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

INTERVIEW OF: [REDACTED]

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2015

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held in Room HVC-205,  
Capitol Visitor Center, commencing at 10:00 a.m.

Appearances:

For the SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI:

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For the U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE:

AUSTIN EVERS, SENIOR ADVISOR

Ms. Betz. We'll go on the record. Good morning. This is a transcribed interview of [REDACTED] conducted by the House Select Committee on Benghazi. This interview is being conducted voluntarily as part of the committee's investigation into the attacks on the U.S. diplomatic facilities in Benghazi, Libya, and related matters pursuant to H.Res. 567 of the 113th Congress and H.Res. 5 of the 114th.

Could the witness please state your name for the record?

Mr. [REDACTED]

Ms. Betz. The committee appreciates your appearance today at this interview. My name is Kim Betz with the committee's majority staff, and I'll take this opportunity to have everyone at the table introduce themselves as well as around the room.

Ms. Jackson. And I'm Sharon Jackson. I'm with the minority. I switched sides -- so, yeah, with the majority staff. Let me go back.

Mr. Desai. I'm Ronak Desai with minority staff.

Mr. Missakian. Craig Missakian with the majority staff.

Ms. Green. Shannon Green with the minority staff.

Mr. Kenny. Peter Kenny with the minority staff.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. I'm Susanne Sachsman Grooms with the minority.

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

Ms. Barrineau. I'm Sara Barrineau with majority staff.

Ms. Clarke. Sheria Clarke with the majority.

Mr. Evers. Austin Evers, State Department.

Ms. Betz. Before we begin, I would like to go over the ground

rules and explain how the interview will proceed. The way the questioning proceeds is that a member from the majority will ask questions for the first hour, and then the minority will have the opportunity to ask questions for an equal period of time if they choose. We will firmly adhere to the 1-hour time limit for each side.

Questions may be asked only by members of the committee or designated staff. We will rotate back and forth, 1 hour per side, until we are out of questions and the interview will be over. Unlike a testimony or a deposition in Federal court, the committee format is not bound by the rules of evidence. The witness or their counsel may raise objections for privilege subject to review by the chairman of the committee. If these objections cannot be resolved in the interview, the witness can be required to return for a deposition or a hearing.

Members and staff of the committee, however, are not permitted to raise questions or objections when the other side is asking questions. This has not been an issue we've encountered in the past, but I wanted to make sure you were clear on the process.

This session is beginning as unclassified. If any question calls for a classified answer, please let us know, and we will reserve this answer until we move into a classified setting. You are welcome to confer with counsel at any time throughout the interview, but if something needs to be clarified, we ask that the witness make this known. If you need to discuss anything with your counsel, we will go off the record and stop the clock to provide you with this opportunity.



We'd like to take a break whenever it's convenient for you. This can be after each hour of questioning or after a couple of rounds, whichever you prefer. During your round of questioning, if you need anything, water, coffee, use the facilities, or confer with your counsel, just please let us know, and we will go off the record and stop the clock. We really want to make this process as easy and as comfortable for you.

As you can see, an official court reporter -- or an official reporter is taking down everything you say to make a written record so we ask that you give verbal responses to all questions, yes and no, as opposed to nods of the head. I'm going to ask the reporter to please feel free to jump in in case you do respond nonverbally. Do you understand this?

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes.

Ms. Betz. Also, we should both try to not talk over each other so that it's easier to get a clear record. We want you to answer our questions in the most complete and truthful manner possible, so we will take our time and repeat or clarify our questions, if necessary. If you have any questions or if you do not understand any of our questions, please let us know. We're happy to clarify or repeat the question.

If you honestly don't know the answer to a question or don't remember, it's best not to guess. Please give us your best recollection, and if there are things you do not know or can't remember, just say so and please let us know to who -- to whom, to the best of your knowledge, may be able to provide the information or a more

complete answer to a question.

You are required to answer truthfully from Congress. Do you understand that?

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes.

Ms. Betz. This also applies to questions posed by congressional staff in an interview. Do you understand this?

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes.

Ms. Betz. Witnesses that knowingly provide false testimony could be subject to criminal prosecution for perjury or for making false statements. Do you understand that?

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes.

Ms. Betz. Is there any reason you are unable to provide truthful answers to today's questions?

Mr. [REDACTED] No.

Ms. Betz. Okay. That's the end of my preamble or bramble. Does the minority have anything they'd like to say or add?

Mr. Kenny. I would like to take the opportunity to thank the witness for appearing here today and thank you for your service and we look forward to your testimony.

Ms. Betz. So the clock now reads what 10:09, 10:10.

Ms. Jackson. 10:08.

Ms. Betz. Okay. 10:08. So we'll now begin with our first hour of questioning.

EXAMINATION

BY MS. BETZ:

Q What did you do prior to assuming your post in Benghazi?  
What's your experience or experiences?

A From when I started with the State Department?

Q Uh-huh.

A I joined State department in 2008, and I served 2 years in our [REDACTED] field, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] I then did 2 years in [REDACTED] as the assistant regional security officer. During that time, I did a TDY to Yemen and also TDY to Benghazi. After that, I served a 1-year tour in Tripoli, Libya, and currently [REDACTED]

Q And did you do any or did you receive any type of training before assuming these posts such as high-threat training?

A Yes. Before going to [REDACTED], I completed the basic regional security officer course and then as well as the high-threat protection course.

Q And were these both required for assuming these posts?

A High-threat was not required for [REDACTED], but it was for Yemen and Libya.

Q Other than these two courses, were there other types of training or classes that you took such as firearms training?

A Separate than just the basic special agent course?

Q Uh-huh.

A Not in addition to the basic special agent course. There was some investigative courses I took, for instance, money laundering. I took two training sessions in that, but I don't know if that was really

relevant to what I was doing in [REDACTED] or Libya.

Q Right. And how did you first learn about the position, the TDY position in Benghazi?

A The desk officer for NEA contacted me and said, You did a good job in Yemen; would you like to go to Benghazi?

Q So they reached out to you?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Did you know anyone that had previously served as the RSO in Benghazi?

A One of the other ARSOs in [REDACTED] with me had done a TDY to Benghazi as an ARSO there.

Q And were you -- given that the desk office reached out to you, so they knew you personally from previous positions?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q And do you know, were they looking for someone with specific experience to serve in this capacity or qualifications?

A I know they were looking for someone that had the high-threat training. I don't know what sort of other additional requirements they might have had.

Q Okay.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Did you have any prior military experience before becoming a DS agent or any other type of law enforcement experience before joining DS?

A No, ma'am.

Q And who was the desk officer who reached out to you?

A I believe it was [REDACTED].

Q Okay. And you said there was another agent from [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] that had served in Benghazi. Who was that?

A [REDACTED]

Q Okay.

BY MS. BETZ:

Q And he had served previously?

A In Benghazi?

Q In Benghazi.

A Yes, ma'am.

Q What sort of conversations then did you have before you left? Did you talk to [REDACTED]? Did you talk to [REDACTED] before you left about the position about?

A I'm sure I did.

Q About the environment?

A I remember at least talking to [REDACTED] about it, but I don't remember what was said.

Q Okay. Did you read any intelligence reports or threat assessments before you left either from the State Department, CIA, DOD?

A I was reading intelligence reporting, threat reporting weekly, if not daily. I can't -- I don't remember if there was something specific on Libya or Benghazi I was reading.

Q Did the previous RSO give you any turnover documents or any notes to help you when you came into the position?

A Yes, there is a turnover document.

Q And did it describe -- what did it describe?

A It described the resources that were available to the RSO, sort of our standard operating procedures, provided contact phone numbers, who to call for various scenarios, gave a readout on, you know, the guard program, the QRF force there, some of the other programs that were running there.

Q Okay. So it was a pretty comprehensive document, would you say?

A Yes.

Q When you -- when you left to travel, were you informed what to bring with you? Did you bring your own firearms? Was that something that was issued when you arrived at the compound or arrived in Benghazi?

A I could not bring my own firearm, so that was issued when I got there.

Q And what was issued to you?

A I had an M4 and a pistol.

Q And were those the only firearms that were on the compound? Were there others?

A Yes, there were other firearms.

Q Elaborate in a different setting?

Ms. Jackson. Just ask.

BY MS. BETZ:

Q Okay.

A The British who had left Benghazi left some of their firearms with us.

Q Okay.

A British security.

Q And were they similar in type?

A I never saw them. They were in the safe.

Q Okay.

A Which we didn't have access to.

Q Okay. Did you -- when you came into Benghazi, did you have any problems coming into the country, visa issues, any other issues?

A No.

Q You're laughing.

A It's always just hit or miss going in there.

Q Okay.

A At that time, it worked out great.

Q Did you travel alone, or did you travel with anybody else?

A Just by myself.

Q Just by yourself. And when you arrived at the airport, who were you -- who met you at the airport?

A I don't remember specifically. I would assume it was the other DS agents and some of the QRF members, but I can't say for certain who was there.

Q Okay. And did you have any conversations on the way back traveling to the post with those -- any conversations about the security environment? Were they concerned traveling from the airport

to post? Did you travel in a convoy or fully armored vehicle?

A I traveled in an armored vehicle, but I don't remember what the security package was, what sort of motorcade setup there was.

Q Okay. So when you left or in your conversations with [REDACTED], were you -- what was the reporting structure? Were you to report to [REDACTED]? Were you to report to Tripoli? Both in tandem?

A Both. If [REDACTED] was asking me something specific, I would respond to him and probably CC the RSO in Tripoli.

Q Uh-huh.

A As well as one of the other ARSOs in Tripoli. Otherwise, most of my reporting was directly to the RSO in Tripoli, oftentimes in consultation with the principal officer in Benghazi.

Q And did you have conversations with [REDACTED] daily? Would he ping you weekly? Daily?

A Weekly.

Q Weekly. And was he the only one that you were in contact with? Were there others?

A As far as stateside?

Q Stateside.

A [REDACTED] is the only one I can remember.

Q I want to shift gears a little bit. So when you arrived to the compound or at the compound, and you know, obviously you were aware of security issues. I want to talk a little bit about the reliance on Libyans for security, and specifically, was this something that was typical in your experiences for a post?



A Relying on host-nation nationals for security?

Q Uh-huh.

A In my experience, in [REDACTED], we had our guard force, there was about 200 of them, some of them armed and they were all third-country nationals, Sri Lankans, Indians, and Nepalese. And it worked well. We trusted them. They performed heroically in the attack [REDACTED]. In Yemen, also we had local Yemenis providing security, so it wasn't uncommon.

Q Okay. In the capacities that Libyans were asked to serve, is that different than -- was it different than in [REDACTED] and Yemen?

A No. They were serving sort of as a bodyguard capacity in Libya, which is also not uncommon. It's done at other posts. [REDACTED] comes to mind.

Q Was it your feeling that they were replacing American agents, DS agents?

A I can't answer that. I don't know.

Q Okay. The local guard force, what were they hired to do?

A Local guards provide access control essentially for visitors as well as us moving on and off the compound, and they also serve as the first line of defense in the event of an attack or some other sort of security incident would happened on the premise.

Q Were they armed?

A No.

Q So what did they -- how did they perform their work? So

you say they are the first line of defense. Would you elaborate a little bit more?

A Well, one is the first line of defense for who gets on to the compound.

Q Uh-huh.

A So they are checking badges, they are checking license plates, that sort of thing. They'll often itemize the vehicles to make sure there aren't explosives in the vehicles. If something were to happen, for instance, a mob or bomb or some sort of scenario like that, they have the IDNS pendants, which sound our alarm, and then they also have radios so they are instructed to call out a certain thing, DS agents, to alert us what type of attack it is and where they are.

Q Were there issues with radios, the LGF radios that you were aware of?

A I can't remember any specific issues. That doesn't mean there weren't. I just can't -- can't remember.

Q Problems getting radios into the country or other type of technical equipment into the country?

A I can't think of the example where that was an issue.

Q Okay. Were the LGF reliable? Were they trustworthy? Loyal?

A They were -- I would trust them to do the job that they were hired to do. I wouldn't trust them to put their lives on the line to defend us in an attack or something like that.

Q Is that something that would differ from -- I mean, from

having additional American sort of security agents on the ground?

A Well, I'm always going to trust an American more than I would a third country, you know, another national.

Q Right. Do you know how members of the LGF were selected?

A I do not, no.

Q So you weren't involved in hiring or selecting them?

A No. They were hired through Blue Mountain.

Q Okay.

A Which was the contractor.

Q Right.

A And I don't remember what sort of hiring process or vetting they did on the guards.

Q Okay.

Ms. Jackson. So did you see anybody vetting documents when you were there that vetting had occurred of the local guard force?

Mr. [REDACTED]. I don't remember seeing any. I know when I was hiring somebody, I vetted them through one of my contacts back in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to do name checks and that sort of stuff, but I don't know what the guards that were on compound, how they had been vetted.

BY MS. BETZ:

Q So you had done this on a previous capacity, worked and hired LGF?

A Yes. But not in Benghazi.

Q Not in Benghazi. Who was responsible for this in Benghazi, the LGF? I mean, Blue Mountain --

A Hiring them?

Q Yeah. Blue Mountain Group, but was there an ARSO or who sort of monitored Blue Mountain Group or worked with?

A I can't -- we divided the DS programs up amongst the ARSOs and the RSO, myself. I can't remember who specifically had the LGF program because they are in portfolios --

Ms. Jackson. But you did hire one local guard force while you were there?

Mr. [REDACTED]. Oh, it was a driver.

Ms. Jackson. It was a driver.

Ms. Betz. Okay. Okay. I'll come back to that.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Okay. Was the driver part of the local guard force or the QRF?

A No, no.

Q Okay. And is that the person that you described as you vetted through a contact in [REDACTED]?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And just walk us through how that worked. How is it that you can vet someone through [REDACTED] as opposed to contacts in Libya?

A This contact I have worked [REDACTED]. They have access to a lot of the systems we use when we conduct background checks or do vetting of employees, so I gave him a name and date of birth to run.

Ms. Betz. This particular.

Mr. [REDACTED] Particular person.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Was this person like dual U.S./Libyan national, or I guess I'm asking why -- how and why [REDACTED] would have information on a Libyan if the person was solely a Libyan national?

A Well, [REDACTED] has access to State Department records as well. So, in addition to any records they may generate [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] They would also have records that are generated by consular officers or either through lookouts or through information they glean during interviews of visa applicants or --

Q Were you able to vet this person through the normal checklist that you would vet a member of the host nation support?

A No.

Q And can you elaborate on what was different?

A Typically, if you're vetting a local national, you would go through various different agencies.

Q Such as?

A [REDACTED]

Q Would you do any local vetting normally --

A Yes.

Q -- like through the local law enforcement, financial institutions, and credit checks, things like that?

A I've never -- I'm not aware if we do credit checks and financial institution checks, but we do do local police checks.

Q Were you able to do any of that in Libya? In Benghazi, in

particular?

A I don't remember because we also had an assistant, Libyan assistant that was serving in sort of a management human resources capacity. I don't know -- I honestly can't remember if she submitted the names for local police checks.

Q And who was that person?

A I don't remember her name.

Q Does [REDACTED] sound --

A [REDACTED]

Ms. Jackson. Okay. Sorry.

Ms. Betz. No.

BY MS. BETZ:

Q Just sort of following up on that. So were you aware of any type of background check that the Blue Mountain Group was conducting on these individuals? Would they go through something similar or as rigorous as what you did, or what is the standard vetting process?

A I can't remember what their vetting process was.

Q Okay. Would the person -- would the ARSO who was monitoring or working with the Blue Mountain Group know that?

A I don't know. I mean, I feel like I would know this at some point, but I just don't. I don't remember.

Q Were you aware of the contract issues that the Blue Mountain Group was having at the time that you were in Benghazi --

A No.

Q -- with the Libyan partners?

A No.

Q So you wouldn't notice -- you didn't have -- weren't aware of any impact that the contract dispute was having on the performance of the LGF at the time?

A Not that I'm aware of.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q So you don't recall any dispute between the Libyan BMG and the U.K. parent company?

A Not that I'm aware of.

Q Okay. All right. I have another question, but it escapes me. Go ahead. Oh, you know what, I do. We need to just establish. When were you in Benghazi?

A I was there the month of August 2012. I arrived July 30th and left September 1st.

Ms. Betz. So you weren't aware of the contract issues with D.C. Anybody else aware of contract issues or -- if you weren't aware, who would be aware of those contract issues?

Mr. Evers. Aware of -- who would be aware of things that he's not aware of?

Ms. Betz. Yeah. Well, I meant would D.C. know? I'm just trying to understand who would -- if he didn't know, does he have an idea of who may know a contract --

Ms. Jackson. Who was responsible?

Ms. Betz. Who was responsible for the contract. Would it have been the ARSO that was communicating about the contract dispute?

Mr. Evers. If you know.

BY MS. BETZ:

Q If you know.

A Typically a contracting officer is in charge of the contracts. I would have to assume that that person was strictly, but I don't know who is in charge of the contract.

Q Okay. So the QRF, the Quick Reaction Force, who were they?

A They were Libyan nationals who were members of the 17th February Brigade.

Q Were they -- were the members that were on the compound, were they loyal, trustworthy, did you believe them to be?

A I think loyal and trustworthy, I have to separate. That's two different things. Loyal, I believe that they weren't do anything to harm us and they would do their best to protect us, so they are loyal in that sense. Trustworthy, in that particular environment under the Qadhafi regime, counterintelligence issues are an issue, and we would have to assume that all Libyans would be pressured to provide information on us to the host nation.

Q Was the service that the QRF provided the post, was that something similar? Was it similarly provided to other Westerners or organizations in Benghazi?

A I could not speak about what sort of protection the other organizations had. I don't know if I ever saw it actually.

Q Was there precedent in your previous experiences for using a militia or brigade to serve in these capacities?



A Now that I'm aware of. There is precedent to use locals in a bodyguard capacity. I'm not -- I can't speak about all the other high threat posts around the world, whether they are using people that are attached to a militia or brigade for protection.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q In [REDACTED] and in Yemen when you were there, who provided -- what were the QRFs in those countries? I mean, where did they come from? Were they a local police? Were they military? Can you compare and contrast what you had in Benghazi with what you experienced in [REDACTED] and Yemen when you were there?

A Sure. [REDACTED] has a competent security force of [REDACTED] that would respond to events. Our own personal Embassy QRF in [REDACTED] consisted of their country nationals [REDACTED]. In Yemen, our bodyguards, which we would consider a QRF, we also had a QRF element where Yemeni nationals, and they also have host nation security support on the perimeter that could respond. Benghazi does not -- did not have much of a security -- much security -- many security capabilities that I saw. You didn't typically see police. You didn't see military.

Ms. Betz. Were those typical security elements, did you envision -- did you rely on them as part of sort of this concentric ring of security? I mean, were they integral to your plan on paper?

Mr. [REDACTED] The QRF?

Ms. Betz. The QRF, the police.

Mr. Evers. And in which country?

BY MS. BETZ:

Q I'm sorry. Back into Libya.

A The QRF were certainly part of our security plan.

Q Okay.

A And you would say they are one of the rings of security.

Q Okay. Do you know how they were selected to serve on the compound?

A I don't know how the ones that were there were selected. I can only speak to when I was there, we -- they attempted to give us a new QRF member and I can only speak to how that person was selected.

Q How did that --

A One of our QRF members resigned, so we requested a new one from the 17th February, which they sent us, and we didn't accept him.

Q Do you know why the initial QRF member resigned?

A He was having personal issues with the QRF leader, [REDACTED]

Q Okay. And why was the initial replacement not acceptable to you?

A It was my understanding that he had already been a member of the QRF in Benghazi and he had been fired previously. I never got the full story on why he was fired, but it was either related to drug use or some counterintelligence issues.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q So he had been previously a member of the QRF on the U.S. compound in Benghazi, not just a member of the militia? I just want to make sure I understand.

A Yes. I was told that he had been a member of the QRF and the compound in Benghazi, but I did not -- I wasn't there when he was a member.

Q But you were told that he had been a member of the QRF and had been previously terminated?

A Yes.

Q And then he came back for round two, but that was rejected?

A He was sent back to us for round two, yes.

Q Yes. Did you ever get a replacement for him, for the one who left?

A Not that I recall.

Q So how many QRF members did you have?

A Three.

Q At that time, after the one left?

A Yes. We had --

Q Were you at three and went down to two, or were you at four and went down to three?

A I can't say with certainty. I remember three specifically. I can't remember when I left if we were down to two or we had three. Maybe somebody else can.

Q And did that number include [REDACTED]?

A Yes.

Q Tell us about [REDACTED] What was his role?

A [REDACTED] was the QRF leader for the group that was on the compound. He -- I guess that describes him.

Q Okay.

A Or his role at least.

Q If you know, was he selected to -- and sent to you as the supervisor, or did you or prior agents have some say in who was going to act as the supervisor of the QRF?

A I do not know how he was selected, if that was done by us or if he was sent that way.

Ms. Betz. And did he play a role in the replacement coming back for round two? Do you know?

Mr. [REDACTED] I believe the replacement was related to him somehow.

Ms. Betz. Was related to [REDACTED]?

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes. I'm not positive, but I believe that I remembered that that was the case.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q And why, again, was this person rejected?

A Like I said, I never got the full story, but there were rumors that it was related to drug use that he was released. The other rumor was that he was a CI concern, sharing information with host nation about us.

Q And who made the decision not to hire him?

A I did.

Q Okay.

BY MS. BETZ:

Q Would you have consulted [REDACTED] in the conversation -- or in

the decision to reject him? Was he aware?

A Yes.

Q So he was aware that you had made the decision not to hire --

A Yes.

Q -- this individual.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Were there any similar concerns with [REDACTED]?

A Similar concerns. Sorry, can you be more specific?

Q Either nonperformance because of drug use or counterintelligence concerns, or were there any concerns that were raised to you regarding [REDACTED]?

A Well, I have counterintelligence concerns over every Libyan employee I worked with both in Tripoli and there, but no concerns related to drug use, no.

Q Okay. Did anyone consult with you or confide in you that there were -- beyond your natural suspicions of local Libyans, that there were any concerns with [REDACTED] or any other member of the QRF?

A If I remember correctly, before [REDACTED] who was the QRF member that resigned when I spoke with him during his resignation, I believe he said that [REDACTED] was spreading rumors about him back at the Brigade, basically accusing him of being a spy for the Americans. That was all I remember really about that incident, I think.

Q Okay.

Ms. Betz. So, just to follow on your concerns about counterintelligence, I mean, did you have anything specific that you

were aware, or were these just speculations, just given your previous experiences?

Mr. Evers. This about [REDACTED] or --

BY MS. BETZ:

Q [REDACTED]. I'll --

A I just -- I think we, or at least I assumed that he was sharing information with Brigade about what he was doing on the compound and what we were doing. I can't think of a specific example of why I would have thought that.

Q Did you share these concerns with anybody?

A Yes. I shared them with the desk officer, [REDACTED] as well as the ARSO in Tripoli, maybe the RSO in Tripoli.

Q Would that be --

A [REDACTED]

Q [REDACTED] [REDACTED] So he was aware of these concerns with regard to --

A Yes.

Q -- [REDACTED] and counterintelligence?

A Yes.

Q So other Westerners and their interactions with Feb 17, did they share similar -- for example, the U.K., did they share similar concerns with the Feb 17th with you?

A I don't know if I ever talked to other Western groups about Feb 17.

Q Okay. Apart from [REDACTED], the other members that were on the

compound, how did they perform? Similarly?

A In my opinion, Feb 17 wasn't a particularly professional fighting unit like you would think of an American military unit. They struggled with even basic tasks.

Q Uh-huh.

A But they were attached to the largest brigade in the city. They served as a buffer, I guess, to some of other militias, so there was value in that.

Q Was the Ambassador concerned? Do you know if these concerns about Feb 17 were communicated to the Ambassador?

A I don't know if they were.

Q Was the PO at the time concerned?

A Yes. He shared the same concerns I did about CI issues.

Q And did --

Ms. Jackson. Who was the PO?

Ms. Betz. Who was the PO?

Mr. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Ms. Jackson. And PO is principal officer?

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson. Okay.

BY MS. BETZ:

Q And at the time, was there discussions about the contract with Feb 17 and keeping this relationship?

A Discussion between me and the PO or --

Q Or just general discussions. Do you know if the officer

was having conversations with the Ambassador as well about keeping the contract moving forward? Were you a part of this -- any of these discussions?

A I wasn't a part of any contract discussions. Contract, I guess, is a strange way to think about it.

Q MOA, a memorandum of agreement with --

A Okay. Yes --

Q -- the government?

A -- I was involved in drafting and working on the memorandum of agreement between us and Feb 17?

Q Was one ever executed while you were there?

A There had been one that had expired, and based on QRF's performance, some other issues, myself and one of the ARSOs drafted a new 1, a new MOA, and we presented it to the QRF on compound. I don't know if that got presented to the actual Brigade or the host nation, but we used it as an agreement between us and the QRF on the compound.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q So they agreed to the terms?

A Reluctantly.

Q How did it differ from the initial agreement?

A I don't -- I don't recall what the initial agreement said. The agreement that we wrote up basically detailed what was expected of them as far as performance. We were having trouble getting them to work.

Q Show up at all or --



A They were showing up. They were just -- there was pushback when we'd ask them to go on moves with us, to serve in the follow car, or you know, where their static position should be around the perimeter providing security. So we drafted something up that clearly explained what was expected of them and what their duties were and that this is why they were getting their stipend of \$35 maybe. I don't remember what it was.

Ms. Betz. So you gave them a list of work requirements?

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes, I believe so.

Ms. Betz. So we are going to mark this as exhibit 1.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 1

Was marked for identification.]

Mr. Evers. When you're ready to go, can we read the doc number into the record whenever we're ready to go?

Ms. Betz. So, just for the record, the witness is looking at doc No. C05397229.

Mr. Evers. And the cover page?

Ms. Betz. Cover page, which is C05397228.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. And just for the record, it is unclear to me from the production that although it appears to be that this is the attachment to that email, I think, that all of the documents that follow in the production, document numbers of this exhibit, they are a little off, are the correct attachments to the email, so it would probably just be helpful if you could authenticate that.

Ms. Betz. Okay. So, moving to the second page, is this

something -- is this document -- the email that you sent or that [REDACTED] sent you which reflects the QRF work requirement, is this something that you were aware of? Were you involved in drafting -- drafting this document?

Mr. [REDACTED] I am aware of it. I don't know if I would have drafted any of this. I certainly would have reviewed it.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Were these the work requirements that you just referenced a little while ago regarding the new memorandum of agreement with the QRF in Benghazi?

A As far as I know they are, yes.

Q They look familiar to you?

A They look familiar, yes.

Q The cover page is an email from a [REDACTED] to you with others cc'd. Do you know who [REDACTED] is?

A Yes, he was an ARSO that I supervised.

Q Okay. So he was an ARSO in Benghazi?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q And on the cc line, are these other ARSOs who were also in Benghazi at the time you were there?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay. So this is a document that was being sent around between the core group of the DS agents in Benghazi?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay. So it's possible that Mr. [REDACTED] was the initial

drafter of this document?

A If I remember correctly, the QRF was his portfolio before it was [REDACTED], I believe, so, yes, it would seem likely that he drafted it.

Q Okay.

BY MS. BETZ:

Q And did you oversee the drafting, given your involvement in the contract or the MOA, in the drafting of the MOA?

A Well, I was the acting RSO at the time, so I would have been in charge of all the programs as well as supervising the agents there.

Q Okay.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Then do these requirements, to the best of your recollection, detail what the QRF was required to do once you entered into this new agreement?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay. And, in particular, which of the 10 requirements here did they have any issues with that were brought to your attention?

A I'm not sure I can state specifically which one of these 10. I can tell you what their issues were. I don't know if I could narrow it down to one of these 10, though.

Q Okay. Could you just tell us again then what the issues were?

A Sure. They didn't want to do movements necessarily off the compound with us, particularly short-notice movement. They also did

not want to do essentially static positions at the front gate. I guess that would speak to number two.

Q Did they say why they didn't want to do movements with you, especially on short notice?

A No, they didn't. In my experience with Libyans, they were just a little bit lazy.

Q You didn't feel that it had a counterintelligence purpose or basis in any way?

A No, I did not.

Q Okay. Go ahead.

BY MS. BETZ:

Q And the reason for elaborating these work requirements was that they were having -- this was to give them a set of basically benchmarks or measures so that they knew specifically what their responsibilities were?

A That's correct.

Q And they were having trouble sort of defining what their responsibilities were?

A They're just a little bit sort of like petulant children that you have to give them guidelines and guidance, I guess.

Q And the guidance, was that, in your experience in previous posts, was something that was not necessary? For example, in [REDACTED] or Yemen, did you have to spell out work requirements for the QRF or any security that a host nation might provide?

A Well, as part of a disciplined security force, you always

have work requirements and guard statements, but in my other posts, we didn't have those statements and guard orders as a result of problems with the guards. Whereas, in Benghazi, we drafted these because we were having issues with QRF.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q During the time that you were there in August of 2012, did the QRF continue to make movements with you after this agreement was reached?

A Yes.

Q Okay. So at any time at the -- towards the end of your tenure, had they refused to go on any movements with you?

A I think they complained about movements that we had asked them to go on, but I don't remember them ever outright refusing to go on a movement.

Q And did you have any conversations or discussions with the leadership of Feb 17th over this memorandum of agreement?

A I don't recall ever meeting anybody in leadership in Feb 17.

Q Okay. So you didn't try and get this agreement signed off on by anyone other than the guard force that was on compound?

A Correct, I believe so.

Q Okay.

BY MS. BETZ:

Q Was the leadership aware of these work requirements; do you know?

A I don't know.

Q So, shifting from the QRF, some of the other security forces that the post might have relied on might have been the SSC. Were you aware of the SSC?

A I knew it was an organization that existed. I don't recall ever seeing them.

Q And for the record, what is the SSC?

A It's the Supreme Security Council.

Q So they were not an integral part of your security plan?

A In the time that I was there, they were not a part of the security plan. My understanding was prior to my arrival, there were one or two SSC officers that were detailed to the mission, but they had not been paid, so they stopped showing up.

Q So they weren't reliable?

A No.

Q Did post have any interactions with the Libyan Shield?

A Not that I'm aware of.

Q And what about the local police? Were they of assistance in any -- at the post? Were they contemplated as part of the security plan?

A They were contemplated. I drafted a DIP note requesting daily 24/7-hour police support at the mission. We got that briefly, I believe, for a couple of hours one day. I instructed the guards that if they see a police car going past the mission, to just flag it down and I'll come out there and talk to them and try and cajole them and

sweet talk them into staying if they could, but that was sporadic at best.

Q Had they been reliable, what security would they have provided to the post?

A The only issue or incident I'm aware of where we requested local police support, I don't know if it was police or SSC, was an incident that happened a couple of days before my arrival, which was a possible hostile surveillance incident at the south gate. I can't remember if it was SSC or police investigated these people that were possibly conducting surveillance and did not have the authority to arrest them or -- and didn't seem to have any either desire or capabilities to further investigate.

Q So, not having authority or desire, that was pretty much standard among the police or the police force in your experience?

A Yes.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q How did you want to compensate for that? You know, you go into a country and you want host-nation support, you want local law enforcement to be, you know, functional, and you don't have that, how -- in your opinion, how would you want to compensate for that?

A I have unlimited resources?

Q Or reasonable resources.

A Reasonable. Okay. Well, with the resources that we had, the best way that we could compensate for it was, one, increase training to our own QRF. We try and do some physical security upgrades to

increase the physical security of where we were at, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]. In a world where perhaps we had more resources, I would always prefer to depend on American security, whether that be DS or the military or contractors.

Q Was there -- given the size of the compound and the number of Americans on the compound, was there a minimum number of agents that you thought were needed?

A I guess that would depend on what other Americans were there, like who we were charged with protecting. I don't know if I can give an answer about how many agents I would feel comfortable with as a minimum.

Q How many did you have? How many Americans did you have to protect on the compound while you were there in August?

A Two.

Q The principal officer and the IMO?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And did you feel like you had the minimum number of agents you needed for the protection of those two persons, the other agents that were there, given the size of the compound?

A Based on the threat reporting at the time [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED], I felt it was appropriate. The only time I wished we had more people was when we were doing off -- more Americans -- is when we were doing off-compound moves. So we would have, for instance, the DS agent is always going to [REDACTED] We probably prefer [REDACTED]



[REDACTED].

Q And you didn't have that when you were there?

A No, ma'am.

Q Now, you said that, given the resources [REDACTED] you felt like you had enough to secure the compound. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A I don't know if I would say that I felt we had enough to secure the compound. I don't know if I ever felt that we could secure the compound, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

BY MS. BETZ:

Q What were your initial impressions of the compound?

A It did not appear -- it was not like the other compounds that I had seen. It appeared to be more of a low-profile building, lower footprint than your typical embassy or consulate. It didn't have the signs up saying "U.S. Embassy" or "Consulate." It didn't have some of the physical security features you would typically see at an embassy or consulate, such as Delta barriers or chicane. There wasn't the host-nation police presence, the military presence that you would find at your typical embassy or consulate.

So my impression was, it was a lower -- or a lower profile mission, and it would be difficult to defend it in the event of a coordinated attack based on our resources there.

Q Was the lower profile, as you describe it, is that something that was communicated to you before you arrived, or these are your first impressions of the compound?

A These would have been my first impressions of the compound when I saw it.

Q Were you aware of the physical security deficiencies when you arrived? Were there some of the observations that you made upon your arrival?

A I don't know if I was aware of any of the deficiencies. Like I said, one of the other agents that was in [REDACTED] had been there, and he might have mentioned to me some deficiencies that were deficiencies in his opinion. Most of the deficiencies, in my opinion, that I saw, were generated through my own experience.

Q What were some of them?

A There wasn't a lot of setback between the main road on the south and our walls. Our walls were not constructed in the same manner that you would see at other embassies. The gates were -- did not appear to be reinforced and did not seem that you could easily get in and out of them with some of them. There wasn't a Delta barrier. There was vegetation growing over the walls.

So we didn't have any sort of host-nation security support on the perimeter. There was only one true wall around the compound, so you don't -- you didn't have a complete interior wall or at least C-wire on the inside to prevent people from coming over the -- where the fence is and advancing, so to speak.

Ms. Jackson. Is that concertina wire?

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes.

Ms. Jackson. C-wire. Razor wire, as I would call it.

Mr. [REDACTED] Razor wire.

Ms. Betz. Did you communicate these concerns to Tripoli, to D.C.?

Mr. [REDACTED] I told the desk officer in D.C. as well as the RSO in Tripoli that I didn't think we could defend it, the compound, and then the RSO asked for a wish list of security upgrades, which I provided to him at some point during my time there.

Ms. Betz. Okay. I'm going to enter in exhibit No. 2.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 2

Was marked for identification.]

Ms. Jackson. Why don't we go off the record because this is rather lengthy, and it might take awhile to go through it. Take your time.

Mr. [REDACTED] Okay.

Ms. Jackson. We can take a break.

[Recess.]

RPTR BAKER

EDTR HOFSTAD

[11:23 a.m.]

Ms. Jackson. We'll go back on the record. It is about 11:23.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 3

Was marked for identification.]

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 4

Was marked for identification.]

MS. JACKSON:

Q [REDACTED], you have before you now three exhibits marked 2, 3, and 4.

And, for the record, exhibit 2 is State Department document No. C05474918. And it is, at the top, an email from [REDACTED] dated August 29, 2012, sent to [REDACTED], and the subject is "Fwd: RSO Turnover Docs."

Exhibit 3 is a series of pages from State Department document No. C05578292, and it is a series of pages, at the top dated 8/22/2012, and has a heading of "Security Requests for U.S. Mission Benghazi." It's followed by some photographs and then a page marked "Equipment Requests" and then some -- appears to be spreadsheets of names of agents and perhaps a diplomatic note in Arabic. And then it appears that all the pages have been repeated again.

And then exhibit 4 is State Department document No. C05391853, a document entitled "Regional Security Officer Turnover" notes, bearing a date of August 28, 2012.

Agent [REDACTED], are you familiar with these documents?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

The email, I read the heading at the top, but it has embedded in it an email that appears to be from you to [REDACTED] on August 27, where you reference that you are attaching four documents to assist in the turnover.

Are exhibits 2 and 3 comprising what you recall to the best of your ability the documents that you attached or a version thereof? I'm sorry, 3 and 4.

A Yes, they are.

Q Okay.

And when you say in your email to [REDACTED] on exhibit 2, "You will find four documents to hopefully assist in the turnover," why were you sending them to [REDACTED]?

A He was the acting RSO that was replacing me.

Q Okay. So he was coming in in early September.

A Yes.

Q Okay.

And so did you prepare any of these documents or assist in preparing any of these documents?

A Yes. All of them.

Q All of them? Okay. And so these would have been the information that you were conveying to [REDACTED] as he was going to resume the position of the acting RSO.

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay.

Ms. Jackson. I think that's all the questions I have on these documents. Our time is now up at the end of 1 hour, so we're going to turn the questioning over to the minority. Why don't we just go off the record as we change seats.

[Recess.]

Mr. Kenny. We'll go back on the record. I note the time is 11:28.

Agent [REDACTED], I just want to thank you again for appearing today. On behalf of the Select Committee's minority staff, I just want to thank you again for both your service and for appearing here today.

I'll just take a moment to reintroduce myself. My name is Peter Kenny. I'm a counsel with the Select Committee minority staff. I'm joined here by some of my colleagues. To my right is our staff director, Suzanne Sachsman Grooms.

And I just would like to say at the outset here, we understand that appearing before Congress can seem to be a daunting experience, so we want to assure you that we'll work with you to make this experience as straightforward and as simple as possible for you.

We also do understand and want to acknowledge again at the outset that you and your colleagues lost friends and fellow patriots on the night of the attacks. So, again, just thank you for your service, and thank you for being here.

EXAMINATION

BY MR. KENNY:

Q I'd like to begin briefly returning to the beginning of the discussion at the last hour. We were talking about your background, your experiences.

You had indicated that you were contacted by the desk officer for the position in Benghazi. And I would just like to ask, you were offered a role in Benghazi, and it sounds like you accepted that role. Can you just explain for us why you accepted the TDY in Benghazi? What did you hope to gain through your experience?

A I don't know if there was anything I necessarily hoped to gain professionally from the experience, but I do enjoy seeing new cultures, new environments. Benghazi or Libya in itself at that time was an interesting place based on the revolution. So I can't really specifically think of a reason why I really wanted to go there, but I did, and I went.

Q Okay.

You had also mentioned that you had served in a TDY capacity in Yemen. I'd just like to ask you, where specifically were you posted in Yemen?

A Sana'a, the capital.

Q And how long was that TDY for, roughly?

A Two and a half months, I think.

Q Okay. And did that TDY precede your time in Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Do you recall about what the sequence or the timing

was between the two?

A I think there would have been about a year in between, but I can't remember the exact dates.

Q Okay. That's fine.

And you had mentioned that the desk officer had contacted you specifically because of your TDY posting to Yemen. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q And what was it about that experience, to your understanding, that would have been helpful for the Benghazi posting?

A Well, Yemen was going through the Arab Spring. They just were in the process of going through a revolution. It was a dangerous environment with a terrorist presence and threat there and also Arab-speaking, so I would assume that there were some similarities in Yemen to what had happened or was happening in Libya, Benghazi.

Q Okay. And based on the description of your assignment in Benghazi, also based on your previous experience, did you feel up to the task at that time?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

And just, again, a foundational question. I don't recall if this was asked of you in the last hour. But what specifically was your role and your responsibilities in Benghazi?

A In Benghazi, I was the acting RSO, so you're in charge of the security for the mission and the people in Benghazi. You would advise the political officer on security issues and then also report



intelligence and security issues to Tripoli. Either they would report it to Washington or, occasionally, I would report things to the desk officer in Washington.

Q Okay. Thank you. That's very helpful.

I'd like to shift now and pick a specific point in time. You mentioned as part of your role as acting RSO that you would report on the security environment. Are you familiar with the term "emergency action committees"?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what is an emergency action committee?

A The Emergency Action Committee consists of members of the embassy community. When there is an emergency or security incident, the committee will convene and discuss the incident as well as steps forward either to mitigate the incident or resolve the incident.

Q Okay. And do you recall participating in any Emergency Action Committee meetings, or EACs -- we'll use the abbreviation "EAC" -- meetings while you were in Benghazi?

A Yes. I participated in one.

Q Okay. And when did that particular EAC occur, to the best of your recollection?

A Mid-August, I believe, to -- somewhere between mid-August and the end of August.

Q Okay. And do you recall who participated in that particular EAC?

A It was myself, the principal officer, [REDACTED]

██████████  
Q Okay. Did any of the other ARSOs participate in the EAC, do you recall?

A I don't believe so, but I don't know for certain.

Q Okay. So you recall an EAC in the mid-August timeframe. Does the date August 15, does that sound about right to you?

A I honestly can't remember. It could be. I don't remember the specific date, though.

Q Okay. In the run-up to that EAC, was there a specific incident or a catalyst that caused post to hold that EAC?

A I had reviewed the tripwires we had at post and made some comments on tripwires I believe we had breached, and I forwarded that document to the RSO in Tripoli, who shared it with the front office. I believe the Ambassador then requested that we hold an EAC as a result of that document.

Q Okay. So you mentioned the front office. By "front office," do you mean the front office in Tripoli?

A Front office in Tripoli.

Q Okay. Who would that include?

A It would be the DCM and the Ambassador. I don't know if it was shared with both of them. I just remember it was the front office.

Q Okay. Thank you. That's helpful.

I think at this point it makes sense to go ahead and enter into the record exhibit 5.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 5  
Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q And for the record, I'll just note that this is an email from you to [REDACTED], dated August 14, 2012. Subject reads, quote, "Tripwires," close quote. The document ID is doc No. C05578623. I'll give you a moment to review this document.

Do you recall this particular document?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

And I'll just also note for the record, I had read from the header of the email. The email indicates that there is an attachment, quote, "Benghazi assessment of tripwires broached as of August 13.docx," close quote.

This was produced as part of the same document, so it appears that the document here is the attachment to this email. Do you agree? Does this look familiar to you?

A Yeah, it still looks familiar.

Q Okay.

So, within the attachment, which is where I'll focus, there appears to be a list of tripwires. And under certain tripwires, there appear to be comments.

And a moment ago you just referred to both the tripwires and the comments. I just would like to ask, do you see that in this document? I know the copy is not the best, so I just want to make sure that you're

able to discern the comments from the tripwires.

A Yes, I think I can do that.

Q Okay. And we can help you, as well, here as we work through this, and I can direct you to some specific portions.

A Your version looks easier to read than mine.

Q When we walk you through it, I'll point out specific portions for you.

But, first, I'd like take a step back here, because you were describing a sequence of events that led up to the mid-August Emergency Action Committee meeting. You had indicated that you had prepared a set of tripwires and an assessment that was then forwarded on and that that somehow led to Embassy Tripoli requesting that post hold an EAC.

Is this the set of tripwires and the assessments that you prepared that led to those events, or led to the EAC?

A They are. But I would clarify that I did not prepare all these tripwires. We already had this tripwire document. At some point, I modified the tripwires, in consultation with the PO, to better reflect the environment at the time. But I definitely wrote the comments that are highlighted.

Q Okay. So that's helpful. So there was a previous set of tripwires that was in place, to the best of your recollection?

A Yes.

Q There were. And you mentioned that you had modified -- we'll just focus on the tripwires for now before moving to the comments -- that you had modified some of those tripwires. Do

you just generally recall what categories or maybe specific tripwires that you modified and perhaps why you made those modifications?

A Some of them were not relevant to the current either political or security environment. For instance, they might have made reference to, like, a congress or something that was not in formation anymore. They weren't substantive revisions. They were revisions just to reflect the current political and security situation.

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q So we'll note here at the top that this appears to be the assessment of tripwires broached as of August 13, 2012. When you refer to modifying the tripwires, were some of the modifications that you just recalled for us, did those appear to be reflected in this document?

A I can't remember if these modifications were in this document or a document that we modified after the EAC.

Q Okay. That's fair.

In making the modifications, whether before or after -- you mentioned you can't recall -- is there some sort of best practices that guides you to developing them? Do you just use your judgment as an RSO, in this instance, to do that?

A Well, I consulted with the principal officer, because typically your creation of tripwires is something that is done more on the political side of the house as opposed to the security side of the house. But in reviewing and modifying these tripwires, I was drawing upon experience with tripwires I had looked at in Yemen, when

we held EACs there, as well as in [REDACTED].

Q Okay.

And I guess, at this point, it would be helpful just to take a step back again and just ask what tripwires are, what their role is.

A Okay. Tripwires are lines that are helpful in guiding decisionmakers to determine if it's appropriate to change, one, the security posture in country or, two, the footprint of the U.S. Mission in that country.

Q Okay.

You mentioned a moment ago that you couldn't recall if this particular set of tripwires reflected modifications that you made. Looking at these tripwires now, do you think that these tripwires were tailored to reflect the current conditions in Benghazi at that time?

Let me ask it this way. Do you feel that this set of tripwires was appropriate for Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Why do you feel that way?

A Well, substantively, these are similar tripwires that you would see at other places in the world that we use. They're referencing actions that you may want to take if you have restricted freedom of movement, if there are disruptions to infrastructure, if there are weaknesses or deficiencies in the police or security services in the country. I don't see anything on here that seems out of place.

Q Did you feel that this specific set of tripwires captured the range of relevant security concerns that one could face in Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

The tripwires -- we'll refer to the document now -- appear to be organized in three categories. The first one is, quote, "events triggering a heightened security posture," close quote; the second one, quote, "events triggering consideration of authorized departure," close quote; and, third, quote, "events triggering consideration of ordered departure," close quote.

Can you just explain the meaning of each of those categories?

A "Heightened security posture" would mean that you would not -- American personnel under chief of mission authority would not be leaving the country, but you may increase your security posture. For instance, perhaps you restrict movements or creates guard presence or police presence.

"Authorized departure" would be voluntary departure for certain noncritical members of the embassy community.

And "ordered departure" would be mandatory departure for noncritical members of the embassy community.

Q Okay. And could you just elaborate further on what is meant by "critical" versus "noncritical"?

A Critical members of the embassy community would be your security personnel, your front office, your political section. Typically, your consular section is critical. Your communications is critical, the management officer. I'm sure I'm forgetting others, but that's the ones I can remember.

Q Sure. Is it fair to say that the three of these categories here, that they fall along a continuum from less serious to more serious?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

The latter two categories, both refer and use the term "consideration." So they say, events triggering consideration of either authorized or ordered departure. Can you explain for us what your understanding of that term is in this context?

A Well, the EAC will convene, and they will consider the tripwires and which tripwires may have been breached. And then that is presented to the front office, who, in coordination with headquarters, determines whether or not to go on authorized departure or ordered departure, for example.

So it's a consideration that post isn't making the specific decision whether or not to go on one of these departures but is providing that information to decisionmakers in headquarters, in consultation with the Ambassador, about the appropriate step to take.

Q And would that decisionmaking process, would that include input from the RSO?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

We'll refer now to some of the specific comments in here. So these are underneath -- the best of our understanding is there are going to be dashes on the left side, and then, where there's text below, it



appears to be a comment. And there is some highlighting, but, again, the copying and the way the documents were produced, it's a little bit of a challenge to discern.

I'd just like to refer you -- we'll go under, first, the "authorized departure" section, the very last tick. There's a quote there that reads, quote, "Security forces appear unable/unwilling to proactively address U.S. Mission Benghazi security needs. SSC members have not been paid and have ceased showing up at the U.S. Mission. RSO requests for a police presence outside the mission have gone unanswered thus far. Host-nation security does not appear to have the ability/desire to prevent/mitigate threats against the mission," close quote.

And I'll just note that that comment appears to be repeated in various places throughout this document. I'd just like to ask you, these repeated references to the willingness and the capacity of the host-nation security forces to assist the mission, is that a topic that you closely tracked?

A Yes. I mean, I wrote this statement that you just read.

Q Okay. So you were generally aware of --

A Yes.

Q Okay. And can you just explain for us what steps you were taking or others at the mission were taking to address those concerns?

A I had tried to get a contact within the Libyan security apparatus that I could liaise with, which is typical for RSOs wherever they're posted around the world, and I had been unable to do that. I

had requested police presence through a diplomatic note, but that had gone unanswered. I was resorting to, you know, flagging police cars down and talking to them to try and get them to stay, and that didn't seem to work.

There wasn't any sort of information-sharing, which is typical, or at least in my experience has been typical, at other embassies or consulates. Where, you know, we provide law enforcement security information to the host nation, they would then, in return, supply us information.

And then just the incident -- the fact that the prior incident we had with the gelatina or alleged gelatina bomb at the mission had not been resolved, and it did not appear that local law enforcement was actively pursuing investigation of that, as well as their inability to pursue the possible hostile surveillance incident that was outside our south gate.

All those things I just mentioned led me to believe that they didn't have the ability/desire to prevent/mitigate threats.

Q Okay.

And you mentioned in the last hour, I think, some of the steps that you were taking to mitigate the lack of the capacity or the willingness. Could you explain further what steps the mission took to address specifically those concerns?

A Well, because we couldn't count on the host-nation security to provide us any sort of security support, we were forced to look inward, to depend on ourselves. So we increased our training with the

QRF as well as the guard force.

We took some creative steps as far as physical security went -- for instance, erecting a, sort of, makeshift chicane outside the north gates or at least the main gate.

[REDACTED]

Q Thank you. That's helpful.

I'll refer you to, real quickly as we move through this document, the middle of the first page of the assessments. There is a tripwire that reads, quote, "armed attacks on political candidates or election commission offices," close quote. Then underneath it says, quote --

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. We're in the "events triggering a heightened security posture" section.

Mr. [REDACTED] Oh, okay. I see it.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q And it reads, quote, "There have been a spate of attacks/assassinations/kidnappings on former Qadhafi loyalists in the past month," close quote.

Regarding attacks, assassinations, kidnappings, that's another theme that seems to run throughout this document. What can you tell us about those events?

A I would say that, according to my memory, it was almost a daily occurrence, or at least a couple times a week, where there was an attack, assassination attempt, or kidnapping attempt on various Libyans within the Benghazi area.

Q Was your sense that that particular string of events was

targeting mostly Libyan nationals at that time?

A No. There were kidnappings of non-Libyans, I believe the Red Crescent. There were some Iranians that were kidnapped. And I believe there was an American, maybe a dual-national, lady that was kidnapped at one point.

Also, I can't state for certain that this happened while I was there or just prior to when I got there. I would have to look at a list of the incidents.

Q Okay.

So you mentioned a kidnapping of some Iranian ICRC members as well as possibly a dual-national. Were any of those kidnappings, that violence -- to the best of your recollection, were any of those events being directed towards Westerners because of their Western affiliation?

A Not that I know of, no.

Q Okay.

Just flipping back to the cover email here, you indicate in the body of this email, quote, "My comments are in yellow in the attached document. Perhaps we can use some of these as talking points in the EAC," close quote.

And, again, you are writing to the principal officer here --

A Uh-huh.

Q -- when you said that.

The "EAC," again, refers to the Emergency Action Committee meeting. And you mentioned that you personally attended that EAC

meeting. Was this document used in the EAC?

A I can't say for certain. I most likely would have brought this with me, but I can't say for certain that we used it.

Q Okay.

A I can say we certainly touched upon themes within this document.

Q Okay. Do you recall specifically discussing whether any tripwires had been broached or crossed in the EAC?

A I don't remember, no.

Q Okay. Do you recall if the EAC determined that any specific tripwires had in fact been broached or crossed?

A I don't remember.

Q Okay.

What was your role in the EAC as the acting RSO?

A My role was to share some of the security concerns I had with the embassy community, as small as it was, and see if there were others that were sharing those concerns or if they had ways that we could perhaps mitigate some of those concerns.

Q And you mentioned a few moments ago some of the participants in the EAC. Is it fair to say that the EAC brings together the relevant security experts and decisionmakers at posts to make decisions?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

To the best of your recollection, did the EAC discuss the security situation in Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q Okay. How carefully or closely did the EAC consider the security situation in Benghazi?

A Very carefully.

Q All right. Do you recall sharing specific concerns in the EAC?

A Yes.

Q What were those?

A I recall being concerned that I didn't have a host-nation security contact that I could liaise with. I was concerned that we would not be able to defend our compound, the Embassy compound, for a variety of reasons.

I was concerned that it was becoming more dangerous in Benghazi, and, although we weren't specifically being targeted, I was worried we might be in the wrong place at the wrong time, so to speak, and be a victim of violence.

Q Okay. When you say "wrong place at the wrong time," are you referring to off-compound moves?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

Can you just share with us generally -- you had raised these concerns. Was there a discussion about the concerns?

A Yes, there was discussion about the concerns.

Q How would you characterize that?

A A robust discussion about the concerns.

Q And they sound like they were serious concerns that you raised.

A Yes, they were serious.

One of the other members of the EAC said they didn't -- if I remember correctly, they said they didn't think it was likely that I would be able to find a host-nation security liaison.

Q And why was that?

A Either there wasn't one or they wouldn't have had the ability to or the power to do anything in that fractured environment even if I had wanted them to.

Q And when you say "host-nation liaison," are you referring to a specific subcomponent of the government -- the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs? You referred to some other elements earlier, such as the Supreme Security Committee.

A Uh-huh.

Q Did you have contacts with any of those entities?

A I didn't have any contacts with any of them.

Q Okay.

So there was a discussion, a robust discussion, to use your term, within the EAC. Did the EAC discuss what potential course of action the mission should take with respect to its security?

A There was a discussion that, if we thought the security situation trended negatively enough, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Okay. And I think we'll flesh that out in a few moments, but were there any specific recommendations that came out of the EAC, do you recall?

A I believe that we determined that we would send some of our physical security recommendations to Embassy Tripoli.

Also, could I clarify the previous question?

Q Uh-huh.

A I didn't have a direct contact with host-nation security, but through February 17, they were our liaison to the February 17 militia leader, brigade commander.

Q That's a helpful clarification. I think you also mentioned that there were some locally employed staff on the compound, as well. Did they also help facilitate your contacts with --

A I mean, they tried, but they didn't get an answer.

Q Okay. Is that just because you didn't hear anything specific in response from the staff, or they told you specifically they couldn't find anybody to contact, for instance?

A No. They submitted our DIP notes; they just didn't get a response.

Q Okay. You did mention, though, at one point, that there was a DIP note that was submitted and there was some response to that, though. Is that correct?

A I don't know if I could say that that police presence that showed up was a response to that DIP note.

Q Okay. But did the timing of it suggest that it was somehow



a response? Did you submit a response one day and the next day a police unit showed up?

A I don't remember, but I don't think it was the next day that it would've showed up, no. And when it did show up, it certainly didn't show up in the capacity that we asked for, which was 24/7 support.

Q I'd like to go ahead and mark exhibit 6.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 6

Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q And I'll give you a moment to review that. As I do, I'm just going to read a brief description of this into the record.

This is an email from you to [REDACTED], dated August 15, 2012. The subject is, quote, "Re: 8/15 update," close quote. Document No. is C05578627.

There is an email embedded within exhibit 6 at the bottom. It's from [REDACTED] to Gregory Hicks and [REDACTED]. It appears to be forwarded from Gregory Hicks to [REDACTED] and then on to you.

Do you recall this email exchange?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And in case we haven't already touched on it, who is [REDACTED]?

A He is the RSO -- was the RSO in Tripoli.

Q Okay. And [REDACTED] is the principal officer in Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q And who is [REDACTED]?

A I can't remember her specific title, but she was a high-ranking person, I believe, in D.C. that [REDACTED] asked me to occasionally send emails to.

Q So, in this underlying email, I'll just quote from a portion of it. And I'm on the second page. Here the principal officer appears to summarize the Emergency Action Committee meeting that appears to have been held in the mid-August time period. He states the following: Quote, "We convened the EAC today, including all USG elements present, to review the situation and security posture. Will write up the minutes on the high side, but, briefly, we: agreed to review/revise the existing tripwires which date to before the elections to reflect present concerns; concluded the situation merits concern and prudent risk management, particularly in light of recent incidents involving internationals as well as locals advocating priority issues such as human rights and women's participation; recommended continued heightened security measures now in place," close quote.

And then, dropping down to the next bullet, it says, quote, "recommended expansion of some precautionary measures," close quote. The next bullet, quote, "agreed to request a number of specific items/actions which we will spell out in the cable; and agreed to meet at least weekly in the future in light of the pace of developments on the ground," close quote.

The Tripoli RSO writes to you, quote -- this is farther up in the chain -- "Did you see this email? Do you concur? I don't see any RSO

comments," close quote.

You then responded, quote, "I'm actually writing the EAC cable today, although the computer problems here are frustrating our efforts of completing it in a timely manner. I do agree with the comments [REDACTED] highlighted in this email," close quote.

I would just like to first ask, recognizing the EAC documents off the cable is classified, as for this unclassified email, the principal officer's descriptions that I read to you of the recommendations that came out of that EAC, is that accurate?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And so his descriptions of decisions that were made and some of the materials discussed in the EAC is accurate?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

We were talking a moment ago about some of the recommendations that came out of the EAC. You had mentioned -- sending physical security requests to Tripoli was one of the examples you gave.

We would like to ask you, did the EAC recommend that posts should be closed or evacuated?

A Not that I recall, no.

Q Okay. And do you recall why that recommendation wasn't made?

A I remember there was discussion that we couldn't draw down any more than we were, or else the post would no longer be operationally effective.

Q Okay. And can you just elaborate a little further on that remark?

A Uh-huh. Well, if you withdrew the political officer, there would be no reason for us to be there, because they're the ones doing the reporting and the actual diplomacy.

If you started to take away some of the DS personnel, which are actually, you know, considered critical members of the mission, then you would have -- I would always have some security concerns moving about the city.

If you withdraw the IMO, or the management officer, you lose some of your administrative abilities. Or you don't lose them; they become much harder.

Q Okay.

A So I would say we were operating at a barebones --

Q Uh-huh. So that there couldn't be a further drawdown, for instance.

A Not in my opinion.

Q Okay.

And was the recommendation, was this recommendation, the other recommendations of the EAC, was that unanimous among the participants there?

A Yes. I don't remember anyone having any disagreements with these recommendations.

Q Okay.

The summary prepared by the principal officer discussed -- and

I read through, there were six bullets there, including, you know, the situation merits concern and prudent risk management. There's a recommendation for continued heightened security as well as an expansion of some of the precautionary measures.

Can you just walk us through, to the best of your recollection, what each of those mean?

A Each one of these bullets?

Q So we could focus -- because I believe we already talked -- the first refers to tripwires.

A Uh-huh.

Q So maybe with the second, third, and fourth.

A Well, the second one is talking about risk management and monitoring the situation, which was not something that we needed to change. We were already doing that pretty aggressively.

The third one recommended continued heightened security measures. That's almost sort of a boilerplate statement that you would recommend after any sort of EAC, which doesn't mean that we weren't doing it. We were.

Expanding some of the precautionary measures, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]. Reduction of classified materials was already minimum. [REDACTED] And we did map areas of particular concern within Benghazi.

The next bullet, agreeing to request specific items, actions --

Q And you --

A Go ahead.

Q No, please continue.

A Oh. We did send requests for security upgrades or security recommendations by separate cover, I believe, from that cable. So we did that one.

And agreed to meet at least weekly, depending on what was happening on the ground. We had a close relationship with , and we were, at the very least, meeting weekly with them.

Q Okay. Thank you. That's very helpful.

At some point down the road, we may return to revisit the discussion [REDACTED] in Benghazi.

A Uh-huh.

Q You mentioned just a moment ago that one of the specific activities was mapping areas of concern. Can you just explain why you did that? Was that, for instance, to assist your off-compound moves to avoid certain problematic areas?

A Yes. In general, there were certain areas that we were concerned with, based on who was occupying those areas, and so we obviously did not want to be driving near or around those areas. I can speak more in detail in a classified setting.

Q Okay.

On that point, I'll just note, back to the top of exhibit 6, you do state, quote, "I would caution that this is just a small part of what was discussed at the EAC today and arguably not the most meaty parts. I think you'll find the EAC draft cable I'm writing will present a more robust view of the security situation here as well as the next

steps," close quote.

I assume when you refer to the more "meaty parts," did you mean you were going to provide more detail regarding some of the security specifics in a classified EAC cable?

A I think what I meant is that political officers will look at an EAC from a political standpoint, and security officers would look at it from a security standpoint. So what I would consider meaty would be more of the security issues, which is what was included in my side cable -- my thoughts on the security situation, our abilities to mitigate those threats, and then what those specific threats were.

Q Okay. And when you say "political," do you mean some of the undercurrents or underlying causes of those security incidents?

A Yes. Well, I mean, a political officer, an economic officer is looking at a situation from one particular lens. It's not the right or wrong lens, it's just that's the lens they look at it through, where a security officer is looking at it through a security lens. And they may just -- you know, I don't want to say disagree, but, I guess, disagree over what the most important part of the message was, I guess.

Q Okay. And do you recall whether a cable was ultimately written --

A Yes --

Q -- on this?

A -- I wrote it.

Q Okay, you wrote that. Did you clear that with the principal

officer?

A Yes.

Q Okay. So when you mentioned that there may be different perspectives at the table, did that cable reflect a consensus view of both the security concerns, security issues, as well as the recommendations of the EAC?

A Yes, as well as it reflected the, sort of, political situation on the ground.



RPTR HUMISTON

EDTR SECKMAN

[12:16 p.m.]

Mr. Kenny. Okay. And just to be clear, did it reflect your views?

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes.

Mr. Kenny. On the ground. You mentioned you drafted the cable.

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes, it did reflect my views.

Mr. Kenny. Moving on, I'd like to mark exhibit 7.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 7

Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q This is an email from you to [REDACTED]. It's dated August 16, 2012. The subject is, quote, "RE: EAC cable," close quote. The document No. is C05397233. It is marked unclassified. Give you a moment to review it.

So I would just like to start from the bottom of the email and read up. In an earlier email in this thread, you write to [REDACTED] and stated the following, quote, "Boss, I just forwarded the draft EAC cable to you on the high side," close quote.

The Tripoli RSO then responded to you, quote, "Thank you for doing that. It was well done. The DCM responded with some questions," close quote.

And, finally, you replied, quote, "We have revised some of the wording in response to their questions, and I believe Tripoli will make

the revisions to push it out. And there's a parenthetical, if this is not the case, please let me know so I can make the revisions," close quote.

Do you recall this email exchange?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And just can you help us understand, you mentioned here that you submitted a draft of the EAC cable to Tripoli RSO; was that requested of you? Was that standard practice? Why did you send it to the Tripoli RSO?

A Well, we were drafting the cable, but for the cable to go out, it needs the approval of various other people. The RSO is one of them, but ultimately the front office has to sign off on it before it can go out. As to why they were sending it out, we didn't have the SMART cable system in Benghazi that would enable us to send it out, so we had to send a draft cable to them.

Q Okay. And, again, when you refer to "front office," you're referring to certain individuals at Embassy Tripoli?

A Yes. The front office is the DCM and the Ambassador.

Q Okay. The RSO's response to you, the RSO in Tripoli's response to you indicated that the DCM had responded with some questions. When he refers to the DCM, who is that referring to? Who was the DCM at the time?

A I believe it was Gregory Hicks.

Q Okay. And, again, here it indicates that the DCM responded with some questions. Do you recall what questions DCM Greg Hicks posed

for you?

A I remember one of the questions. I don't remember if it was the DCM or Ambassador who posed the question, but I do remember one of the questions.

Q Okay. And what was that question that you remember?

A We should probably speak about that in classified --

Q Okay.

A -- I think.

Q Maybe this will help facilitate our discussion.

So, before we move on, just a minor bit of housekeeping, a follow-up question in our discussion of what occurred or transpired in the EAC. You had mentioned that there was not a specific recommendation for post, for the special mission to close or be evacuated. Is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q Did anyone make that recommendation at the EAC?

A No. I don't believe so.

Q Okay. So when the EAC did not make a recommendation that post should be evacuated or closed, did you agree with the omission of that recommendation?

A The -- in my experience, the RSO typically doesn't make the decision whether or not we stay or leave a post or why we're even at that post in the first place. We do what D.C. and the Ambassador tell us to do and, you know, make the best of whatever situation we have.

Q But certainly if the security situation had degraded to such

a point, would the RSO have been empowered to make such a recommendation?

A Certainly.

Q Okay. And, in this instance, did the RSO or anyone in the RSO shop make that recommendation?

A I don't know if the RSO made that recommendation. On previous conversations with me, he said that he was not happy that we were in Benghazi. Whether or not he shared that with the front office, I couldn't say.

Q Okay.

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

Q But you didn't?

A I did not, no.

Q And did you feel that the security situation in Benghazi had gotten so bad that you needed to leave?

A No. I wouldn't put it that way.

Q Did you feel that the recommended next steps that came out of that EAC, did you agree with those?

A Yes, I agreed with them.

Q And you thought that those would mitigate the danger?

A They would certainly make our situation safer, in my opinion. I don't know if they ultimately would have changed anything, any of the outcomes that happened there.

Mr. Kenny. I see we have a few moments left. I'd like to move forward and introduce, this will be exhibit 8, into the record.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 8

Was marked for identification.]

Mr. Kenny. We can go off the record for a moment.

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q This is exhibit 8. It is marked unclassified at the top and appears to have gone through some sort of review process. It does have redactions. It is marked unclassified/noforn, so we will note that for the record.

The top of the email is from Christopher Stevens, it's to you, Gregory Hicks and [REDACTED]. Doc No. Is C05391814. We'd just like to read a brief portion of this and ask for your response. This appears to be an outgrowth of the thread we just read in exhibit 7. You can see the email below. Well, I apologize. Actually, this is a new thread. This is similar to other documents.

Here Gregory Hicks writes to you at the bottom, "Thanks, [REDACTED]. I had a couple of questions and a couple of suggested edits. Looping in the Ambassador," close quote.

And then the Ambassador responds and says, "Good cable."

And a little bit below that, "concur in Greg's question re the term 'terrorist organizations,'" close quote.

A little bit above that, there's an email from you to Chris Stevens, Greg Hicks, [REDACTED]. And it reads, In lieu of terrorist organizations, what if we try to capture the spectrum of actors here with criminal elements, Islamist militias, and violent extremists.

And then it is marked [REDACTED] there.

And then, finally, there's a response from Christopher Stevens that reads, quote, "perfect," close quote.

We were briefly talking about how you would send a draft cable to Tripoli for their review, their approval. This appears to be some specific feedback that you received from Tripoli from the Deputy Chief of Mission. And I would just -- does this help refresh your recollection of what the specific edit that the Deputy Chief of Mission made to your draft EAC?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what was that edit?

A The major point, as I understood it, was I had referred to a certain group as a terrorist organization, and the front office didn't necessarily agree that that was the correct classification for that organization.

Q And, again, when you say, "front office," where are you referring to?

A The DCM and the Ambassador.

Q Okay. And so there was a disagreement over whether "terrorist organizations" was the appropriate term to use in the EAC cable. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. All right. Do you know the basis for that concern?

A Can -- could you ask that a different way, maybe?

Q Yeah. And perhaps we can reserve some of this for later

this afternoon, but I guess we can just fast forward and ask, do you recall if that specific edit was made to the EAC cable?

A Yes, it was.

Q Okay.

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

Q Was the concern with using the term "terrorist organization" that that specific group was not a designated terrorist organization?

A Yes.

Q And who are terrorist organizations designated by?

A The Department of State.

Q Okay. So there's some specific list of groups, and that group was not on it?

A That was my understanding, yes.

Q Okay. And so, in lieu of using the term "terrorist organization," they went with criminal elements, Islamist militias, and violent extremists? Is that accurate?

A Yes. And maybe the final cable has slightly different wording than that, but it would be that sense.

Q And that would have described fundamentally the same -- the same thing?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Is there, in your view, a significant difference between describing it as a terrorist organization or a violent extremist, Islamist militia?

A Not in -- not in my opinion, not from a security standpoint.

Mr. Kenny. And, just finally, I see we are running low on time, the second email here ends, [REDACTED], though it appears to have been sent from your email alias. It says [REDACTED] above. Do you recall why or what that means?

Mr. [REDACTED] Can we do one off the record?

Mr. Kenny. Sure. We can go off the record.

[Discussion off the record.]

Mr. Kenny. We will go back on the record. And just to reiterate, the question had been posed about what appears to be initials, [REDACTED], at the bottom of an email sent from your email account. And we've asked what your understanding of what that was or why that came to be.

Mr. [REDACTED] So we had one classified laptop in Benghazi. And I was logged in and writing -- or reading the responses from the front office. And I had asked [REDACTED] to read it as well for his insight and then I asked him to -- since he was assisting me with it, to respond since it was from the Ambassador, and I thought it would be more appropriate for the principal officer to respond to the Ambassador.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Did you -- I mean, did you read it at the time?

Mr. [REDACTED] I was sitting in the -- right there with him.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Okay. And did you agree with it?

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Okay.

Mr. Kenny. Thank you. That concludes our hour. We'll go off



the record.

[Recess.]

Ms. Betz. The time is 1:31. Glad you're back with us.

BY MS. BETZ:

Q In the last hour, we discussed tripwires, and I was curious as to whether or not D.C., whether it was [REDACTED] or somebody at NEA, was aware of possible tripwires being crossed and the need to have them reviewed?

A I'm almost positive that that tripwire document with my revisions on it went to the -- went to [REDACTED].

Q Do you know of any discussions about drawdown occurring in D.C. around that time?

A Drawdown in Benghazi or in Tripoli?

Q Benghazi.

A I do not know.

Q In the last hour --

Ms. Jackson. What about Tripoli?

BY MS. BETZ:

Q Oh. Tripoli.

A I don't know that.

Q No. Go ahead.

A I was just saying because we had established that it would be difficult to drawdown anymore in Benghazi, I don't perceive that being a discussion.

Q In the last hour, you also talked about tripwires being

politically driven versus more security driven. I just wanted you to elaborate more on that. Doesn't it seem sort of contrary to the point of tripwires, which seem more security driven?

A I don't know if I would say that they're more politically driven, but -- and there are certain -- certainly tripwires that are security related or provided by the security people at post, so a lot of the tripwires relate to the political environment where, you know, other members, including the security people at post, just wouldn't have the same sort of in-depth background that the political officers would have.

Q And when you talk about political environment for Benghazi, would that be the benefits of being in Benghazi?

A I'm sorry. Say it again one more time.

Q So, in terms of being politically driven and being concerned about the political environment, for Benghazi, would that political lens be focused more on the benefits of being in Benghazi, the need to be in Benghazi?

A I'm sorry. Is there a way you could ask it a different way?

Q Sure. Was, for example, the PO, [REDACTED] -- I mean, his purpose in being there was to really communicate what was going on sort of politically, economically in Benghazi, the point -- the benefits of being in Benghazi.

A I don't know if he was communicating the benefits of being in Benghazi. I don't remember seeing anything like that. But he's certainly communicating, you know, the security situation, the

political situation, basic, you know, diplomatic programs that we would run there back to Washington and Tripoli.

Ms. Jackson. So when you say "political environment," are you referring to the civility of the Libyan government or are you talking about the need for U.S. diplomacy in that area, or some combination thereof of the two of them?

Mr. [REDACTED]. Some --

Mr. Evers. Are we still talking about tripwires?

Ms. Jackson. Yes.

Ms. Betz. Yes.

Mr. Evers. Okay.

Ms. Jackson. Yes.

Mr. Evers. I just wanted to make sure.

Mr. [REDACTED]. The -- in answer to your question, he would have been saying, one, yes, what was the political situation in Tripoli -- or, sorry -- in Benghazi, in the country, and also what are some of the benefits of us being in Benghazi? He would have reported on that and his opinions on that. I don't necessarily know if those are reflected in the tripwires.

Ms. Jackson. Okay.

BY MS. BETZ:

Q So going back to -- staying sort of on the tripwire theme, going back to exhibit 5 --

A Okay.

Q -- the document, I believe, that you edited. Correct? Was

it your opinion that specific tripwires had been crossed?

A Yes.

Q And in your -- let me ask it this way. In your opinion, what should happen when tripwires are crossed?

A You should hold an EAC meeting, and then the results of that discussion should be forwarded to the front office, who -- as also as well as D.C. through a cable, and they make a decision based on your recommendations and what was the information you provided to them, to the EAC.

Ms. Betz. So I'm going to hand you now what will be exhibit 9.

[REDACTED Exhibit No. 9

Was marked for identification.]

Ms. Betz. And for the record, the document that the witness is reviewing is State Department document No. C05397236. And it is titled "Mission Libya Tripwires, updated as of August 13, 2012." And I'll give you a moment to review it.

BY MS. BETZ:

Q So this document differs than the previous tripwire document that we discussed in that it has certain measures to consider under each of the sort of the categories of different security postures or positions. Were these measures to consider preexisting your tenure?

A I believe they were, but I would have taken them out, because the purpose of my email was just to alert those that needed to know that I thought we'd crossed some of the tripwires, and they didn't

necessarily need to know what measures to consider.

Q On the bottom of page 3, there is a paragraph or a bullet, and it says, consideration of, quote, "suspended operations," and it reads, "U.S. mission Benghazi is staffed solely with mission critical personnel and as such cannot draw down further while remaining operational. Therefore, post has added a suspended operations category to the tripwire matrix. Under this scenario, post would stop all movement outside the mission. Meetings with host nation could continue, but must be conducted at the mission only."

Was this a category or a measure to consider that was part of the EAC discussion, or was it an outcome of the EAC?

A It -- I could say it was certainly an outcome of the EAC. I don't remember if it was discussed in the EAC.

Q Could you clarify?

A When I say "outcome," I don't know if this was brought up, this suspended operations category, was brought up in the EAC or [REDACTED] would have brought it up after the EAC in discussion with the front office in Tripoli.

Q So was this a measure that you were aware of or had discussed with --

A Yes.

Q Okay. And you agreed with the consensus -- or the addition of a suspended operations?

A Yes.

Q How would the suspended operations be any different

than -- let's say, for example, with previous incidents either in Benghazi or Tripoli, the compound went sort of, I don't want to say lockdown, but for lack of a better way to describe it, off-campus or off-compound movements were curtailed. Would this be the same type of procedure, or how does this differ than what typically would happen if there were incidents in which caused the compound to limit its off-campus -- or off-compound movement?

A Typically when you go on what you would label as lockdown, you know, that's for --

Q Sorry. It's fresh in mind because we just went on lockdown, or the Capitol did.

A It would be for a finite period of time --

Q Okay.

A -- so maybe a couple hours or maybe a couple days, something like that. Typically, the authorized -- these categories, the authorized departure and ordered departure are for, like, 30-day periods. So my assumption would be if we were to do suspended operations, that would mean more than just 2 hours or a day, and maybe a 30-day chunk of time.

Q So for an extended period of time?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

Ms. Jackson. And was this term, "suspended operations," something that you had encountered prior to Benghazi in the course of your Diplomatic Security career?

Mr. [REDACTED] No, it was not.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. Had you ever -- during your training as an agent or in your high-threat training, had this concept been discussed? What I'm getting at, was this new and novel, or had you been trained to consider this?

Mr. [REDACTED] It wasn't new and novel in that I think it was [REDACTED] explained to me they had done something similar to this, I believe when they had the previous gelatina bomb incident at the front gate and they had labeled it as suspended operations, but, no, in my training and experience, I had not seen a suspended operations category before.

BY MS. BETZ:

Q Would it be something that you contemplated?

A I'm sorry. Would what be --

Q In your previous positions, I mean, is this suspended operations something that you would have contemplated?

A Well, we -- I had been to places where we had done lockdown, so to speak, for a set period of time, and this seems like a logical outflow of that idea.

Q So staying with the EAC, in the last hour, one of the items that you had mentioned that was discussed [REDACTED]. Was that something that was immediate, that could happen immediately?

A Yes. [REDACTED]  
if we felt the security situation warranted it.

Q You also discussed briefly that the RSO in Tripoli, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED], was unhappy about being in Benghazi. Do you remember having

that conversation with him about evacuation?

A At one point I forwarded our -- the copy of our evacuation plan, and I believe it was to him and he had asked for it.

Q Did he review the plan, then?

A I don't know.

Q Did you review it?

A Yes.

Q And what were your thoughts on the plan?

A It seemed like it was a logical plan. I've never -- I mean, any time you do an evacuation, it's probably not going to go down just how it is laid out in the plan, but the basic plan, the ideas, the strategy in that plan seemed sound.

Q Were you concerned about a strike at the airport so that there was only really one sort of viable plan at the time? Was a plan B being contemplated?

A Let me break that up into two sections. So, first, yes, we're always concerned with any sort of airport closure or rumor of an airport closure because it affects your freedom of movement, obviously. In this case, I don't know if we ever got confirmation that the airport was closed or it was just rumors at that point. I don't recall the airport closing and affecting our airport operations.

The second question -- oh, the second part of that is if the airport was closed, we would still have multiple options for getting out of the country, including an overland route to Egypt, water route out of the port, or flying in either military aid, we could also



charter -- well, I think there's only one airport in Benghazi, so we wouldn't be able to charter, but flying in military assistance or, you know, the full-blown MEU, if it was necessitated, with Marines.

Q For the record purposes, what does MEU stand for?

A Marine Expeditionary Unit.

Q Okay.

Ms. Jackson. And that's an exfiltration plan?

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes.

Ms. Jackson. They basically drop in, scoop you up and get you out of there?

Mr. [REDACTED] They drop in, cut a swath to the Embassy, and then cut a swath back out.

BY MS. BETZ:

Q Were you aware of a memorandum that was being drafted for the secretary at the time regarding security incidents in Libya?

A I don't believe so, no.

Q So you weren't asked to -- you weren't asked for your input from an on-the-ground perspective as to what was going on?

A Can you -- I don't think so, but are there any more details that you have about this memo?

Q So there was a memo that was being drafted and --

Ms. Jackson. Well, you know what? Let's mark it and ask him if he ever saw it. Oh, never mind.

Ms. Betz. Yeah.

Ms. Jackson. Next session.

Ms. Betz. I can elaborate later. So I just generally wanted to ask about your awareness?

Ms. Jackson. See, mine's not so good.

Mr. [REDACTED] Well, generally, then, I am not aware. Maybe if there were more specifics, I would be aware.

Ms. Betz. Okay. And we can do that in a different setting.

I think this is a good opportunity to segue into or to restart our discussions, you had mentioned in the EAC issues about the compound not being able to defend itself. We ended during our last hour talking about physical security vulnerabilities of the compound, and we had asked -- or put into the record a document that I believe that you had put together.

Mr. Evers. Exhibits 2 and 3?

Ms. Betz. Exhibits 2 and 3, yes.

Ms. Jackson. Two, 3 and 4.

Ms. Betz. Two, 3 and 4, yes. I'm looking at exhibit 3 right now.

Thank you.

BY MS. BETZ:

Q And just to refresh our memory, we had talked a little bit previously about the physical security vulnerabilities of the compound, one being its vastness, 13 acres, issues with the fence and the wall, among others. I don't know if you want to elaborate again.

A Not if I don't have to.

Q Okay. That's fine. That's fine.

So you had drafted a list of physical security upgrades. To whom

were those submitted?

A They were sent to the RSO in Tripoli and also to [REDACTED], who was my replacement in Benghazi.

Q And was it your opinion that had all of these security upgrades occurred, would the post would have been OBO compliant?

A I definitely wouldn't be able to answer that. There's a lot that goes into OBO compliance.

Q Well, let me ask you another. Would it have met minimum security standards?

Mr. Evers. What minimum security standards?

Ms. Betz. Just vis-à-vis other posts that he has --

Mr. Evers. I don't know if you're referring -- you just referred to specific OBO standards, and I don't know if you're meaning to refer to specific standards by when you say "minimum standards."

Ms. Betz. Well, let me rephrase.

BY MS. BETZ:

Q Would those have made -- would -- if all of these upgrades occurred, would that have made the compound able to withstand -- defend itself, to use your words?

A I think it would have made -- it would have been safer, but I can't say for certain that if all these upgrades were in, the results would not have been the same.

Q And to your knowledge, what -- were you aware of any of these upgrades occurring or being contemplated while you were there or while you were leaving?

A Are you talking about just the physical security or all of them?

Q Well, I mean, I was going to get to some of the technical upgrades as well. We can go down the list. I can ask you if certain things had been approved or not approved.

A The only -- I -- the only thing that I know that we had -- we were working on actively, because it was something we could actually do at post, was the creation of sort of this safe haven office villa, which is under the physical security section, bullet nine, and also under equipment requests, bullet one, Tripoli had sent us -- Embassy Tripoli had sent us an engineer, who was attempting to fix some of these power issues for us. But the rest are things that I had requested, and I don't know which ones might have been forwarded on from Tripoli for action.

Q And why do you believe there were some of these vulnerabilities? Why, in your opinion, would D.C. or whomever not employ or install these features initially at the facility?

A I don't know if I can answer why they weren't installed initially. I would have to assume that a decision was made that it was important that we were in Benghazi at that particular time, and that outweighed having some of the maybe traditional security features we would find at other embassies and consulates.

Why we continued to not have them, I wouldn't -- I wouldn't be able to answer that. I don't know.

Q Was funding an issue? Were you aware of cost concerns?

A In a limited capacity, I was -- I was aware of cost concerns. We had difficulty, I believe, getting funding for some things, and we were going off of a \$500 limit for petty cash funds, I believe, to do some of our projects, but as far as a larger funding issue, I don't know.

Q Did anyone ever suggest that you should temper your expectations as to requests made of D.C.?

A Yes. I remember hearing that. I don't remember how I heard that, maybe where I read it, but for whatever reason, I had the understanding that we -- that post had an uncertain future, maybe would be closing soon, and therefore, we may not get expensive security upgrades. I don't know if that's because I was told that or because I had read something where previous RSOs or DS agents had tried to get those things and it was declined.

Q So there was an unspoken or -- thought amongst many that the facility was temporary in nature and/or would not support upgrades?

Mr. Evers. Is that what you meant to say?

BY MS. BETZ:

Q Is that what you meant to say?

A I can't say amongst many. I can say for me, and I don't -- I don't remember why I thought this, but that it was a temporary facility and that requests for funding for security upgrades may not be forthcoming due to the nature of the temporary facility.

Q Okay. Just going back to the technical equipment and some of the vulnerabilities there, were you aware of requests made by ARSO

██████████ as to the need to upgrade the IDNS systems, issues with old pendants for the IDNS, replacement camera, monitors?

A Yes.

Q Yes. And were those requests fulfilled?

A I know we had new cameras that we had received. They weren't installed yet, at least at the time of me leaving. I don't know if -- I can't remember if those were in response to him asking for these cameras or something separate.

Q Okay. And we --

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q What was the issue with the IDNS pendants?

A I believe it was typically when your IDNS is pushed, if you have the proper panel, it'll tell you which pendant pushed it so you know where on the compound the threat is coming from. And if I remember correctly, in this instant, the alarm would go off, we would know there was a threat, but we couldn't identify specifically which pendant had triggered it.

Q Did you have -- so you had more than one pendant?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Do you recall how many you had?

A I believe we had two.

Q Okay.

A Or I should say two posts had a pendant.

Q I'm sorry. What was that answer?

A I can say -- I can say that we had two posts, two positions

with a pendant.

Q Okay. You may have had more on compound, but two were being used?

A Yes.

Q Do you recall whether others were not operational?

A I can't say for certain, but typically each one of your guard positions would have a pendant, have IDNS, so my assumption would be some of them were not working. I can't remember for sure.

Q Okay.

BY MS. BETZ:

Q And just to talk about the camera, elaborate a little bit more on the cameras, were all the cameras functional at the time, monitors?

A Boy.

Q Sorry.

A I wish you'd asked me this, like, 2 years ago. I honest -- I don't remember.

Q Okay. Was the TOC door fixed? I understand that there were issues with the door, the TOC door. Was that something that was addressed by D.C.?

A I don't -- I don't know that it was addressed by D.C. per se, but we were trying to create a safe haven door on the TOC, and we would have had to send some sort of notification or memo to Tripoli reporting to them that we were doing that, and we were in the process of modifying that door to be more like a safe haven door when I left. I don't know

if it ever got installed, though.

Q Just shifting a little bit away from the physical security issues to talk a little bit, we talked -- alluded --

Ms. Jackson. Before we leave that --

Ms. Betz. Okay.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q -- I just noticed one thing. On the equipment requests on exhibit 3, the sixth bullet point down is, belt-fed, crew-served weapon, 240 Bravo or 249 with bipod.

Not being a firearms encyclopedia, could you tell us what that is?

A Sure. It's a machine gun that has the capacity to shoot many more bullets essentially than your typical handheld M4 machine gun.

Q And why did you make that request? Well, first of all, is that a weapon that is typically found at a high threat post?

A Yes.

Q But Benghazi did not have one?

A No.

Q Do you know if Tripoli had one?

A When I was in Tripoli, we had multiple ones of these. At that time, I don't know if they had one at Tripoli.

Q Okay. Because you were in Tripoli after the attack in Benghazi?

A Yes.



Q And, in fact, when were you in Tripoli?

A [REDACTED], I believe, approximately.

Q Okay. Did you have belt-fed or machine guns when you were in [REDACTED], when you did your TDY there?

A No. DS did not, but we had a fairly large contingent of marines there that had those types of weapons, as well as other military units that had those capabilities.

Q What about [REDACTED]?

A No, but [REDACTED] also not classified as high threat.

Q High threat. Okay. And you obviously had no marines in Benghazi?

A No.

Q Okay.

Ms. Betz. Was this something that members of the MSD might have?

Mr. [REDACTED]. Yes.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q And why is it that you asked for this weapon?

A In the event that you had to engage multiple targets, many targets, it, in my opinion, would have been the most efficient weapon to resolve the threat.

Q Does it have a deterrent value just by its -- just by seeing it?

A If someone was to see it, it would -- I believe it would have deterrent value.

Q And what was your plan for this weapon?

A I would have liked to have put it in our safe haven in the residential villa near the window, where it could have been taken up to the roof facing the main gate.

Ms. Betz. And to that point, so it actually would help secure sort of the perimeter or -- it would cover a lot -- a greater area than specific individuals with sort of isolated weapons could address?

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes. You would have been able to essentially kill many more people much quicker.

Ms. Betz. Okay. And you may not know the answer to this, so I'll preface it that way. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mr. Evers. If you can answer it.

BY MS. BETZ:

Q If you can answer it. I --

A [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I just don't recall.

Q So now going back to where I was going to go before that conversation, just revisiting the staffing issue in Benghazi during your time there, how many DS agents were there when you arrived?

A Two.

Q Two. In addition to yourself?

A Yes. So three total with me.

Q So three total with you. So three consistent throughout your time there?

A At a minimum, we would have had three. At the -- my last day or two there, [REDACTED] had come down, so we would have had four.

Q Did you make requests for additional agents?

A The only time I think that I would have made requests was there was talk of the Ambassador coming down for a visit, and I would have requested additional resources for that visit.

Q To that point, when the -- if and when the Ambassador would travel to Benghazi, did you have an expectation that there would be certain agents or groups accompanying him?

A I remember emailing the RSO in Tripoli at one point and asking if MSD or additional DS agents would be accompanying the Ambassador when he came. I'm certain he would have had more with him, but what those numbers were or who they were, I don't -- I don't know.

Q Do you remember his response back to you?

A I don't.

Q Okay.

A No.

Q Do you -- in that same conversation, do you remember talking about security being in-house, having to be conducted in-house during his trip to Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what did you mean by that?

A I would have meant that we -- we wouldn't be able to depend on host nation supplemental security, and therefore, all security would have had to have been provided by the Embassy.

Q Okay. And just to elaborate, were you concerned about QRF, were you concerned -- the ability of QRF, local guard force, to do their job?

A I wasn't -- I wasn't concerned with the LGF, their ability to do their job, but once again, their job was not to defend in the event of attack. QRF, I wasn't -- I also wasn't necessarily worried about their ability to do their job, but the same -- same thing. There was only three of them, and so I don't know -- they would be limited in what they could do in response to an attack.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Were you aware of whether the QRF, as part of the compound's security plan, that the QRF was to call on the larger February 17th to augment them in security for the compound?

A Yes, that was the plan.

Q That was the plan?

A Yes.

Q Did you have confidence in that plan?

A I had never had to put the plan into action, but I -- having talked with the desk officer, I was told in the past that that plan had worked, that they had responded, the larger brigade, meaning they had responded.

Q Okay. Were you aware of any changes in the either leadership or the capability of 17 Feb over the time? Had any of that been communicated to you that they were better than they were, worse than they were, about the same, or no conversations regarding that?

A No conversations regarding that.

Ms. Betz. So just to follow up, do you believe that the compound was equipped staff-wise to handle the Ambassador's trip?

Mr. [REDACTED]. Personnel-wise, we would need assistance. We would need supplemental personnel from Tripoli if the Ambassador were to visit.

Ms. Betz. Just --

Ms. Jackson. Are you moving on to a new topic?

Ms. Betz. I'm going to stay sort of in the topic. You go. Go.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q I have one follow-up question on the issue of the machine gun. Were you aware that there had been a prior request for a belt-fed machine gun?

A No.

Q You were not?

A No.

Q Okay.

BY MS. BETZ:

Q So I want to turn back to what is now exhibit 4. Do you need time to review it? No?

Is this a document that you prepared?

A Yes. I mean, this document was prepared -- was originally written by somebody else, but I edited it before I sent it to [REDACTED] so it would be up-to-date.

Q So, in terms of substantive revisions, more just to reflect

your experiences?

A That's -- I would say that's mostly accurate. There was a couple things I did in here that maybe would be considered substantive. I think some of the discussion about the QRF would be considered substantive. I think somewhere in here I mentioned the incident chart and the recent EAC cable. I would say the information in there was substantive, that that was mentioned in there.

Q So it's a document you would say transcended RSO's --

A That was my understanding.

Q -- in Benghazi? On page 3, I just want to draw your attention to sort of below the printing line, where it says, "Protection (PRS) and Auxiliary Security Support." And in it you reference that the PRS is one of the smoothest running programs because it's one program that has remained consistent. Would you elaborate on that?

A I didn't write this part, but I understand what the writer was saying. DS agents are trained to be interchangeable pieces in a protection detail, and so someone if -- no matter where they were coming from, they would have an understanding of where they would fit into a protection detail.

Q Was this impacted at all by the few number of agents that would be on the ground? Does it contemplate a certain number of agents being present for it to run smoothly?

A It would certainly be different than maybe what they've done in other environments or maybe the textbook way that they had learned in the training school, but I don't think it would have been completely

foreign to anyone, any DS agent.

Q Would you have to change it because of the low number of agents on the ground? I guess let me rephrase. Would it -- would two agents impact how the system would work, or the program would work?

A You would certainly want more agents, given that type of environment, but there are other protection details we do where it is just one agent or maybe just two agents, depending on the VIP that you're protecting, their ranking. So, once again, I don't think it would have been foreign. We may have wanted more people, but we -- we could have -- we made it work with what we had.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q You had mentioned just a minute ago textbook training, that reality often differs than textbook training. In your -- I assume you had protection training in your high-threat course. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. When you were making a movement with an ambassador or principal officer in a high threat -- according to your high-threat training, what was -- what was your textbook training on that? And this is really like a pop quiz.

A We would have been using a full motorcade for the movement, whether it was high-threat training or just our basic special agent training. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] So --

Q And the AIC would have been with --

A [REDACTED], I think. And the AIC, yes,

would have been with the protectee.

Q And that's both in your basic training and in the high-threat training was the textbook model of how to make a movement in a high threat environment?

A I don't know if I would say it's the textbook model for how to make a movement in a high threat environment. It's -- it's the -- one of the preferred ways to do things if you have that many resources. For instance, in other places we'll run low profile movements because it doesn't draw as much attention to the protectee, so maybe not a full motorcade, maybe not using black Suburbans; you know, low pro car, less -- less agents involved.

Q [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

A I think for me to answer that, I would need to know who the protectee was. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

BY MS. BETZ:

Q So, to follow on those questions, the modifications that you had to make at post, were those based on experience, based on any other type of training? Given that this is sort of the benchmark that you learned, was there -- were there any benchmarks or any other -- was



there any other training that you took to make these modifications to ensure the security of those that you were guarding, the compound?

A Well, I mean, I've done what we would call escort details, [REDACTED] in the United States. And I'd also done movements in [REDACTED] and Yemen, where it was just the follow car that we had and just a follow car that consisted of local nationals.

Q Okay.

A So it wasn't a foreign concept to me. There are certain, you know, ideas that you're -- you know, that you can't lose sight of regardless of how many resources you're using, security ideas. And I think, you know, we try and cover those, make sure they're covered.

Q In those -- in that training, would it also include how to guard the compound? So, for example, would you discuss or simulate with two agents how to divide up the compound between the two of you or with the QRF? Is that something that you would have discussed in this type of program?

A I remember in some of the scenarios in our high-threat training, we were certainly protecting buildings in a compound while the VIP was inside. Most of my experience in protecting a compound came from protecting the compound at Yemen and [REDACTED] and what we were doing there, and then trying to apply that to Benghazi.

Q Moving away from exhibit 4 --

A Okay.

Q -- and shifting gears a little bit. I want to talk a little

bit about the security environment and the change that I think was evident from the time that you arrived to the time that you left. Were you aware of the deteriorating environment when you arrived?

Mr. Evers. You just asked about the deterioration during his presence and then asked about whether it had deteriorated before.

BY MS. BETZ:

Q Yes. So I think there were -- my understanding is that there were conversations when you arrived about how the incidents had changed even from the previous month. So, one, were you aware of those conversations? And then, two, you know, wanting to get your observations on the changes that occurred in the month while you were there. So really looking at a 2-month span.

A I was aware of the prior incidents, because we had a log of them, and during my time there, there were certainly many more incidents, so I would classify the security situation as deteriorating.

Q How did you typically receive your intelligence or updates regarding security incidents?

A There were a variety of methods. Some was open source reporting, so incidents mentioned on Facebook or in the local news or Twitter. We had contacts, Libyan contacts, that would report either maybe through 17th February Brigade or something, or, you know, [REDACTED], who worked with us, might report something. [REDACTED] would give us information, and then we had, for instance, like, a contact at the U.N., and maybe some organizations that would share information with us.

We weren't -- we weren't in downtown Benghazi, and some of our

other contacts were, so they were helpful in giving us visibility of what was going on within the city.

Q Okay.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q I want to backtrack just a minute, because when you mentioned [REDACTED], it triggered something in my head. When you were talking earlier today about reaching out to the local police, the Supreme Security Council and others, for additional host-nation support, I believe you said that you had relied on Libyan nationals that worked for you to assist in that effort. And was one of those individuals [REDACTED]?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Was there any other Libyan national who was employed at the compound that assisted you in that endeavor?

A Yes.

Q Male or female?

A It was a male. I want to say his name starts with a [REDACTED].

Q Does the name [REDACTED] --

A Yes, [REDACTED].

Q Okay. Did he go by [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] or something like that?

A I called him [REDACTED].

Q Okay.

A [REDACTED].

Ms. Betz. Did you interact with him while you were in Benghazi?

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes. Maybe a handful of times.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q What role did he play in trying to increase the security assets for the compound?

A If I remember correctly, he had various contacts within the Libyan Government, whatever the government may have been at that point, and was trying to work through those means to get us additional security.

Q Would he also be a source of information for you and the other agents regarding security incidents that were occurring in and around Benghazi?

A Yes, he would have. I don't remember any specific things he would have told us, but he -- I certainly would have listened to him if he had told me a security incident.

BY MS. BETZ:

Q Was he reliable?

A Reliable in was his information accurate?

Q Uh-huh.

A Once again, I don't remember any information that he gave us, but any sort of information we got from any source, we would have tried to vet against another source.

Q Such as?

A So, for instance, if we heard that there was a -- if the U.N. had told us that there was an IED found at the Tibesti Hotel, we would have contacted -- you know, we would have asked [REDACTED] or somebody in 17 February to see if he knew any security people at the hotel that

could have confirmed it. We would have -- well, we certainly would have alerted [REDACTED], seeing if they could have corroborated it.

Q But it's, I think, safe to say, to your point, that a lot of -- most of your conversations went through Feb 17th, [REDACTED]?

A Conversations about what?

Q In terms of contacts into Libyan society or into the city per se.

Let me ask -- let me rephrase it. So rather than directly contacting organizations or individuals, you would work through -- you primarily worked through Feb 17th to make these contacts to obtain the information?

A If they were Libyan organizations, but most of our, you know, incident reporting and threat reporting was coming through either the other Western organizations in Benghazi [REDACTED].

Ms. Betz. I'm going to show you now what will be exhibit 10.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 10

Was marked for identification.]

Ms. Betz. And just for the record, this is State Department document C05396416, and it's titled "Benghazi Security Environment and Threat Assessment, updated 8/14/2012."

Mr. [REDACTED] I hope you're not going to tell me that I wrote this one.

Ms. Betz. No.

Ms. Jackson. That was going to be the first question. Did you?

Ms. Betz. Did you -- did you write this assessment?

Mr. [REDACTED]. I don't remember this document, no.

Ms. Betz. Okay. So were you aware of the document or this type of security environment, threat assessment being drafted?

Mr. [REDACTED]. This document really doesn't ring a bell to me, so, no, I can't say that I was aware of this.

Ms. Jackson. As you peruse this document and have had an opportunity to review it, in your opinion, does it accurately summarize the security environment that you experienced in Benghazi when you were there in August of 2012.

Mr. Evers. Do you want to go off the record and let him read it, and then I think we will spend a couple minutes before we start talking about it?

Ms. Jackson. Sure.

Ms. Betz. Sure?

Ms. Jackson. Okay. Let's go off the record.

Ms. Betz. We'll go off the record.

[Recess.]

Ms. Betz. So looking at exhibit 10, I want to draw your attention to the "Look Ahead" section --

Mr. [REDACTED]. Okay.

Ms. Betz. -- and specifically the second paragraph that discusses AQIM, Al Qaeda and the Islamic Maghreb smuggling weapons and explosives out of Libya to neighboring countries, AQIM and other transnational terrorist groups could try to take advantage of a deteriorating security environment in Benghazi or a post-Qadhafi power

vacuum in Tripoli.

Were you aware of this type of intelligence when you arrived to Benghazi?

Mr. [REDACTED] I -- I don't -- I don't remember. I was reading threat reporting, intelligence reports at least weekly while I was in [REDACTED], and I don't know if I was aware of this before I arrived. I may have been, you know.

Ms. Jackson. As of the date of this document, August 14, 2012, you agree with this sentence and assessment in here in the Look Ahead?

Mr. [REDACTED] As of what date?

Ms. Betz. August 14.

Mr. [REDACTED] I don't know if I can say by that specific date, but, yes, certainly some -- at some point within my time in Libya, I would agree with this.

Ms. Jackson. Okay.

Mr. [REDACTED] I was aware of this.

Ms. Betz. Okay.

Do you believe this type of intelligence could be one of the reasons that the Ambassador had canceled his trip in early August?

Mr. [REDACTED] I -- I can't -- I couldn't -- I wouldn't even know why he canceled his trip.

Ms. Betz. For security reasons?

Mr. [REDACTED] I -- I don't know why he canceled the trip. At least I don't remember why he canceled the trip.

Ms. Betz. So I'm going to show you what is now --

A Okay.

Ms. Betz. -- exhibit No. 11.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 11

Was marked for identification.]

Ms. Betz. So, for the record, the witness is looking at State Department document C05390855, and it is an email in which the witness is not copied but in which security issues are discussed.

Ms. Jackson. And the date.

Ms. Betz. I'm sorry. And it's dated August 2, 2012.

BY MS. BETZ:

Q Have you had a chance to look at it?

So, in the email, after your -- after you've read -- had a chance to read the email, does this bring back some recollection of the ambassador canceling his trip?

A No. I know that he had wanted to come, but I -- I don't remember ever learning a reason why he did not come.

Q So Mr. [REDACTED] didn't discuss with you any security reasons why the Ambassador may not have wanted to travel during the time that he had anticipated coming?

A He very well may have, but once again, I just don't remember why the Ambassador didn't come, what that decision was based off of.

Q Just one quick question. In regards to the declining or deteriorating security environment, were you communicating these incidents back to D.C. in addition to Tripoli?

A I cannot remember if they -- we had been creating an



incident chart. I don't know if -- I can't remember if the desk would have been copied on that at any point.

Q Do you believe -- or would you -- would it not be out of the realm of possibility for [REDACTED] to forward the incidents to D.C.? Would he have communicated with [REDACTED] about the security incidents?

A He very well may have. It's entirely possible.

Q Did you communicate those events to him or incidents to him?

A To --

Q To [REDACTED]

A Yes.

Q Daily?

A I think I would -- it's fair to say, any time we had a significant security incident, I would have informed the RSO in Tripoli.

Q Okay. So you're not aware of any inquiries by Jake Sullivan to the Ambassador regarding any specific incident?

A I don't think I know who Jake Sullivan is.

Q With the secretary's office.

A I don't -- I don't know who that is.

Ms. Betz. So now that the witness is looking at what is now exhibit 12 --

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 12

Was marked for identification.]

Ms. Betz. And for the record, it is State Department document

C05396005, and it is an email from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED].

Ms. Jackson. And it also has on it an attachment called an incident chart, which pages 2 and 3 of this document have the sequential -- the next sequential document number ending in 006. And so our first question for the witness will be whether he believes that the pages 2 and 3 are the attachment to the email.

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes, I believe so.

Ms. Betz. And is this an email that you would have drafted to [REDACTED] copying [REDACTED]?

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes.

RPTR KERR

EDTR HOFSTAD

[2:40 p.m.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q And is this the incident chart that you referenced just a few minutes ago?

A Yes.

Q Okay. So this is an internal document that you and other DS agents kept in Benghazi.

A Yes. At least during my time in Benghazi.

Q Okay.

BY MS. BETZ:

Q And you updated this chart daily to -- or when necessary to update or reflect the incidents that were occurring in Benghazi?

A Yes. But I had delegated this particular portfolio to one of the other ARSOs. But, yes, in consultation with me, they updated it regularly.

Q And it's a reflection of, at that point, to date, as of August 21, it was a reflection of the incidents that you were aware of and/or that occurred during your time there?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

Ms. Betz. We can go off the record.

[Recess.]

Mr. Kenny. We'll go back on the record. I'll note the time is

2:53. We'll hopefully do better this time.

Agent [REDACTED], I'd just like to thank you again. Appreciate your patience and your indulgence here with us today.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q I would like to pick up and continue our conversation about the physical security platform in Benghazi during the time that you were aware, or that you were there, and continue our discussion about some of the security requests that were made by post to improve the physical security at the Special Mission Compound.

I would like to begin by referring back to exhibit 4. This is the "RSO Turnover" document. You said you prepared it. And I would like to direct your attention to page 5. And at the top there, you can see there is a section on physical security. And if you want to reread that, I'm going to focus on the second point and the fourth point under this section.

A Which two? The second and the fourth?

Q That's correct, sir. So "Safe Haven" and "Fighting/REACT Positions."

A Okay. I read that.

Q Okay. Great.

So I'll just read a brief portion of this into the record. Under "Physical Security," there is a section here that's entitled "Safe Haven Gate/Day Cage." It reads, quote, "The 'safe haven' in the villa is closed and locked every night and serves as the hold room in the event of attack. Recently we have attempted to create a safe haven

in the office villa as well," close quote.

The reference here to the safe haven, can you explain for us just generally the importance of a safe haven and how that relates overall to a post's security plan?

A A safe haven is an area you could go to that would provide protection from bullets, fire, mobs, attackers. It typically has a variety of features in it, to include some sort of communication, typically radios. It will usually have a bathroom. It will have an egress route. It's basically designed as a place you can hunker down and await further help.

Q Okay.

And I'll note here that this paragraph from which I just read, it mentions that there was, in fact, one safe haven and there was also one that was under consideration.

The safe haven in the villa here, does that refer to the safe haven in Villa C?

A The residential villa, yes.

Q The residential villa. So, to the best your understanding, is that what is referred to elsewhere as Villa C?

A Yes.

Q Okay. All right.

Was that safe haven formally part of the post's security plan in the event of an attack, for instance?

A Yes. But, once again, I would caveat that "safe haven" is in quotation marks here when referencing that one.

Q Okay. And perhaps you could elaborate on that. I think you'd mentioned that, for instance, there are certain features of a safe haven.

A Right.

Q So perhaps you could just walk us through this particular safe haven.

A I wouldn't classify this as the same type of safe haven or, at least, a safe haven in the traditional sense. One, the type of door it had on it was not a typical safe-haven door. It had a gate on it.

Two, it had access to a lot of other rooms with windows in it. And, typically, a safe haven would be somewhere on the interior of a building. You wouldn't be able to access it from the outside.

Q Uh-huh.

A I guess those were the two main differences I would see between what we were calling that particular room and a traditional safe haven.

Q Okay. No, that's helpful.

And is there any reason why in this particular document, which was the turnover document you would be providing to the incoming RSO, that you didn't include, for instance, that description of the safe haven?

A Your typical DS agent with overseas experience would understand the difference between what we were using and what a traditional safe haven looked like.

Q Okay.

During the time you were in Benghazi, was there ever a time that a plan to initiate the use of the safe haven, that that was ever activated, do you recall?

A Yes. We used the safe haven -- in addition to some drills we did, there was one incident close to the end of when I left Benghazi where we used the safe haven.

Q Okay. And what can you tell us about that incident?

A I believe there had been some small-arms fire outside, and then there was an explosion that shook the walls of the villa. We instituted our REACT plan and went to the safe haven, or at least the non-DS agents went to the safe haven. I believe one of the DS agents was in the safe haven, and the rest of us responded per the REACT plan.

Q And so those specific responses were part of at least one of post's REACT plans?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And, in that instance, the REACT plan called for personnel, non-Diplomatic Security personnel, to be sheltered in the safe haven; is that right?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

And you mentioned that post would run drills from time to time related to the safe haven? Can you just elaborate on that for us?

A We would do at least weekly drills with the local guard force and the QRF simulating various types of emergency situations, either bombs or attacks. And we would also do drills with the entire embassy,

or the entire mission.

Q Uh-huh.

A I remember we did one towards the end of my time there that I believe was simulating an attack, if I remember correctly.

Q Okay.

And I'll just note, if you drop down under "Emergency Action Planning," there is a sentence here that reads, quote -- this is the end of the first paragraph -- quote, "We routinely conduct drills and held a post-wide drill last week," close quote.

So can you just describe for us about how often these types of drills would be held on the compound while you were there?

A We were conducting drills with the guards at least a couple times a week, different types of drills. And I don't know how many we would've done with the entire embassy. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I couldn't say with certainty if we did other ones.

Q And you mentioned one of those drills was held to simulate some sort of attack or some type of attack or assault on the compound; is that right?

A Yes. I remember we used smoke grenades as part of that simulation, so it would've been some form of an attack.

Q Okay. And, to the best of your recollection, would that have been the post-wide drill that was held the week prior?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And why would you have done some sort of role-play



or simulation for that type of event?

A Specifically for an attack?

Q Uh-huh.

A In that environment we were in, it seemed most likely that the types of emergencies that we would deal with would either be a bomb or an attack. And a typical bomb drill would involve more of the LGF unit as opposed to the entire mission, and an attack scenario would involve the entire mission.

Q Okay. And would that have been fairly common, for a post to undertake different types of drills, for instance, whether it is an IED, bomb-type attack or some sort of assault?

A Yes. You are required to hold X amount of drills in a certain timeframe addressing various scenarios at any embassy you're at.

Q Okay.

Just moving quickly along here, there is a section that's "Fighting/REACT Positions."

A Uh-huh.

Q And it reads, quote, "We recently removed many sandbag positions as the sandbags had disintegrated. We purchased new sandbags and constructed three new fighting positions," close quote.

Do you recall this specific action?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And can you just briefly describe for us the importance of having some sort of hardened fighting position at post?

A Yes. If there is an attack, there needs to be a position where you can return fire from that offers some sort of form of protection. And so, in addition to some of our positions on the buildings, we also had sandbag positions that would allow us to return fire and also offer some form of protection.

Q Okay. And would that have been for the Diplomatic Security staff, or was that for the QRF on the compound? Do you recall?

A It was for both.

Q It was for both. Okay.

And do you recall if there were more fighting positions at one point in time and that number was reduced, or were the three --

A There were more sandbag positions. I don't remember exactly how many. Almost all the sandbag positions had disintegrated, so we put in three -- or three new positions or replaced three positions.

The reason that we only replaced three positions was, one, we were operating with that \$500 petty cash limit so that there was only so much that we could get, and, two, with the limited amount of personnel that we had on post, I was concerned that we couldn't man all the positions, and we would essentially then been creating fighting positions for the enemy were they to invade the compound.

Q Okay.

There was a brief discussion earlier about this concept referred to as concentric rings of security. Can you just describe for us how either the fighting positions or the safe haven, how that fits within the concentric rings of security?

A There is certainly a -- at least the safe haven is certainly a part of the concentric rings of security.

So on the outside or outer ring would be typically host-nation police or security, which we did not have there. So the next ring would be our guards, then the wall, then the QRF, then typically the safe haven -- or backup QRF, then DS agents, then the safe haven. Then the final ring of security would be whichever DS agent was left with protecting the safe haven.

Q Are each of these rings -- is part of the purpose of that to increase the amount of time it would take for an attacker, for instance, under that scenario to reach a protectee or some protected part of the compound?

A That's certainly one of the benefits of that.

Q Okay. And so how would the local guard force, for instance, fit into that?

A The local guard force would be essentially an early-warning signal. So they would alert the rest of the mission to the fact that there was an emergency, an attack or a bomb or something.

Q Okay. And in the absence of the local guard force, was there any other early-warning detection system? Or was that the primary system?

A That was the primary system. I mean, QRF had a rover position, as well, as someone that was supposed to be out at the front gate. So, in the absence of the guards, QRF could have also provided the same sort of information.

Q Okay.

You had mentioned, in the rings of security there, you had mentioned the wall. And I would like to ask, because I recall you saying in a prior round that you had concerns about setback of at least one section of the wall from the street.

And perhaps you could just help us understand, since we are not familiar with all the physical security standards, the concept of setback, does that relate to the property itself? Does it relate to the wall? Does it relate to the buildings that are on the compound?

A It relates to the buildings that are on the compound, depending on an OVO classification.

Q Okay. And did you have any concerns about the location of the buildings on the Special Mission Compound with respect to setback?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what were those concerns?

A My main concern was the office building was very close to the south wall, and you could drive a vehicle right up to the south wall, and given a large enough explosion, you could certainly tear through the wall and hit the compound, or the office villa.

Q The office villa. Okay.

I would like to direct your attention to the first page of the document. There was a brief discussion about this in the last hour, but I wanted to draw your attention to some specific language in here.

The bottom of the third paragraph reads, quote, "The RSO should be aware that requests for expensive security upgrades may be difficult

to obtain, as headquarters is hesitant to allocate money to a post that may be closing in a few months," close quote.

And I know we touched on this in the last round. I would like to first ask just, is this your language that you inserted in this memo?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And why did you insert it?

A Once again, I don't know where I read that or who told that to me or where I got that idea, but, at the time, I would have believed that to be true, and that's why I would've written it in there.

Q Okay.

Do you have any specific examples of any security upgrades that were considered to be too expensive and that were not funded?

A The only one I can think of off the top of my head was the sandbags.

Q The sandbags were too expensive?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

A I remember asking -- I don't remember what we asked for, but it was very difficult to get the funding for that, and so we ended up using the petty cash. There was a reason that we were using that \$500 petty cash limit --

Q Uh-huh.

A -- and it was because we were having difficulty getting more funding than that. I don't remember why that we were --

Q So when you say "difficulty getting funding," where would

the funding come from? Where were you seeking the funding?

A It would've had to come from the budget in D.C.

Q I'm sorry? "In D.C." you said?

A Funding approvals, you know, are granted from D.C. in coordination with post. You know, you have your budget. So they would've either approved or declined our funding request.

Q And the sandbag request that you recall as the one example of something that was considered too expensive, do you recall about how much was being requested for that project?

A I don't. I remember requesting it, and then we were getting some pushback from Tripoli, I believe, asking -- I think they asked if we thought we were still in a war zone or something.

Q Tripoli asked you if you thought you were still in a war zone?

A Yeah.

Q Do you recall who asked you that?

A I don't remember.

Q Was it somebody -- the RSO? Was it --

A No.

Q -- a management officer?

A Yeah, management officer or somebody in that section.

Q Okay.

A I don't know specifically who.

Q So you received some pushback, to use your word, from Embassy Tripoli, specifically the management office, regarding a

request for sandbags.

A Yes.

Q Okay.

A But management office is a large position. That can include, you know, financial management, includes the GSO, includes facilities. I mean, there's a lot that falls under that, so I don't remember which specifically it was.

Q So, just tying back to our discussion, did anybody in D.C. tell you that the sandbags were too expensive, or was that relayed to you by the management officer in Tripoli?

A My understanding is that our budget was controlled and would've gone through Tripoli, Embassy Tripoli.

Q Okay.

Did there seem to be some sort of disconnect between your experience on the ground in Benghazi, your understanding of the security environment, and the management officer or whoever posed the question to you, whether or not you thought you were still in a war zone?

A Certainly, in that specific example, yes, there was a disconnect, it would seem.

Q Okay. Do you recall following up at all with that? Did you follow up with the RSO in Tripoli? Did you communicate to the management officer that you needed this request?

A I don't remember what the followup was.

Q Okay.

A I can't remember. I know that I must have gotten frustrated and used the \$500 in petty cash. I remember the sand truck showed up and the employees got in a fight, so we had to kick them out, and then we just loaded all the sandbags and built the positions ourselves.

Q I'm sorry, the employee unrelated to --

A The people that drive the sand truck that were there to put the sand in the bags and stack them --

Q Uh-huh.

A -- they somehow got in a fight with each other, and --

Q Okay.

A -- so we just did it.

Q The challenges of operating and working in --

A It's just Libya.

Q But you found the petty cash sufficient, though, to fund the three fighting positions that you referred to earlier that you --

A Yes.

Q -- thought were sufficient?

A Uh-huh.

Q Okay. Yes? Is that your answer?

A Yes. I can't remember if I would've wanted one or two more fighting positions, but we made do with the three positions we had.

Q Okay.

And just to tie this back to the turnover memo, because here it specifically refers to headquarters being hesitant to allocate that money, in this one example that you recall, did you have any information



that headquarters had denied that request?

A No, I didn't. "Headquarters" may have not been the most appropriate term there. I don't know who the appropriate organization would have been to put there, but I think "headquarters" was just an easy term --

Q Okay.

A -- and sort of a generic term to use.

Q Could that have also, then, referred to the front office at Embassy Tripoli, in your mind?

A I don't know if I would say the front office. They typically aren't involved in the, sort of, funding issues. But maybe the management section in Tripoli.

Q Okay.

I would like to move to page 6. And, again, there was a brief discussion of this in the last hour. At the bottom of the page, there's a section entitled, "Engineering Security Office."

And this section reads, quote, "You may seek the assistance of the ESO in Cairo to come out and perform ESO work. He is tentatively scheduled to arrive at the mission September 16-20. SA [REDACTED] has a list of projects for him. We recently received cameras and monitors, and the installation of these is a priority. Time permitting, we would also like him to repair the itemizer, reprogram the IDNS, as well as a variety of other small projects," close quote.

And just for the record, what is the ESO, or who is that entity?

A The ESO is the engineering security officer. And they

perform technical tasks, technical security tasks, for the RSO.

Q Okay. And, according to this, it sounds like there was a visit that was planned for them to come to post to provide some type of physical security assistance. Is that correct?

A That's what I wrote, so I believe it to be true, yes.

Q Okay. Okay. That's fair.

All right. We'll go ahead and mark -- this will be exhibit 13.

[██████████ Exhibit No. 13

Was marked for identification.]

Mr. Kenny. For the record, exhibit 13 is an email that's dated August 7, 2012, from ██████████ to ██████████ It cc's Benghazi RSO. The subject is, quote, "Re: Wish List of Equipment for RSO Benghazi," close quote.

And I'll just provide you the opportunity to read that.

Mr. Evers. Can we go off the record for just a quick second?

Mr. Kenny. We can go off the record.

[Discussion off the record.]

Mr. Kenny. We'll go back on the record.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Again, referring to exhibit 13, the doc ID, just for the record, C05390265.

I'll note that your name does not appear in the thread, but the email alias "Benghazi RSO" does.

A Uh-huh.

Q And we'll ask you about that just in a moment, but I would

like to first read from the first email in this thread, where [REDACTED] writes to [REDACTED] and states the following: Quote, "Hey [REDACTED], hope all is well. Here's the wish list for new and upgraded equipment that we discussed. Give me a call and let me know if you have any questions or concerns," close quote.

The email then proceeds to list several items. You can see here there's a new IDNS system listed there, replacement camera monitors, old pendants for the current IDNS systems, camera/monitor sets for the TOC and villa safe haven, additional cameras with visibility outside the compound walls, upgrading critical cameras for night vision, and louder IDNS alarms and hardening of the TOC door.

In the email following this in the string, [REDACTED] responds with certain comments. And, in the final email, [REDACTED] replies with additional information in response to Mr. [REDACTED] questions and states, quote, "Thanks again for all of the help man, we all appreciate it out here," close quote.

Before just getting into the specifics of this request, I'd like to ask who -- I don't recall if this was asked in the previous hour -- who was [REDACTED]?

A He was one of the ARSOs there that I supervised.

Q Okay. And who is [REDACTED]?

A He is the ESO.

Q Okay. So the engineering security officer?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And where was he based?

A Cairo.

Q In Cairo. Okay.

And when we see the alias here, "Benghazi RSO," what is your understanding of who would receive those emails?

A It would have been a group email that would have included the DS agents in Benghazi and possibly [REDACTED] in Tripoli, but I'm not sure.

Q Okay. And would you have been included on that list?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Do you recall this email exchange?

A No.

Q Okay.

You see here that there is a list of requests, the original wish list that ARSO [REDACTED] submitted. Do you recall at all whether these are listed in order of importance? Is there any priority as to how these requests are listed?

A I don't know.

Q Okay.

Do you know how this document was created? For instance, was there a discussion about it? Did you review previous security requests? Was there some sort of formal site survey done?

A Is there a date on this first document?

Q It's at the bottom here.

A Oh, okay.

No. [REDACTED] very tech-savvy and would've been keen on identifying

issues we might have had with some of our technical security features. And I have no doubt that what he was identifying and was asking for here would have been appropriate and necessary security upgrades.

Q Okay. And when he uses the term "wish list," did you understand that to mean that that was everything that post thought it needed at that time?

A It was everything that -- yes, I would say that's everything we needed for that particular compound setup.

Q Okay.

Was your sense that the requests that were submitted here to the ESO in Cairo -- during your time there, did you have a sense that these specific requests were being worked on?

A I can't remember ever having a sense that these were being worked on and that there was any followup to this.

Q Okay.

Perhaps to refresh your recollection, we can refer back to exhibit 4 on page 6, where it refers to a trip that the ESO had planned.

A Uh-huh.

Q What did you know about that trip?

A Based on these documents, I would say that he was planning a trip, and I would assume that he was going to address some of the issues that are raised here.

Q Okay. For instance, you mentioned in a previous round that there were cameras that had been delivered --

A Yes.

Q -- to post. Would the RSOs have been able to install those themselves, or would that have required some sort of technical expertise?

A It would have required some sort of technical expertise.

Q Okay. And was it your understanding that the ESO office, that they possessed that --

A Yes.

Q -- expertise? Okay.

A That's something they typically do at post.

Q And was your understanding of the trip that had been planned for the ESO to, among other things, install those cameras?

A Logically, I would make that assumption, but I can't say he was coming for that specific reason. I would say there's a good chance he was, but I don't know that for a fact.

Q Okay.

And, again, just to reread from the turnover memo -- which I can give you a moment -- it's page 6, where it says, quote, "We received cameras and monitors, and the installation of these is a priority," close quote.

A Uh-huh.

Q Looking at this now, does that help refresh your recollection?

A I would agree that they were a priority. Whether or not that was something that he was going to be able to complete in his time here, I don't know, or I cannot remember what the task was he was going

to perform when he got to post.

Typically, ESOs, in my experience, when they have come to post, we have a lot of tasks for them, and they just don't get to all of them, so they prioritize them with what they can do. I would imagine, in this case, the cameras, he would've worked on that. But I just don't want to say certainly that's what he was coming here for.

Q And the last request that's listed in [REDACTED] request is the hardening of the TOC door. I believe you were asked about this in a previous round, but, to the best of your recollection, did that occur or had that happened before you left?

A No. We had gotten the approval to spend \$500, maybe a little bit more than that, on the door. We had the person that was constructing the door come in and take measurements. But when I left September 1, it had not been completed.

Q Okay. But it was in the process of being completed?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Did you have any reason to think it wouldn't be completed?

A Well, it's Libya. I mean --

Q Fair enough. Okay.

A Who knows what's going to happen there.

Q What I would like to do now is I will introduce exhibit 14.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 14

Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q This is a short one. It's just a one-pager.

Ready?

A Uh-huh.

Q Okay.

Just for the record, exhibit 14 is an email that's dated August 23. It's from you to [REDACTED], with the subject, quote, "Re: Reports to system," close quote. The document number is C05B391883.

Do you recall this email?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

I would like to note that in the attachment field it says that this email contained an attachment. The attachment was securityrequests.docx. Do you see that?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Do you recall what that document was?

A I think it's the same one that you showed me earlier.

Q Does it look like exhibit 3?

A Yes, that one.

Q Okay. And I can give you a moment if you would like to -- and I apologize that we've inundated you with paper here.

A Sure. Yes, 3.

Q Okay.

So, just to be clear, I think we established earlier that this -- you thought that this document also was attached to exhibit 2.



Does it look like this, which is exhibit 3 we're looking at, which is the security requests for Mission Benghazi, was also the attachment to exhibit 14?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

And I think you had described a little bit earlier about the basis for creating this document. But, specifically, was this a spinoff from the EAC, do you recall, the security requests document?

A I drafted this because RSO [REDACTED] had asked me to draft a, for lack of a better term, wish list of what I thought we needed. And I don't remember if that was a result of the EAC that he had asked for that or he had asked for that separate of the EAC.

Q Okay. And when he asked you to do that, do you recall how you went about doing it? For instance, did you, again, review previous equipment requests? Did you consult with the other ARSOs at post?

A I consulted with the other ARSOs at post. I drew on other information I would've had. So, for instance, some of these pictures I didn't take; I would've had to pull them from other documents. But quite a bit of this is information I would have generated on my own.

Q So without the input from the ARSOs?

A I think I generated, if I remember correctly, the majority of this and then gave it to the ARSOs and asked for their input and if there was anything else that they would like or that they thought was critical that was missing.

Q Do you recall if they had any specific requests to add or

remove certain content?

A I don't remember, no.

Q Okay.

Same question I'd like to ask you about this document I asked you about the [REDACTED] wish list. Were these requests in any particular order? Were they listed in order of priority?

A No.

Q Okay.

And I would just like to note that the requests here do appear to be different from the requests that were generated out of the August 6 document, which was also referred to as a wish list. And I'd just like to ask for your understanding of why that was the case.

A Exhibit 3 is the turnover document. Do you have the one that was generated out of the EAC?

Q So, I'm asking for your help, and this is exhibit 3 that we're in --

A Uh-huh.

Q -- and comparing that with exhibit 13, which is the wish list from [REDACTED].

A Oh, okay.

I would say that the items in exhibit 13 are technical security upgrades, and, although that was a focus of our equipment request, I was focused more on some of the physical security upgrades, manpower requests, various other equipment requests.

Q Okay. Is that because --

A And, additionally, [REDACTED] was not at post anymore.

Q Okay. So it sounds like there were some other considerations at play, and, also, you created this document, and another ARSO created the other document. That's fair?

A Yes.

Q To the extent that the scope of this document is slightly different from the other document, was that in part due to the request that RSO [REDACTED] made of you? What were his instructions to you?

A As I remember it, his instructions were, draft a wish list of what you would like there for security requests. I remember asking, can I put anything on there? For instance, can I request, you know, Marine support? He was like, well, no; try and make it, you know, reasonable.

So I think I probably would have had an understanding or at least something in the back of my head saying, put down what you think is most critical on this list. And perhaps that's why some of these other items, although important, maybe I didn't view as critical --

Q Okay.

A -- as what made the final cut in exhibit 3.

Q Okay. That's helpful.

Do you recall whether the request that RSO [REDACTED] made to you to prepare this wish list, was that connected in any way to discussions about the long-term presence in Benghazi?

A I don't believe it was.

Q Okay. So, knowing that, what was your expectation when you

sent this list of requests in as to whether they could or would be met?

A My expectation was he would forward this or discuss this back with DS headquarters and some, perhaps all, of the recommendations would be approved.

Q Okay. Do you recall whether he did, in fact, or did you ever learn that he did, in fact, submit this request back to anyone in Washington or at main State?

A I never found out. I never followed up.

Q In the -- well, actually, before we move on, in exhibit 3, the list of requests, on page -- we don't have page numbers here, but the last page of the request, which talks about equipment request, there was a discussion in the last hour about the belt-fed, crew-served weapon, which you referred to as a machine gun. I would like to ask you about that.

In the discussion of who added which component, do you recall, was this your suggestion or was this another ARSO's suggestion?

A It was, I want to say, [REDACTED] suggestion, but it could've been [REDACTED].

Q Okay. But it wasn't your suggestion.

A I did not come up with it, but I agreed with it.

Q Okay. That's fair.

You've mentioned your intent to put a machine gun if this request were to be granted, I believe you said, in a window in one of the buildings. Which building?

A I would have put it in the residential villa, C Villa --

Q Okay.

A -- where it could be transported to the roof if need be.

Q Okay. Was Villa C, was that clearly visible from outside the compound, beyond the walls?

A It was certainly visible from the wedding hall across the street. And it would be the first villa that you would come in contact with, as well as the QRF villa, when you come through the front gate.

Q Okay. And the window that you were proposing putting the machine gun in, which direction was that facing?

A I wouldn't put it in a window. I would put it on the roof of that villa. But it would be facing the main gate.

Q Okay. So that wouldn't necessarily have been visible from outside the compound, beyond the wall.

A The actual machine gun? I doubt you'd be able to see it out there.

Q Okay.

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

Q And you would have left it inside of the building to be transported to the roof if there was an emergency? Is that the idea?

A Yes.

Q And about how long would it take someone to do that, to move it from the inside to the roof?

A Not very long. I mean, it's heavy, but it can be carried by one person. I mean, it would take a minute to go out the window and up the ladder to the roof.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q I would like to refer you back to exhibit 14. This as an email from you to [REDACTED], August 23.

And, again, this email, you had mentioned to us, included the security requests document. I'll just read you right here a quote. "Our Internet just came back up, so I have attached the security/manpower/equipment requests. Some of them are long shots, but it doesn't hurt to ask," close quote.

You had mentioned a moment ago some of your expectations about whether requests would be fulfilled or not, and I just would like to ask you what you meant when you said some of those requests were long shots.

A A belt-fed weapon I would say was a long shot.

Q Why? Why do you think that?

A I'm trying to remember why. I believe it was with the desk officer I mentioned that, the possibility of getting that, and I think I was told that it was unlikely because of the residential area we were in. That sort of weapon could do a lot of damage to surrounding houses, people, cars. So that seemed like it would have been a long shot.

Some of these, based on the time it takes to construct and the cost -- for instance, building a man trap, I thought that might have been a long shot.

I mean, I don't know if you want me to go through each one of these and say -- or is that enough -- what I think could have been a long shot.

Q I mean, if there are more that you thought were long shots in the list.

And maybe just understand, when you send the request in, why caveat that some are, some aren't and not identify which ones are or aren't? Did you have some sort of understanding that RSO [REDACTED] would know what you meant by that?

A I think probably any DS agent that served overseas that looked at this list would recognize that some of them are easy fixes and some of them take either a little bit more effort or a little bit more money. So, for instance, a Delta barrier is really expensive, and any DS agent would look at that and know that that's an expensive item, whereas shatter-resistant film on the windows is not particularly expensive.

Q And, again, just to clarify, you recall only sending this security requests list to the Tripoli RSO, is that correct, in this timeframe?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And did the RSO ever respond to any of these requests directly?

A I don't remember a response, no.

Q Okay. And did you ever take any steps, or any of the other ARSOs on the compound, to follow up on the status of any of these requests?

A I didn't. I did not. All I remember is attaching it with the email I sent [REDACTED] for the turnover document, and I don't know if

he followed up either.

Q And, to your knowledge, did you forward it or send it to anyone at main State?

A I don't believe I did, but I don't know for sure.

Q Okay.

I'd like to turn our attention now to the discussion about the February 17 Martyrs Brigade and the QRF. We had an extended conversation about your opinions, your thoughts about the QRF, the Brigade, and some of the individual members. And we're harking back now to the first hour, so I appreciate your indulgence here as we walk through some of these things, but I just would like to clarify or clear up a few matters related to your opinions about the QRF.

You had mentioned that you'd heard rumors of a counterintelligence concern related to one of the members of 17 February Martyrs Brigade; is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Do you recall if that rumor or that concern was substantiated during your time there?

A It was not substantiated, no.

Q Okay. And just for the purposes of having as clean of a record as possible, who was that person? Was that a QRF member who was on the compound at any point in time?

A To my knowledge, he had previously served as a QRF member on the compound.

Q Okay. But was that during your time in Benghazi?



A No.

Q Okay. And it was --

A They tried to send him back during my time, but I refused him.

Q Okay. That was going to be my followup question.

You'd also, in that discussion, talked about some general concerns you had -- I don't want to mischaracterize what you say, so please correct me if I'm wrong, but that you had perhaps some generalized concerns just about any Libyans on the compound. Is that a fair summary of your concerns?

A I would have CI concerns about any Libyans that were on the compound. And that's based on the CI environment and the prior environment under Qadhafi regime, where Libyans were almost forced to report information to the host government out of fear, you know, for their life or their family's safety.

Q And were those concerns, were they generalized concerns? Were they specific concerns based on specific incidents or reporting?

A At other posts I had been to, I had seen plenty of these CI concerns that were justified, turned out to be true, and it seemed likely that I should take the same precautions related to the Libyan employees we had.

Later on, when I served in Tripoli, many of my concerns were justified with Libyan counterintelligence issues on the compound there.

Q And when you say "counterintelligence," can you just

explain for us what that means, a counterintelligence risk or concern?

A That would be Libyans reporting on us and our activities

Q Okay. And would that have been related -- why was that a concern?

A Part of the concern is [REDACTED] knowing information about us and what we're doing makes us vulnerable, the Americans vulnerable to intelligence pitches, for lack of a better word, [REDACTED]. It can also lead to security vulnerabilities if they're providing that information to people that maybe do not like the United States or wish to do us harm.

Q Okay.

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

Q You said that you had CI concerns, counterintelligence concerns, also with foreign nationals from other countries; is that right?

A Yes.

Q So that's common and generalized for foreign nationals, period? Is that sort of an accurate way of understanding that?

A For me, there would only be a handful of countries in the world where I would not have counterintelligence concerns with the local nationals.

Q And you said you had some specific ones when you were in Tripoli well after the attacks and some specific ones in other countries.

A Yes.

Q Did you ever have a specific one for someone who was on the compound when you worked in Benghazi?

A Well, I had a CI concern about the QRF member they tried to provide us. And I had a concern in a similar vein with [REDACTED], that he wasn't necessarily being forthright with information with us. That's different than spying on us or reporting on us, but I felt it was somewhat in the same vein.

Q And what do you mean by "he wasn't being forthright with information"?

A In the interview I had with [REDACTED], who was the member of the QRF that resigned, I believe he had mentioned that [REDACTED] perhaps knew more information about the prior attack on the U.S. Mission and was not sharing it with us.

Q And so that created suspicion that maybe that was accurate?

A It created suspicion that, if he's withholding that information from us, it led me to question why he was holding that information from us and what else might he be withholding from us.

Q And did you ever have any evidence or any sort of -- anything ever happen to sort of prove your suspicions correct, I guess?

A No.

Q And you said in light of these generalized and sometimes specific concerns about foreign nationals, you take precautions. What are those precautions?

A If it's a specific person I have a concern with, I would

offer [REDACTED] to see if they have similar concerns and ask them to run various checks on that person.

I would also -- I believe in this case I had instructed the other people on the compound, the other Americans on the compound, to just be careful about what sort of information we were discussing when we were around the QRF.

Q So you took some specific precautions here. One of them was instructing the other Americans to keep your information away from the QRF. Is that right?

A Yes.

Q [REDACTED]

A I'm almost positive I did. I can't say for certain, but fairly positive that I discussed this with them.

Q [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

A I can't remember. I know I've discussed 17 February with them. I'm almost positive I would've discussed both of these incidents you said, but I can't say for certain.

Q Did you report both of those to Tripoli?

A I reported some of my concerns I had with CI issues with the QRF to the desk officer, because I thought he would have more institutional knowledge about the QRF. And I most likely would have cc'd maybe [REDACTED] in Tripoli or somebody, but I don't know for sure.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Do you recall ever recommending to [REDACTED] that Embassy

Tripoli hire a member of the QRF for their bodyguard program?

A Yes.

Q Okay. What can --

A [REDACTED].

Q -- you tell us about that?

A When [REDACTED] resigned, or was telling me he was resigning, he was asking if there was a position, a bodyguard position, for him at U.S. Embassy Tripoli. And I asked [REDACTED] if they had an opening, and, as I recall, [REDACTED] said they did.

Q And did you make a specific recommendation that they bring or hire a former member of the 17 February Martyrs Brigade in Tripoli?

A I probably would have said something to the extent that he was one of the more capable QRF members and, you know, a good guy, somebody that we, you know, trusted probably more than the other ones.

Q So, just to differentiate at the individual level, it sounds like you had at least some confidence in some of the QRF members. Is that fair?

A I had the most confidence in [REDACTED]. The others I didn't have much confidence in.

Q Do you recall -- you mentioned that you reached out to the desk officer -- is that at DS/IP/NEA? Would that be [REDACTED]?

A Yes.

Q Okay -- to ask whether he had any institutional knowledge about this. Do you recall what he told you?

A I don't recall, no.

Q Do you recall in your discussion with [REDACTED] whether you also inquired with him about the future relationship with the 17 February Martyrs Brigade?

A I remember suggesting that DS vet, hire, and train the people that we wanted, that we had chosen, as opposed to 17 February just providing us people that we were basically forced to take. I thought that would be the better plan if we were going to use local security. And I don't remember what the response was.

Q So was that a proposal you made?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Do you recall who you made that proposal to?

A [REDACTED], I believe.

Q Okay.

I would like to just real quickly here -- and I appreciate the indulgence. We'll enter into the record exhibit 15.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 15

Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q And just in the interest of time, I'll go ahead and read some of the description. So this is an email dated August 6, 2012. It's from you to [REDACTED]. The subject is, quote, "Re: Bodyguard position," close quote. Doc number is C05396698.

All set?

A Uh-huh.

Q So I'd just like to begin at the bottom. In an earlier

email, you wrote to [REDACTED], quote, "[REDACTED], we're having some issues with our QRF here, and at some point someone is going to have to make some difficult decisions. In the meantime, though, one of our QRF members" -- redacted -- "recently quit and would like to work as a bodyguard at Embassy Tripoli. I told him I would ask if there were any available positions or if you needed him for anything. He was our best QRF member tactically, was the only one who reportedly fought in the revolution, and speaks fairly good English. He would be a good asset if you have a spot for him," close quote.

[REDACTED] responds, quote, "Actually, [REDACTED], I would hire him almost immediately. We just upped our Bodyguard detail to 35 members, and we need 20 bodies. All the help we can get here will be appreciative.

"On another note, keep in mind that Benghazi is not a traditional Consular nor Embassy post. The QRF there has helped keep security in place for almost a year now. And Benghazi will not be closing down anytime soon. Be as flexile" -- should be "flexible" -- "and as patient as possible with the personnel there," close quote.

And we'll start just with that first chain. This seems to be a continuation of the discussion we were just having, where you recommended one of the members of the QRF. Does this refresh your --

A Yes.

Q -- recollection of that event? Okay.

And so, in that email, you had raised -- you mentioned that there were issues. You were having some issues with the QRF and you might

have to make some difficult decisions.

Were the difficult decisions you're referring to, is that in reference to whether -- can you just explain what you meant by the difficult decision?

A The difficult decision would have been whether or not we were going to keep using this militia as our QRF. And, at some point, I thought we were going to need to make the decision to go another route.

Q Okay.

A Training other people.

Q And [REDACTED] response to you, he tells you to, quote, "be as flexible and as patient as possible with the personnel there," close quote.

Did ARSO [REDACTED], to your understanding, did he also have specific knowledge of the 17 February Martyrs Brigade, for instance? Had he served in Benghazi?

A Yes, I believe he had.

Q Okay. And what did you interpret that line to mean when he wrote that to you?

A I interpreted it as his opinion. I've disagreed with him before on his opinion as it relates to Libyan bodyguard personnel. I don't know what else I can say about that. I disagreed with it, but that was his opinion.

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

Q Was there another group, other than 17 Feb, at the time that you could've gone to for this kind of QRF support in Libya?



A There may have been, but not that I'm aware of.

Q So if you had decided to -- if you had actually moved forward with the recommendation to, sort of, stop using this QRF support, what would you have been recommending to do?

A I think we could have done something similar to what Tripoli had done, which is where your direct hire, Libyan nationals, and then vetting them and training them through DS trainers. I think there's some advantages to doing it that way as opposed to how we did it.

Q Did you ever communicate that to somebody at the time?

A I wrote it to [REDACTED] in a previous -- oh.

Thanks.

In the equipment requests, or under "manpower requests" in exhibit --

Mr. Evers. I think it's exhibit 3.

Mr. [REDACTED] -- exhibit 3.

It says, "The use of a brigade QRF is not desirable for many reasons. Request a minimum of four local bodyguards trained by DS to use on movements as well as QRF duties."

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Do you what RSO [REDACTED] position was on this matter?

A I don't know what his position was then.

Q With this email, were you seeking to initiate a discussion about the QRF? Were you making a specific recommendation? Were you seeking Embassy Tripoli's blessing or approval for a different course of action? We're in exhibit 15.

A I think I would classify that as I was putting out feelers to see if they had some of the same issues or if they would be amenable to choosing a different course of action resulting in QRF.

Q Did you ever feel any pressure from Embassy Tripoli not to report on problems about the QRF to them?

A No.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. How about from headquarters? Did you ever feel any pressure from them not to report about problems?

Mr. [REDACTED] No.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Can we just go off the record for a second?

[Discussion off the record.]

Mr. Kenny. We'll go back on the record.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Just one final line of questioning before we hopefully move to our next setting.

You had mentioned -- again, we're harking back here to the first round, but I wrote that you felt that that there was pushback from certain members of the February 17th QRF on the compound in regard to supporting moves off the compound. Do you recall that discussion?

A Yes.

Q Okay. But do you recall or were you aware of whether there were any discussions between those members and their parent command about whether the scope of their work for the mission would include off-compound moves? For instance, did you ever hear, did the parent command ever express concerns about increased risks to their members

in supporting off-compound moves?

A I don't remember that, no.

Q Okay.

And just to close that out, as a part of that discussion, of whether they were supporting the moves -- and you mentioned or we talked about the work requirements that were created for them -- was there a worry or concern that they would not fulfill their internal defense role at that time?

A My concerns were they were not competent or professional enough to fulfill their internal defense role. They may have tried to do it, but I don't know how -- I didn't have the confidence that they would be effective in doing it.

Q Okay.

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

Q I just want to catch up on a couple things that came up during the interview today. One of them was back to the Emergency Action Committee in mid-August. I think, coming out of that, one of the options that was discussed was [REDACTED] if there is a dangerous situation; is that right?

A Yes.

Q Did you ever recommend, during the time you were in Benghazi, [REDACTED] due to some kind of an emergency? And I mean that in terms of, like, that kind of a [REDACTED] instead of, like, a long-term-view sort of --

A Right, like a short-term.

Q Yeah.

A I think we had discussed it regarding maybe one of the Qadhafi anniversaries one of my last few days in country, but we didn't do it. I don't remember why we decided not to do it, but we didn't.

Q And if you felt that the situation had become dangerous enough that you needed to do it, would you have recommended doing it?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And so, during the time that you were there, is it fair to say it was never dangerous enough that you would have decided to do it, [REDACTED]?

A I never felt that there was a -- it was certainly very dangerous. I never felt that there was a specific enough threat to us that would necessitate us moving to the compound.

Q That's helpful.

I think also during the interview you said what I think is the same thing in two different ways, but I want to make sure that I'm not misunderstanding.

One of things that you said, and tell me if I'm just misstating this, but one of the things I believe that you said is that you didn't think that you could defend the compound. And, in other instances, you said you didn't think you could defend the compound against a coordinated attack.

Is that essentially the same thing?

A It is. I was qualifying it. I think we probably could have defended the compound if we were encountering one or two attackers,

but in the event of a large-scale, coordinated attack, it would've been difficult.

Q And did you have a specific warning that there was going to be a coordinated attack against the compound in Benghazi?

A No.

Q Did you have reason to believe that a coordinated attack was likely on the compound while you were there?

A No.

Q And if you had thought that it was likely or that the risk level of a coordinated attack was going up, would you have recommended taking steps at that point, such as [REDACTED] or evacuation or something?

A Yes, certainly. I would've most likely recommended that we leave Benghazi.

Q Okay.

I think in another instance, I think a couple of times, you sort of described the recommended security requests, the physical security requests that you made, and you said that you didn't think that if you had gotten all of those things that it necessarily would have made a difference in the particular attack that happened on September 11. Is that accurate?

A Yes. I can't say for certainty whether it would have made a difference. We've been attacked at various posts around the world with even more security than what I was asking for, and it didn't make a difference. So, like I said, I think it would have been safer. I

can't say that it would have changed the end result.

Q And, while you were there, is it fair to say that you and the people that you worked with worked very hard to try and make it a safer place?

A Yes. That's a fair statement.

Q And would that include the people that you were working with in Tripoli? Were they also trying to make the Benghazi compound a safer place?

A Yes.

Q And would that include the people you were working with in headquarters? Were they also trying to make the Benghazi compound a safer place?

A I can't say for certain what they were doing in headquarters, but I would say that the person I talked to, the desk officer, was concerned with our safety.

Q That's [REDACTED]?

A Right. Yes.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q So, at this point, we'll just shift gears. And I'll try to do this as expeditiously as possible, but I have a list of allegations that have been publicly made about Benghazi. I'd just like to walk through some of those allegations with you and ask whether you have any evidence to substantiate any of these.

It has been alleged that the Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, intentionally blocked military action on the night of the attacks. One

Congressman speculated that, quote, "Secretary Clinton told Leon Panetta to stand down," close quote, and this resulted in the Defense Department not sending more assets to help in Benghazi.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary of State Clinton ordered Secretary of Defense Panetta to, quote, "stand down," close quote, 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 Secretary Clinton personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security resources in 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 been alleged that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risk posed by Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for military operations in Libya in

spring 2011.

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

A No.

Q It has also 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 they found, quote, "no support for this allegation," close quote.

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

A No.

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

A No.

Q A team of CIA security personnel was temporarily delayed from departing the Annex to assist the Special Mission Compound, and there have been a number of allegations about the cause of and appropriateness of that delay.

The House Intelligence Committee issued a bipartisan report



concluding that the team was not ordered to, quote, "stand down," close quote, but that instead there were tactical disagreements on the ground over how quickly to depart.

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

A No.

Q Putting aside whether you personally agree with the decision to delay temporarily or think it was the right decision, do you have any evidence that there was a bad or improper reason behind the temporary delay of CIA security personnel who departed the Annex to assist the Special Mission Compound?

A No.

Q A concern has been raised by one individual that in the course of producing documents to the Accountability Review Board damaging documents may have been removed or scrubbed out of that production.

Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department removed or scrubbed damaging documents from the materials that were provided to the ARB?

A No.

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

A No.

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

A No.

Q It has also 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 also been alleged that Ambassador Susan Rice made an intentional misrepresentation when she spoke on the Sunday talk shows about the Benghazi attacks.

Do you have any evidence that Ambassador Rice intentionally misrepresented facts about the Benghazi attacks on the Sunday talk shows?

A No.

Q It has also been alleged that the President of the United States was, quote, "virtually AWOL as Commander in Chief," close quote, on the night of the attacks and that he was, quote, "missing in action," close quote.

Do you have any evidence to support the allegation that the President was, quote, "virtually AWOL as Commander in Chief," close quote, or, quote, "missing in action," close quote, on the night of attacks?

A No.

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

A Republican staff report issued by the House Armed Services Committee found that, quote, "there was no stand-down order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi," close quote.

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

Do you 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. Thank you.

And that concludes our interview. We'll go off the record.

[Whereupon, at 4:15 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

---

Date

*Errata Sheet*

**Select Committee on Benghazi**

The witness declined to review the accompanying transcript.