that of the names of junior officers?

A Exactly, the names and their contact information and titles.

Q Okay. Did you make a recommendation for any other type of information to be redacted from the documents you were reviewing?

A Basically, I mean, kind of my memory is most of what I highlighted and recommended for redaction was, again, names of Libyan American, other international contacts that the mission or Tripoli had. That was the bulk of it, yeah.

Q And you mentioned that you performed some limited FOIA reviews in the past?

A Yes.

Q And you applied similar guidelines when conducting this review. Did you have any specific concern about performing the review that you were performing in reviewing for the sensitive information that you were looking for?

A No. It made sense to me. We were preparing information to be released.

Q Okay. And when you say prepared to be released, did you have an understanding that this information would be publicly released?

A No, I did not. At the time, I wasn't clear on where the document production was going, to the ARB, beyond the ARB. But, again, I was thinking about FOIA, and if things are publicly released, would there be damage to the United States Government or to individuals that we should protect.

Q You mentioned it was your belief that the H Bureau had led this effort or was participating in this effort in some way?

A I thought it was H.

Q Can you describe what H is?

A H is the Bureau of Legislative Affairs at the State Department.

Q Would H typically be involved in a process of reviewing documents that would be turned over to the Accountability Review Board, to your understanding?

A I don't know. I've never been involved in an ARB before.

Q Okay. That's helpful. Were you aware that there was a congressional request for information that preceded the convening of the ARB?

A No. I was not aware of that, or I don't recall that.

Mr. Kenny. Returning to the article, one of the implications in what Mr. Maxwell describes here is that you didn't notify him about your weekend work beforehand. The one implication there being that you were probably participating in some sort of covert, possibly nefarious document review. Would that been an accurate characterization?

Ms. [REDACTED]. No.

Ms. Safai. Did you say "accurate" or "inaccurate"?

Mr. Kenny. Accurate.

Ms. [REDACTED]. No, that's not an accurate description.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q And why not?

A I recall notifying not just Ray, but my Libya desk officers and [REDACTED] that I'm like: Look, [REDACTED] called me, and I'm going to be involved in this, and I'll probably have to rope more people in from any to help as time goes by.

So -- and I can't recall exactly when -- if I emailed the folks that morning or after I arrived, but I let them know.

Q Did you ever receive any feedback or instruction back that you were not to inform others of the existence of this document review?

A No. I know no one listed had asked me to do that; no one in the room asked me to do that.

Q Okay. So you didn't understand this to be some secret operation --

A No.

Q -- that was secretly going to be done?

A Certainly not. No.

Q Okay. And the fact that it was scheduled outside of business hours or began outside of business hours, it wouldn't be fair to then assume that this was done to conceal or hide this activity?

A To be frank, we worked every weekend anyway, so to me -- I don't mean to make light of this. It didn't strike me as unusual.

Q Okay. Also, according to this, there is a direct quote here where Maxwell seems to describe a quote to you.

A Uh-huh.

Q He raises an ethical concern or claims to raise an ethical concern to you. Do you recall him doing that?

A I don't recall him raising an ethical concern, but again, I don't remember the specifics of our conversation, but I don't recall that.

Q Okay. If he had raised a concern about the ethics of the activity, what -- how would you have dealt with that?

A I was not uncomfortable with what I was asked to do in that room, my understanding of what I was supposed to do or the fact that [REDACTED] asked me to help out to represent NEA in this process, so I would not -- had he asked me about it, I probably would have said: This seems perfectly normal or this seems like we want to -- we want NEA to be

involved if there is -- if we're looking at information and recommending redactions, then we should be here.

Q Uh-huh.

A Yeah.

Q And do you recall if anyone else, to include people participating in the review whom you may have been working alongside, whether any of them expressed any concerns about the document review?

A No. I mean, again, not to make light of it, people were quite tired. It was the weekend. That was the only --

Q It was a holiday.

A It was griping. It was the holiday weekend. There was a bit of griping. A lot of plans changed that weekend, but that's all I recall.

Q Okay. A little later in the article, I'll direct you to the third page in. The top of the page there, the second sentence reads, "He views" -- quote, "He views the after-hours operation he witnessed in the State Department basement as an 'exercise in misdirection,'" close quote.

A Yes.

Q Do you agree with Mr. Maxwell's characterization here?

A I do not, no.

Q Okay. Again, can you just explain for us? And I appreciate your indulgence.

A No. In terms of what I had done before with FOIA, I mean, there's always a need for subject-matter experts to -- if there's going

to be a document production for any purpose and that could potentially make documents public, you want to make sure that you take a very careful look at what the documents are to protect people or information that could do damage to the United States or could endanger people. That's always something. And I think I'm even more sensitive to that after WikiLeaks, to be frank, what had occurred just a few -- a year before this, you know, the incident in Benghazi.

So we're very sensitive to, you know, if documents are made public, are people going to be endangered, or are there national security issues here that we don't want known?

Q Sure. You were asked in the last round about whether the Secretary's chief of staff, deputy chief of staff, was ever present for a document review session, and I believe you indicated at some point they may have showed up --

A Yes.

Q -- during the week.

A Yes.

Q But you couldn't recall exactly when. This article spawned a series of spinoff articles where the allegation was that Cheryl Mills had somehow ordered the destruction and removal of documents before they were turned over to the Accountability Review Board, and it's a serious allegation, so we'd just like to follow up with you --

A Yes.

Q -- and ask if you have any information or evidence. So do you have any evidence that Cheryl Mills or Jake Sullivan personally

removed or destroyed or ordered anyone else to remove or destroy documents related to Benghazi?

A No.

Q Did you see anyone destroy, remove, or attempt to destroy and/or remove any Benghazi related information?

A No.

Q Did anyone, including the Secretary, ever ask you or order you to remove or destroy potentially damaging documents about the attacks in Benghazi before they were provided to the ARB?

A No.

Q And you had indicated that you did speak with the ARB in the course of its investigation. Is that right?

A That's correct.

Q Okay. Did you ever feel that you couldn't be as forthcoming with the ARB as you wanted or felt you needed to be?

A No, not at all.

Q Okay. Did anyone ever ask or instruct you to withhold any evidence from the ARB?

A No.

Q And this is a more broader question.

A Uh-huh.

Q And we may have touched on it, so I'm just getting at it a different way.

A Sure.

Q But did anyone ever ask or instruct you to withhold

documents or any other evidence in response to a congressional request for information related to the Benghazi attacks?

A No.

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q So before we leave this article, I did just want to ask you a couple of quick questions. My colleague touched on it, but there is, on that front page, a direct quote wherein Mr. Maxwell indicates, quote, "I asked her," meaning you, "but isn't that unethical? She responded 'Ray, those are our orders.'"

You indicated earlier that certainly nothing like what is implied here happened?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q That goes beyond an implication. It actually indicates that you may have engaged in something unethical. What is your response to that potential charge?

A My response to that is it's completely nonsensical and inaccurate.

Q And you would --

A And I would embellish that if there wasn't a court reporter in the room, but this article made me extremely angry.

Q And you indicated earlier in the day, you kind of pointed out in response to another question that, on another issue entirely, that you are not the type of person who would succumb to pressure.

A That's right.

Q Had you felt that someone was asking you to do anything that

was unethical, what would you have done at that point in time?

A I would have, frankly, told that person that I felt uncomfortable and that I needed to consult with my colleagues and that I would leave the process, that I would not participate in the process if I thought there was something wrong with the process, what we were being asked to do.

Q So certainly with regard to this document review, had you felt there was anything unethical or inappropriate, you would have raised that as an issue up the chain?

A I would have raised that, and I would have gotten up to leave.

Q Aside from this article, have you ever heard this allegation from any other source that there was a document review and documents were reviewed for the purposes of determining whether or not it was painting the NEA or the seventh floor in a bad light?

A No, I've never heard that allegation separately. Only in this article.

Q And did Mr. Maxwell himself ever raise this allegation to you, other than when you saw it appear in this article?

A No.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q I'd like to redirect your attention.

A Yes.

Q Back to exhibit 5, which is the information memo to the Secretary, dated August 17th. And, again, in the last hour, I think

you touched on this, but I just wanted to ask if you could explain for us a little bit -- in a little bit more depth, for those of us outside of the State Department -- or bureaucracy, rather, that this is an information memo, and we've seen a series or examples of what I refer to as action memos, and if you could just explain for us what the difference is between the two.

A Sure. An information memo is something that we send up to provide an update, additional background information on a country or a development, you know, the Syria peace negotiations, whatever may happen. A decision memo is you tee up specific decisions for the Secretary or the relevant Under Secretary to -- and you provide a recommendation for each decision you're recommending. Like so, for example, this IM, this info memo, has no specific trigger points or decisions. We're not asking the Secretary to make specific decisions. We are getting her up to speed on what happened following the election.

The decision memo always triggers a kind of decision, a kind of action item with our recommendations inside.

An action memo can be just from one bureau that's cleared through others, or it could be multiple bureaus seeking action.

Q No, thank you, that's a helpful distinction for us.

So if there had been a specific recommendation for the Secretary to take based on the information presented here, that would have been more appropriately packaged in an action memo?

A That would have been packaged in an action memo. That's right.

Q Okay. And my colleagues had asked about some of the specific content in here. I would just like to ask about the -- both the subject line as well as the first line, and also, just to be clear on the record, so this is a -- this document has been recently declassified, so you may see --

A It has been declassified?

Q This is declassified, yes. We're in an unclassified setting.

A Of course, yes.

Q Sure. It's undergone a sensitivity review, so I just want to make sure the record is clear because there are some markings that appear in here.

A Yeah.

Q And so I'd just like to direct your attention to the subject itself is presented as a question, and the very first paragraph begins, quote, "Libya has experienced an upward trend in violence, primarily but not exclusively in the east, since May. It is not yet clear if this trend will reverse itself as earlier ones have over the past year or if in eastern Libya, at least, it constitutes a new normal," close quote.

A Uh-huh.

Q And what I'd like to ask you is, at this point in time, which is the middle of December -- the middle of August --

A Right.

Q -- rather, of 2012, whether it was unclear that the security

situation would naturalize, would improve itself over time in Libya or if it would remain. Is that -- was it unclear at this time what would happen with the security situation?

A It was unclear.

Q Okay. And we'll direct you to the last page -- sorry, the second page, the very bottom, the last paragraph begins, quote, "Despite the worrisome aspects of this increase in violence, there is no coordinated organization behind the incidents," close quote.

I believe you touched on this a little bit in your explanation in the last round, but again, just at this point in time, it was unclear whether the security incidents were connected or linked in any way. Is that correct?

A That's right. That's right.

Q Okay.

Mr. Kenny. So at this point we'd like to introduce what will be marked as exhibit 7.

[██████████ Exhibit No. 7

Was marked for identification.]

Ms. ██████████. Thank you. Is this missing a page? Oh. Oh, I see. Yes, sir.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q And for the purposes of the record, to identify this document, exhibit 7 is an email, dated August 29, 2012, from Gregory Hicks to Ambassador Stevens. Subject line reads, quote, "Draft Benghazi Proposal," close quote. It then appears to contain a 3-page

attachment bearing document No. C05578322-MOA, and again, for the purposes of the record, this is a document that has been recently declassified by the State Department.

I would like to begin just reading the first line of this email, which is from Gregory Hicks. It reads, quote, "Chris: Attached is the draft proposal. It's not quite final, but I think it's close," close quote.

And I'd just ask, what was your understanding of what this proposal was?

A So my understanding, we knew that Ambassador Stevens and post were preparing a memo justification for extending the presence in Benghazi, making it more permanent in some aspect, and it -- this was information that post, we knew, was pulling together to justify, you know, kind of why we needed to remain in the east and what the staffing requirements would be to cover it.

So this includes, you know, kind of the policy justifications as well as a snapshot about what kind of personnel you would need to do this job, and it touches on, you know, the beginning of discussion they were having with DOD on who else would be there.

Q Okay. And this appears to be a draft, as you described.

A Yes.

Q Do you recall that a draft was at one point sent to NEA/MAG? Is that correct? Or submitted by post?

A I remember conversations with post, that they were going to send us a draft. I don't recall -- I don't recall getting the draft.

Q Okay.

A The specific draft from Greg.

Q Okay.

A Yeah.

Q But it's possible that Ambassador Greg may have send it to Director [REDACTED], for instance?

A It's possible, yes.

Q And the date here, this is August 29?

A That's right.

Q So this is a couple of weeks after the information memo is sent up to the Secretary. Is that right?

A That's right.

Q Okay. I would just like to direct -- direct your attention to the third page.

A Uh-huh.

Q And attempt not to spend the --

A The third page of the memo?

Q Third page of the document, so second page of the memo.

Ms. Safai. Peter, can we put on the record that Ms. [REDACTED] name is not on this?

Mr. Kenny. Yes.

Ms. Safai. Did you want to establish --

Mr. Kenny. Of course.

Ms. Safai. -- for the rest of the document?

BY MR. KENNY:

Q That's right. So the email is between DCM Hicks, Ambassador Stevens. Your name doesn't appear on here, but you were aware of discussions ongoing at the time?

A Yes, I was aware that post was going to send us a memo.

Q Okay. And I'd just like to ask, the third paragraph, there's a quote here, reads, quote, "A permanent Embassy branch office in Benghazi would enable us to continue to monitor political activity in this extremely important region in the country. It would allow us a base from which to track Islamist and other extremist terrorist activities at and to develop effective countermeasures against them," close quote.

And what I'm hoping to understand or -- first of all, I'll just ask, do you recall that specific justification ever being made by post to NEA/MAG?

A Not the specific justification. The wider justification of needing to be present to understand security developments in the absence of kind a national army, a national police force, you know, kind of unified security, like what's going on out there that could be of concern.

Q Okay. And the reason I'm asking about this --

A Yeah.

Q And I realize there's a lot of content here, and I keyed in on a specific section?

A Yeah.

Q But --

A Yeah.

Q -- what we're trying to understand is you have an information memo that the desk office, through NEA/MAG, sends up to the Secretary --

A Uh-huh.

Q -- and several weeks later, you see a justification for continuing the presence. One of the things we're hoping to link up is what the understanding of -- at post was of the threat, not just at Main State.

A Uh-huh.

Q And from here, it seems to at least, to us, that there was a desire to continue U.S. presence in Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q Despite the security situation in Libya. Is that a fair reading?

A That's right.

Q Okay. And, in fact, it appears that this memo, at various points, there's references to AQ and AQIM.

A Yes.

Q It does acknowledge that there was a security concern in Libya and eastern Libya.

A And the presence of extremist groups, yes.

Q So one of the things I was hoping you could help us understand is, it may sound a little counterintuitive, but you know, some may want to argue that because you had a challenging security

situation in eastern Libya, that was a reason to close post there; whereas, here, it seems to be the opposite, perhaps somewhat counterintuitive rationale being put forward that we need to be there because of those developments. And maybe you could help us understand, is that -- am I clear?

A If I could ask you sort of to clarify. You're pointing out that there's two contrary opinions.

Q Yes.

A Yes.

Q Yes. So can you help us just explain that other view that is important or why it would be important for the U.S. to be present in an area where there is extremist activity?

A Yes. So kind of my understanding and kind of the our role from NEA/MAG, we were -- we were aware that the Ambassador and our team in Libya were very -- very much understood the balance, you know, how the risks-rewards balance or interests-risks balance that we have to constantly think about for every diplomatic post in the world in a country that's undergoing change.

I mean, it's not Mexico. It's not France. It's a country undergoing significant changes after a revolution where we have a now Rolodex, new contacts we have to make contact with. It's not the normal set of people that you work with as diplomats.

So it was clear to us through, you know, what post was reporting and what the media was reporting, what other, you know, international partners were advising us that there were extremist groups present in

Libya. Some of those guys were connected to Al Qaeda, right. I mean, that was -- some were connected to Islamist groups that had been fighting Qadhafi for a long time but that he had managed to repress pretty violently but that they had risen -- you know, they had a presence, again, following the revolution, as Qadhafi's security services and kind of his repressive rule dissipated.

So the point that -- again, I don't recall seeing this memo in this form specifically until today. I knew it was coming, but the argument is, in addition to kind of the political context and the women leaders and kind of the -- you know, the academics, you are also talking to security services when you're in a country and people that have knowledge of who's doing what in a country.

So it's better to be present and active and listening to what's going on and sharing that information back with Washington, and you know, with Washington's instruction, you know, taking specific actions. That it was worth it to us to be in Libya at this time and in eastern Libya as well as in Tripoli to have a better understanding of the security as well as the other developments.

It is very hard to track terrorism from -- just from ISR, right, just from intelligence resources or just from Washington or just from capitals, yeah.

Q And just to clarify one point. So at this point in time -- and again, this is a few weeks after the info memo goes up.

A That's right, sir.

Q The discussion at post was not whether to close the Special

Mission in Benghazi, but it was to in fact extend it and make it a permanent presence. Is that --

A There was no discussion of closing Benghazi from post. It was all like it is more important than ever that we get a handle on what's going on and that we are influential and present to understand what's going on and to influence what happens in eastern Libya.

Q Okay. So at this point -- and this will just take a few minutes.

A Sure.

Q So I'll ask you to please bear with us.

A Sure.

Q We are going to shift gears a little bit.

A Okay.

Q And I'll preface by saying that this is -- I'll let her ask one more question.

A Yes.

Ms. Sawyer. Give me a moment, and I'll always think of one other question.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Give us a minute, we'll always write another email. Sorry.

Ms. Sawyer. Yeah. Let the record reflect we were just joking.

You know, there have been some allegations. This memo indicates a pretty active effort on the part of the individuals on the ground --

Ms. [REDACTED]. Uh-huh.

Ms. Sawyer. -- to be advocating a particular recommendation to

both keep and then extend the presence.

Ms. Safai. Heather, I apologize. Are you still referring to 7?

Ms. Sawyer. I'm sorry, I'm referring back to exhibit 7.

Ms. Safai. Okay.

Ms. Sawyer. Toward the end of August 2012.

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q You know, there have been allegations that the both presence in Benghazi and the desire to remain in Benghazi did not come from the ground up but instead came from the top down, that it was truly -- that the Secretary of State at the time, Hillary Clinton's desire to be there and her directive to be there, or if not Secretary Clinton, then someone in the White House or the White House National Security Council.

A Right.

Q Is that true? Is that allegation true?

A No.

Q That it was being driven from the top down?

A No, not at all. It was very much, you know, from -- from early -- from 2011 onwards through 2012, it was post really leading the charge and making -- because they were on the ground. They saw how important it was, and they had the hunger to be like: There is a lot going on here. We need to be responsible diplomats and stewards of American interests. We have to understand what's happening. We have to be present to understand what's happening.

And it was not a fun place to live, so it's not like -- I don't mean, again, to make light of this, but we took this very seriously.

And obviously, the Assistant Secretaries and the seventh floor always take seriously the recommendations of our ambassadors because it's not like he was asking to open up a Club Med or something. This was a difficult place in which to work, but it was worth to us to make the case to remain in Libya and to make sure we stay in eastern Libya as well as Tripoli to keep the mission going.

Q And on the very last page of this exhibit 7.

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Down in that bottom paragraph, there's just a mention in the first few -- in the first sentence right there: "The Embassy's facilities manager and," redacted," colleagues, have conducted site surveys in multiple compounds that could properly house a co-located mission."

So in terms of discussing that and just at a high level, not in detail --

A Uh-huh.

Q -- the ability to co-locate different entities from U.S. Government, to me, indicates that enhancing security for folks on the ground --

A Yes.

Q -- was being considered and being considered very seriously, and steps were actually proactively being taken in that direction.

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Was that accurate? Is that accurate?

A Yes, that is absolutely my understanding.

Q So it's not that individuals were unaware of the security challenges or ignoring the security challenges.

A No. They were very much aware, and this memo -- this discussion reflects to me that post was thinking very clearly about the risk-reward, the risk-interest balance, like: If we do this, we will need RSOs; we will push for publication; we will -- you know, these are what we'll recommend to Washington, the steps that we take.

Q So those steps and that discussion was well under way and ongoing at the time that the attacks then occurred?

A It was beginning. It wasn't -- you know, post had just -- and the Ambassador and his team had had the discussion with their interagency colleagues in Libya, and they were coming back to Washington to say -- the Ambassador was like: This is my concerted recommendation of where we need to go forward.

Q And just from a personal perspective, you know, hindsight is always 20/20 vision, but at the time, did you agree with the recommendations that were being made to continue a presence and extend it, you know, with the considerations that were under way, the presence in Benghazi?

A Yes, ma'am. I agreed 100 percent. As I stated earlier, that as a Foreign Service officer and someone who has worked in the Middle East and tough places, you know, I saw the immediate benefit of contact building and being present and meeting people and kind of helping to shape, you know, decisions on the ground or activities on

the ground and pushing American perspectives and interests along the way.

So I agreed with this 100 percent. To be frank, when I -- when they first mentioned this memo to me, and we knew the Ambassador was a strong proponent, but my stomach sank a little bit because there is, bureaucratically, until we had the bureaucratic agreement that this would be extended for a period of time, I knew that the difficulty of staffing would continue, kind of the TDY, the need to pull people from other places. Mainly, I'm a policy sec because that was what I was responsible, not the DS staffing, so I'm like, absolutely, 100 percent, and like 5 percent was like -- you know, to reflect to the court reporter -- 5 percent of me was like: Wow, this is -- we're going to have to think very carefully bureaucratically with our resource people how this would -- how we try to regularize the staffing for this.

So a little bit of me was a scrooge, was uncomfortable, but not for any security reasons, mainly for the bureaucracy itself. The logistics are tough.

Q And despite the fact that you realized that there would be some period of time where those logistics would remain a challenge --

A Absolutely.

Q You still thought --

A Absolutely, 100 percent. This absolutely had to be done, and I believe that to this day, despite our losses.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q And just a moment ago when you were referring to the

difficulties of the TDY, were you referring to that in the context of the December 2011 decision to extend for 1 year?

A No. Well, I was more referring to this, the 2012, the beginning of the discussion to continue to extend because at the end of 2011, when the memo came out, you know, we're like: Okay, we're going to keep this going for a year. It's fine. We've got our game. I know how to do this. I know how to -- who to draw from to do our principal officers and the policy staff.

Q But to be clear, this exhibit 7 is a recommendation to make a permanent post, not to re-extend. Is that how you viewed it?

A Yes, sir. That's what the Ambassador -- it looks like that's what they were setting forth in the cable. Of course, Washington ultimately makes the decision. They take the Ambassador's recommendation into -- absolutely, it's a very strong element of this, but it also takes time to determine that you set up a permanent mission. So in the interim, it doesn't happen overnight.

Q Okay. And this was the beginning of that process?

A This was the beginning of that process. That's right.

Q Okay. So shifting gears a little bit.

A Yes.

Q This will be our last portion of our interview, and I'll just preface by saying that this is the eighth congressional investigation into the Benghazi attacks. It's our intent and hope that it's the last, and we, therefore, have been asking every witness a series of public -- about a series of public allegations that have been

made about the attacks. And while anybody can speculate about the Benghazi attacks, plenty of people have, there is only a limited universe of people who have direct specific knowledge of what happened both before, during, and after the attacks, and so what I'm asking for here is not your speculation, not your opinion but whether you have any firsthand knowledge on these allegations. If not, we'll just move on to the next allegation.

So there's several of them, so it takes a little bit of that time to get through those, but I appreciate --

A I understand.

Q -- your patience. First, it has been alleged that Secretary of State Clinton intentionally blocked military action on the night of the attacks. One Congressman has speculated that, quote, "Secretary Clinton told Leon Panetta to stand down," close quote, and this resulted in the Defense Department not sending more assets to help in Benghazi.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary of State Clinton ordered Secretary of Defense Panetta to stand down on the night of the attacks?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that Secretary of State Clinton issued any kind of order to Secretary of Defense Panetta on the night of the attacks?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that Secretary Clinton personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security resources to Libya. The

Washington Post Fact Checker evaluated the claim and gave it Four Pinocchio's, its highest award for false claims.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security resources to Libya?

A No, I do not.

Q Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton was personally involved in providing specific instruction on day-to-day security resources in Benghazi?

A No.

Q Next. It's been alleged that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risk posed by Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for military operations in Libya in the spring of 2011.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risk posed by Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for military operations in Libya in the spring of 2011?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that the U.S. Mission in Benghazi included transferring weapons to Syrian rebels or to other countries. A bipartisan report issued by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence found that, quote "CIA was not collecting and shipping arms from Libya to Syria," close quote, and that they found, quote, "no support for this allegation," close quote. Those were the unclassified findings from the report.

Do you have any evidence to contradict the House Intelligence Committee's bipartisan report finding that the CIA was not shipping arms from Libya to Syria?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that the U.S. facilities in Benghazi were being used to facilitate weapons transfers from Libya to Syria or to any other foreign country?

A No.

Q A team of CIA security personnel was temporarily delayed from departing the Annex to assist the Special Mission Compound, and there have been a number of allegations about the cause and the appropriateness of that delay. The House Intelligence Committee issued a bipartisan report concluding that the team was not ordered to, quote, "stand down," close quote, but that instead there were tactical disagreements on the ground over how quickly to depart.

Do you have any evidence that would contradict the House Intelligence Committee's finding that there was no standdown order to CIA personnel?

A No.

Q Putting aside whether you personally agree with the decision to delay them temporarily or think it was the right decision, do you have any evidence that there was a bad or improper reason behind the temporary delay of the CIA security personnel who departed the Annex to assist the Special Mission Compound?

A No.

Q Concern has been raised by one individual in the course of producing documents to the Accountability Review Board damaging documents may have been removed or scrubbed out of that production.

Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department removed or scrubbed damaging documents from materials that were provided to the ARB?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence anyone at the State Department directed anyone else at the State Department to remove or scrub damaging documents from the materials that were provided to the ARB?

A No.

Q I'll ask these questions for documents provided to Congress. Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department removed or scrubbed damaging documents from the materials that were provided to Congress?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that CIA Deputy Director Michael Morell altered unclassified talking points about the Benghazi attacks for political reasons and that he then misrepresented his actions when he told Congress that the CIA, quote, "faithfully performed our duties in accordance with the highest standards of objectivity and nonpartisanship," close quote.

Do you have any evidence that CIA Deputy Director Michael Morell gave false or intentionally misleading testimony to Congress about the Benghazi talking points?

A No, I do not.

Q Do you have any evidence CIA Deputy Director Morell altered the talking points provided to Congress for political reasons?

A No.

Q Next. It has been alleged that Ambassador Susan Rice made an intentional misrepresentation when she spoke on the Sunday talk shows about the Benghazi attacks.

Do you have any evidence that Ambassador Rice intentionally misrepresented facts about the Benghazi attacks on the Sunday talk shows?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that the President of the United States was, quote, "virtually AWOL as Commander in Chief," close quote, on the night of that attacks and that he was, quote, "missing in action," close quote.

Do you have any evidence to support the allegation that the President was, quote, "virtually AWOL as Commander in Chief," close quote, or quote, "missing in action," close quote, on the night of the attacks?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that a team of four military personnel at Embassy Tripoli on the night of the attacks were considering flying on the second plane to Benghazi, were ordered by their superiors to, quote, "stand down," close quote, meaning cease all operations.

Military officials have stated that those four individuals were

instead ordered to remain in place in Tripoli to provide security and medical assistance in their current location.

A Republican staff report issued by the House Armed Services Committee found that, quote, "There was no standdown order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi," close quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict the conclusion of the House Armed Services Committee that there was no standdown order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi?

A No.

Q Last one.

A Okay.

Q It has been alleged that the military failed to deploy assets on the night of the attack that would have saved lives. However, former Republican Congressman Howard "Buck" McKeon, the former chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, conducted a review of the attacks, after which he stated, quote, "Given where the troops were, how quickly the thing all happened, and how quickly it dissipated, we probably couldn't have done more than we did," close quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict Congressman McKeon's conclusion?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that the Pentagon had military assets available to them on night of the attacks that could have saved

lives but that the Pentagon leadership intentionally decided not to deploy?

A No.

Q Okay.

Ms. Sawyer. Thank you for the time that you've given us today. You came a long way to answer our questions. We appreciate it very much, and I just wanted to give you an opportunity if there is anything that we didn't ask or that you felt would be important to this committee for us to understand or to know, to give you the opportunity to, you know, explain anything further.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Thank you. I have nothing further to offer with regard to the investigation. I think the one thing that I'd like to say, since it's on the record, is that, you know, for better or for worse, I think we're going to continue living and working in a very unpredictable world, and ultimately, our resources come from you, from Congress. And so I'd like to say that as a Foreign Service officer -- and I hope I'll continue to have the privilege to work in positions of greater responsibility. I hope at some point to potentially be DCM or, you know, a leader in a bureau.

It's very important that we have the ability to surge and flex as we need to in the field. It is not just the military that has to surge for crises, but it's also your civilians. That will entail -- I think it's going to be -- it's difficult. We're going to -- and it's difficult for Congress to address these changing resource requests, but it shouldn't be a surprise to any of the staffers here today or

to your Members that this is a very unpredictable world we live in.

We will continue to want to represent the American people and defend our interests in places that change. I have never served in Western Europe, you know. I've never served in a garden post, other than Thailand early in my career, and so I anticipate that I will probably continue to have the opportunity to work on the Washington side and overseas in places that are slightly unpredictable. And we welcome kind of the dialogue with Congress and the flexibility and the resources that we need to change staffing as needed.

And it's a tall order, but we can't predict exactly what's happening in the world, but I believe it's very important that in addition to military intelligence and other colleagues, that diplomats are in the lead in representing the United States and interpreting and shaping what happens overseas, so I -- Ambassador Stevens was an amazing diplomat and an amazing friend, and he understood the Middle East like very few other people.

It was very important that the United States had his leadership there, and there are many -- this is very hard to go through again, but it's worth it that we continue to do this work. And it's very important that we continue to have that dialogue with the Congress on what's needed to make this work possible because, ultimately, the money doesn't come from within the State Department.

So thank you very much, and thank you very much to my colleagues from the State Department as well, and Raeka.

Ms. Sawyer. Well, thank you. We truly appreciate it. You

know, on behalf of all the members of the committee, we thank you both for being here today, obviously, but also for the tremendous service that you have given to the country, that you have pledged -- and it is on the record -- that you will continue giving to the country.

It is very much appreciated, and we certainly do hope that Congress will continue to partner in a meaningful way with the State Department to help continue the really important work that you all do and that you all do on our behalf, as you said, not in garden situations, but in ones that are not garden-like and can be very unstable, so thank you.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Thank you, ma'am.

Mr. Kenny. Thank you. We'll go off the record.

[Whereupon, at 2:10 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

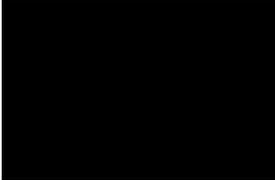
April 28, 2016

Dear Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the unclassified transcript from my December 17, 2015 interview with the Select Committee on Benghazi. During my review, I identified one statement that I believe need correction or further clarification. I respectfully request that the record be amended to reflect the below changes:

PG 132: With regard to my second answer on that page regarding the future of an office in Benghazi: the phrase "we will push for publication" should be stricken. It doesn't make sense and what I recall saying is: "If we do this, we will need RSOs; we will push for adequate personnel..."

Sincerely



Welcher, Alison R

Subject: Select Committee Transcript
Attachments: [REDACTED] 2015.12.17.pdf

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 1:17 AM
To: Deck, Laura E
Cc: Welcher, Alison R; [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Select Committee Transcript

Colleagues,

Thanks for the chance to review. My recommended edits for clarification follow.

PG 63: Third line from the bottom: It's not my answer but I think the questioner asked or meant to ask whether "....Bill Roebuck sent this note **to the Assistant Secretary..**" not to the "Secretary" Per the context of that discussion.

PG 96: Middle of the page. This one is important because I think the text as drafted mischaracterizes my point. I did not say (or mean)that only junior State Dept officers should have their names redacted from the cables, etc. in the document production, but that ALL PEOPLE BELOW THE LEVEL OF THE AMBASSADOR at post, from all agencies, should have their personal details redacted. The phrase ..."from the State Department...." Should be stricken.

PG 104: The correct spelling of the name is [REDACTED].

PG 132: With regard to my second answer on that page regarding the future of an office in Benghazi: the phrase "we will push for publication" should be stricken. IT doesn't make sense and what I recall saying is: "If we do this will need RSOs; **we will push for adequate personnel...**"

PG 133: Middle of the page in my answer. After "Mainly..." it should read "on the policy side" not "I'm a policy sec..."

Best,
[REDACTED]

EXHIBIT 1

SCB 000029

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 10:32 PM
To: Fishman, Benjamin I.
Cc: [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Ops ([REDACTED] our mole in Ops) tells us Jeff is already on the phone with Beth to pass along some info he's gleaned. Qatar might be a good avenue.

From: Fishman, Benjamin I. [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 10:21 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: statement from the GNC

Our Turkey people will reach out and coordinate with EUR presumably.
Another thought. Has someone notified Jeff? Among other things, he could call the Qataris who I think are the only others in Benghazi with resources and potential information. Not sure that's the right channel but at least worth considering.

From: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 9:45 PM
To: Fishman, Benjamin I.
Subject: RE: statement from the GNC

That's a good idea, I'll check in with Ops

From: Fishman, Benjamin I. [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 9:28 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: statement from the GNC

Has there been any thought to outreach to Turkey to see what they may have present in Benghazi? I can't think of any others who might be in a position to help if needed.

From: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 9:26 PM
To: Fishman, Benjamin I.
Subject: RE: statement from the GNC

Nothing we're waiting for an update from the special folks.

I bet Kennedy is worried about further repercussions and attacks if US military is too obvious.

From: Fishman, Benjamin I. [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 9:19 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: statement from the GNC

You don't have anything further on Chris, right? I was sitting in that meeting for two hours.

I don't know why Pat Kennedy is so concerned about what extra security folks are wearing. Does that come from Greg? The time for being overly sensitive to Libyan concerns about military appearances seems to be over.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 9:17 PM
To: Fishman, Benjamin I.; [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: statement from the GNC

Thanks Ben....

From: Fishman, Benjamin I. [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 9:10 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: statement from the GNC

For what it's worth, [REDACTED] sent this to me.

I got a separate call from [REDACTED] the Congressman close to Magariaf, who claimed Feb 17 has Chris and he's alive, according to MOI. Clearly don't know reliability.

If you need anything from here, let me know.

EXHIBIT 2

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 2:18 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Libya PG

Off the reservation on five networks!

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 2:17 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Libya PG

Yup. Luckily there's enough in her language to fudge exactly what she said/meant.

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 2:16 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Libya PG

I think Rice was off the reservation on this one.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 2:05 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Libya PG

Toria planned on walking it back just a bit, though.

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 2:02 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Libya PG

The horse has left the barn on this, don't you think? Rice was on FIVE Sunday Morning shows yesterday saying this. Tough to walk back.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 01:59 PM

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Libya PG

[REDACTED] – per my call. Note sure we want to be so definitive – what does A/S Jones say?

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 1:41 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Libya PG

I really hope this was revised. I don't think we should go on the record on this.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 12:36 PM
To: [REDACTED]; NEA-LIBYADESK; CAPRESSREQUESTS; [REDACTED]
Cc: M_Clearance
Subject: Re: Libya PG

This is actually the most recent. Just saw NSS language, which I used as the key points here.

NEA Press Guidance

September 17, 2012

Libya: Update on Investigation on Attack in Benghazi

Key Points

· The currently available information suggests that the demonstrations in Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by the protests at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and evolved into a direct assault against the U.S. mission and subsequently its annex. There are indications that extremists participated in the violent demonstrations.

· This assessment may change as additional information is collected and analyzed and as currently available information continues to be evaluated.

· The investigation is ongoing, and the U.S. Government is working with Libyan authorities to bring to justice those responsible for the deaths of U.S. citizens.

Q: Do we have any confirmation of the names and condition of those injured in Benghazi yet?

· Due to privacy considerations, I have no comment.

Q: Can we confirm the authenticity of the cell-phone video of Amb. Stephens?

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

We cannot confirm the authenticity of the video.

Q: Do we have any adjustments in the time line, sequence of events in Benghazi?

As I said, there is an ongoing investigation and I am not going to comment any further at this time.

Q: Has the FBI provided any investigation updates? Has the FBI been able to even reach Benghazi yet?

I refer you to the Department of Justice for information on the ongoing investigation.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 12:34 PM
To: [REDACTED]; Meehan, Bernadette <[REDACTED]>; NEA-LIBYADESK; CAPRESSREQUESTS; [REDACTED]
Cc: M_Clearance
Subject: RE: Libya PG

Hi – I made some tweaks. I am not keen on the first point, even as I edited it, but don't have any better suggestions. Maybe was not "planned well in advance." ?

The rest of it looks good.

I added DS to this message also.

Thanks, [REDACTED] M/PRI

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 12:13 PM
To: Meehan, Bernadette; NEA-LIBYADESK; CAPRESSREQUESTS; [REDACTED]
Subject: Libya PG
Importance: High

Hi Everyone –

Please see the below PG on Libya. This is all I really have for today.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.

NEA Press Guidance**September 17, 2012****Libya: Update on Investigation on Attack in Benghazi****Key Points**

- We will continue to wait for the findings of the ongoing FBI investigation before reaching a final conclusion, but at this preliminary stage, ~~time~~, we have not yet seen any signs that the attack on our consulate in Benghazi was other than spontaneous. ~~premeditated. or coordinated.~~

- I have nothing more for you due to the ongoing FBI investigation.

Q: Do we have any confirmation of the names and condition of those injured in Benghazi yet?

- Due to privacy considerations, I have no comment.

Q: Can we confirm the authenticity of the cell-phone video of Amb. Stephens?

- We cannot confirm the authenticity of the video.

Q: Do we have any adjustments in the time line, sequence of events in Benghazi?

- As we have said, there is an ongoing investigation into the tragic events that occurred in Benghazi, and I am not going to comment any further at this time.

Q: Has the FBI provided any investigation updates? Has the FBI been able to even reach Benghazi yet?

- I refer you to the Department of Justice for information on the ongoing investigation.

██████████ Press Officer | Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs | U.S. Department of State

2201 C St, NW Rm 2234, Washington, DC 20520 | ☎: 202.647.4184 | ✉: ██████████@state.gov

EXHIBIT 3

C05580192

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, September 16, 2012 3:57 PM
To: Hicks, Gregory N
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: (SBU) Priority and High Ranking TDYs, And Other Important Issues

Ok, thank you!

From: Hicks, Gregory N
Sent: Sunday, September 16, 2012 03:55 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: (SBU) Priority and High Ranking TDYs, And Other Important Issues

[REDACTED] We do not know what was in the safe. We believe the person most likely to know what it contained is RSO [REDACTED] who, we believe is heading back to the Washington today or tomorrow.

Glad you met [REDACTED] and thanks for your help in getting her there. Seeing her was a big morale boost.

Best Regards, Greg.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, September 15, 2012 2:34 AM
To: Hicks, Gregory N
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: (SBU) Priority and High Ranking TDYs, And Other Important Issues

Thanks Greg.

There is interest here on what computers and classified or sensitive information might have been taken from Benghazi.

Do we know what was in the safe?

It was very nice to meet [REDACTED] today!

Best,
[REDACTED]

From: Hicks, Gregory N
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 04:48 PM
To: Jones, Beth E; [REDACTED]
Cc: Operations Center; [REDACTED]
Subject: (SBU) Priority and High Ranking TDYs, And Other Important Issues

Beth [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

(SBU) I spoke with LEGATT [REDACTED] this evening. He said that FBI would like to send as soon as possible a 5-person team to Tripoli, including [REDACTED]

They agreed that a DS agent could accompany them on all investigations. We would prefer that DS send an appropriate agent to Post for this purpose. Even with only five person on the team, this will be a high maintenance visit that will

C05580192

diminish our ability to support other tdy activity. Otherwise, we may have to ground the FBI team temporarily to support other tdy visitors that Washington deems to be priority. Please advise if we should begin working with [REDACTED] to identify dates and rooms for this visit.

(SBU) General Ham's staff indicated a desire to visit Tripoli on 9/21. We have asked his staff to reconsider visiting Tripoli on a Friday and notified them of the suspension of tdy missions to Tripoli through at least 9/26. Depending on the day proposed and the timing of the arrival of the FBI mission, we could probably support a short visit by the General to meet the Libyan MOD and the Chief of Staff of the Libyan Armed Forces. His visit might be important for us to push for final 1208 approval by the GOL. We have basically advised RADM Losey, SOCAfrica commander to accompany General Ham rather than try to come on his own.

(SBU) RSO, ARSO, and DATT spoke with GOL lead investigator for the attack on the consulate while he was doing his first inspection of the facilities. They established a good rapport as they walked him through the unburned building. Unfortunately, the conversation indicated that the safe has been taken from the premises. We asked him to secure all papers and personal effects that he finds and return them to us.

(SBU) [REDACTED] [REDACTED] connected with him and he is flying to Tripoli. We are meeting him at the airport tonight and bringing him to the Villas compound. We hope to continue to use his talents while you all work on appropriate means for him [REDACTED]

(SBU) Facilities: With the changed security paradigm, we are no longer confident that we can work safely at the CMR. I have asked [REDACTED] to begin planning to move all operations, except consular services, to the Villas compound. We believe that working inside the consular section is one of the safest places on our facilities and for policy reasons, we need to keep the section open. Meanwhile, OBO needs to be prepared to move more quickly to begin and finish the Villas construction projects once we decide to lift the tdy suspension.

(SBU) Personnel: Thanks for talking with our folks in Frankfurt. I'm trying to set up a call for sometime tomorrow. I've asked the team to develop a schedule for returning to Tripoli to resume duty. On the Management side, I understand that [REDACTED] has asked EX to allow PCS officers to report to Post as planned so that our WAE team may return to the States. I support this request.

Thanks again for arranging for my wife to attend the ceremony. It was exciting to see her in the crowd, and everyone required me to point her out.

All the best, Greg.

EXHIBIT 4

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2012 4:19 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: draft email for your clearance: (SBU) Lack of Security Staffing at Benghazi undermining mission

Categories: Working
Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
SensitivityCode: Sensitive

Also, the Secretary asked last week if we still have a presence in Benghazi – I think she would be upset to hear that yes we do but because we don't have enough security they are on lockdown.

SBU
This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2012 3:25 PM
To: NEA-MAG-LIBYA
Subject: FW: draft email for your clearance: (SBU) Lack of Security Staffing at Benghazi undermining mission

SBU
This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2012 3:24 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: draft email for your clearance: (SBU) Lack of Security Staffing at Benghazi undermining mission

[REDACTED]

Let me know if this works and whether you want to consult with [REDACTED] or EX before sending this to the FO. Another issue to keep in mind is Embassy Tunis' longstanding request for an A/RSO. If we ask JDF to present this to M, we might get asked which would be our top priority within MAG. (That's not a fair question of course, because Tunis is asking for a permanent A/RSO FTE, whereas we are looking for a solid commitment of 4 TDY DS agents through the end of the year.)

Thanks.

We determined early on that it was important to us to maintain a presence in Benghazi to engage with the TNC and keep an eye on political and security developments in the east. The mission in Benghazi has also allowed PM and USAID to conduct periodic TDYs in the east to further develop their contacts and monitor progress on our MANPADS, elections

and civil society assistance programs. The simmering protests in Benghazi and the east against the TNC and local councils over the last few weeks (along with violent unrest in Bani Wali in the west) have shaken the interim government, and illustrated the importance of maintaining a broad base of contacts and visibility outside of Tripoli.

Unfortunately, DS staffing is becoming a recurring problem in Benghazi. At the current security threat level, Benghazi needs a minimum of four agents to support moves out of town (3 to accompany the Principal Officer or TDY officer, and 1 to remain on compound with the IRM/management person). Post needs a minimum of three agents to facilitate one movement at a time in town, and one to remain on compound.

DS staffing has dropped to two agents several times over the last few months between rotations, which has prevented the PO from leaving the compound. DS tells post it is unlikely they can fully staff Benghazi due to broader staffing challenges across NEA, and has suggested we adjust our expectations about movements and outreach.

The fluid security situation makes it unlikely that RSO and EAC will decide to significantly ease the security profile in the immediate future. If DS cannot or will not allocate the right resources for Benghazi, we may want to push back with M to force a discussion about DS's decision. If there is no recourse, we should reconsider whether we keep the mission going. There is very little reason to maintain the expense if our people are going to be trapped on the compound and unable to get around.

[REDACTED]
Deputy Director, Office of Maghreb Affairs
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
U.S. Department of State
(O) 202-647-4675 (F) 202-736-4460

SBU

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

EXHIBIT 5

UNCLASSIFIED U.S. Department of State Case No. O-2015-15055 Doc No. C05390124 Date: 10/13/2015
 STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOJ. NO FOIA WAIVER.



201214940 Rev. 1
 United States Department of State



Washington, D.C. 20520

CONFIDENTIAL
 DECL: 08/16/2022

RELEASE IN FULL August 17, 2012

INFORMATION MEMO FOR THE SECRETARY

FROM: NEA – Beth Jones, Acting

SUBJECT: (C) Security Situation in Libya: A Spike in Violence or a New Normal?

Overall Security Situation

(C) Libya has experienced an upward trend in violence – primarily but not exclusively in the east – since May. It is not yet clear if this trend will reverse itself as earlier ones have over the past year or if, in eastern Libya at least, it constitutes a new normal. The ongoing presence of militias is a complicating factor, both providing security in many areas where the national government cannot, and undercutting it in others. Militias were seen as a constructive force during the July 7 elections for the General National Congress. The central security services are still being reconstituted and do not have the capacity to force the militias under a national authority. While unpredictable security conditions restrict the movement of U.S. government personnel, they have not limited our assistance work. The violence has not targeted the oil and gas infrastructure.

Uptick in Violence, Primarily in Eastern Libya

(SBU) Since May, there has been a spike in violent incidents, including bombings, abductions, assassinations, and car-jackings. The attachment lists the major events, which include a June 6 bombing at the U.S. Mission in Benghazi and an August 6 attempted car-jacking of embassy personnel in Tripoli. Recently, foreign residents of Benghazi have expressed concern about the risks of living and working there. In response to five attacks since May, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) withdrew its personnel from Benghazi and Misrata in early August, but continued work in the rest of Libya. The ICRC country director believes international organizations in Libya have underestimated the recent rise in violence out of a shared sense of optimism.

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Charles Daris, Senior Reviewer

CONFIDENTIAL

Classified by: NEA Assistant Secretary Beth Jones, Acting
 E.O. 13526, Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMMITTEE.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOJ. NO FOIA WAIVER.

UNCLASSIFIED U.S. Department of State Case No. O-2015-15055 Doc No. C05390124 Date: 10/13/2015

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

Emboldened but Random

(C) The variety of the violence points to the overall lack of effective security institutions, particularly in the east. Local contacts blame pro-Qadhafi element efforts to destabilize the government, militia vigilante action, extremist Islamist groups settling scores, and criminally motivated thugs for most of the incidents. The distance from the already weak central security services, feelings of marginalization from the central government, and a history of Islamist extremism in some eastern towns all seem to contribute to a permissive environment where disparate motivations for violence have found fertile ground in which to germinate. The national Supreme Security Council – a post-revolutionary coalition of militia elements cobbled into a single force and designed to provide interim security in Benghazi – has had limited success as a stabilizing force.

(C) The government seems largely unable to gather intelligence in advance of attacks and central security services appear intimidated by the local militias, in some cases tacitly ceding their authority to them. Some actors see the weak response from the government and feel they can act with increasing impunity. The sense of lawlessness encourages spoilers, predators, and other disruptive players to escalate their actions.

The Transition Requires Security

(C) Benghazi was once palpably safer than Tripoli, but in the absence of a national political consensus on fundamental issues, lawlessness is increasing. The newly seated General National Congress should address the security situation directly to reassert control. Despite the urgency, however, the government's response is likely to continue to be hesitant and tentative, as it focuses on maintaining momentum and cohesion for the challenging political transition it is undertaking. Efforts to rebuild the national military and police forces (including the incorporation of some militias into the national forces) will need to proceed in step with efforts to create the right package of educational, vocational, and monetary incentives to demobilize, disarm, and reintegrate the revolutionary fighters into civilian life. We are working to assist the Libyans through advice on disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration and reconstituting elements of their national security forces through capacity building for counterterrorism and border security activities through classroom and field training.

(C) Despite the worrisome aspects of this increase in violence, there is no coordinated organization behind the incidents. Ethnic, sectarian, and tribal differences have not been major factors in causing or exacerbating the violence; in fact, there is some evidence that traditional tribal structures are helping to contain

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 3 -

it. Nonetheless, the likelihood of more widespread violence is strong if Libya's political leaders are unable to demobilize militias and strengthen the government's security institutions.

Attachment:

List of Recent Violence in Libya

CONFIDENTIAL

EXHIBIT 6

11/3/2016

Benghazi Bombshell: Clinton State Department Official Reveals Details of Alleged Document Review - The Daily Signal



Benghazi Bombshell: Clinton State Department Official Reveals Details of Alleged Document Review

Sharyl Attkisson / September 15, 2014

As the House Select Committee on Benghazi prepares for its first hearing this week, a former State Department diplomat is coming forward with a startling allegation: Hillary Clinton confidants were part of an operation to “separate” damaging documents before they were turned over to the Accountability Review Board investigating security lapses surrounding the Sept. 11, 2012, terrorist attacks on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya.

UPDATE: Hillary Clinton's chief of staff allegedly present at after-hours document review.

According to former Deputy Assistant Secretary Raymond Maxwell, the after-hours session took place over a weekend in a basement operations-type center at State Department headquarters in Washington, D.C. This is the first time Maxwell has publicly come forward with the story.

At the time, Maxwell was a leader in the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, which was charged with collecting emails and documents relevant to the Benghazi probe.



Raymond Maxwell, former State Department deputy assistant secretary (Photo: Sharyl Attkisson)

“I was not invited to that after-hours endeavor, but I heard about it and decided to check it out on a Sunday afternoon,” Maxwell says.

11/3/2016

Benghazi Bombshell: Clinton State Department Official Reveals Details of Alleged Document Review - The Daily Signal

He didn't know it then, but Maxwell would ultimately become one of four State Department officials singled out for discipline—he says scapegoated—then later cleared for devastating security lapses leading up to the attacks. Four Americans, including U.S. Ambassador Christopher Stevens, were murdered during the Benghazi attacks.

'Basement Operation'

Maxwell says the weekend document session was held in the basement of the State Department's Foggy Bottom headquarters in a room underneath the "jogger's entrance." He describes it as a large space, outfitted with computers and big screen monitors, intended for emergency planning, and with small offices on the periphery.

When he arrived, Maxwell says he observed boxes and stacks of documents. He says a State Department office director, whom Maxwell described as close to Clinton's top advisers, was there. Though the office director technically worked for him, Maxwell says he wasn't consulted about her weekend assignment.



'Basement operation': The Department of State in Washington. (Photo: Wayan Vota/Creative Commons)

"She told me, 'Ray, we are to go through these stacks and pull out anything that might put anybody in the [Near Eastern Affairs] front office or the seventh floor in a bad light,'" says Maxwell. He says "seventh floor" was State Department shorthand for then-Secretary of State Clinton and her principal advisers.

"I asked her, 'But isn't that unethical?' She responded, 'Ray, those are our orders.'"

A few minutes after he arrived, Maxwell says, he walked two high-ranking State Department officials.

In an interview Monday morning on Fox News, Rep. Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, named the two Hillary Clinton confidants who allegedly were present: One was Cheryl Mills, Clinton's chief of staff and a former White House counsel who defended President Bill Clinton during his impeachment trial. The other, Chaffetz said, was Deputy Chief of Staff Jake Sullivan, who previously worked on Hillary Clinton's and then Barack Obama's presidential campaigns.

Benghazi Bombshell: Fox News Reports on Sharyl Attkisson's...

"When Cheryl saw me, she snapped, 'Who are you?'" Maxwell says. "Jake explained, 'That's Ray Maxwell, an NEA deputy assistant secretary.' She conceded, 'Well, OK.'"

Maxwell says the two officials, close confidants of Clinton, appeared to check in on the operation and soon left.

Maxwell says after Mills and Sullivan arrived, he, the office director and an intern moved into a small office where they looked through some papers. Maxwell says his stack included pre-attack telegrams and cables between the U.S. embassy in Tripoli and State Department headquarters. After a short time, Maxwell says he decided to leave.

"I didn't feel good about it," he says.



Cheryl Mills, left, was Hillary Clinton's chief of staff and a White House counsel who defended President Bill Clinton during his impeachment trial. (Photo: Newscom)

We contacted Mills and Sullivan to ask about the allegations and the purpose of the described separation of documents, but they did not return calls or emails. We reached out to Clinton, who declined an interview request and offered no comment. A State Department spokesman told us it would have been impossible for anybody outside the Accountability Review Board (ARB) to control the flow of information because the board cultivated so many sources.

'Unfettered Access'?

11/3/2016

Benghazi Bombshell: Clinton State Department Official Reveals Details of Alleged Document Review - The Daily Signal

When the ARB issued its call for documents in early October 2012, just weeks after the Benghazi attacks, the executive directorate of the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs was put in charge of collecting all emails and relevant material. It was gathered, boxed and—Maxwell says—ended up in the basement room prior to being turned over.

In May 2013, when critics questioned the ARB's investigation as not thorough enough, co-chairmen Ambassador Thomas Pickering and Adm. Mike Mullen responded that “we had unfettered access to everyone and everything including all the documentation we needed.”

Maxwell says when he heard that statement, he couldn't help but wonder if the ARB—perhaps unknowingly—had received from his bureau a scrubbed set of documents with the most damaging material missing.



An attacker celebrates as buildings and cars burn at the consulate compound in Benghazi late Sept. 11, 2012. (Photo: Getty Images/Newscom)

Maxwell also criticizes the ARB as “anything but independent,” pointing to Mullen's admission in congressional testimony that he called Mills to give her inside advice after the ARB interviewed a potential congressional witness.

In an interview in September 2013, Pickering told me that he would not have done what Mullen did. But both co-chairmen strongly defend their probe as “fiercely independent.”

Maxwell also criticizes the ARB for failing to interview key people at the White House, State Department and the CIA, including not only Clinton but Deputy Secretary of State Thomas Nides, who managed department resources in Libya; Assistant Secretary of State for Political Military Affairs Andrew Shapiro; and White House National Security Council Director for Libya Ben Fishman.

“The ARB inquiry was, at best, a shoddily executed attempt at damage control, both in Foggy Bottom and on Capitol Hill,” Maxwell says. He views the after-hours operation he witnessed in the State Department basement as “an exercise in misdirection.”



http://dailysignal.com/print?post_id=157483

11/3/2016

Benghazi Bombshell: Clinton State Department Official Reveals Details of Alleged Document Review - The Daily Signal

Ambassador to Libya Christopher Stevens and three other Americans were murdered in Benghazi. (Photo: Newscom)

Sullivan did not respond to emails or to messages sent to him through his current teaching job at Yale Law School. Mills did not respond to a message passed to her through Black Rock, a major global investment firm where she is on the board of directors. Clinton's press officer ultimately referred us to the State Department, though none of the three currently works there.

State Department Response

A State Department spokesman, Alec Gerlach, calls the implication that documents were withheld "totally without merit." Gerlach says: "The range of sources that the ARB's investigation drew on would have made it impossible for anyone outside of the ARB to control its access to information."

Gerlach says the State Department instructed all employees to cooperate "fully and promptly" with the ARB, which invited anyone with relevant information to contact the board directly.

"So individuals with information were reaching out proactively to the board. And, the ARB was also directly engaged with individuals and the [State] Department's bureaus and offices to request information and pull on whichever threads it chose to," Gerlach says.

Benghazi Select Committee

Maxwell says he has been interviewed privately by several members of Congress in recent months, including Chaffetz, a member of the House Oversight Committee, and Rep. Trey Gowdy, R-S.C., chairman of the House Select Committee on Benghazi.



Rep. Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, speaks with Rep. Trey Gowdy, R-S.C., chairman of the Benghazi Select Committee, (Photo: Newscom)

When reached for comment, Chaffetz told me that Maxwell's allegations "go to the heart of the integrity of the State Department."

"The allegations are as serious as it gets, and it's something we have obviously followed up and pursued," Chaffetz says. "I'm 100 percent confident the Benghazi Select Committee is going to dive deep on that issue."

Former Obama Supporter

Maxwell, 58, strongly supported President Barack Obama and personally contributed to his presidential campaign. But post-Benghazi, he has soured on both Obama and Clinton, saying he had nothing to do with security and was sacrificed as a scapegoat while higher-up officials directly responsible escaped discipline.

Maxwell spent a year on paid administrative leave with no official charge ever levied against him. Ultimately, the State Department cleared Maxwell of wrongdoing and reinstated him. He retired a short time later, in November 2013.

11/3/2016

Benghazi Bombshell: Clinton State Department Official Reveals Details of Alleged Document Review - The Daily Signal

Maxwell worked in foreign service for 21 years as the well-respected deputy assistant secretary for Maghreb Affairs in the Near East Bureau and is a former chief of staff to the ambassador in Baghdad. Fluent in Portuguese, Maxwell is a Navy “mustanger,” which means he successfully made the leap from the enlisted ranks to commissioned officer.



Raymond Maxwell speaks with investigative correspondent Sharyl Attkisson in Washington. (Photo: Courtesy Sharyl Attkisson)

Maxwell also is a prolific poet. While on administrative leave, he published poems online: allegories hinting at his post-Benghazi observations and experiences.

A poem entitled “Invitation” refers to his placement on leave in December 2012: “The Queen’s Henchmen / request the pleasure of your company / at a Lynching — / to be held / at 23rd and C Streets NW [State Dept. building] / on Tuesday, December 18, 2012 / just past sunset. / Dress: Formal, Masks and Hoods — / the four being lynched / must never know the identities/ of their executioners, or what/ whose sin required their sacrifice./ A blood sacrifice — / to divert the hounds- / to appease the gods — / to cleanse our filth and /satisfy our guilty consciences...”

11/3/2016

Benghazi Bombshell: Clinton State Department Official Reveals Details of Alleged Document Review - The Daily Signal

In another poem called "Trapped in a purgatory of their own deceit," Maxwell wrote: "The web of lies they weave / gets tighter and tighter / in its deceit / until it bottoms out — / at a very low frequency — / and implodes... Yet all the while, / the more they talk, / the more they lie, / and the deeper down the hole they go... Just wait... / just wait and feed them the rope."



Maxwell in Algiers in 2011 as deputy assistant secretary for the Maghreb region. (Photo: YouTube via U.S. Embassy in Algiers)

Several weeks after he was placed on leave with no formal accusations, Maxwell made an appointment to address his status with a State Department ombudsman.

"She told me, 'You are taking this all too personally, Raymond. It is not about you,'" Maxwell recalls.

"I told her that 'My name is on TV and I'm on administrative leave, it seems like it's about me.' Then she said, 'You're not harmed, you're still getting paid. Don't watch TV. Take your wife on a cruise. It's not about you; it's about Hillary and 2016.' "

Since retiring from the State Department, Maxwell has obtained a master's degree in library information science.

Fox News: Hillary Clinton Aides Allegedly Witnessed Benghazi...



This is a Daily Signal special feature.

EXHIBIT 7

STATE DEPT. - REPRODUCED TO HOUSE SELECT BENGHAZI COMM.
 REVIEWED FOR SENSITIVE INFORMATION PURSUANT TO MOU. NO FOIA WAIVER.
 C05578322 Date: 10/20/2015

C05578322-MOU

Woods, Olivia M

From: Hicks, Gregory N
Sent: Wednesday, August 29, 2012 4:03 PM
To: Stevens, J. Christopher
Subject: Draft Benghazi Proposal
Attachments: Benghazi Proposal.docx

Chris:

Attached is the draft proposal. It's not quite final, but I think it's close. I believe it closely tracks the substance of the Alexandria paper and is similar to Cairo's cable. I may still need a couple of data points from Alan on the management information, but I wanted to give you a chance to comment on the Political justification before you go on leave. I also plan to show it to Eric when he's here, do a final scrub, and send to DC on Friday, if that is ok with you. I may also split the document into the political justification and the management piece, the latter would need to be classified.

Your comments and suggestions would be welcome.

Thanks, Greg.

This document is UNCLASSIFIED//NOFORN when separated from SECRET//NOFORN attachment(s).

Sensitivity: Sensitive
Classification: SECRET//NOFORN
Classified by: Gregory N. Hicks, Deputy Chief of Mission
Reason: 1.4(c), (d)
Declassify On: 2022/08/29

Embassy Tripoli strongly recommends that the Department establish a permanent branch office in Benghazi to provide a permanent platform to protect U.S. national security interests in the region, and to promote a stronger, healthier, and more vibrant bilateral relationship with the new, free, and democratic Libya.

Benghazi is the main city of Cyrenaica, which has long been the spiritual center of Libya. The Sanussi Sufi movement was headquartered in Cyrenaica, and was the catalyst for Libyan resistance to the Italian occupation. In the nineties, Cyrenaica became the base of an Islamist resistance movement against Qadhafi. Under Qadhafi's rule, the region first suffered from his neglect, and then from his violent suppression of the Islamist opposition movement.

More recently, Benghazi and Cyrenaica were the heart of the successful February 17, 2011, revolution to oust Qadhafi. Many eastern Libyans believe they have earned special rights in the new, free Libya, and are calling for a greater share of government expenditures and greater political autonomy. To demonstrate its spirit of independence and better civic organization, Benghazi staged its own municipal elections prior to the July national elections. Meanwhile, some of Cyrenaica's traditional political leaders announced a federalist movement, based on the 1951 constitution. More recently, conservative elements of the population have been promoting an Islamist political philosophy and agenda. In the absence of an effective security apparatus and weak governance, some political groups may be using violence to embarrass rivals and to settle scores with former regime figures involved in the suppression of the Islamist resistance to Qadhafi. Many Libyans believe that the final allocation of political responsibilities and authorities between the capital and municipalities will determine the success or failure of Libya's political transition, and the people of the East will have a large impact on that debate.

Some Islamist groups, possibly linked to AQ and AQIM, are also taking advantage of the security and governance climate to establish militia training facilities that are evolving or could evolve into terrorist training camps. There is a growing possibility that, should Libya's political transition fail and the country slip into anarchy, the eastern part of the country could become a new base for international terrorist activity, threatening vital U.S. interests in the Eastern Mediterranean and farther afield.

The Libyan Armed Forces facilities and units in the Benghazi area survived the revolution largely intact. Thus, they currently form the core of the LAF's capability to defend Libya's borders and sovereignty. The Libyan Air Forces air operations center, along with major air force units, as well as the primary land forces involved in securing the Libyan-Egyptian frontier are located or based in and around Benghazi. In addition, Libya's Special Forces brigade is also based in the area. Cyrenaica is also home to naval bases at Tripoli and Tobruq.

Benghazi is the largest economic center in eastern Libya and aspires to becoming the economic and commercial capital of post-Qadhafi Libya. If Libya adopts a free market oriented policy framework, Benghazi could achieve this vision. Most of Libya's current oil wealth is located in Cyrenaica, and the hydrocarbon sector could fuel industrialization and attract investment to other sectors that benefit from lower relative energy costs. In addition, tourism based on Cyrenaica's coast, Greek ruins, and famous World War II battlefields has potential, and the region has an agricultural base in the Green Mountains. Meanwhile, Libya's most important trading partner and most important source of imported labor, Egypt, is just across Libya's eastern border.

Since we opened our expeditionary Mission in Benghazi in April 2012, it has established ties to parties across Cyrenaica's political spectrum, observed Libya's landmark elections, identified Libyan students for scholarship opportunities in America, and supported the development of a vibrant civil society active on issues ranging from health to women's rights. The Mission's partnership with the local business community is providing a foundation for commercial engagement and economic statecraft in a region that wants American products and needs American expertise. The Mission's outreach to minorities and NGOs has underscored our commitment to Human Rights. Perhaps, most importantly, the people of Benghazi desire, and would openly welcome, our announcement of a permanent office in their city. We have already established a foundation in Benghazi, and we should provide a permanent platform from which to expand it.

A permanent Embassy branch office in Benghazi would enable us to continue to monitor political activity in this extremely important region of the country. It would allow us a base from which to track Islamist and other extremist terrorist activities and to develop effective countermeasures against them. It would sustain the frequency of interaction with local contacts who could provide us with a better understanding of Cyrenaican political currents as they relate to emerging political trends elsewhere in the country as well as in the capital. From a Benghazi branch office, we would be able to plan and stage more effective outreach programs to influence local political thought in directions more consistent with overall U.S. policy goals and objectives. A branch office would more easily facilitate U.S. business participation in Cyrenaica's future economic growth, and assist Libya and Egypt to cooperate to secure their border against terrorists and smugglers. We could not have achieved these goals, or aspire to achieve broader objectives in the future, if we limit our diplomatic platform in Libya to the Embassy in Tripoli.

Projected Mission Size

The current expeditionary mission in Benghazi consists of a Principal Officer, IRM/Management Officer, RSO, and two A/RSOs. LES staff consists of ?? personnel. The Principal Officer reports to the Ambassador in Tripoli through the Deputy Chief of Mission.

[REDACTED]

To perform the State missions identified above, we propose the following personnel configuration for a permanent branch office in Benghazi:

Principal Officer – FO-01
POL/ECON/COMM Officer – FO-03
MGMT Officer – FO-03
IRM Officer – FP-05
RSO – FO-02
A/RSO – FO-03
A/RSO – FO-04

As an Embassy branch office, we would seek full diplomatic immunity for staff. Allowances, benefits, and differentials would match those given Embassy Tripoli. It would provide the branch office regional management support in the areas of human resources, facilities maintenance, finance and budgeting, and others as necessary.

We have approached [REDACTED] possible DOD interest in assigning a position to a permanent facility in Benghazi.

We estimate that a permanent branch office would need an LES component of 40-60, depending on the size and sophistication of the local guard force needed to protect a co-located compound in a security environment that is expected to feature political violence and terrorist activity over the short to medium term.

The Embassy's facilities manager and [REDACTED] colleagues have conducted site surveys of multiple compounds that could properly house a co-located mission. We will forward the drawings and commentary on our recommendations as soon as this package is complete. Appropriate equipment to support classified and unclassified communications would need to be integrated into the planning for the co-located facility.