

RPTR ZAMORA

EDTR HOFSTAD

SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI,  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTERVIEW OF: [REDACTED]

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2015

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held in Room HVC-205,  
Capitol Visitor Center, commencing at 10:04 a.m.

Present: Representatives Brooks and Westmoreland.

Appearances:

For the SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI:

DANA CHIPMAN, CHIEF INVESTIGATIVE COUNSEL

SHARON JACKSON, DEPUTY CHIEF COUNSEL

MAC TOLAR, SENIOR COUNSEL

CARLTON DAVIS, INVESTIGATOR

SARA BARRINEAU, INVESTIGATOR

SUSANNE SACHSMAN GROOMS, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR/GENERAL COUNSEL

HEATHER SAWYER, MINORITY CHIEF COUNSEL

PETER KENNY, MINORITY SENIOR COUNSEL

BRENT WOOLFORK, MINORITY SENIOR PROFESSIONAL STAFF

For the U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE:

AUSTIN EVERS, SENIOR ADVISOR

Ms. Jackson. 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 of 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.

Mr. [REDACTED] would you give us your full name, please?

Mr. [REDACTED]

Ms. Jackson. Okay.

The committee appreciates your appearance for this interview and your cooperation with us today.

Again, my name is Sharon Jackson. I'm an attorney with the committee's majority staff. And we're going to go around the room and have everybody introduce themselves and their position so you get an idea of who all is here.

You're here with Mr. Evers from the State Department. I'll have him introduce himself.

Mr. Evers. Austin Evers, State Department.

Ms. Jackson. Okay.

Brent?

Mr. Woolfork. Brent Woolfork, minority staff.

Mr. Kenny. Peter Kenny with the minority staff.

Ms. Sawyer. Heather Sawyer with the minority staff.

Mr. Davis. I'm Carlton Davis. I work for Mr. Gowdy.

Ms. Barrineau. Sara Barrineau with the majority staff.

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

Mr. Tolar. Mac Tolar with majority staff.

Ms. Jackson. Before we begin, there are several ground rules that we have, as in anything like this in the world, so let me explain how the interview is going to proceed today.

The way we do questioning in this committee is that a member from the majority -- and that will be me -- will ask you questions for up to 1 hour, and then the minority staff will have the opportunity to ask you questions for a similar period of time. We firmly adhere to the 1-hour rule and time limit for each side. Questions can only be asked by one of the Members of Congress that are on the committee or one of the designated staff members. And we'll rotate back and forth in those hour increments until we've exhausted all of our questions here today.

Unlike testimony in court or a deposition in Federal court, the committee's format is not bound by the rules of evidence. You or your counsel may raise objections for privilege, but that is subject to review by the chairman of the committee. If those objections cannot be resolved during the interview, the witness may be required -- you may be required to return for a further deposition, testimony, or hearing.

Members and staff of the committee, however, are not permitted to raise objections when either side is asking questions. That's not been an issue that we've encountered in the past, but I just wanted

to make sure that you know.

This session is going to begin as unclassified. If any question calls for a classified answer, please let us know, and we will either move on or reserve the answer until we're in a more appropriate classified setting.

You are welcome to confer with counsel at any time throughout the interview, but if something just needs to be clarified because you didn't hear the question fully or you're not sure what is being asked, just ask first. We'll be glad to repeat any question, clarify any question to make sure that you understand it fully before you give any answer to us.

But if there is anything that you need to speak with Mr. Evers about, we'll stop the clock, go off the record, and give you as much time as you need to confer with him and take that opportunity.

We'll also take a break whenever it's convenient to you. Usually, at the end of 1 hour, we'll all stand up. We'll switch seats, so somebody from the minority will sit here so that they're directly across from you. And then, usually, after the first 2 hours, we'll break for lunch, decide whether we need to come back for an afternoon session.

But if at any time you need a break, even in the middle of the hour, we'll just stop the clock, go off the record, and take a break.

We have water here. We have coffee, tea. So if you find that you need anything, just let us know. Okay?

Mr. [REDACTED] Okay.

Ms. Jackson. We're trying to make this process as easy and comfortable as possible, knowing that testifying before a congressional committee is probably not your most favorite thing to do.

So, as you can see, we have an official court reporter here. You may have experienced that, either, you know, grand-jury testimony or in any type of Federal trial you may have been a part of. So, just like a court reporter in Federal court, they're taking down everything that is being said today. So, like in court, we need you to give verbal responses to any questions, because the court reporter is not going to be able to pick up nods of heads, shakes of heads, and things like that.

The other thing that we ask, which is often difficult when you're just having a conversation, is people tend to interrupt each other. They'll start answering before the question has ended because you know where it's going and you know what the answer is. But to the best of all of our ability, we need to wait until the question is completely done, and I also need to wait until an answer is completely given before I go on to the next question. Okay?

Mr. [REDACTED] Okay.

Ms. Jackson. We know that we're going to be asking you about events that happened almost 4 years ago when you were in Benghazi as a Diplomatic Security agent. So we know that you may not remember everything that happened, but we are asking that you give us your best recollection of what you recall from those events when you were in Libya

and the time leading up to that and the time afterwards.

If you honestly cannot remember an answer, just say so. But if you can give us, you know, part of your recollection, we want to get as complete a picture as possible, so please give us your best recollection of that.

But if you can't remember, just say so. And we may follow up and ask, who do you think might know that? So if there is someone else out there that might have a recollection of that event, we'll probably ask you to identify that person.

Do you understand that you are required to answer questions of Congress truthfully?

Mr. [REDACTED] I do.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. And do you understand that that extends to questions that are asked of you by staff of a congressional committee?

Mr. [REDACTED] Yep.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. And because you are a Federal law enforcement agency, you know that providing false testimony could subject you to either perjury or the crime of making a false statement?

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. Is there any reason that you can think of that you would not be able to provide truthful answers to the questions that are posed to you today?

Mr. [REDACTED] Nope.

Ms. Jackson. Okay.

You have Mr. Evers with you today. He is an attorney for the

Department of State. You are allowed to have personal counsel if you wanted, because Mr. Evers is here in the position of agency counsel. And I'm sure he's explained his role to you. Do you have any questions about his presence here today?

Mr. [REDACTED] No.

Ms. Jackson. Okay.

All right. Well, that's the end of my preamble.

Does the minority staff have anything that they'd like to add?

Mr. Davis. No, thanks.

Ms. Jackson. Okay.

The clock now reads 11 after 10 -- 11 after 10, or -- yeah.

Mr. Evers. I have 10:11.

Ms. Jackson. 10:11. So we'll get started on the first hour of questions, okay?

Mr. [REDACTED] Okay.

#### EXAMINATION

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Agent [REDACTED] how long have you been a special agent with Diplomatic Security?

A I have been with Diplomatic Security since [REDACTED] 2009.

Q Okay. Did you have any prior military or law enforcement background?

A Yes. Prior to coming to the State Department, I was a Border Patrol agent from 2007 to 2009. Prior to that, I was on Active Duty in the Navy for 5 1/2 years, and I'm still a reservist in the Navy.



Q Okay. When you were on Active Duty, what was your role?

A I was in the military police field.

Q Okay. And do you do that as a reservist, too?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

Since joining Diplomatic Security in [REDACTED] 2009, what have been your various assignments?

A My first assignment was in the [REDACTED] field office. The second assignment was with the Secretary of State protective detail. And I'm now in language training for my follow-on assignment.

Q Okay. And how long have you been in language training?

A I started in the beginning of November, first week of November.

Q Okay. And were you with the Secretary's protection detail up until that time?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And how long were you on the Secretary's protection detail?

A I started [REDACTED], ended in [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Q Okay.

It is our understanding that you were in Benghazi, Libya, in April and May of 2011. Is that correct?

A That is correct.

Q Okay. How did you get assigned to going to Benghazi? Were

you recruited? Did you volunteer? How is it that you were picked?

A I volunteered for it.

Q Okay. Was it posted in some way, or how did you hear about it?

A Our field office [REDACTED], the management received notification from higher up in DS that there was a mission in Benghazi, and they asked for volunteers who were high-threat-trained, who had completed the DS high-threat training course. At that time, I was one of few in the office, so I volunteered.

Q Okay. When had you done your high-threat training?

A That was February 28th through the end of March of that same year, 2011.

Q So you had just completed it --

A Yes.

Q -- at that time.

How much advance notice did you have before you went into Benghazi?

A About a week or two.

Q Okay. And do you recall that you went in on or about April 22nd?

A Yes.

Q Okay. What was to be the length of your assignment there?

A It was supposed to be a 45-day TDY.

Q Okay. So from the time you departed the United States until the time you were back was to be a period of 45 days?

A Correct.

Q Okay. And did that hold true? Was it a 45-day assignment?

A I believe I left slightly before the 45-day mark in May, around the 26th of May.

Q Okay.

And what was your understanding as to the nature of the assignment? I mean, why was Diplomatic Security needed to go to Benghazi?

A We were going to provide protection for Chris Stevens, who at the time was the Special Envoy.

Q Okay. Did you know anything more about why he was going into Libya?

A No.

Q Okay. Did you subsequently learn any more about why he was in Libya?

A Yes.

Q Okay. What did you learn?

A He was going as the U.S. Government's representative to work with the TNC, the National Transitional Council.

Q Okay. So you were aware that there was a revolution going on in Libya?

A Yes.

Q Okay. All right.

When you were initially selected or volunteered for this assignment, was it to go in initially with him, or was your assignment

always to go in after the initial team was in?

A My assignment was to go in after the initial team.

Q Okay. And do you know why that was?

A What I was told was it was to increase the number of DS agents on the ground from 8 to 10.

Q Okay. And do you know why that was needed?

A I do not.

Q Okay.

And so did you and another individual, then, go in on or about April 22nd?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And who was the other individual?

A The other individual was [REDACTED].

Q Okay. And is his name [REDACTED]

A Yes.

Q Okay. And then [REDACTED]

A Yes.

Q Okay. All right.

So you were never to go in with the initial team?

A No, I was not.

Q Okay. Were you aware of your assignment before the initial team went in?

A No.

Q Okay. So you were picked -- was the initial team already in Libya at the time you were selected?

A I don't remember the exact date the initial team arrived in Libya, so I couldn't answer that.

Q Okay.

And, again, I know you answered this, but I just don't remember what your answer is. How much advance notice did you have from the time -- if you could give us the time sequence, to the best of your recollection, from the time it was advertised, the time you were selected, and the time you departed.

A It was 1 to 2 weeks at the most from the time I was notified to the time I flew out.

Q Okay. All right.

Mr. Davis. I'm sorry. What about the time between when it was advertised in the [REDACTED] field office to when you volunteered?

Mr. [REDACTED] What about that time?

Mr. Davis. Did you volunteer immediately? Did you go home and think about it and volunteer a week later?

Mr. [REDACTED] I volunteered the day that they offered the assignment.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Did anybody else from the [REDACTED] field office go?

A During what time period?

Q Well, let me ask this: At any time.

A Yes.

Q And who was that?

A The only other person that I personally know of that went

was [REDACTED]

Q Okay. And he went from the [REDACTED] field office over to Benghazi for a period of time?

A Correct.

Q Okay.

So had you ever met the Special Envoy, Chris Stevens, before going over to Benghazi?

A No.

Q Okay. Did you know any of the other members of the team that you met over there, the other eight that were already there?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And who did you know?

A I knew two who were in my special agent training class.

Q Okay. And who were they?

A They were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

Q Okay. All right.

And you said that you were chosen because you were high-threat-trained. Is that correct?

A Correct.

Q Was that a requirement for every member of the team that was over there, to the best of your knowledge?

A Correct.

Q Okay.

And when you went into Benghazi, were there other U.S. Government people with you or U.S. citizens with you when you went in?

A Just myself and [REDACTED] We were the only DS agents that went in --

Q Okay.

A -- when I physically arrived.

Q Tell us how you got to Benghazi.

A I had departed Washington, here in D.C., flew to Greece. And then in Greece we linked up with Senator McCain, and we flew on Senator McCain's plane from Greece -- Crete, to be exact -- into Benghazi.

Q Okay. And was that a State Department plane?

A I do not know. I know they were State Department-contracted pilots.

Q Okay. So it wasn't a military plane.

A As far as I know.

Q No. Okay. Other than Senator McCain and his staff, were there any other United States personnel on the plane --

A Yep.

Q -- other than the pilot?

A Yes. There was one assistant regional security officer out of Athens.

Q Okay. And who was that?

A His name was [REDACTED].

Q Do you know how to spell his last name?

A Last name is [REDACTED].

Q Okay. And what was his role, if you know?

A He was the AIC, agent in charge, of Senator McCain while he was traveling from Greece to Benghazi.

Q Okay. And then did he return when Senator McCain's visit was over?

A Correct. He returned back to Greece.

Q Okay. All right.

So, while Senator McCain was there, they went from 8 to 11, is that correct, DS agents?

A Correct.

Q Okay. And then went down to 10 when Senator McCain left.

A Correct.

Q Okay. And then it stayed at 10 during the time that you were there?

A Correct.

Q If you know, did it stay at 10 for a period of time after that?

A I do not know --

Q Okay.

A -- the numbers afterwards.

Q All right.

To your knowledge, were there other U.S. security personnel present in Benghazi when you got there other than the 11 DS agents, of which you were one?

Mr. Evers. And I'll just -- as counsel cautioned earlier, if you have to give a classified answer, please say so.



BY MS. JACKSON:

Q And this question just calls for a "yes" or "no" answer.

A Not that I know of. I do not know of any other U.S. security personnel in the country.

Q What, if any, materials were you provided or -- well, let me ask it this way. Did you review any materials or other information regarding the security situation in Benghazi prior to going over?

A The only materials that I reviewed, aside from the news I'd seen on television, were the site surveys that the team of DS agents that was already on the ground had provided us to review.

Q Okay. And describe for me what is a site survey.

A A site survey is a very basic overview of any type of site -- an airport, a hotel, any type of building. It gives a very basic overview of the security in place at that site as well as the DS security plans for that site in terms of what DS is going to do for security at that site and why we're there.

Q So, if I could just elaborate for a little bit, like, for a hotel, it would include the number of floors in the hotel?

A Correct.

Q Okay. The number of entrances into and out of the hotel?

A Correct.

Q Streets, alleys, thoroughfares surrounding the hotel?

A Correct.

Q Okay. The setback from any roads to an entrance of the hotel?

A Correct.

Q Okay. Whether the hotel had its own private security or not?

A Correct.

Q Okay. Would it include photographs of the hotel?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And would it include a description of where, for example, in a hotel, on what floor your rooms were, things like that?

A Correct.

Q Okay. Is there any other type of information that I've missed in elaborating on what a site survey would include?

A It will also include the names and phone numbers of point-of-contacts, pertinent point-of-contacts for that particular site.

Q Okay. And did you receive a site survey for the hotel?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Do you recall the name of the hotel?

A It was the Tibesti Hotel.

Q T-i-b-e-s-t-i?

A That sounds right.

Q Okay.

Do you recall approximately how many site surveys you received prior to going to Benghazi?

A The only two that I recall offhand were for the airport, the Benghazi airport, and for the hotel, the Tibesti Hotel.

Q Okay. And did you actually fly into the Benghazi airport?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

And once you were there, were there other site surveys that you used in the course of your duties and responsibilities that you executed?

A We created our own on a few sites that we frequented when we were on the ground, but there were no additional surveys available when we landed.

Q Okay.

Were there any specific training or equipment that you were provided with prior to going into Benghazi?

A Aside from the high-threat training I completed?

Q Yes. Yes.

A There was no other additional training specific to the Benghazi mission.

Q How about any briefings that you would have received, perhaps here in Washington or through video-teleconference or anything like that?

A The only additional briefing I received when I arrived here in Washington was the general overview of what I would be doing in Benghazi.

Q Okay. And who provided that briefing to you?

A I don't remember the name of the specific individual, but they worked in the Office of Dignitary Protection.

Q Okay. Does the name [REDACTED] mean anything to you?

A Yes. He was the former director of that office.

Q Okay. So it wasn't him who gave you the briefing?

A I don't remember.

Q Okay. All right.

If I could go back to the site surveys for just a moment, you said some were created after you were there?

A Correct.

Q Okay. Do you remember how many were created?

A I do not.

Q Okay. Do you remember any of the locations they were created for?

A The only one I remember specifically, because I did the survey on it, was for another hotel that we frequented for meetings.

Q Was that the Fadeel Hotel?

A I don't remember which one.

Q Okay. Where was it located in relation to the Tibesti Hotel? Was it, like, across the city? On the port? If you recall.

A I don't recall. The only thing I remember was it was in what I would classify as the central downtown location of Benghazi.

Q Okay. Were there other Westerners staying at the hotel, other countries such as maybe the British or the Italians or the U.N. or NATO or --

Mr. Evers. Can you just clarify which hotel you're asking about?

Ms. Jackson. The one he did the site survey for.

Mr. Evers. Thank you.

Mr. [REDACTED] No, I do not know if anyone else was staying at the hotel.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Okay. But the Envoy would travel there for meetings?

A Correct.

Q Okay.

Where else would the Envoy travel for meetings, if he did?

A He would travel to the Swedish consulate. He would travel to the Egyptian -- I don't remember if it was the consulate or the embassy, but the Egyptian mission.

Q Uh-huh.

A And he would travel to another hotel. Aside from the hotel I did the survey on, there was another hotel that the TNC used to host meetings at. I don't recall the name, though.

Q Okay. And the TNC, again, is the interim government --

A Correct.

Q -- in Libya.

A Correct.

Q Okay. All right.

Were you told anything about your official status when you were in Benghazi?

A No.

Q Okay.

Did the Envoy report back to main State or back to Washington while

you were there?

A I do not know.

Q Okay. Do you know how he communicated, if he did?

A Yes. I know he communicated via email and via telephone.

Q Okay.

Tell us a little bit about your communications capabilities while you were there.

A When I arrived, we were communicating via satellite uplink -- that allowed us to access email -- and via satellite phones.

Q Okay.

Ms. Jackson. Agent [REDACTED] I'd like to introduce Congressman Westmoreland from Georgia. He is a member of this committee. And he, for the record, is joining us now.

Mr. Westmoreland. Thanks for your service.

Mr. [REDACTED] Thank you.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Can we go over your last answer? The communications, you had email and telephone via satellite connection? Did I understand your answer correctly?

A Correct.

Q Okay. How did that work? I mean, did it work well? Did you have issues with it?

A The connectivity was intermittent. Sometimes it worked; sometimes it didn't.

Q Okay. Did you have cell phones?

A We did.

Q Did they work?

A We had local cell phones, which worked within the country. At that time, the local cellular network did not allow phone calls to be placed from within Libya outside of the country on the local network, and vice versa, from calls outside of the country to be placed to a local cell phone.

Q So I'm sure you had a workaround. What workaround did you have?

A Our workaround was the satellite phones.

Q Okay.

Mr. Westmoreland. I apologize for being late. They told me it wasn't going to start till 10:30.

Ms. Jackson. Oh.

Mr. Westmoreland. No, that's okay. But could he just say where he was at, what he was doing, and when he was there?

Ms. Jackson. Yes.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q If we could go back for Congressman Westmoreland's benefit, could you just give us the overview of when you went in on April 22nd and how long you were there and why you got recruited to go?

A Okay.

I volunteered to go into Benghazi in April. I volunteered because I was one of the few people in my field office who had completed the high-threat training course, which was a prerequisite to serve on

the Benghazi mission.

I arrived in Benghazi on April 22nd with Senator McCain, and I stayed in Benghazi until May 26th.

Q And you went to Benghazi with another agent; is that correct?

A Correct.

Q Okay. And that increased the protection detail from 8 agents to 10 agents; is that correct?

A Correct.

Q And then there was with Senator McCain an eleventh agent who traveled in with him and then out with him.

A Correct.

Q Okay.

Ms. Jackson. Is there anything else you need? Okay.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Back to the availability of communications, so you had cell phones, but they only worked within the country of Libya. Is that correct?

A Local cell phones, yes.

Q Local cell phones. Did you have State Department-issued cell phones?

A Yes. We all had our BlackBerrys, State Department-issued BlackBerrys.

Q Did they work in any way? Like, did your pin-to-pin work or text messaging or anything like that work on your State



Department-issued cell phones?

A No.

Q Okay.

Did you have radios?

A We did.

Q Okay. Do you recall how many radios you had?

A Each agent had their issued Motorola radio. And the members from the MSD team had -- I don't know how many, but they had at least one PRC radio.

Q Okay.

You said members of the MSD team. Can you describe how many there were? Was there their role different than yours? Can you just elaborate on that a little?

A Sure.

Of the eight original agents that went in initially, two of the eight were members of the Office of Mobile Security Detachments, MSD, the State Department's tactical team. They did not have a separate mission. They were there with the same mission, to provide protection for the Special Envoy. And they were there because they had the prerequisite training, high-threat training to be there.

Q Is the MSD training the same, similar, or more expansive than the high-threat tactical course?

A It's more expansive.

Q Okay. Do you know how much more expansive?

A All I know is it's 6 -- at the time, it was 6 months of initial

training.

Q Okay.

And who were the two members of the initial eight that went in that were from MSD?

A They were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

Q Okay. And is that [REDACTED]

A I believe so.

Q Okay. It's either [REDACTED]

A I believe [REDACTED]

Q Okay.

Back to the communications capability while you were in Libya, did you say you used satellite connection for email?

A Correct.

Q Okay. Are you familiar with an email address of [REDACTED]@gmail.com?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And that's [REDACTED]@gmail.com?

A Yes.

Q All right. Tell us what you know about that email address.

A That address was set up as the generic email for the DS team on the ground because we did not have access to the State Department email system.

Q So you couldn't, through the satellite connection, send or receive emails through your State Department address?

A To my knowledge, no.

Q Okay. Did you try it?

A Yes.

Q And it didn't work?

A Correct. It did not work.

Q Okay. And so this Gmail address was a workaround for that.

A Correct.

Q And what type of communications did you do through this email address?

A That email address was used for the DS agents to communicate back to Washington, to the DS Command Center, concerning any type of official business. It was also used to communicate to the DOD elements that were in support of our mission in Europe.

Q Okay. And was it used by all of the agents that were there?

A Correct.

Q Okay. Including yourself.

A Correct.

Q Okay. And would it be your assessment that it was the primary email address that was used during the time that you were there to have official communications back and forth with the military and your headquarters?

A It was the primary email for the DS agents.

Q Okay. So it was used daily.

A As far as I know.

Q Perhaps even hourly?

A That I do not know.

Q Okay. Do you have an assessment of how often you used it?

A I know I used it at least once, but that was all I can remember.

Q Okay.

So if there was a security concern or incident that needed to be reported back to the DS Command Center, you or others would have used this email address to send that information in?

A Yes, in addition to calling it in.

Q Okay.

And I am not technologically advanced, so do you have any idea why a Gmail address worked when your State Department email addresses did not? If you can answer.

A Because in order to access the State Department email network from a non-network computer, there are certain programs that need to be used in order to access that network, and we did not have access to those programs. Let me clarify. We had access to the programs, but they did not function over in Benghazi.

Q Okay. Was it your understanding -- was it the expectation that they would function and they just didn't, or was it sort of an unknown? If you can answer that question.

A I don't know if they were expected to function or not when we were there.

Q Okay.

Is the [REDACTED]@gmail.com address something that you or other agents created once they were there or -- if you know -- was it an address

that was set up prior to going in?

A I don't know when it was set up.

Q Okay. It was functioning as an email address when you arrived.

A Correct.

Q Okay. And it was still being used when you left.

A That I don't know.

Q Okay.

Did you or others have the capability to undertake classified communications? I don't want to know what they were; I just want to know if you had the capability.

A When I arrived, we did not. A few weeks prior to my departure, we did.

Q Okay. And was that for verbal communications or typed communications?

A That I do not know.

Q Okay.

And, again, I don't want to know what was in these reports; I just want to know if you received intelligence reports regarding the security situation in Libya while you were there and in country.

A I did not personally receive any reports.

Q Did you review any reports?

A I did not personally review any reports.

Q Are you aware that any intelligence reports came in while you were there?

A I do not know.

Q Okay.

Were you or other DS agents tasked with collecting any intelligence and reporting it back to DS headquarters or the military or any other U.S. Government agency?

A I do not know.

Q Okay. So you did not personally do that.

A I did not.

Q Okay.

Tell us a little bit about your day-to-day activities when you were in Libya.

A What specifically? Because there's a lot of things that we did.

Q Let me ask this, then. Were there particular or specific roles that various agents were assigned? Or did you all just sort of work together collectively and do whatever had to be done that day?

A Yes, each agent had a mostly permanent assigned role, although they did change occasionally if the need arose to change it.

Q So what was your role?

A I was the primary limo driver for Chris Stevens.

Q Okay. And what were the other roles, then, that other people were assigned?

A There was AIC, the agent in charge.

Q And who was that when you were there?

A That was -- I don't remember the exact name. [REDACTED] or

██████████  
Q Does ██████████ ring a bell?

A ██████████ yes.

Q And was he the agent in charge during the whole time you were there?

A No. He was in charge approximately half of the time.

Q Okay. And then was he replaced by ██████████

A Correct.

Q Okay.

And was there a shift leader?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

Well, let's go back. What was Mr. ██████████ and then ██████████ role?

A Mr. ██████████ was the agent in charge when I arrived, and Mr. ██████████ took over as the agent in charge approximately halfway through --

Q Okay.

A -- my term.

Q So they were running the show.

A Yes.

Q Okay.

And then you had a shift leader?

A Yes.

Q And who was that?

A That was [REDACTED].

Q Okay. And what's the shift leader's role?

A The shift leader's role is the tactical commander of the DS team on the ground.

Q And for a non-law-enforcement agent, could you elaborate on what a tactical commander does?

A Their responsibility is to have tactical command of day-to-day operations, day-to-day security operations on the ground. So, for example, if something were to happen, the shift leader is in charge of making all of the calls.

Although even though the agent in charge, AIC, is technically senior to him, to everyone in the group, the shift leader is in command of any type of security response that would happen.

Q So if there had been a car bomb explode outside the hotel, the shift leader would be the one that would report that in to DS Command Center?

A Not necessarily. Anyone can report that type of information.

Q Uh-huh.

A But he would be in charge of the response.

Q Okay. Sending agents out?

A Correct.

Q So the shift leader would've been charged with how many agents are going to move with the Envoy to a particular location?

A Correct.



Q Okay. All right.

What are some of the other roles and responsibilities of the team?

A You had the drivers -- myself, the limo driver, and there was a follow-car driver. And then you had the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] protection for the Special Envoy. And then you had advance agents, who would go out in advance of the Envoy to prepare site for his arrival.

Q Okay.

Did you have fully armored vehicles when you were there?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what were the type of vehicles that you had?

A We had Toyota Land Cruisers, and we had two Mercedes G-Wagens.

Q All right.

Did you have any special weapons that were provided to you, either before you went over or once you got there, different than what you would normally have?

A No, not different than what we would normally have.

Q Okay. And so, then, what were the weapons that you had?

A Each agent had their Sig 229 pistol. And then each agent was assigned an M4 rifle. And we also had a Remington shotgun.

Q Okay. Each agent had a Remington shotgun?

A No.

Q One for the team?

A I don't remember how many exactly, but there was at least

one.

Q Okay.

Describe how, as I believe you call them, movements the Envoy would typically make in a given day.

A Describe --

Q His movements. Do you call them movements?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

A What exactly about the movement would you like?

Q First of all, would he limit himself in any way to one movement a day or two movements a day or a particular time of the day? Was there any rhyme or reason to when he would leave the Tibesti Hotel?

A The Envoy did not have a set schedule. His schedule was determined based on the meetings he had to conduct for the day.

Q Did you, as his protection detail, ever advise him, to your knowledge, not to make a particular movement?

A As far as I know, no.

Q Okay. So, as far as you can recall, anytime he wanted to go somewhere in the city he did so?

A Sometimes there were -- because there was a USAID team on the ground, we had to balance their movements with the Envoy's. So depending on the Envoy's schedule and the AID's schedule, we could only make a movement with one group at a time, either the Envoy or the AID team.

Q Uh-huh.

A So if the AID team was out, we couldn't move the Envoy through town. And vice versa, if the Envoy was out, we couldn't move the AID team through town.

Q Okay.

How many members were on this USAID team?

A The day that I arrived in country, there were three members of the AID team.

Q And they were already there?

A Correct.

Q Okay.

A It dropped to two at some point while I was there, because their TDY tour there had come up so they were rotating out. And I don't remember if it went back up to three before I left or not.

Q Okay.

Was it your understanding that they had come in with the Envoy? Or had they arrived sometime between when the Envoy came in and when you arrived?

A I don't know when they arrived.

Q Okay. But there were three in country when you arrived on the 22nd?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

And part of the protective detail that you were a member of was to also provide protection for these USAID members in addition to the Envoy?

A Correct.

Q Okay. And was that your understanding of the team's duties from before you arrived and after you left?

A I did not know about the AID mission until I arrived in Benghazi.

Q Okay. All right.

And do you know what they were doing over there?

A I don't know their exact mission, no.

Q Okay.

Mr. Davis. Do you know where the AID individuals were staying? Were they staying at the same hotel?

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes. They were in the same hotel, on the same floor, same suite as us.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Okay. It's our understanding that you had the better part of an entire floor of the Tibesti Hotel? Or half of a floor?

A We had one suite, which was on the end of the wing of the hotel, and then we had a few rooms on that same floor outside of the suite.

Q Okay. So this suite was essentially protected by the rooms that you had immediately outside of it?

A I wouldn't use the term "protected," but we occupied rooms outside of the suite.

Q Was the Special Envoy and the USAID workers generally cooperative with your security assessments and decisions regarding

their movement?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Any incident where they disagreed with your or any other members of the team's decision as to when to travel someplace or how to travel there or insisting on going when there was a recommendation that they not go?

A No.

Q Okay.

Other than the USAID team that was there, to your knowledge, were there any other U.S. governmental agencies or officials in Libya?

Mr. Evers. Again, just to caution on classified information. But I think you're asking for an awareness --

Ms. Jackson. I'm asking for a "yes" or "no" question at this point.

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes, there were other members of the U.S. Government in Libya when we were there.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. Was that from one particular agency or entity or more than one?

Mr. Evers. Same caution.

Mr. [REDACTED] I don't know how many to be exact. I know at least one.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. Were they also staying at the Tibesti Hotel?

Mr. [REDACTED] No, they were not.

Ms. Jackson. Were they staying at any hotel?

Mr. Evers. Same caution.

And I know you said that we can move to a classified space, and I think it's fair to allow the witness to extrapolate in that type of space. But you're asking him to police lines that no one else in this room is quite capable of policing, in terms of you're asking him to answer high-level questions that could implicate classified issues. And it would probably be more fair to allow him to do that in the right setting.

Ms. Jackson. Well, I'm asking questions very carefully to --

Mr. Evers. I understand.

Ms. Jackson. -- elicit "yes" or "no" questions that I think can be asked and answered in this setting.

Mr. Evers. And what I'm saying is that only Mr. [REDACTED] is able to make that call --

Ms. Jackson. Right.

Mr. Evers. -- not you, not me, not anyone else in this room. And I'm sure he would be willing to answer less high-level questions in the proper setting more fully.

But you can proceed.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Can you answer whether they were -- I think the question was, were they staying at the Tibesti Hotel? Was that the question? Or any other hotel.

A I do not know if they were staying at the Tibesti or other hotels in Benghazi.

Q Okay.

Prior to going into Benghazi, were you aware of any security incidents that had occurred after the Envoy arrived with his initial team of eight?

A The only incident that I had heard of was of a round that went through the window of our command post room in the hotel. But that was the only security incident that I'd heard of before I arrived.

Q Okay. Did security incidents occur after you arrived?

A The only incident that occurred after I arrived was at the Swedish consulate compound, where a round of -- I don't know what type of weapon, but a small-caliber round came down through the middle of the dining room table where the Envoy and the Swedish Consul were having dinner.

Q Okay. And that was where the Swedish -- I'm sorry, what type of facility was that?

A It was essentially a villa-type compound in a residential area of Benghazi.

Q Okay. And did you or others investigate that incident?

A No.

Q Okay. Did you subsequently learn from anyone else what was the suspected cause of that bullet going through the dining room table?

A I did not learn. I don't know if anyone else on the team learned.

Q Okay. And do you recall approximately when that occurred?

A It was at night, after dark. I don't remember the day, though.

Q Was it early on in your 30-some days there or later?

A I don't know to be exact.

Q Okay.

Mr. Davis. I'm sorry. You said it came down through the dining room table?

Mr. [REDACTED] Correct. It was essentially straight down through the table.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Going back to the Tibesti Hotel where you were staying, was there any local security provided at that hotel?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And can you describe that for us, please?

A The security at the hotel -- I'll work from the outside in for ease.

Q Uh-huh.

A Outside, there were members of one of the local militias, who would park anywhere from one to two or more of their vehicles -- "vehicles" being a pickup truck, usually with some type of machine gun mounted on the back.

Q Do they have a name for those? Were they called "technicals"?

A Some people called them "technicals." That's what we referred to them as when we were there. I don't know of an official name, though.

So they would park those outside of the entrance to the hotel



grounds. Some days they would be parked there; other days they would not be there.

There was one person who would control access to the parking lot of the hotel via a drop-arm, a manually operated drop-arm.

Q Was this a member from that same militia?

A I don't know if he was a militia member or not.

Q Okay. And do you recall the name of the militia, if they had one?

A I do not recall because there were many separate groups operating at that time.

Q Okay.

A So there was one person who would operate the drop-arm. And he would search vehicles entering that parking lot to the hotel. Some vehicles would be searched; others would not.

Working into the hotel, at the main entrance there was a walkthrough metal detector set up and an x-ray machine for luggage set up. That was staffed with anywhere from one to three or four people. They were armed with AK-47s. Some were; some weren't. But they were always there, 24 hours a day.

And that was the extent of local security that I saw within the hotel and on the hotel grounds.

Q Of these vehicles that would be outside, the technicals or whatever, you said they weren't there every day.

A Correct.

Q There were days they didn't show up.

A Correct.

Q Was it your understanding they were to be there every day?

A No. I do not know what the arrangements were. And I don't know why they would be there some days and why they would not be there other days.

Q Can you give us an average or estimation -- I'm struggling for the appropriate words. Like, would they be there on average 3 out of 7 days a week or 5 out of 7? Or were they there more often than not there? Can you give us any type of estimation as to how often these vehicles would be outside as opposed to not being there?

A Not that I can remember. It was very unorganized, where I wouldn't be able to give you an accurate number.

Q Okay.

At any time during the 30-some days that you were in Libya, was there ever a consideration of leaving the country?

A I don't know.

Q Not that was ever discussed with you?

A Not that was ever discussed with me.

Q Okay. Not discussed between you and other DS agents?

A I don't know if it was discussed with others, but it was not with me.

Q What was your personal assessment of the security in the country?

A It was available to us when we needed it, in reference to security provided by the local militias. It was available when we

needed it. But it was, in my assessment, unreliable, and the training was unreliable.

Q So would you say they were not a disciplined militia?

A I couldn't accurately assess their discipline because I don't know their backgrounds or their training.

Q Okay. It appeared to you, though, to be different than what you and the other agents had had?

A Had had in terms of?

Q Of training to be law enforcement.

A It did appear to be different.

Q Okay.

Would you and the other agents use this militia, then, when you would make movements throughout the city?

A Not always. We typically would request their assistance, when I was in Benghazi, only for visits of other dignitaries who would come. For example, when Senator McCain came, their assistance was requested and provided. And when the other -- I don't recall the name, but when the other State Department representative came shortly before I left, their assistance was also requested and provided.

Q Okay. You can't remember the name of the State Department person, but do you remember the position that he or she --

A It was one of either the assistant secretaries or deputy secretaries. I don't remember from which section or their name off the top of my head.

Q Male or female?

A Male.

Q Okay. All right.

Do you know what a tripwire is?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Did you have tripwires while you were in Benghazi?

A I never saw any official tripwires when I was in the country.

Q Okay. Was there a discussion of -- well, let me ask this first. What's your understanding of a tripwire?

A A tripwire is some type of event that takes place in the country that would trigger either a response or set in motion certain plans on the U.S. Government side, State Department side, as to how to proceed next.

RPTR HUMISTON

EDTR CRYSTAL

[11:03 a.m.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Okay. And did you and the other agents that you worked with discuss informally what your tripwires would be for Benghazi to trigger an event, an evacuation or other type of increased security?

A No. It was never informally discussed, specific tripwires that would be --

Q So you never saw any tripwires and didn't have any discussion with any of the other agents regarding that?

A Correct.

Q Okay. Discussions with anyone else outside of the agents?

A No.

Ms. Jackson. Okay.

I believe that Congressman Westmoreland may have some follow-up questions to mine, so I'm going to turn it over to him at this time. Okay.

Mr. Westmoreland. Again, thank you for your service.

Mr. [REDACTED] Thank you, sir.

Mr. Westmoreland. This group, this security group that was outside, who communicated with them?

Mr. [REDACTED] There was not one designated person who would communicate with them. On occasion, any one of the agents that was in the hotel would try and communicate with members of the group

providing security at the hotel, but usually, since most did not speak English, we used our translator point of contact who was on the ground to relay our desires or needs and he would communicate it to members of that group.

Mr. Westmoreland. So it was a direct communication between one of -- in your group to a headquarters?

Mr. [REDACTED] I don't know who specifically our point of contact communicated with. When we as individual agents would communicate with the group we would go down to the person in the lobby of the hotel and communicate directly with them?

Mr. Westmoreland. Okay. When you walked by them, did you all say, hey, how are you doing, or anything, was it pretty --

Mr. [REDACTED] We would. They all knew who we were, and they were all friendly with us, and we had a good relationship.

Mr. Westmoreland. So were they basically the same people every day or it kind of switched off? I mean --

Mr. [REDACTED] It did switch. I don't know how frequently.

Mr. Westmoreland. You said that they were there when you needed them. You know, you're talking about the security that she said, you know, the security was good, but when you needed them, you know, they were there, I guess. Was there any particular instance that you needed them for security?

Mr. [REDACTED] When we needed them, I'm referring to the visit of Senator McCain where their assistance was requested for additional security for the motorcade and for the venues that he visited, and they

provided that assistance, as well as assistance during the visit of the State Department representative.

Mr. Westmoreland. So it was more you needed them for additional security rather than protection?

Mr. [REDACTED] Correct.

Ms. Jackson. Okay.

[Discussion off the record.]

Ms. Jackson. You know what, I think we'll take a break here, only because I don't want to start another topic with about 3 or 4 minutes left. So why don't we go off the record.

[Recess.]

Mr. Kenny. We'll go back on the record. The time is 11:19.

And, Mr. [REDACTED] on behalf of the Select Committee minority staff, I just want to thank you again for your service and for appearing here today. I'll take a moment to reintroduce myself. I'm Peter Kenny. I'm with the minority staff. I'm joined here by my colleagues.

We understand that appearing before Congress can seem to be a daunting experience, so like our Republican counterparts we want to make this process as simple and straightforward for you as possible.

We also understand that you and your colleagues may have lost some fellow colleagues and friends on the night of the attacks, and so we just want to be as respectful as possible to you and them as well. So just thank you again for your service and for being here today.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Let me just introduce myself, because came in late. I apologize for that. My name is Susanne Sachsman Grooms.

I'm on the minority side also.

Mr. [REDACTED] Okay.

EXAMINATION

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Just like to begin real generally here, returning to the beginning of your service in Diplomatic Security. And you laid out some of your experiences both before coming to DS as well as once you started at DS, and I was just wondering if you could help us understand, just so we get a better sense of you, just why you joined the Bureau of Diplomatic Security.

A I joined in part for -- or mostly for the opportunity to continue to serve overseas. I gained a number of years of experience serving overseas in the military. That was where I had my first exposure to the State Department, and DS in particular. And DS was in line with what I was doing in the military at the time in terms of protection, and that's something I enjoy doing, and DS is one of the few federal agencies that offers that as a specific career path.

Q Okay. Thank you. That's very helpful. You mentioned during the last hour, I believe, that you'd worked out of the [REDACTED] field office and then followed by work on the Secretary's detail. Is that right?

A Correct.

Q Were you able to travel at all when you were posted at HFO or on the Secretary's detail?

A Yes.



Q Okay.

A When I was in [REDACTED], I did a few, three to be exact, TDYs with the Secretary's detail, and I did a number of domestic trips also.

Q Did any of those TDYs involve travel to what would now be considered to be a high threat post?

A No.

Q Okay. But working on the Secretary's detail, would you have been able to travel to high threat posts? Did the Secretary sometimes travel to more austere locations?

A The secretary's detail, yes, I did travel on a few occasions to high threat posts. In [REDACTED], I did not.

Q Okay. Are you allowed to share some of those high threat posts that you traveled to with the Secretary?

A Sure. I travelled to Islamabad, Pakistan. I traveled to Cairo, Egypt, Israel, Jerusalem and the West Bank, Algeria.

Q And this is all prior to you having received high threat training. Is that correct?

A That's after I received high threat.

Q That's after you received. Great.

A When I was in the Secretary's detail.

Q Okay. You know, for those of us who aren't as familiar as yourself with some of the risks that American personnel face overseas, can you just describe for us very generally just what some of those risks are?

A Well, they face a risk when serving in countries where

there's political instability. They face risks when serving in countries where there's active wars going on, whether they're civil wars or wars between other nations. They face the risk of general crime in the country. Some countries have extremely high levels of crime, whether it would be violent crime or lesser petty crimes. Those are the major physical risks of classifying risks. Health risks of serving in places where there's high risk of disease and other health concerns.

Q Can you maybe walk us through how some of your DS training has helped prepare you for those types of environments and how to address those types of risks?

A Sure. DS training in general from our basic special agent training through more of the specialized courses like the high threat course and the RSO course teach you how to operate and survive in more austere environments where you don't have all of the infrastructure in place to provide support that you would have in the United States or more developed countries elsewhere in the world, operate in places where you may not have ready access to DOD support.

And all of the training that we receive from day one is geared towards teaching you to make independent decisions based on the information that you have and make decisions that are going to be in the best safety and security reasons of everyone there.

Q Thank you. That's helpful. Is perhaps another goal of that training to teach you how to completely eliminate all risks that you might face?

A It's not --

Q Is it possible?

A It's not possible to eliminate 100 percent of risk in the world. There's always risk in whatever you do.

Q So do you see your job, then, as to minimize that risk as much as possible?

A The job's risk management. You have to balance the goals of the Department versus the environment you're working in.

Q Okay. Thank you. That's helpful.

You'd mentioned in the last round that when you arrived in Benghazi, I believe it was April 22, that you had hitched a ride with Senator McCain on his congressional delegation. I'd like to ask you, were you in any way involved in the preparation or planning for that trip from a security standpoint?

A In terms of what specifically?

Q For instance, doing reviews of potential venues where the codel would like to travel to.

A No, I was not.

Q Okay. How about the size of the detail that would be responsible for the Senator?

A No, I was not.

Q Were there any other aspects that you were involved in of planning?

A No. The Senator was simply our way of getting from Greece into Benghazi.

Mr. Kenny. And I'd like to introduce Congressman Susan Brooks.

Mrs. Brooks. Hello. Susan Brooks. Sorry for the interruption. I'm just going to be here for a few minutes.

Mr. [REDACTED] Congresswoman.

Mrs. Brooks. Thank you.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q So once you landed in Benghazi, were you in any way involved in Senator McCain's trip, in providing security, for instance?

A No. My the day we landed, my only job was to stay with the plane to provide security for the plane while the Senator went into town.

Q Okay. Were any other agents also tasked with that responsibility?

A The ARSO, Assistant Regional Security Officer, that came with us from Greece was with me also at the airport.

Q Okay.

A With the plane.

Q So the ARSO stayed at the airplane. I think you described that individual as the Agent in Charge --

A Correct.

Q -- of the trip? Okay. And so that agent didn't accompany Senator McCain to any of his sites?

A No.

Q Okay. Were you aware of how big the security detail was for Senator McCain?

A I was aware of the number of DS agents that were currently

on the ground.

Q Okay. And at that time in Benghazi, all of Benghazi, there were 11. Is that correct?

A When we landed, if you include myself, [REDACTED] and the ARSO from Greece, that would put the number at 11.

Q But with two of you remaining at the airport, that meant there were nine available --

A Correct.

Q -- to support --

A Correct.

Q -- Senator McCain. Okay. And that's one more than was on the ground before you arrived. Was that also correct?

A Correct.

Q Were you aware of any of the sites to which Senator McCain traveled that day?

A No.

Q Did anyone discuss with you how this charter flight came into being, how it was planned?

A No.

Q At the time, did you know why Senator McCain wanted to travel to Benghazi?

A No.

Q Did you later learn?

A Not the specifics. Just that -- what I saw on the news.

Q Okay. So I know we had a discussion in the last hour about

security conditions on the ground, and that was very helpful in describing -- or your assessment of the security conditions. I'd like to maybe take a little step back and just get a sense of your understanding of what the security conditions were in Benghazi before arriving in the country.

A Before, I don't know what they were.

Q Okay. But you had mentioned that you had read press accounts and had at least one briefing before traveling into the country. Is that right?

A Not about the security conditions.

Q Okay. But you were aware that there was a revolution --

A Yes.

Q -- ongoing? Okay.

We've heard the terms permissive, semipermissive, nonpermissive used to describe security environments. You were the special envoy's limousine driver at the time. How would you characterize the environment?

A I'm not going to use those terms in particular, because they're not used within DS, but overall, I would -- at the time I was on the ground in Benghazi, the locals were very friendly towards Americans.

Q Okay. I'll mark Exhibit 1, which is a copy of a State Department transcript.

[█████ Exhibit No. 1

Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Just bear with us here.

So, again, this is a copy of a State Department transcript from an August 2, 2011, on-the-record briefing that was provided by then Special Envoy Christopher Stevens during a return visit to Washington, D.C. During this briefing, Special Envoy Stevens provided an update on the conditions in Benghazi both from a political and security standpoint. And if you like, I can give you a moment to read that.

A Please.

Q So it's a rather lengthy press briefing, and I can focus you on two particular discrete sections.

A Okay.

Q So the first one we'll focus at is at the bottom of the first page, second paragraph up from the bottom.

A Uh-huh.

Q And this is then Special Envoy Stevens speaking, and he says, and I quote, "Now, I don't want to paint an overly rosy picture, because there are also challenges inside the TNC-controlled area, and one of them is security. There was a security vacuum when the regime fell, and they had to stand up very quickly this organization called the TNC. The police, for the most part, just left their posts, because they were afraid of popular reaction against them because they had committed abuses in the early days against the people. So there's hardly any police around, and because of that vacuum, militias started to form and step in.

"And so looking after the security of Benghazi and eastern Libya, you've got a lot of militias and a few police, and this has led to some security challenges that you've already read about and know, I'm sure, and the TNC is working to address these problems. We've flagged these problems with them. The British, the French, other diplomatic missions there are sort of keeping the pressure on the TNC to get their arms around the militia problem so that they can provide better security as they try to move forward to Tripoli and hopefully to Qadhafi's departure," end of quote.

So while this is August 2011, clearly after you departed Benghazi, did the special envoy's observations here, did they generally apply to the time when you were in Benghazi?

A This -- I would say this is a fairly accurate description of the security environment when we were -- when I was in Benghazi.

Q Okay. So is there anything about this statement that is inaccurate in any way or that somehow would be misleading to the picture?

A I mean, it's a very general statement, so --

Q Okay. That's fine.

A In general terms, it's accurate.

Q So did -- to your knowledge, did the special envoy pay close attention to security in Benghazi?

A He was very security conscious.

Q Okay. Do you have any specific examples of that? Would he have frequent discussions with the security staff?



A He would -- if we had any security recommendations, he would, when I was in Benghazi, abide by whatever our recommendations were.

Q Would he ever report information to the security team about conditions based on some information he may have heard from his contacts?

A I don't know. Nothing was reported to me as an individual by him. I don't know if he reported to anyone else.

Q And you mentioned that some security recommendations would be provided to the special envoy. Who within the team, would that be one person who was primarily tasked with that or could it vary?

A It would vary. The primary conduit between the security team and Chris Stevens was the AIC --

Q Okay.

A -- but we all had open channels of communication with him if we needed to.

Q Okay.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. So were there times when you communicated specific recommendations to Mr. Stevens?

Mr. [REDACTED] I never personally communicated a specific recommendation to him.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q So we know from the ARB report and other investigations that the lack of a police presence, as the special envoy describes it here, became a serious challenge over time. It seems, however, that based

on this description, the special envoy felt that the Transitional National Council was working or attempting to address the shortcomings caused by that. Was that also your sense?

A They were attempting to provide some form of security in the city.

Q Okay. And do you know why the special envoy would be working with the TNC on these types of issues? Was that because the TNC had some sort of relationship with the militia on the ground?

A I don't know why he would have worked with one group as opposed to another.

Q Okay. But the -- did the TNC seem to have any influence over any of the militias in Benghazi, to your knowledge?

A I don't know for sure if they did or did not.

Q Okay. So I'd like to direct you to page 3 in the Q&A portion. It's about the middle of the page, there's a question that begins, "Also, have you been able to travel --"

Mr. Evers. Do you see it?

Mr. [REDACTED] Yeah.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q So I'd just like to read this brief quote into the record. Quote: "Question: Also, have you been able to travel outside of Benghazi and meet with civil society leaders in other places? And are these the people who are telling you that they support the TNC? Is that --"

"Mr. Stevens: Absolutely. We try to get out as much as

possible, so -- and meet with all sorts of people -- tribal leaders, Islamists, NGOs, women, men, all around. So Benghazi, but also we've headed out into the east. Where we don't go for security reasons is into the war zone," close quote.

So based on this, it sounds like, despite some of the security challenges that we've been discussing today, the special envoy was still able to go out, meet and develop contacts in eastern Libya. Is that accurate?

A I do not know. We never traveled into eastern Libya when I was in the country.

Q Okay. But you were able to travel within Benghazi. Is that correct?

A Correct.

Q Okay. And could you generally do that at will, meaning you picked a time and place and you could make it happen?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And you mentioned before that on occasion you would request militia assistance for certain instances where you would be providing movement security?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And those requests were fulfilled, at least in some of the more high profile instances. Is that right?

A In the two instances that I had experience with it, it was fulfilled both times.

Q Were you in touch with other foreign missions, you or

anybody on the security team, to your knowledge, from Western countries about their security?

A Western countries? Not to my knowledge, no.

Q Okay. Other countries?

A Yes.

Q Which countries? With which countries would you interact?

A The Qataris and the Danes.

Q Okay. Were you aware at all of how the Danes had postured themselves from a security standpoint?

A I was not personally aware, no.

Q Okay. Did they seem to have a substantial presence?

A I don't know. I never saw their full security arrangement.

Q Okay. And I believe we may have addressed this in the last hour, but I'd just like to ask it slightly differently. Were there any times when you advised against any particular activity for security reasons during your time in Benghazi?

A The only negative advisement that I was aware we ever made was to change our departure time from a location to avoid a rally in front of the hotel, the Tibesti Hotel.

Q Okay. And in that instance, how did you become aware of that risk or of that event, the protest?

A Every Friday the locals would rally in front of the Tibesti Hotel, in front, I mean across the street in front of the main entrance of the hotel in an open plaza area, and they would gather anywhere from the hundreds to up to a thousand at my count --

Q Okay.

A -- and rally about the week's accomplishments of the war.

Q Okay.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Were these anti-American rallies?

Mr. [REDACTED] As far as I know, no. They were pro-Western rallies.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Did you ever see any flags of other countries being waved about during these demonstrations?

A No.

Q Or the rally? Okay. Okay. So this just became a regular occurrence?

A Yes.

Q Is that right? Okay.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. And so the reason to avoid the rally is just that it's a lot of people? Is that the idea?

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Okay.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q And so at the time, that was assessed to be some sort of security risk, just having a large number of people outside of your control. Is that right?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And was that risk presented, then, to the special envoy with a recommendation, for instance, that you would change his departure time for that day?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what was his response?

A I don't know, because I didn't personally make the recommendation.

Q Okay. Was your understanding that he accepted the recommendation?

A It is my understanding, because we always avoided the crowds.

Q Okay. So I just want to say that overall it does sound like the team did a pretty exceptional job and were up to the challenges of the task. Is that generally how you felt about the mission, the security mission?

A Yes. I felt we were capable of providing the adequate amount of security necessary based on the resources we had available to us.

Q Did you have a general sense of whether the diplomatic team to the special envoy, they felt like they were accomplishing their goals there?

A I'm not sure if they were being accomplished or not.

Q Okay. I'd like to revisit a few topics we discussed in the last hour, so I may be jumping around, but I just wanted to ask a few follow-up questions just for some clarification.

There was some discussion in the last hour that at least two members of the original eight agents that went into Benghazi were from the MSD division. Is that correct?

A Correct.

Q Okay. And there was some discussion about differences in training between MSD and other high-threat-trained agents. Do you recall that as well?

A Correct.

Q Okay. I believe I heard you in the last hour say that even the high-threat-trained agents were a limited resource within the Department. I think you mentioned there were maybe only two in the [REDACTED] field office. Is it generally Departmentwide at that time there weren't many high-threat-trained agents?

A I can only speak to [REDACTED]. There were only a handful. I don't know the exact number, but there were only a handful who had gone through the training --

Q Okay.

A -- at that time.

Q And is your understanding also that the MSD team is even a smaller pool of individuals who are qualified for that?

A Everyone in MSD is high threat trained.

Q Okay.

A I don't know the numbers of MSD at that time, though.

Q Okay. But generally was it a finite resource or is it something unlimited that could be requested and deployed anywhere?

A It's finite in terms of numbers, but you can always request their assistance, but it's always going to come down to availability.

Q Okay. We spent a little bit in the last hour discussing

your communications on the security side as well as the diplomatic side. I know you discussed that there was a satellite phone, you also had some limited Internet connectivity for email?

A Yes.

Q I just want -- it would be helpful for us to understand, did the team on the ground, did you have an open line of communication with the Diplomatic Security Command Center throughout the entire time that you were there?

A Open in terms of what?

Q In terms of if you needed to report something to them or if they needed to contact you, there would be a capability for that.

A Yes, as long as we could get a satellite link to make the call or to send the email.

Q Okay. And were the satellite links for the voice, were those generally reliable? Were they more --

A Generally, yes, but as with any satellite communication device it's dependent on a lot of factors, from weather to where you are in the city. So if you had a clear -- a clear link, then generally they were reliable.

Q Okay. And in the event the email was somehow unavailable, would you have resorted or anyone else on the team resorted to the use of voice or telephone?

A For what?

Q To contact or reach back to DS at main State?

A Yes.



Q Okay. We talked a little bit in the last hour about how you had -- the team did the division of labor, and you mentioned that you were the limousine driver, and we went and I think talked about the agent in charge, as well as the team leader. Was there a person who would generally be responsible for communications, say, a watch officer in --

A There was one person permanently assigned to our command post, the TOC, Tactical Operations Center.

Q So you had a Tactical Operations Center. And was that manned pretty much around the clock?

A Manned 24/7.

Q Okay. And you had mentioned before that maybe you weren't aware of whether certain reporting was taking place, but it sounds like this person would have been responsible for the primary point of contact. Is that generally accurate?

A Primary point of contact in terms of what?

Q With anybody back at main State, whether it's the Diplomatic Security Command Center or otherwise.

A The person working in the TOC would have been responsible for contacting the DS Command Center regarding any issues and contacting our DOD point of contact regarding any issues.

Q And would you have been aware of every communication that that person made to the Diplomatic Security Command Center?

A I would not be aware of every communication made.

Q There was a discussion in the last hour about a specific

incident occurring at the Swedish -- I believe it was the Swedish Consul?

A Consul, yeah.

Q And that occurred during your time in Benghazi?

A Correct.

Q Okay. And you mentioned that there was no formal investigation that was undertaken. Is that correct?

A Not that I know of.

Q Okay. Were there any discussions on the team about what this was, whether this was some sort of assassination attempt on the special envoy?

A There was informal discussion, and our conclusion was it was a stray celebratory round that happened to land through the middle of the dining room table.

Q And can you talk about that a little bit and just help us understand Benghazi at this period? Was that a common thing?

A Celebratory fire was common when I was in Benghazi.

Q Okay. So based on this informal discussion, it was assessed or somehow determined that it wasn't a specific threat to the special envoy?

A Correct.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Did you agree with that assessment?

Mr. [REDACTED] I did. I had no reason not to.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q At the very end of the last hour there was a discussion of

tripwires and what those things mean. It would just be helpful if we could maybe revisit what the tripwire is. I know you mentioned that it could be one of several things, and this is obviously pre the events of September 2012. But can you just help us understand, when a tripwire is crossed, does that automatically mean everybody packs up and evacuates or is it something less than that? And if so, is it at least a discussion about security?

A No, it doesn't mean everyone packs up and evacuates. All it means is the current situation that caused that tripwire is to be assessed and then future action is going to be based on that assessment.

Q Okay.

A It doesn't mandate any type of action, though.

Q Okay. During your time in Benghazi, how closely did you, did the DS team, how closely did you monitor security conditions in Benghazi?

A I personally was not involved in any monitoring of the security conditions other than the general environment that I saw when I worked every day, and I don't know if anyone else on the team was involved in in-depth monitoring of the conditions or not.

Q Would the team discuss, maybe at the end of a day or a shift, just what they encountered, security conditions, those sorts of things?

A We would informally discuss the -- on Fridays, the rally outside of the hotel, how many people there were, what they were doing. We would discuss the security at the hotel itself also.

Q Okay. Were those fairly frequent conversations or just

occasional?

A They were occasional if we happened to --

Q Okay.

A -- see something different than we usually see.

Q Right. But otherwise, unless you had some information that you thought necessary to share, you wouldn't have a conversation about security. Is that fairly accurate?

A We wouldn't have a conversation unless it -- unless we needed to.

Q Okay.

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

Q So in the previous hour, and maybe it was just me, but I thought it got a little confusing whether what you were talking about was sort of a written list of tripwires or actually the existence of conceptual tripwires, or what was going on in Benghazi. So maybe if I could just walk you through a couple of things to clarify that.

Were you aware of whether there was or was not a written list of tripwires during the time period that you were in Benghazi?

A I do not know if there is a written list of tripwires.

Q Okay. Is it possible that there was a written list that you wouldn't have seen?

A It's possible.

Q Were you aware conceptually through discussions about what kinds of events could occur in Benghazi that would at the time that you were there become tripwire-type events, so cause a need for

discussion that you would then have to base future action on?

A We never discussed informally what specific events may trigger a tripwire.

Q And by "we" in that, do you mean that you never discussed that with anyone?

A By "we," I mean myself and the other members of the security team.

Q Is it possible that the senior members of the security team were having those discussions without you present?

A It's possible.

Q Similarly, I think, you know, you've defined your role when you were there as being driving the limo, right?

A Correct.

Q And that there were a couple of things that maybe you weren't aware of, such as at the time you were there, I think you said you weren't aware of whether a person was gathering intelligence. Does that mean that nobody was doing it or just that you don't personally know whether that was happening or not?

A I don't personally know whether that was happening or not.

Q Okay. And I think you also said you weren't really aware of some of the communications going on with D.C., or all of the communications going on with D.C., I think is a better way of saying that. Would that mean you were talking about your personal experience or that you were talking for sort of the whole group?

A My personal experience. I do not personally know of any

communications, when they may have happened or may not have happened.

Q In the time period when I think you were discussing if a -- did any large-scale events that would be the kind of large-scale events that would constitute a tripwire where you would have to reassess the security situation, did any of those occur when you were in Benghazi?

A I really can't answer that accurately, because every mission has specific tripwires based on where they're operating. So no one -- no tripwire is going to be the same, whether -- a tripwire in Libya is not necessarily going to be the same as a tripwire in Tunisia, vice versa. So I couldn't say whether one event may have triggered a tripwire or not.

Q But I think you said previously that there was only one security incident when you were there, and that was the bullet in the Swedish Embassy. Is that accurate?

A Correct. Consulate. Swedish Consulate.

Q Sorry. And when that occurred, do you know whether there was an assessment of the security risk?

A I do not know.

Q And if there had been, do you know who in the structure would have been doing that assessment?

A No. The AIC would have been involved. I don't know who else would have been involved.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Just moving to our discussion in the last round about the

Tibesti Hotel. You described several layers of security from, I believe, the exterior moving in. And I just want to first ask, when you were reviewing some of the materials that may have been provided to you, site security reviews of the hotel, were you aware that there were many secure locations in Benghazi that were available to the U.S. government to use or would this be something you weren't necessarily be involved in?

A In terms of?

Q Selecting a site for --

A No. I was not involved in --

Q Okay.

A -- selecting the site.

Q Okay. Did you have a general sense that there were lots of readymade options for the U.S. Government when they arrived in Benghazi?

A I'm not sure what was available when they arrived.

Q Based on your experience in the Tibesti and some of the layers of security that you described, were you generally comfortable with being present there?

A Given the resources that we had, we were able to provide as much security as we could.

Q Okay. But would it have been preferable to have been somewhere where maybe you had more control over the facility, if maybe --

A I'm not going to say preferable or unpreferable, because

a lot -- the selection of the site is not entirely security based. A lot of it has to do with accessibility for the envoy to do his job. So even if there was a site that was more secure than the Tibesti, it may not have been an option for a reason such as that.

Q In your capacity as the lead car, the limousine driver, you obviously spent some time with the special envoy --

A Yes.

Q -- got to know him. Is that right? Did the special envoy ever share with you some of his optimism of Libya or for Libya and the Libyan people?

A No.

Q Okay. Did you have a sense of whether he had strong feelings about Libya?

A No.

Q Okay.

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

Q Did you have or raise up to your superiors any security-related concerns during your time in Benghazi that were not addressed?

A I did not raise to any of my superiors security-related concerns, and I did not have any concerns that I chose to raise, felt needed to be raised with them.

Q Can you remind me when you left Benghazi?

A It was May 26.

Q May 26, 2011?



A 2011.

Q So that would have been approximately 16 months before the attacks on 9/11/2012?

A Yes.

Q Sorry. I apologize. So in that 16 months, the Qadhafi regime toppled, the embassy in Tripoli reopened, democratic elections were held in July of 2012. Is it fair to say that a lot changed in the 16 months after you left Benghazi?

A I really can't answer that accurately, because I wasn't there.

Q Did you stay involved with the security in Benghazi after you left in May of 2011?

A No.

Q So after you left in May of 2011, did you have any firsthand knowledge about the topics that we've been talking about today? And I'll just go through a couple of them. Did you have any firsthand knowledge after May of 2011 about the security resources, staffing, or equipment in Benghazi?

A No.

Q Did you have any firsthand knowledge about the means of communications in Benghazi after May of 2011?

A No.

Q Any firsthand knowledge about the tripwires in Benghazi after May of 2011?

A No.

Q How about any information about the intelligence in Benghazi, whether it was being received, reviewed, collected after May of 2011?

A No.

Q And did you have any firsthand knowledge of the militias on the ground or local security arrangements in Benghazi after May of 2011?

A No.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. I think we'll go off the record right now. Thanks.

[Recess.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Agent ██████ again, I'm Sharon Jackson, and my colleague is Carlton Davis, and I think both of us are going to be asking some questions during this hopefully last portion for you.

At the end of your questioning by the minority, you were asked about the sufficiency of the resources. And my sense from your answer, and I'd just like you to elaborate, is that you felt that you didn't have enough resources. Did I get the correct implication? And, if so, could you elaborate on your answer?

A I wouldn't say we were lacking resources in terms of equipment. We could always use extra manpower, that would have always been beneficial, but in terms of equipment, we went into Benghazi with our normal allocation of equipment that we would typically take on a similar mission anywhere else in the world.

Q So even though you were going into an active war zone, you weren't augmented with any extra equipment for that particular mission. Is that correct?

A We didn't have anything that we wouldn't normally take with us.

Q Okay. What else would you have liked to have had?

A In that particular situation, I think additional manpower would have been all we could have asked for.

Q Okay. We talked earlier about the bullet going through the window at the Tibesti Hotel prior to your arrival. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Was that in the current suite of -- suite -- first of all, was it in the suite of rooms?

A Yes.

Q The window.

A Yes.

Q Okay. Did that cause them to make any changes, such as did you move to a different -- did they move to a different suite or anything like that?

A I don't know what changes, if any, that would have caused, but the window it went through was the window of the TOC, and that remained the TOC when I was there, same -- same room, it didn't change.

Q The window would have been fixed by the time you got there?

A I don't remember.

Q Okay. And how high up was that?

A I don't remember the exact floor, but we were midway up in the hotel. It wasn't the ground floor, it wasn't the top floor. We were in the middle. I don't remember the exact floor, though.

Q Do you remember how many floors the hotel had?

A No.

Q More than 10, less than 20?

A I really don't know.

Q You've stayed in a few hotels in your career with --

A More --

Q -- the Diplomatic Security?

A More than I care for.

Q Okay. Was the TOC manned 24/7?

A Correct.

Q Okay. So someone was in the TOC when the bullet went through?

A I don't know if they were physically in it or not.

Q Okay. But it was to be manned 24/7?

A Yes.

Q Okay. To your knowledge, was anybody hurt or injured because of that?

A Not to my knowledge.

Q Was any equipment damaged in any way?

A Not to my knowledge.

Q Okay. And did that cause any changes in security measures in that suite where the TOC was? I mean, from bulletproof glass being

requested or installed, to keeping the drapes pulled or anything like that, if you know?

A The only precaution that was implemented, although I don't know if it was a direct result of that incident, was we always kept the curtains closed in the room.

Q Okay. To your knowledge, was there any indication that it was directed at your group?

A Not to my knowledge.

Q Okay. Going back to the local militia that provided some security at the hotel and you occasionally called upon, you had previously described them, in your opinion, as unreliable. And I'd just ask if you could elaborate on any specifics that you saw or can you tell us upon what you based that conclusion?

A I used the term "unreliable" because in the example of hotel security, some days they were parked out front, other days they were not. We didn't know why they chose to be there on some days and why they chose not to on others. And to my knowledge, myself, I didn't know who they were or where their loyalties happened to lie, so if something would have happened, I had no confidence if they would or would not come to support.

Q Okay. So to your knowledge they were not under contract with the State Department to provide some additional security?

A As far as I know, they were not.

Q Okay. And to your knowledge, had they been vetted in any way that the State Department normally vets a local guard force to

provide protection?

A I don't know of any vetting of any of the local militia members at the hotel or that supported us when I was in country.

Q And I know you said earlier that you couldn't remember the name of the militia. Do you recognize the name February 17th or Feb 17 as a militia that was in Benghazi at the time?

A Yes.

Q Does that refresh your recollection as to whether that was the name of the particular militia that was providing security at the hotel?

A I don't know if it was the name of the particular one. They were -- I know that it was operating in the area.

Q Okay. Was that the group that you would call upon on the two instances where you needed additional security for Senator McCain's visit and then the State Department official's visit?

A I don't know if that was the specific group, because we used our local point of contact to request the assistance. I don't know who he actually called once we made the request.

Q Who was your local point of contact?

A I don't remember the name. It was -- and I don't remember how he was particularly linked up with the State Department. When I arrived, I was just told this is our point of contact. We used him for translation and anything that we needed out in town, setting up meetings and such.

Q Were you told or did you get the impression that Chris

Stevens knew him on a personal basis?

A I had the impression that Chris Stevens didn't know him prior to.

Q Would this local Libyan travel with you when you would go to various venues?

A Occasionally, he would travel separately from our motorcade.

Q So he was never a part of your motorcade?

A No.

Q Okay. And you were the driver for Mr. Stevens. Who else would be in the vehicle with you besides you and he?

A The only other person that was always in the vehicle was the AIC.

Q The agent in charge?

A Correct.

Q Okay.

A And the --

Q Would you typically have a fourth?

A Typically, no. The only time that there was a fourth was when Senator McCain came and when the other State Department representative came.

RPTR ZAMORA

EDTR HOFSTAD

[12:22 p.m.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q That you thought was an assistant secretary or deputy secretary, somewhere up there --

A Correct, yeah.

Q -- up the chain?

A I don't remember his exact title.

Q Okay. When that person came, did an extra agent come along, such as what occurred when Senator McCain came?

A No.

Q Okay. So it was the 10 of you.

A Correct.

Q Okay.

Did you get danger pay when you were over there?

A Yes, retroactively.

Q Retroactively?

A Yeah.

Q You didn't know you were going to get it when you went in?

A There was discussion -- the initial group that went in, of eight agents, when they arrived, danger pay had not been authorized at that time. And, eventually, after I arrived in Benghazi, something was worked out by the people who deal with danger pay to designate a start date for the danger pay. And beginning on that date, we all



received danger pay from that start date until when we left the country.

Q So was there a period of time from when you initially got there till this start date that you did not get danger pay?

A For myself, no, but for some of the eight initial people, there was.

Q Okay. So you got danger pay for the entire --

A Correct.

Q -- time that you were there. Okay.

It is my understanding that the Greek ferry that brought the initial eight agents and Envoy Stevens into Benghazi was still there when you arrived. Do you recall that or not?

A Correct. It was still there.

Q And it was there for a couple of days after you arrived?

A I don't remember when it left.

Q Okay. Was it there at the end of your tour?

A No.

Q Okay. So it left at some point.

A Correct.

Q Was that ferry your evacuation plan initially?

A I never heard of it being part of our evacuation plan, personally.

Q Were you aware of your evacuation plan?

A I had heard through informal discussion of an evacuation plan.

Q And what was that plan?

A The plan was we would pack up all of our equipment, mainly our weapons and communication equipment, and we would drive to Egypt. And when we arrived at Egypt, we would essentially turn ourselves over to the border guards at Egypt and hope that the U.S. Embassy in Cairo could help us out.

Q And get you in Egypt?

A In Egypt, or if we were in jail, get us out of jail.

Q Okay. Because was it your understanding, then, that people who were leaving Libya to go into Egypt would not be allowed in?

A I don't know anything about that.

Q Okay.

We talked earlier about a classified communications system arriving after you arrived on April 22nd, and --

A Correct.

Q -- I just want to direct your attention back there. Okay. Did you use that system?

A I did not personally use it.

Q Okay. Do you know who used that system?

A I know Chris Stevens used the room. I don't know if he actually used the equipment in the room, though.

Q Was there other equipment in that room?

A Not that I know of.

Q Okay. So if you went into that room, presumably you were using the equipment in that room?

A Possibly, but I couldn't say for sure.

Q Do you know why that system was brought in, for what purpose?

A Specific purpose, no.

Q Okay. And do you have any knowledge about anyone among your team using that equipment for a particular purpose?

A No.

Q Okay.

You talked earlier about that there were generally rallies on Fridays?

A Correct.

Q Okay. Were there rallies any other day of the week?

A The only instance in particular that I remember is the day the news came out that bin Laden was killed. There was another pro-Western rally to celebrate his death in front of the hotel.

Q Okay. But, typically, every Friday there would be a rally?

A Typically, yes.

Q Approximately what time of day would these rallies start?

A They were usually late afternoon, 4, 5 o'clock in the afternoon.

Q So during the daytime?

A Correct. It was still light outside.

Q Okay. Would they end before dark, or would they go until, you know, midnight or so?

A I don't remember exactly, but they wouldn't go very long. They wouldn't go till midnight, I know that for sure.

Q Okay. Past the dinner hour?

A I don't know for sure.

Q Okay. Would they have flags or banners or other things like that?

A They would have the Libyan flag -- Libyan, I mean the --

Q Revolution flag?

A Yes. Not the flag of the government but the revolution one.

Q Not the Qadhafi flag but the revolution flag?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Any other flags that you saw?

A Not that I saw.

Q Any discussion among the agents that you worked with that they were seeing flags of extremist groups?

A No, not that I heard.

Q Okay. And you said that up to, like, 1,000 people would rally on Fridays?

A The number would vary. Some Fridays there would be more people than others. I don't know why the numbers would change.

Q Okay.

You stated earlier that it was your impression that the locals were very friendly toward Americans.

A Correct.

Q Okay. Were there other groups, either in Benghazi or in the Benghazi area, that were not friendly to Americans or Westerners, if you're aware?

A I never encountered a group or heard of any anti-Western

group --

Q Okay.

A -- in the area.

Q Okay.

We talked earlier about emailing back to the command center and use of the Gmail account. Were you doing that from State Department computer systems, like laptops, computers, that kind of stuff?

A It was sent from a laptop that the initial group of eight agents had brought with them.

Q Okay. Did anybody bring their personal laptops with them?

A I don't know --

Q You did not?

A -- personally. I did bring my personal laptop, yes.

Q Okay. Want to communicate with family members or things like that?

A Until I found out that the whole WiFi system was nonfunctioning.

Q You had hopes --

A Yes.

Q -- but reality crashed those hopes; is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Did you ever use your personal laptop to create any State Department documents, such as the site survey or anything like that?

A No. Those were all created on that laptop in the TOC.

Q Okay.

Following the Benghazi attack in September of 2012, did you receive any notification that there were -- well, first of all, were you asked to provide any documents to the Accountability Review Board regarding your experience in Benghazi?

A Nope.

Q Okay. Were you interviewed by them?

A Nope.

Q The same questions regarding the Best Practices Panel. Did you provide any documents to that group?

A Nope.

Q Were you interviewed by them?

A Nope.

Q Okay.

Were you ever advised that various congressional committees had requested documents regarding the U.S. presence in Libya prior to the attack and of the attack?

A I wasn't formally advised. There was an email that was sent by DS headquarters basically saying people with information regarding this should be aware that they may be asked to provide emails, any type of communications regarding the incident.

Q Okay. So you were told that you may be asked but not that you were asked; is that --

A Correct.

Q Okay. So did you go in and look for any emails or documents

that you may have created and sent?

A No.

Q Okay. So you were never directed to produce any of the site surveys or anything like that?

A In terms of after the fact?

Q After the attack --

A No.

Q -- and up until this day.

A No.

Q Okay.

When you got back from Libya in the end of May 2011, were you debriefed or interviewed or asked to write a report regarding your experience for internal use?

A No.

Q And have you ever been asked?

A No.

Q Are you aware of whether any of the other DS agents who you served with over in Libya were asked to do that?

A No.

Q Okay.

Ms. Jackson. Go ahead.

Mr. Davis. Yeah. If there's any area that you think might be pertinent to our inquiry that we did not ask you about today, feel free to share.

Mr. [REDACTED] No. I think you've covered all the main points.

Ms. Jackson. You mean there's no area that you thought we would ask about and we didn't?

Mr. [REDACTED] No.

Ms. Jackson. Or you just don't want to prolong this any longer?

Mr. [REDACTED] No, no, no. You were thorough.

Ms. Jackson. All right.

Mr. Davis. And just one other question. When did you first learn that Congress wanted to speak with you?

Mr. [REDACTED] On the 28th of January, I received an email from Director Starr that there was a possibility that we would be asked to provide information.

Mr. Davis. Thank you.

Ms. Jackson. Those are all the questions that we have, and we would turn it back over to you all.

[Recess.]

Mr. Kenny. The time is 12:40. Nice round number.

So, appreciate your patience again today, Agent [REDACTED]

And I'll just give you a quick roadmap. I'd like to return to some of our discussion throughout the course of today, ask a few followup clarifying questions, at which point I'm going to hand it over to my colleague. This is Brent Woolfork, who is going to ask you some questions. And then I'll ask you another series of questions, as well, to conclude our hour.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q So I'd like to begin by returning to our discussion about



the militia that was in Benghazi or the various militias that you observed during your time there. In the last hour, you corrected, I believe, a statement, or clarified a statement, when you had said that they were somehow unreliable.

And the thing I think it would be helpful for us to understand is, obviously, the security team has a specific lens through which they view the world, and we're on the ground, assessing and working with some of these actors. And it's also possible that the diplomatic staff had their own lens through which they viewed the world.

And it would be helpful for us to understand, were some of these observations, these assessments about the militia, were those being relayed back to main State during your time? Or were these more informal discussions you and the team were having?

A I never relayed any back to main State. I don't know if anyone else on the team relayed any. They were informal discussions amongst the rest of my team when we were there.

Q Okay. And is it possible that some of the other staff, perhaps the diplomatic staff, maybe had a different view of the militia, their reliability and those sorts of things?

A It's possible.

Q Okay.

I'd like to move on to our discussion of danger pay. And maybe it'd be helpful if you could just provide us with an overview of what that is --

A Sure.

Q -- and when it applies.

A Danger pay is an entitlement pay that the State Department offers to any Foreign Service officer who is serving in an area that is designated to receive danger pay. That area changes from year to year. I believe every year, each post has to resubstantiate their claim to danger pay. And the amount varies based on the post.

And if a post is eligible for danger pay, then for TDY Foreign Service officers to that area, to my knowledge, it's a minimum of 45 days. Once you're in country 45 days, you're eligible to receive it. There are exceptions to that depending on the country, where you don't necessarily have to be in country for 45 days. Some it's just however long you're on the ground. But I don't know the specifics of the regulations.

Q Sure. Did those exceptions apply at all to any of the personnel in Benghazi, the exception to the 45-day minimum, to your knowledge?

A To my knowledge, yes, because I received danger pay and I was not in country for 45 days.

Q Okay.

And you mentioned that, it sounds like -- and please correct me if I'm wrong, but that the post is responsible for originating the request. They send the request in and have to substantiate it somehow. Is that --

A Correct. Post is responsible for sending in all the justifications for danger pay to main State.

Q Okay. And once they do that, there's some sort of an evaluation process that then takes place, and a decision is made? Is that right?

A In terms of --

Q Just generally for how this process would work.

A Yes. Some evaluation is made as to whether post qualifies for danger pay or not and to what percentage of pay they qualify for.

Q Okay.

Do you have any evidence that the fact that danger pay didn't apply to the first team or the first group of folks that went in, that that was somehow part of an effort to deny that Libya or Benghazi was somehow embroiled in a revolution?

A I don't know.

Q So you don't have evidence of that.

A I don't, no.

Q Okay.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Is the danger-pay process sometimes a bureaucratic one that takes a little bit of time to get through?

Mr. [REDACTED] I don't know what the baseline timeframe is for that process to take place, so I don't know if how long it took for Benghazi approval to go through, if that was the norm or outside of the norm.

Mr. Kenny. Are you aware of whether it requires any sort of congressional notice?

Mr. [REDACTED] I'm not aware, no.

Mr. Kenny. No.

Mr. Woolfork. Agent [REDACTED] my name is Brent Woolfork, as was stated at the outset. And I just wanted to ask you a few questions following on what the majority asked you regarding the Accountability Review Board.

BY MR. WOOLFORK:

Q You had previously answered that you had become aware regarding the Accountability Review Board being convened from -- I believe from Diplomatic Security. Is that correct?

A They made me aware that I may be required to provide documents or communication records regarding my time in Benghazi. It wasn't the actual notification that the board was being convened on this date.

Q Okay.

A Simply that we may be required to provide documents.

Q And given that you were in Benghazi from April and May of 2011, did you feel that you had information that could be provided that would be helpful towards the investigation?

A I didn't feel I had any relevant information.

Q Is there a reason why not? Is it just in terms of the duration of time that had lapsed or other reasons?

A It was due to I was there prior to the attack, and, at the time, the impression was they were looking for information regarding the time of the attack.

Q Okay.

Were you ever asked or ordered not to provide information to the

ARB?

A No.

Q Were you ever asked or ordered to conceal or destroy information for the ARB?

A No.

Q And then, once the ARB completed its report in December of 2012, did you have a chance to take a look at it, read it at all?

A I did, but just skimming through. I didn't read it in detail.

Q Did you have a chance to take a look at the recommendations that were made?

A I did, again, skimming through. Nothing in detail.

Q Did you have any thoughts in terms of the recommendations that were made?

A I thought they were adequate recommendations.

Q Were there any additional recommendations you thought would be helpful towards Diplomatic Security's mission in the future?

A No, not that I can remember from the recommendations.

Q Thank you.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Now, shifting gears, I would like to ask you a series of questions about a number of public allegations related to the attacks. We understand that the committee is investigating these allegations, and, therefore, we have to ask everyone about them. But we don't want you to infer that, by us asking these, you know, that we've adopted

them as our own.

You will also see that there are a lot of these allegations, so it takes a while. And I apologize in advance and ask that you just please bear with us. For the most part, I will just ask whether or not you have any evidence or information to support each of these, and if you don't, we can move on to the next one.

So the first is, 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" -- Leon Panetta -- "to stand down," close quote, and this resulted in the Defense Department not sending more assets to help in Benghazi.

Agent [REDACTED] 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's also 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 day-to-day security resources in Benghazi?

A No.

Q It has also 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 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 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," 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 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 on the night of the attacks, and there have been a number of allegations about the cause and 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 about 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 personally agree with the decision to delay temporarily or whether you 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 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 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 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 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 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 a, quote, "intentional misrepresentation," close 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 We're almost to the end.

It has been alleged that the President of the United States was "virtually AWOL as Commander in Chief" on the night of 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 who were considering flying on the second plane to Benghazi were ordered by their superiors to, quote, "stand down," close quote. Military officials have stated that those four individuals were instead ordered to, quote, "remain in place," close quote, in Tripoli in order 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 flight in Benghazi," close 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," close quote?

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," 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 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 conclude and go off the record.

[Whereupon, at 12:55 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

Certificate of Deponent/Interviewee

I have read the foregoing \_\_\_\_ pages, which contain the correct transcript of the answers made by me to the questions therein recorded.

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Witness Name

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Date

*Errata Sheet*

**Select Committee on Benghazi**

The witness declined to review the accompanying transcript.