

RPTR BAKER

EDTR HUMKE

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

INTERVIEW OF: [REDACTED]

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2015

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held in Room HVC-205,  
Capitol Visitor Center, commencing at 10:05 a.m.

Appearances:

For the SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI:

SHARON JACKSON, DEPUTY CHIEF COUNSEL

SHERIA CLARKE, COUNSEL

KIM BETZ, MEMBER OUTREACH LIAISON

SUSANNE SACHSMAN GROOMS, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR/GENERAL COUNSEL

HEATHER SAWYER, MINORITY CHIEF COUNSEL

PETER KENNY, MINORITY SENIOR COUNSEL

BRENT WOOLFORK, MINORITY SENIOR PROFESSIONAL STAFF

For the U.S DEPARTMENT OF STATE:

AUSTIN EVERS, SENIOR ADVISOR

For [REDACTED]:

RAEKA SAFAI, AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION

Ms. Jackson. All right. We'll get started because your time is valuable.

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 at the U.S. diplomatic facilities in Benghazi, Libya, and related matters pursuant to House Resolution 567 of the 113th Congress and House Resolution 5 of the 114th Congress.

Could you give us your full name for the record, please.

Ambassador [REDACTED]. Sure. [REDACTED].

Ms. Jackson. And for the reporter, I gave it to her but, could you spell your last name?

Ambassador [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] as in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] as in [REDACTED],

[REDACTED].

Ms. Jackson. Okay. We appreciate your appearance before this committee today for this interview. Again, my name is Sharon Jackson. I am one of the counsel for the majority staff of the committee, and we're going to go around and introduce everybody again so we have that for the record, and we know we went through the introductions really fast this morning. There will be no quiz at the end as to who is who. So to your left is --

Ms. Safai. Raeka Safai, American Foreign Service Association.

Mr. Evers. Austin Evers, State Department.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. I'm Susanne Sachsman Grooms. I'm from the minority staff.

Mr. Kenny. Peter Kenny with the minority staff.

Ms. Clarke. Sheria Clarke with the majority staff.

Ms. Betz. And Kim Betz with the majority staff.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. Before we begin this interview, I'd like to go over the procedural ground rules that we follow in transcribed interviews before a congressional committee and explain how the interview will proceed.

The way questioning proceeds in congressional committees is that a member or a staff member from the majority staff will ask questions for up to an hour, and then the minority, either member or staff, will have the opportunity to ask questions for up to the next hour. And we generally firmly adhere to these one-hour timeframes; however, we have on occasion adjusted it in the past, but that's generally how the process will go.

Questions for this committee may only be asked by a member of the committee or a designated staff member, and then we'll go back and forth in these hour-long interviews until each side has exhausted all the questions that they have for you.

Unlike a testimony or deposition in Federal court, the committee's format is not bound by the Rules of Evidence. The witness or their counsel may raise objections for privilege, which is subject to the review of the chairman of the committee. If these objections cannot be resolved in the interview, the witness can be required to return for a deposition or a hearing.

Members and staff of the committee, however, are not permitted

to raise objections when the other side is asking questions. This really has not been an issue that we have encountered in the past, but I wanted you to be clear on the process that we will follow.

The room that we are in in this session is going to be unclassified. If any question that is posed to you would call for any answer that would get into the realm of classified information, please let us know, and we will reserve it for our classified session. We have made arrangements for a classified facility to be available this afternoon, and we can transition into it at a later date. So, just let us know, and we can reserve that question for the afternoon session. And I anticipate that we will have a short classified session this afternoon.

You are welcome to confer with the counsel who has accompanied you at any time throughout the interview, but if it's just a question that needs to be clarified, restated or repeated, please just ask us to do so, and we would be happy to do that. It's very important to us that you understand what we're asking so that you can give us the best answer that you have. If you need to confer with your counsel at any time, just let us know. We will go off the record. We will give you the opportunity to step outside and have a quiet, secure, place to confer with counsel regarding any matter that is brought up today.

We will also take a break whenever it is convenient for you. This is generally, we generally take a break after every hour of questioning; but if you need a break before then, please just let us know. Again, we'll go off the record. We have water here. We have coffee, so if

you need anything, just also let us know.

We hope to make this process as easy and comfortable as possible given the circumstances that we all find ourselves in today. As you can see, we have an official reporter taking down everything that you say to make a written record of this proceeding, so we ask that you give verbal responses to the questions that are asked as opposed to nods of the head, shaking.

Ambassador [REDACTED]. Okay.

Ms. Jackson. It's the common way of everyone doing that, and I'm going to also ask the reporter to interject if either of us get into the habit of giving nonverbal responses to anything.

The other thing that I'm going to ask the reporter to do is that as is human nature, we sometimes have a tendency to talk when the other person is talking when you're sure of what the question is and start to give an answer or a questioner going on to the next question before, so in order to get an accurate transcript of what is asked and answered today, I will do my level best to give short pause, deep breath, after you answer your question before I go on to the next to make sure that the reporter gets everything down, and I would ask her to interject too if we tend to get caught up in our conversation and don't do that.

And, again, if any question posed to you is unclear in any way, please just ask that it be restated, broken down, repeated in some way so that you understand what we're going for, because we'll be happy to repeat or clarify anything.

We do ask that you give the most complete, truthful answer that

you can to the questions that are posed to you today. We ask that you give us your best recollection. We understand that these events were a few years ago and memories fade over time and things aren't clear.

We have some documents that we are likely to show you today that were written on or at the time events occurred that will hopefully clarify things, put things in proper time perspective and things like that. So we're not here to trick or to, you know, capture anything. We really want to know what happened, and the only way for us to know what happened is for us to ask the people who were there at the time.

So if you cannot recall or if you don't know or can't remember something, just say so, but we'd also ask that you think about who might have the answer to that question and give us someone who was there or who also had that knowledge so that we can explore those issues with that person.

I don't know that you want to be known as the person who gave someone up to come before this committee, but it's really not that. There are just questions that we would like answers to, and we want to explore those.

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

Ambassador [REDACTED]. Yes.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. And do you also understand that this applies to a congressional committee.

Ambassador [REDACTED]. Yes and questions that are posed to you by staff in an interview?

Ambassador [REDACTED]. Yes.

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

Ambassador [REDACTED]. Yes.

Ms. Jackson. Is there any reason that you would be unable to provide truthful answers to today's questions?

Ambassador [REDACTED]. No.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. Well that's the end of my preamble and the process that we're going to follow. I would ask the minority if they have anything they would like to add?

Mr. Kenny. No. We're all set. We just want to thank the Ambassador for her time and for appearing here today.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. I see that the clock says 10:14, so we'll start the first hour of questioning.

#### EXAMINATION

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Ambassador, you are currently the Ambassador to Algeria. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q And how long have you had that position?

A I was confirmed -- I don't actually remember when I was confirmed. Last summer sworn in on August 14th of last year, so I've been working on the ground in Algeria since September 13th of 2014.

Q So you're coming up on your one-year anniversary of being



in country being the Ambassador of Algeria?

A Yes.

Q Congratulations on that. That's wonderful.

A Thank you.

Q Can you just kind of walk us through your past experience with the State Department because we understand that you are a career Foreign Service officer?

A Yes, that's correct. I'm career Foreign Service. I joined the Foreign Service in March 1994. My first assignment was in ~~Tashkent, Pakistan~~ <sup>Tashkent, Uzbekistan</sup>. Then I worked in Tunis, Tunisia. Came back to Washington where I served as the NEA staff assistant working for Assistant Secretary of State.

I was on the Iran desk in Washington. Went out to Jordan as the Regional Refugee Coordinator. From there I did a year of Azerbaijani language training. And then I was in Azerbaijan. A year of Arabic training. Then I was in Libya as DCM, and then back in Washington where I served for about 6 months as the Director of the Office of Israel and Palestine Affairs and then the Director of Office of Egypt and Iraq Affairs before I was confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Algeria.

Q And for purpose of this interview, you said that you had previously been the DCM in Libya?

A Yes, that's correct.

Q And what does DCM stand for?

A Oh sorry. Deputy Chief of Mission.

Q Thank you. And when were you in Libya?

A I started my assignment there on July 2, 2009, and I served in country, in Libya, until February 25th, 2011, when we evacuated the embassy fully and suspended operations because of the start of the Libyan revolution.

And then the Embassy evacuated to Washington, and we kept, we worked sort of in Embassy in exile from, I believe I came back to the department like on March 2nd, or something, 2011; and I was there through the end of August, 2011, during which time I did serve in Benghazi on two separate temporary duty stints filling in for Chris Stevens as the Acting Special Envoy.

In August 2011, our official status as Embassy Tripoli expired because the State Department had run the course of the 180 days of evacuation status for Embassy Tripoli, so we created a new entity that we called the Libya cell. And the purpose of the Libya cell was to either staff the mission in Benghazi if the situation continued and we needed to have our only representation in country in Benghazi because Qadhafi was still in Tripoli, or the Libya cell would serve as the nucleus of the group that would go back into Tripoli to reopen the Embassy.

So that was a bureaucratic way of keeping a core team together so that we could provide the staffing that was needed for an overseas presence in Libya regardless of what would happen in terms of the overall political environment there and where we would ultimately be.

So beginning in, it was either August or September, I was reassigned to the Libya cell, where I again served as the Deputy Chief

of Mission of the Libya Cell, which is a sort of odd title, and I was assigned to Washington but went back into Libya on September 10th, 2011, as part of the small group that went in to reopen the Embassy in Tripoli. And I stayed there until June 15th, 2012 when I completed my assignment.

Q And I'm sorry. What date in June was your last day in Libya?

A June 15th, 2012.

Q I want to go back and talk about this Libya cell for just a little bit because I want to make sure that I understand it. This is something kind of new that I have -- well, everything about the State Department is fairly new to me. But to make sure that I understand, as I understand what you just said, Embassy Tripoli suspended operations February 25th of 2011, and that suspension could only last for 180 days. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And by what authority does it expire after 180 days?

A I'm actually not sure of the legal parlance, but we had gone on fully ordered departure status and evacuated. So the State Department regs state that an Embassy can remain on a departure status, whether ordered or authorized, only for a maximum of 180 days.

And the conditions in Tripoli, given that Qadhafi was still there and the insurrection was still ongoing was such that it wasn't appropriate for us to go back into Tripoli to reopen the Embassy. But we wanted, the State Department, me personally as the Deputy Chief of Mission in Libya, wanted to make sure that we had the resources necessary to, as I said earlier, either staff up the mission in Benghazi

if we needed to continue our presence there as the diplomatic representation to the revolutionary authorities or to be able to jump back into Tripoli as soon as possible to be able to reopen the Embassy; and that Libya cell gave us the flexibility to do that. Because otherwise we would have to reassign everyone, and we did reassign everyone except this core group of positions that we kept.

Q And how many people was that in this Libya cell?

A I don't remember off the top of my head. I would have to really think it through. It was probably like six people, six to eight maximum.

Q Ambassador Cretz?

A Ambassador Cretz was never reassigned because he was the Ambassador to Libya, so he stayed the Ambassador to Libya no matter what.

Q Okay. So that didn't expire, if you will, after the 180 days when this core operation --

A Correct. And I'm not a State Department lawyer, so I couldn't explain to you the difference in his status versus the rest of us; but it was very clear as we were sorting this out there was a difference for him.

Q Who were some of the other people who were part of the Libya cell?

A It was me. I'm trying to remember. [REDACTED] was assigned as part of the Libya cell. He was the RSO. [REDACTED], who is a political officer; [REDACTED], who was a political and consular

officer. We had a GSO who was assigned. I'm picturing the guy's face. I can't remember him. Sorry. But we mapped out, and I'm sure somewhere in your files you have the paperwork that maps how exactly who that would be because that was very well documented. Like I said it was either six or eight positions.

Q So there was some sort of action memo or information memo designating the six or eight of you as part of the Libya cell?

A I'm fairly sure if my memory serves me correctly that there was an action memo, yes.

Q And who would have signed off on that action memo?

A I don't remember quite honestly.

Q Would it likely have been the Under Secretary For Management?

A That's likely, but I couldn't tell you with 100 percent certainty. I would have to look at the documents again and tell you who had done it. This was all in the summer of 2011, so 4 years ago.

Q This would have been around August of 2011 when the 180 days expired?

A Yes.

Q Whenever that date was?

A It was actually I remember it was like the day before Tripoli fell. Actually it was quite ironic.

Q Almost made it?

A Yes.

Q Again, if you could walk me through, what was the purpose

of the Libya cell?

A The purpose of the Libya cell was to ensure that we had appropriate staffing to continue diplomatic engagement in Libya, either to increase the presence in Benghazi if the current situation continued, the current situation being an ongoing struggle between Qadhafi and the revolutionary forces, or in the event that Qadhafi suddenly left power, that we could go in quickly and restaff and reopen the Embassy in Tripoli.

Q Okay. And that ultimately happened?

A Correct.

Q The Embassy Tripoli reopened in late September 2011. Is that correct?

A Correct.

Q Okay. During the time that Embassy Tripoli was in suspended operations, I believe the term that was used to describe you and others was Tripoli in Exile, or Embassy Tripoli in Exile or Embassy Tripoli on the Potomac?

A Yes.

Q Okay. What were your duties and responsibilities during that timeframe?

A Well, first when we immediately evacuated the Embassy, it was cleaning up -- not cleaning up in the literal sense -- but making sure that we had all the appropriate procedures in place to look after our properties and our locally engaged staff whom we left behind. And for me that was actually the biggest responsibility because I was quite

worried about their safety and security.

So there were lot of meetings initially working to set up protecting powers. I believe the Hungarians ultimately took it, although it was a convoluted series of meetings to set that up. And working with Under Secretary Kennedy and others to make sure that we had the appropriate mechanisms in place and the authorities, by the way, to continue paying our staff who continued to work while they were there. The local guards were continuing to patrol the properties, including our residences.

A number of people were, you know, undertaking activities to make sure that staff were being paid, et cetera. So it was quite a complicated operation. And especially given that we suspended operations in the course of, you know, two days basically, there was a lot of loose ends to tie up. We also at the same time took on a political reporting function like an Embassy because we had the contacts and the familiarity with the folks on the ground, so we reached out to people throughout Libya to talk to them about what was going on. You know, what's the military status? What's the fighting? What's the status of political party formation or the Transitional National Council?

So every day our team was reaching out making phone calls, and we did a daily update. I think it was daily. Maybe not every day, but a very regular update to Secretary Clinton about what we thought, you know, what we heard, what was going on and on the ground. And then as time progressed, we also used our Embassy Tripoli staff to supplement

the activities of the Libya desk which had gone from being a one person desk to suddenly in the midst of a rather high-profile and taxing crisis.

Q Let me just stop you there, and I want to go back for just a moment and have you expand a little bit on the decision to leave Tripoli. You said it happened very fast, in the matter of a course of days?

A Yes.

Q Can you just kind of walk us through what happened, who decided, who was making the call, just in that very short timeframe?

A Okay. Well, the uprising really started on February 17th in Benghazi. I believe that was a Thursday. On Friday in Tripoli, things started to get a little tense, sporadic gunfire. Then Saturday night, sustained gunfire, so we started having emergency action committee meetings that Sunday at the Embassy to talk about what our response should be. I started working immediately with Under Secretary Kennedy and his team, which is standard practice by the way in the State Department to do conference calls with Under Secretary Kennedy, the Operations Center, the Crisis Response people, Consular Affairs, Diplomatic Security, tapping into the whole network of resources here in the State Department to make sure that they understood what was happening on the ground and, you know, what our asks were and our needs.

So we started working on the mechanism to get people out. There was an aborted attempt to get our dependents out via a flight. That



didn't work, so we ultimately ended up getting a ferry that was chartered by the State Department. I'm sure you've seen all the stories about that. But then in the meantime, the political and military situation kept worsening. And there, of course, were high-level policy discussions back here in Washington, which are classified so I cannot discuss them in this forum. I participated in them via SVTCS.

And I think what is unclassified, I feel comfortable sharing unclassified, is that I was very clear with the people on those policy planning discussions that I felt very strongly that the administration could not change its policy toward Qadhafi until we got all of the U.S. employees out safely because we did not have appropriate security at our Embassy in Tripoli. It met none of our State Department security standards.

And my assumption was if Qadhafi wanted to do anything to us, he could, you know, whether taking people hostage, siccing, you know, an angry mob on us. He did have a track record of sending people to burn down diplomatic facilities previously, so I was very firm that our policy towards Qadhafi could not change until we were out safely. And so I think that resulted in an accelerated timeline to close up shop and get out.

Q Now, as I understand it, at this time in February of 2011, you are the charge. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Because Ambassador Cretz is back in the United States at

the time?

A Yes.

Q And so you are the highest ranking State Department official in country. Is that correct?

A Correct.

Q All right, so was Ambassador Cretz part of all of these discussions from his place back here at Main State or not?

A To the best of my recollection, no, he was not. I believe that he had been assigned to do something related to Egypt and was actually on the road, travelling in Europe somewhere.

Q Okay. So who was part of -- you said you were having multiple conversations with the Under Secretary of management office. Was the NEA front office involved in these conversations?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Other bureaus or offices, were they engaged in this decisionmaking?

A Given that this was all more than 4 years ago, I couldn't give you an exhaustive list, but certainly State Department standard practice on this is well known, and hopefully well-documented in the paperwork that you have. As I said earlier, it would have been Under Secretary Kennedy and/or his representatives from his team, Consular Affairs, Diplomatic Security, the Operations Center, the Crisis Management Team within Operations Center, the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, the guy who's responsible for leasing airplanes and ferries. You know, it's a whole cast of thousands.

Q Okay. So everyone leaves Libya, or at least the U.S. direct-hire personnel leave. Your locally employed staff obviously stay behind, and you and others come back to the United States. Is that correct?

A Correct.

Q Okay. And you have Tripoli in Exile at the time?

A Correct.

Q From the time you get at the end of February, first of March, when are you first aware that there's discussion that is there's going to be a special representative sent to Benghazi?

A I was not aware during that period.

Q When did you first become aware of that?

A I received a phone call from Ambassador Cretz, I want to say it was like March 13th, because it was quite early on, and I was actually trying to plan a little vacation. He phoned me quite early in the morning and told me that he had been asked to serve in that capacity to go back, and he turned it down and that Chris Stevens would likely be asked.

Q And do you know, was Ambassador Cretz in Washington at the time?

A I don't remember exactly where he was, but I remember he called me at like 7:15 a.m.

Q Okay. Do you recall, was he overseas like in Paris at any meetings?

A I really don't remember the timeline. As I said

earlier -- actually I didn't say it earlier -- he was being asked to immediately start a lot of outreach to the political leadership of the revolutionary authorities so was travelling regularly. Because, you know, once we evacuated, it was, you know, March 1st, March 2nd, whatever it was, he immediately was asked by Deputy Secretary Burns to chair kind of a policy coordination group for Libya policy.

So my first act on going back into work was to be with him at that meeting and help figure out how we would coordinate ourselves in that capacity.

Q Was this known as the Libya policy and planning committee or group or council?

A I don't remember what it was called.

Q And who all participated in that?

A It was a broad array of people from throughout the State Department and the Interagency.

Q Generally who from the Interagency was involved?

A I couldn't give you an exhaustive list. Again, this was all 4 years ago, but certainly looking around in my memory of who was around the table, certainly USAID was part of the discussion. And that's the only kind of body that jumps to mind right now.

Q Was the National Security Staff part of it?

A I don't remember.

Q The Department of Defense?

A I don't remember.

Q The intelligence community?

A I don't remember. If you have documentation or notes from all of those meetings, I could certainly, that would help refresh the memory, but this was all a very long time ago.

Q Who was the note taker for those meetings?

A It was [REDACTED] more often than not, who was our ~~MS~~<sup>OMS</sup> or office management official.

Q And she had come back from Tripoli with you?

A Correct.

Q So that was some of the duty she had at Tripoli in Exile?

A Yes.

Q Were those notes from those meetings kept electronically?

A Presumably. I know that [REDACTED] wrote them, and we distributed them.

Q Okay. And were they in memo format?

A I don't remember.

Q Okay. Was it just a long email about what happened, or was it more of a formal document?

A It was a long email. It wasn't a formal document that was submitted through bureaucratic processes. It was produced and distributed by us, us being the Libya Embassy in Exile.

Q So on or about March 13th is the first time that you learned that Chris Stevens may be going into Benghazi. What all did you talk to Ambassador Cretz about or understand was going to be Chris Stevens' role?

A It was all very unclear.

Q Did you gain clarity over the next several days?

A I was not personally involved in any discussions where someone came to me and said Chris Stevens' role will be to be to do X, Y and Z. I personally met with Chris. I wanted to make sure that he had the knowledge and the contacts and, in fact, my telephone so that would help him sort of get started on the ground.

I remember talking to him and saying, you know, what are you going to do, local outreach, political reporting. I said, okay, well, who was going to do the political reporting and he said me. And I said really. It's kind of hard sometimes to be in a meeting and take your own notes. I said what if we send someone with you.

So we talked it through with a number of people and agreed that [REDACTED] should go out with Chris as kind of the political reporting/right-hand man due to [REDACTED] outstanding Arabic language skills and his very good knowledge of Libya.

Q Okay. And do you recall when Chris Stevens and [REDACTED] actually went into Benghazi?

A It was in April. I don't remember the exact date.

Q Do you recall that it was early in April?

A I believe so.

Q Do you recall whether there was any issues with them actually getting into Benghazi? Were they scheduled to go in before, but it took some time?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Tell us what you know about that.

A Again, I don't remember the exact timeline, but they initially went to Malta and also had at least one member from our regional security office with us in addition, you know, as part of the overall security component, and sat in Malta for quite some time and then ultimately decided the timing wasn't right.

I don't remember the timelines, and I don't remember what made them decide that the timing was right, but then they did ultimately go in in early April via boat.

Q And when you say there was some sort of delay, was this because of security concerns, or were there other logistical snafus that played a part?

A I really don't remember.

Q Okay. So do you recall what was the extent of the team that went into Benghazi in April of 2011?

A I don't recall the exact specifics. As I said earlier, Chris and [REDACTED] formed the core of the team, and there was a very robust Diplomatic Security component as well.

Q Okay. And prior to the Stevens team going in, what was your understanding of how long they were going to be in Benghazi?

A I honestly don't remember. There had been discussions of whether it should be short in and out or more indefinite, you know, go in and metaphorically plant the flag and have a longer-term presence.

But everyone agreed that having the boat stay there was a very good idea because that would be a quick way out if security conditions worsened. So if I remember correctly, the initial plan was they would

have the boat in the harbor and use that as their base and sort of do little day trips out until they had a better sense of what the reality was on the ground.

Q Okay. So you don't have a clear recollection, I just want to make sure I understand. You don't have a clear recollection as to whether the initial trip was to be for a matter of days or just kind of go with the flow, see what happens, stay as long as possible, or any other type of defined timeframe?

A I really don't remember where the debate came out. I remember that there was a debate, but I don't remember how it came out.

Q And who participated in that debate?

A I don't remember everyone who was involved in it. But certainly I was part of it and again the sort of key players that one would expect that would be there, so Under Secretary Kennedy and/or his staff depending on the appropriate level of the meeting. Diplomatic Security, of course, played a very key role in that. The Operations Center Crisis Management Team as well.

Q Other than Under Secretary Kennedy, any other principals in the Department play a role in that, any other Under Secretaries, or the Deputy Secretaries, or the Secretary herself?

A Not that I'm aware of. I did not interact with them. And by the way, I should have added that, of course, the NEA Bureau, not just me as the DCM from Embassy Tripoli, but the EX office, the executive office from the NEA Bureau, played a very important role in all of this.

Q Yes. We understand that [REDACTED] is worth her weight



in gold.

A I would second that.

Q When Chris Stevens went in as the special representative or the envoy, were you in contact with him while he was in Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q Was that daily?

A Yes.

Q Often more than once a day?

A Yes.

Q And as I have looked through the documents, and I don't want to put words in your mouth, but it seemed like you were the reporting person. He would talk to you and you would report to others within the Department. Is that how you saw your role?

A I saw my role as his backstop, because having been in a situation where the security environment was very fluid, and having limited resources, knowing that their communications setup was less than ideal as they were getting started, I thought it was very important for him to have a single point of contact that he could reach out to that could then communicate information, requests, et cetera; and also I personally felt very invested in what was happening, and I wanted to be there for him.

Q Okay. And how long did that continue, that daily if not more than once a day, phone call with him?

A Probably throughout the whole time that he was in Benghazi, so as I mentioned earlier, I did go in and fill in for him when he took

a break twice, so that was late May of 2011 and then again late July through early August also of 2011. So obviously I wasn't talking to him when he was on break, but otherwise I kept up the contact pretty regularly.

Although I think at some point we shifted from the three times a day phone calls. Once they had communications up and running and were able to start sending in situation reports, I think the frequency of the phone calls diminished. But then of course once we went back into Tripoli and Chris was still in Benghazi, we coordinated regularly as well.

And then I think, if I recall correctly, resumed these phone calls with [REDACTED], who is our office director in Maghreb Affairs, to make sure that he was then getting all the information and feeding it back in.

Q Okay. In that period of time from when Chris Stevens went in in April of 2011 and until you went back in in September of 2011 -- and it's just totally escaped me what I was going to ask, so give me a moment.

A I'm sure it will come back.

Q During that timeframe of April of 2011 through September of 2011, can you describe for us the sort of evolution of conversations about how long the Stevens, the Benghazi expedition or the Stevens expedition, was going to be in Benghazi? Were there ever discussions about pulling out or we didn't need it any more; it had served its purpose? Were there any of those type of conversations during that timeframe about the utility or usefulness of that mission?

A Quite early on, it looked as if -- Chris and team had just arrived. There was a moment when it looked like a city called Ajdabiya was about to fall to Qadhafi forces. I remember it was a Saturday, and I was on a conference call, and I remember talking to Chris and saying, are you sure you should stay? Because my perspective is very much with the events in Tripoli when we were evacuating fresh in my mind, things can change on a moment's notice; I would feel much better if he would get out now.

And Chris had, I think, a different tolerance for risk than I did. And he felt that the conditions on the ground were such that it was okay to stay. And, again, these were conference calls that involved a variety of actors in the State Department. I believe Op Center was on it and was probably documenting the call as well. So that was one instance.

But in terms of the overall what is our future, I don't remember the specifics, but I do remember an overall very strong impression from Chris that he felt it was important to stay, and the conditions were such that they should.

Q Okay. Let me hand you what I've marked as exhibit 1.

A Okay.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 1

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q And if you can take just a moment and take a look at that, and what I've handed you is a document that is numbered at the bottom

C05396329. It is an email chain that is dated April 10, 2011, and in sort of the second blurb, it is from you at 9:26 a.m. to [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED]. The subject line is forward (SVU) Update from Special Envoy Stevens. Is this sort of summarizing what you've just described as the time when Envoy Stevens was considering leaving --

A Correct. However, I had the date wrong. It was a Sunday, not a Saturday.

Q Perhaps the calls started on a Saturday?

A No, it was a Sunday. And now I'm remembering, I was actually with my family at an event, so yes it was a Sunday.

Q So the bottom two-thirds of the page is from an individual by the name of [REDACTED], [REDACTED].

A Uh-huh.

Q Would that be an Ops Center person or a Command Center person?

A Yes. To the best of my recollection, he was an operations officer in the State Department Operations Center.

Q Okay. And then were you on one of the distribution lists? Is that how you received this email, Tripoli Cooperation perhaps?

A That must be when I'm looking at the sort of forensics of that, yes.

Q Some sort of distribution list?

A Yes. That would have been the only distribution list to which I would have been privy, Tripoli Cooperation.

Q All right. So you received this email, and then you're forwarding it on to [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED]? Can you tell us who those people are?

A That was our team in the NEA/EX office. [REDACTED] was the Director. [REDACTED] was our Post Management Officer, and [REDACTED] was the Deputy Director.

Q Would it be a fair generalization to say they were your logistical people?

A Not just the logistical people, but the policy people who handled all of the administrative support for all of our operations in Libya.

Q Okay. Then at the top of the page, [REDACTED] forwards it to [REDACTED]. Who is [REDACTED]?

A [REDACTED] is a special assistant in Under Secretary Kennedy's office.

Q Okay. In your part of the email, the last line reads: MPDS will need to be involved. Jeff Feltman has been alerted, and then the letter P. Can you tell us what that means?

A Sure. It's acronyms. So the first sense that you read means Under Secretary Kennedy, Under Secretary -- was it Sherman or Burns at the time? I don't remember. But the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Diplomatic Security, would need to be involved. And when I said Jeff Feltman has alerted P, that actually means Jeff Feltman has alerted the Under Secretary for Political Affairs.

Q Okay. And who was Jeff Feltman at the time? What was his

role at the time?

A He was the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs.

Q So he had the Main State shop, if you will, that included Libya?

A Correct.

Q Okay. And would all of these different levels be involved in the decision to leave Benghazi, or was Chris Stevens the one to make that call?

A I have no idea.

Q Your recommendation was that he should leave?

A I was nervous.

Q Because of the instability and the violence that was ongoing in and around Benghazi at the time?

A Because of the instability and the violence in Ajdabiya and, again, because I was carrying the baggage of my very recent experience in Tripoli where the security situation deteriorated very, very quickly and we were in a bad place; and I didn't want Chris and the team to be in a similar situation.

Q Let me take a step back and ask you something about right after you came back from Tripoli, was there any type of formal debriefing or interview of you regarding the decisionmaking and the leaving of Tripoli? Sort of was there any group that got together for sort of a lessons learned, what went right, what went wrong type thing?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Can you describe that for us, please?

A It was a meeting that was chaired by [REDACTED]; who was the director of the NEA/EX office. There were people from other offices around the table. I don't recall which ones, but again the usual suspects certainly Diplomatic Security, Consular Affairs, the Crisis Management Team from the Operations Center. So that was one process.

I also participated in several lessons learned interviews, one with the Foreign Service Institute's leadership, or I guess it was the Crisis Management Team, and the second was with Diplomatic Security.

Q And so Diplomatic Security had their separate sort of lessons learned?

A It wasn't a separate lessons learned. I was asked to do a videotaped interview, and I'm actually not quite sure what they did with the product.

Q Okay. Might be in their training repertoire?

A Potentially.

Q Okay. At the time that Chris Stevens first went over into Benghazi, did you feel comfortable with the number of security agents that he had with him?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Do you recall that he had eight to ten agents with him at that time?

A I don't recall the exact number. For some reason around a dozen sticks in my head, but I really don't know.

Q Okay. And you said that you went to give him a break and replace him towards the end of May of 2011. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And how long were you over there?

A I think it was about 2 weeks.

Q And what did you do when you were in Benghazi?

A I served as the Acting Special Envoy, which meant that I was doing the same political outreach that Chris had been doing, so meeting regularly with the leadership of the Transitional National Council, meeting with NGOs, meeting with political parties. I also in May spent some time looking at properties because there was a strong sense in the State Department and also a strong sense by Chris that the Tibesti Hotel, which was the initial base of operations was not appropriate from a security perspective; so I spent a good amount of time actually walking the perimeter of the various aspects of the Tibesti Hotel with the head of our Diplomatic Security team who was on the ground and a gentleman from the Office of Overseas Buildings Operations to think through some physical security measures that could be implemented to try to make our operations at the Tibesti Hotel more safe. And then I also looked at other residential properties that could potentially be a good fit. When I was there in May, we did not find anything that was a good fit.

Q Okay. So as you're looking at properties, had there been a decision or at least a strong probability that the presence in Benghazi was going to be a lengthy one?



A I'm not aware of or able to recall a formal decision at that point, but given that this was May, and Chris at that time had been in there for about 6 weeks I think, I didn't consider it to say this was going to be a lengthy process. I considered it as we have a decision at a policy level that we need to be on the ground, and we have a responsibility to keep our people safe; and I didn't see the Tibesti as a safe place.

Q Okay. Is that where you stayed while you were there?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And these properties that you looked at, were they for long-term leases or were they --

A At the time I was looking at it to say, is there physical security? All of the kind of criteria that you would look at for establishing a mission to find a long-term lease.

You know, I wasn't going out there to say we're going to need a property for 5 years. I just went out there to say we're going to need a property for an indeterminate amount of time.

Q But longer than 30 days, longer than six months, longer than a year?

A I was not given specific parameters in my head. It was a I'm going to call it a short-term lease in my head. I don't recall having received specific guidance, and I think there wasn't specific guidance at that point. The specific guidance was we need to find an alternative.

Q I'm sure that Libya real estate is different than U.S. real

estate, but there are certain properties that are not available for short-term leases, and I was just wondering if you were focused in any way only with looking at facilities or places that were only available for short-term leases?

A The rental market in a place like Libya is wildly different from the rental market in a place like the United States.

Q So help me understand it.

A It means that if you find something that you're interested in leasing, and, again, the State Department does this kind of business all over the world. If we find a property that we like that meets our specific requirements, you can negotiate. And if the landlord isn't willing necessarily to do a short-term lease, you can sweeten the pot by saying, okay, we'll pay X number of months up front in cash, into your off-shore account. So there are ways to negotiate.

So I never in my career -- and by the way, I also in my first assignment served as the general services officer also in a sort of emerging post -- have felt like the real estate market overseas is the same as the United States. So there's a lot more flexibility on the part of the landlord, a more creative approach lets say to leasing terms.

Q When you said that your first general services job, was that in Tunisia?

A No. That was in Uzbekistan.

Q Okay. When you went back into Tripoli in September of 2011, did the purpose of the mission ongoing in Benghazi change in any way?

A In a formal --

Q Let's start with formal, and we'll go into more general?

A In a formal scripted sense, no, there was no decision memo taken that, you know, now that we're back in Tripoli, the Special Envoy's duties will be X, Y and Z. Events were evolving very, very quickly. Literally I came into the office of the State Department on September 8th at like 8:30 in the morning, and at 8:35 was told you need to pack a bag and get on a plane tonight. So it was quick.

And that's not to convey that there hadn't been a lot of planning because there had been months and months of planning of what it would take to go back into Tripoli. But things happened very quickly because Qadhafi left Tripoli a lot more quickly than anyone had anticipated.

So, you know, Chris was still there in Tripoli -- I'm sorry, in Benghazi. The Transitional National Council had not yet shifted officially. Maybe it had. I don't remember the exact timeline. But things were vague. You know, some officials from the Transitional National Council were beginning to shift to Tripoli. Others were still there, so it was clear that there was going to be a period in which the political leadership of a free Libya, you know, the post-Qadhafi government was going to be in a variety of places; so we needed to make sure that we had the ability to touch them in both places, and from my perspective, it made a lot of sense to keep Chris there.

Q Okay. And he then did stay until November of 2011?

A Correct.

Q Do you recall why he left at that time?

A I don't remember the exact timeline, but I do know that at that point he was under consideration to become the next Ambassador; and it's very inappropriate for someone sitting in country to be working in country. I mean, it's an unusual situation. In order to be nominated and get through the congressional confirmation process, I think it was better for him to be here.

Q Okay. And that's again something that is State Department centric, if you will, from my perspective. So, that generally is the process the State Department follows is whoever is seriously being considered to be an Ambassador will not be in country?

A Usually. And in fact, I'm only aware of one case in my career where someone who had been serving as charge in a country was then nominated; but it was very, very unusual.

Q And when did you first learn that Chris Stevens was under consideration to be the Ambassador to Libya?

A I don't remember.

Q Was it before you went back in in September?

A It must have been, because that was 2011. Right?

Q Yes.

A Yes. Yes it was definitely.

Q So sometime in the summer of 2011, you learned that Ambassador Cretz was going to step down as Ambassador to Libya?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And did he tell you that, or did you learn it from someone else?

A I learned it from -- well, let me back up. I mean, Ambassadors generally serve for 3 years. Career State Department officials usually serve as Ambassadors for 3 years, and Ambassador Cretz had arrived in 2008, I believe, December 2008, January 2009; so it was the normal process by which he should have been, you know, getting prepared to cycle on.

Obviously things in Libya were not normal with the outbreak of revolution and complete political upheaval. I actually had been one of the names that was put forward to what we call in the State Department in the D committee to replace Ambassador Cretz, but I also was told I was not the leading candidate, so I knew quite early on in the summer of 2011 that Chris Stevens was the leading candidate.

Q And just to educate us, tell us about that process?

A I'm not an expert on that process. I don't feel qualified to talk about it. I could talk about it from my own experience as gone through it as a nominee, but I am not a personnel expert.

Q When your name was on the list as potential Ambassadors to Libya, is that something that you applied for or someone has to nominate you, or just from your perspective, how did that happen with respect to Libya?

A From my perspective it happened such that the then Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Jeff Feltman, called me into his office for a meeting. Told me he would like to put my name forward on that list. Told me I was not the leading candidate, but that he thought it would be good for my career to get my name out there

as someone who was considered qualified to be in the running for an ambassadorship.

Q Okay. And then what was the rest of your experience with that process?

A You have to prepare a lot of papers selling yourself, you know, the short resume, the short here's why I'm qualified to be the Ambassador. And then you have a 360 process through which people provide references and supposedly unvarnished insights into your interpersonal skills, leadership, et cetera, all the things that the State Department looks for in leaders.

And then it goes into a process called the D committee, and then out comes the potential nominee who then is vetted by the Secretary of State and then goes through the normal White House vetting and nomination process.

Q Okay. And with respect to Libya, that process started in the summer of 2011 and then ended by January of 2012?

A I have no idea.

Q Okay. I actually don't have the documents here, but I believe that Chris Stevens was formally nominated by the President on January 23rd of 2012. Was that a fast period of time or a typical period of time, if you have any sense of that?

A I have no sense of that.

Q Okay. At the time that you went back into Tripoli in 2011, what was the relationship, formal or otherwise, between the Embassy in Tripoli and the Stevens mission in Benghazi? How did it work? Was

there a reporting structure? Did everything in Benghazi flow through Embassy Tripoli, or was Benghazi's information flowing straight back to the State Department? Just explain how the coordination was at that time.

A There was no formal relationship between Embassy Tripoli and the Special Envoy's mission in Benghazi. So Chris --

Q Is that unusual in your experience to have something going on, a State Department post, if you will, in Benghazi with an opened embassy?

A This is a complicated question to think about because, one, the State Department uses special envoy structures all over the world, all the time. As someone who has worked extensively in the Middle East, I often think about the Israeli-Palestinian experience where throughout the decades, there has been a special envoy, a special Middle East coordinator, whatever you want to call him -- and it's always been a him and not a her -- but that works totally independently of the missions in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

Traditionally those folks have been based in Washington, but I know in recent years there has been a special envoy presence in Jerusalem that reports to the Secretary of State. So it's not unprecedented to have special envoy missions.

That said, it is unusual to have a totally separate office in a country in which there is no other consulate or presence. So it was a bit of an odd duck. Let's say it doesn't fit the unusual State Department pattern, and it's something that as DCM, I struggled with

a bit, not in the early days, because it was just a different operation, I think, while Chris was there. Because of his stature, because of his experience, because of his reach back into the State Department, I think he had the ability to get resources and attention in a way that the people who followed him did not.

I was able as DCM to have a good working relationship with Chris and all of his successors just because we made it work. But I did not -- you know, in another country, if there's a consulate per se, the principal officer or the consul general reports to the DCM, and the DCM has oversight for operations and hiring and resources and all of those issues. As DCM in Tripoli, I did not have that.

Q Once Chris Stevens left in November of 2011 and was replaced by a series of principal officers, did that change then?

A The formal relationship?

Q In that principal officers then became more routine and report to you, and then you reported out to Washington?

A No. There was never a decision or a procedure put in place to have the mission in Benghazi report to the Embassy in Tripoli. It was still something that was reporting directly to Washington, staffed by Washington. I had no say in the staffing decisions, resourced by Washington, et cetera.

I played a supporting role. To the extent that I could, I made sure that I coordinated very regularly with the principal officers; and whenever they needed help on anything, I jumped in.

Q So you were at least an echoing voice for whatever they



needed in Washington, that you would echo their request?

A An echoing voice and also a source of resources as needed.

Q And what type of resources as needed?

A For example, when the decision was made to hire local drivers, FSN, locally engaged staff, drivers, they had no H.R. person in Benghazi, so I asked our human resources team in the Embassy in Tripoli to get involved in working that.

When there were gaps in the Diplomatic Security coverage, I asked our teams to go out and fill in. I asked our RSO to go out and do a security survey. So whenever I had the ability to augment and help out whatever was going on in Benghazi, I did.

Q Did you voice any complaints or concerns back at Main State that they were not staffing Benghazi appropriately?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Would you explain what you did, what prompted your concerns and what you did in response to those concerns?

A Beginning in February, I believe, or maybe it was January, but quite early on in 2012, it was clear that there were going to be some staffing gaps in the coverage of our security team in Benghazi. I started weighing in with people and also had some meetings here in Washington.

Q Okay. As I recall, you made a trip back to Washington in February of 2012. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Do you recall when that was?

A I don't recall the exact date. It was sort of mid February, I think, but it's been reported in the media that I did it specifically to demand more security resources. No. One thing that I fought for for the team was to make sure that we had a rotation because it was very intense and difficult conditions on the ground in Libya. So I made sure that we had a 6 weeks on, 2 weeks off rotation for people who were assigned to our Libya cell, so I was on my normal 2 weeks off rotation but asked to build in some time for consultations to discuss these security issues.

Q Is that unusual to have consultations when you're on your two week R&R or whatever it was called?

A For me and Ambassador Cretz, no. For the more junior personnel in the Embassy, sometimes they would check in. But for me, at a leadership level you have certain responsibilities and you don't get as much vacation as you'd like.

Q Okay. And explain to us or describe for us the various meetings that you then had, the consultations that you had when you came back to Main State in February of 2012?

A I don't remember my entire meeting schedule, but the ones that were relevant to the security discussions included the NEA/EX team. Within Diplomatic Security I saw Deputy Assistant Secretary Charlene Lamb, and I saw the NEA front office. I saw the principal deputy assistant secretary, Liz Dibble.

Q Did you have any meetings with Ray Maxwell?

A Not to the best of my knowledge.

Q And what was his role at the time?

A He was our deputy assistant secretary.

Q And who was Liz Dibble?

A Liz Dibble was the principal deputy assistant secretary.

Q Was she the one that you would go to for issues in country?

A I wanted to see her to make sure that she was aware of security concerns that I had.

Q Okay. And had you been -- I guess why did you choose her?

A Because the principal deputy assistant secretary is responsible for overall management of the Bureau, and I felt like we weren't getting what we needed from the State Department in terms of security. So in my mind seeing her is kind of bumping it up a level.

Q And what was your assessment of her level of knowledge of what was happening? I mean, was she on top of the security incidents and security concerns that you had, or did you feel like you were educating her?

A There was one major issue on which I felt like I was educating her, and that's a classified issue.

Q We can go into that at a later time. Although I have about 5 minutes left, I think that we're going to go ahead and go off the record because I have another area that's going to take longer than 5 minutes, so I will waive my last 5 minutes and we'll go off the record, and we'll take a break and then we'll chat later.

A Okay. Thank you.

[Recess.]

RPTR DEAN

EDTR WILTSIE

[11:25 a.m.]

EXAMINATION

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Madam Ambassador, on behalf of the Select Committee minority staff, I would just like to take a quick opportunity to reintroduce myself. My name is Peter Kenny. I am counsel with the minority staff. I am joined here today by our staff director, Suzanne Sachsman Grooms.

And on behalf of our members, we just want to thank you again for your appearance here today as well as your service in the Foreign Service and continuing service as to Ambassador to Algeria.

During our hour, we would like to ask our questions in a targeted fashion. I think, as a consequence of that, we may end up jumping from topic to topic. So I just want to apologize in advance to you. But if you are at all unclear at any point, please let me know.

A Okay.

Q And we can take a step back and help try to clarify that portion for you.

A Okay.

Q Also, during the last hour, we spent a significant amount of time talking about events in the 2011 timeframe.

A Uh-huh.

Q What we would like to do in this hour is move forward in the clock, if you will --

A Uh-huh.

Q -- to the 2012 time period, so late spring, early summer 2012.

A Uh-huh.

Q And we would just like to start and set the scene there, if you will. If you could walk us through maybe late May, early June 2012, where you were serving at that time and where Ambassador Stevens was serving. If you could just help explain where the various players were.

A Sure. How late in May do you want to get started?

Q We can start late May, May 20, going forward, just to pick an arbitrary date.

A Okay. I really don't remember what happened on May 20. But Ambassador Stevens arrived on Memorial Day weekend in May 2012.

Q Okay. That's a good start.

A I don't remember the dates exactly. But Ambassador Cretz had left, I think, around the 15th of May. And it was, I think, about a 10-day gap. Maybe a week. I don't remember exactly. Not a terribly long time before Ambassador Stevens arrived.

So I was serving as chargee in the gap between the two Ambassadors, working with Ambassador Stevens to prepare his entry plan, you know, what he would do immediately upon arrival internally and externally.

And then shortly thereafter, in early June, of course, we had

those two security incidents. One was the IED attack on the compound in Benghazi, and the second was the attack on the British Ambassador's convoy.

And I at the same time as we were handling all that was also preparing for my own departure, because I left Libya on June 15, 2012. So Ambassador Stevens and I only overlapped for about 3 weeks.

Q Okay. A 3-week overlap.

And you had mentioned there was about a 10-day period when you served as the chargee. Is that correct?

A Uh-huh.

Q And that is a capacity you had served in previously --

A Multiple times.

Q -- in Tripoli.

And you just previewed for us -- we will talk more about the second security incident, but you previewed some security incident that happened during this time period.

A Uh-huh.

Q I understand that both of those events occurred after the Ambassador had arrived in Libya, Ambassador Stevens. Is that correct?

A Correct.

Q Okay. I would like to take a moment just to focus if we could and just isolate that June 6 IED attack on the compound with the Special Mission.

A Uh-huh.

Q And, to clarify, at this point in time, June 6, the

Ambassador, Ambassador Stevens, is now accredited and in country?

A Correct.

Q And what was your position then at that time?

A I was the Deputy Chief of Mission.

Q Okay. So you reverted back to being the Deputy Chief of Mission?

A Uh-huh.

Q Okay. And at the time of the June 6 attack --

A Uh-huh.

Q We can start with: How did you learn about the June 6 attack in Tripoli, if you recall?

A I really don't recall how I first heard about it. Either a phone call or an email, probably, from our principal officer in Benghazi.

But I am not 100 percent certain whether that was through the principal officer or whether it was through our RSO on the ground in Tripoli. But I heard about it very soon thereafter.

Q Okay. And I know it may be a little bit difficult. You had mentioned this during the last round --

A Uh-huh.

Q -- about recollecting specifics events with the passage of time.

But do you recall at that time what you did learn about the attacks, for instance, whether the identity of the attackers was known at that time -- attacker or attackers?

A I don't believe we knew anything about the identity of the attackers.

Q Okay.

A I recall learning that a pretty massive hole had been blown into the wall of the compound. I remember also feeling very relieved that our security -- our local security guards had taken the appropriate measures and I think hit the duck and cover and done everything that they needed to do to make sure that the staff who was on the compound was safe.

And I also remember thinking that this was in the context of a number of other incidents that had happened in Benghazi and it was quite troubling.

Q And when you say that the local security guards -- you are relieved that the local security forces there had taken appropriate measures, was that an assessment that had been relayed to you by either the RSO or principal officer in Benghazi or was that your personal assessment --

A Correct. That was an assessment that was relayed to me by people on the ground in Benghazi. I don't remember exactly who, but I remember feeling very relieved that the right procedures had been followed.

Q Okay. And generally in this time period do you recall whether the embassy in Tripoli -- would they have prepared some sort of a notice for American citizens in Libya to notify them of an incident of this type?



A Yes. That is standard procedure for embassies to put out American citizen -- what is the right word? -- notifications. Whether we did or not in this case, I don't remember.

We certainly had a travel warning in place for Libya that was very kind of "Red alert. Red alert. Do not come to this country. We can't help you," because we weren't providing anything except very, very limited consulate services.

Q Okay. And would those notices also be referred to as a warden --

A A warden notice. Yes. Warden message.

Q You had mentioned that you weren't sure if in this instance a warden message was prepared or not. Is that right?

A I cannot remember.

Q I'd just like to ask more generally: At this time, was the embassy -- when you say that there was also a travel warning in place at the time warning about specific things, was the embassy trying in any way to downsize or minimize the significance of the incident in Benghazi?

A No. We were trying to make sense of it, trying to figure out who was responsible, trying to figure out how we could mitigate the risks that clearly were there.

Q Okay. And did you meet with the regional security officer in the embassy in Tripoli to discuss the incident?

A Yes. I believe we probably also had an Emergency Action Committee meeting.

Q Okay.

A And this was where, you know, the fact that there were two different missions came into play. So, obviously, in Benghazi they were having their own Emergency Action Committee meetings. But I recall in June we had several Emergency Action Committee meetings in Tripoli as well.

Q Okay. And would that have been standard practice in an incident of this type?

A Absolutely.

Q Okay. So you had just a moment ago referred to an EAC in Benghazi and an EAC in Tripoli.

Were both of those EACs held in reference to the event on June 6 at the Special Mission Compound?

A I don't remember. I remember that we had a series of EACs in that early June period related to this IED incident and then also to the attack on the British Ambassador's convoy.

Q Okay. I think it may be helpful at this point to take a step back and just ask for you to explain to us what the Emergency Action Committee meeting is, what it does, who participates.

A An Emergency Action Committee is the State Department's standard mechanism at embassies and consulates all over the world for assessing the overall security environment.

So the EAC is composed usually of the heads of various State Department sections at the embassy and all the agencies present at an embassy.

So, obviously, in Tripoli, we had sort of a more robust EAC, larger in size. In a place like Benghazi where we had just a handful of personnel on the ground, it was a very small --

Q Okay. And would that have also included security elements?

A Absolutely. Security elements are a critical part of it. For example, in Tripoli, we made sure that, when we had Emergency Action Committee meetings, we had representatives of all of the security elements that we had in place. It was not just the regional security officer. It was also the MSD detachment and also the SST.

Q Thank you. That is helpful.

And as the Deputy Chief of Mission or, at the time, if you were the chargee, although we established earlier you were the Deputy Chief of Mission for this time period --

A Uh-huh.

Q -- what would have been your role in that EAC?

A The DCM usually chairs the EAC, although it is flexible. In the case of serious incidents, the Ambassador usually chairs meetings himself. And I believe definitely after the attack on the British Ambassador's convoy Chris chaired that EAC himself, if I remember.

Q Okay. And we may revisit that that some later time.

Again, just speaking generally, what is the purpose of the EAC? Is it to consider specific security information, to consider revisions to post security posture? Can you perhaps walk us through --

A What the EAC does?

Q Yeah.

A So the EAC meets on a regular basis. It is not just crisis-driven. For example, before you have your large 4th of July reception, you have an EAC to review the security plans and the posture and whether or not that is appropriate. So it is a body that meets very regularly to review routine business and not-so-routine business as well.

So the EAC in this case where there has been an attack on a U.S. mission would review the facts, review what we know, think about what might have been motivating, who might have been responsible, the measures that we can put in place immediately to try to mitigate the risk to the personnel, so kind of like looking at physical security measures, looking at staffing, looking at varying your times in your routes, looking at support that is given or not given by the host government, and usually coming up with specific recommendations and an actual plan.

Q Okay. And then, to tie that back to your role as the Deputy Chief of Mission, as the chair of the EAC, would there be decisions or recommendations that would come out of an EAC?

A Yes.

Q And those would relate to possible changes of the secure departure?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Could those also relate to maintaining or continuing a presence in a country, for instance, whether to make a recommendation

to depart post?

A Yes. In certain instances. And definitely -- for example, when I was in Tripoli before the revolution, as we were considering our response to be an evolving situation, for instance, the Emergency Action Committee met to discuss authorized and ordered departure and the drawdown of staff and voted on those issues.

Q Okay. And do you recall in those EACs in that time period -- so now we are looking back to the February 2011 time period? --

A Yes.

Q -- did the EAC make a recommendation about departure in those instances?

A Yes.

Q What was that recommendation?

A Back in February 2011, we made a series of graduated recommendations, one to go to authorized departure and then very quickly to go to ordered departure.

And then, ultimately, the decision to pull up stakes was made by Washington because that is a serious decision to suspend operations and close an embassy.

I sent a cable back -- I think it was our last cable that we sent from Tripoli -- recommending that we do that, and then permission was granted.

Q Okay. So just so I am clear, it sounds like it is a graduated schedule. So if you start with authorized departure and then

this ordered departure and then --

A In certain cases. But in other cases not. I mean, there is no one size fits all for managing security situations. So that is a traditional path to take if you are in a sort of slow or not so slow -- a developing situation.

But I'm sure you can point to other instances anywhere in the world where people go immediately to ordered departure. I can't speak to that myself. But it is not necessarily a phased approach.

Q And just before we move forward, can you just explain for us the difference between authorized and ordered departure. I know those are terms of art you used when --

A Yes. So authorized departure gives permission for the spouses and children and nonemergency staff to depart the country if they so wish. Ordered departure requires the departure of spouses, dependents and nonemergency personnel.

Ms. Grooms. In February of 2011, did the EAC on the ground that you were chairing as the chargee -- were you all able to make the decision for authorized departure on your own?

Ambassador [REDACTED]. I don't remember exactly. But I think, to the best of my recollection, we sent the recommendation back to Washington and Washington agreed.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q So it would be in the form of a recommendation?

A Yes.

Q And then focusing -- and, again, I apologize for jumping

time periods now. I apologized for this at the outset.

A It's okay.

Q The February 2011 time period. You'd mentioned in the last round that your experience -- that you had carried forward some baggage because security conditions changed or deteriorated rapidly.

Do you recall in that period of the EAC's meeting, did you start first with authorized departure and then ordered departure and then suspension of operations or did it go directly to ordered departure?

A In February 2011?

Q To the best of your recollection.

A To the best of my recollection, we discussed first authorized departure, but then overnight the situation deteriorated so quickly that then we went to ordered the next day.

Because that Sunday night was the night that, you know, people were killed in Green Square in Tripoli. So we very quickly went to ordered after having discussed first authorized.

Q And so am I to understand that a recommendation would have been made in EAC to go to ordered departure for Embassy Tripoli and that would have been sent back in the form of an EAC cable? Is that right?

A I believe that is what we did, but my memory -- again, this was all more than 4 years ago -- is not 100 percent accurate.

Q Okay. And in those situations it may be difficult to generalize. But where post would make such a recommendation --

A Okay.

Q -- to go to ordered departure or even to suspension of operations, has it been your experience that the Department would override or would ever override those types of recommendations?

A In my personal experience, the Department has been very supportive and generally tends to take very seriously the views and recommendations of the people on the ground.

Ms. Grooms. You said that, in February 2011, you all took a vote in the EAC?

Ambassador [REDACTED]. Uh-huh.

Ms. Grooms. How does that work? Is that a Democratic process?

Ambassador [REDACTED]. Generally. And in every Emergency Action Committee meeting that I have participated in, yes, people vote.

I have never seen a situation where everyone sitting around the table votes one thing and the Ambassador says "No. I don't agree. I mean, usually it is usually a consensus position.

Ms. Grooms. Okay.

Ambassador [REDACTED]. Sometimes there will be one person or two who has an outlier view. But these are serious discussions with serious people. It is the leadership of the embassy. So it is actually agency heads.

Ms. Grooms. So, usually, you would try to reach a consensus position that everyone would then vote for?

Ambassador [REDACTED]. No. It is not like -- how to describe it? I mean, usually -- usually -- and, again, I am generalizing. But, usually, people are looking at a fluid situation with not necessarily



perfect information.

But these are the people who are the experts on the ground who know the situation better than anyone. And, usually, there is an approach that tends to make sense and people -- I have -- I mean, yeah.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q And EACs where security would be the primary topic of discussion, would the views of the RSO tend to carry more weight than, say, for instance, the views of the consular in trying to reach a consensus view about what post should do?

A Generally, there are certain offices that have a lot more insight into the security situation. So, generally, when I chair EACs, I set the scene with what is on my mind and my concerns and I ask the RSO then to immediately give a brief on the security situation.

Other agencies at post which follow similar issues -- and, if you want to talk more about that, we can go into classified session -- obviously also have a lot of insight and provide a lot of good information.

And then, generally, when I am chairing an EAC, I turn to the RSO and ask him for his or her recommendations on what should be done similar to mitigate those risks, you know, physical security measures, et cetera.

Q Returning back to the June 6 time period and the time period immediately following the attack -- the IED attack, do you recall if an EAC took place in Tripoli to discuss that particular incident?

A I really don't remember.

Q Okay. You don't remember if an EAC took place?

A I -- again, it is very weird for me because I remember so vividly the EAC after the June 13 -- or was that the date that the British Ambassador's convoy --

Q June 11.

A I vividly remember that. I don't remember whether or not we had an EAC after the IED. My experience makes me say yes, of course, we would have had one.

But I can't tell you with 100 percent certainty because I am not remembering that right now. If there is documentation that I can review, that may be helpful.

Q That is fair and I appreciate that.

I understand also you had mentioned that there were a series of EACs and it was difficult to recall with specificity. So to the extent we can aid you with that going forward, we will do our best.

But you do recall -- if you don't recall if there was an EAC specific to that incident in that time period, do you recall if around that June 6 time period there was a recommendation to go to ordered departure in either Benghazi or Tripoli?

A No. There was no recommendation to go to ordered departure.

Q In the wake of the June 6 event, do you recall taking any steps to immediately bolster, enhance, physical security at the Special Mission in Benghazi or the embassy in Tripoli?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what do you recall about that?

A I recall -- and, again, this was all more than 3 years ago. But certainly we discussed the incident with -- the local authorities asked for an increased police presence, recommended physical security measures to fix -- I mean, obviously, it was a big issue that there was a giant hole in the wall of the compound.

I don't remember exactly what was done to try to fix that immediately. But there were a series of physical security measures that we thought needed to be put in place, and I know that those requests were sent immediately back to Washington.

Q Okay. You referenced a hole in the wall at the Special Mission.

Was your sense that the Special Mission in Benghazi was working expeditiously to repair that wall?

A Absolutely.

Q Do you happen to recall how quickly they were able to do so?

A I do not recall that.

Q Okay. Do you happen to recall around this time a request for technical security specialists --

A Yes.

Q -- to come to either Benghazi or the embassy in Tripoli to install a technical security system?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And without touching on any classified material, can

you explain for us what a technical security system is and how that would aid or harden post security posture.

A I don't recall the specifics of what we were looking for in Benghazi. But, normally, every diplomatic facility has cameras, early warning systems like a duck and cover, so that, if there is an attack that is underway, people can quickly react and take the appropriate measures.

Q Okay. And to the best of your recollection, did Tripoli -- did the embassy in Tripoli have those systems in place at this time?

A I don't think we had them. I think we were working on getting them. We did have some cameras that had been installed by the AFRICOM SST, but I don't think we had the standard State Department package.

Q Okay. And do you recall if the Special Mission in Benghazi at this time -- if they had cameras, for instance?

A I don't recall.

Q Okay. And you mentioned -- I believe you mentioned that some security specialists had deployed from a regional office. Is that accurate?

A I don't think I mentioned that. I think you asked me whether we had a request.

Q Was a request acted on, to the best of your recollection?

A I don't remember whether it was while I was there or after my departure. But I remember that it was in train around the time of

my departure. Whether it was already underway on the ground in Benghazi or if it was going to happen right around the time of my departure, I really don't remember.

Q Okay. Thank you.

I think at this point -- well, let me first ask: Do you recall around this time any discussions that you may have had with Ambassador Stevens about security staffing, specifically the embassy in Tripoli?

A Yes. We had a lot of security staffing discussions.

Q Okay. And what can you share with us about those discussions in this time period around the IED attack in Benghazi?

A Well, at the time, we were looking at -- there was a transition that was underway in our security staffing and we had been working to establish and train a local bodyguard force that could take over some other responsibilities for personal protection that had been provided by the mobile security detachments, the MSD teams, in Tripoli.

So we were trying to figure out what sort of timing made sense to manage that transition. There was also the issue of the continued presence of AFRICOM SST. So a lot of discussions, as I said, about how we managed that.

I know that we were trying to get an extension of the MSD teams. And then also separately we had promises from the commander of USAFRICOM that we could have the SST through the end of the upcoming election.

In fact, I think General Hammett said, "We will give you an extra 30 days because we just don't know how the election is going to go."

So as I was preparing to leave Tripoli, I felt confident that we

had the right security profile in place for Tripoli to get us through the election and a little bit beyond and then it was no longer my responsibility. Because, as I said, I left on June 15.

Q What was it -- you mentioned elections just now. So what was it about elections in particular that caused or raised concern?

A Well, it was a significant political development. And given that it was a fluid situation, it was unclear, first of all, how it would go, you know, would there be parties to the conflict who would seek to disrupt the election. There is always the possibility of terrorist attacks tied to an election.

We also wanted to make sure that we had the capacity to do job as diplomats to get out and about and actually see what was happening on election day. And the MSD teams were a critical part of that because there are certain areas where, you know -- and places that we couldn't go, being that we couldn't go without the armed close personal protection.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 2

Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q I will give you a moment to review it. Just read it for the record. This is an email. It is dated June 7, 2012, from Ambassador Stevens to you with the subject "RE: MSD/Tripoli." Document number is C05409983.

I just ask: Do you recall this particular email exchange?

A Yes, I do.

Q Okay. And in here there seems to be a discussion about the mobile security deployment teams.

A Uh-huh.

Q Just to be clear, this email thread, is this referring to security resources dedicated to Embassy Tripoli?

A You know, that is a very good question. I don't recall.

But I think it is important to keep in mind, when we were looking at our overall Diplomatic Security presence in Libya, we still had the issue of not enough people, not enough Diplomatic Security agents on the ground in Benghazi, and trying to figure out how we would manage that.

And I had been separately engaged in a discussion with Diplomatic Security leadership, specifically Charlene Lamb, about getting new positions, what we call FTE, which I don't even know what that stands for, but new slots assigned to Mission Libya and how we would parse that between Tripoli and Benghazi.

So, as I read this, my sense is that this was looking at people who would be assigned to Tripoli, as I recall it.

Q Let me ask the question this way: At this point in time, there were MSD teams in Tripoli. Correct?

A Still in Tripoli. Correct.

Q And they were in Tripoli, not in Benghazi?

A Correct.

Q Okay. I would like to direct your attention to the first email in the thread.

A Uh-huh.

Q It begins at the bottom of page 1 into page 2. It is dated June 5. Ambassador Stevens here writes to [REDACTED] --

A Uh-huh.

Q -- and cc's you and says, "[REDACTED]-Greetings from your favorite country." And a little bit farther down he writes: "I'm writing specifically to ask your advice on an MSD matter. My understanding is that we are scheduled to reduce to one MSD team on July 12, with the second team staying until August. The second team has been doing the LGF training.

"The July-August period is going to be potentially tumultuous with national elections in the late June-mid July timeframe followed by appointment of a new gov't in the weeks thereafter. We will likely have VIP observers, including possibly Pres. Carter and Sen. McCain. There is much uncertainty about how the militias will conduct themselves during this period of shifting political power.

"Our LGF are getting good training from one MSD team, but don't yet have their weapons permits. We'd feel much safer if we could keep two MSD teams with us throughout this period to provide QRF for our staff and PD for me and the DCM and any VIP visitors.

"What do you think? I know you guys are stretched. Is there any room for keeping two teams here through August (vice letting one go in mid July)? Appreciate your advice. Chris."

I would just like to begin by asking who is [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]?

A [REDACTED] was the head of the MSD office in the State



Department.

Q Okay. Do you know if he had previously served or worked in Libya?

A Yes. [REDACTED] was the head of the MSD team -- or whatever team was deployed when Chris first went into Benghazi. I worked with him closely when I was in Benghazi as well in May 2011.

Q And it looks like here that Ambassador --

A I'm sorry.

I should also add [REDACTED] then was assigned to lead the team when we went back into Tripoli. So he and I worked together for -- I want to say it was about 30 days in September 2011 as well. So he is someone who knew the situation in Libya quite well.

Q Okay. And he knew the situation in Benghazi well as well. Is that right?

A Uh-huh.

Q Thank you for that clarification.

I would just like to ask -- it looks here as though the Ambassador is asking for Mr. [REDACTED] -- Director [REDACTED] advice.

Do you agree with that clarification?

A Uh-huh. Advice and help. It was a very specific ask. And I remember talking with Ambassador Stevens about how we could handle this and he said, "Let me do a personal outreach to [REDACTED] and see if that will help." Because we had been getting a no from further -- you know, lower level officials within MSD.

Q Okay. So this is a way of escalating that within the MSD

shop?

A Correct.

Q Because he served as the Director of MSD?

A Uh-huh.

Q And based on my reading of this email, it appears there are two factors behind this inquiry about the MSD, the one -- and we haven't talked about this much -- but being the lack of weapons permits for the local guard force of Embassy Tripoli?

A Correct.

Q And the other being an upcoming election?

A Uh-huh.

Q Did you share the Ambassador's concerns about those two factors?

A Absolutely.

Q And, again, we had mentioned the elections a few moments ago, and here is the specific mention to the elections and what assistance MSD could provide with the election.

The elections -- first I'll ask: When were the elections originally scheduled to be held, to the best of your recollection?

A I don't remember.

Q Sometime in the June timeframe?

A I don't remember. I think the Libyans had been very remiss in setting a date. It was that kind of Libyan thing. I mean, it was weird because, you know, how do you hold an election. They were waiting for the technical things to arrive, the ballot boxes, and I don't know

what else.

So I remember we had in our head an idea of when the election might be, but it wasn't announced. And then I think, ultimately, it was held later than expected.

Q Okay.

A But I should add I left the country on June 15. So I stopped following all of this on June 15.

Q Okay. That is helpful.

I would just like to clarify here because there is an inquiry here asking for advice. You've mentioned asking for help as well.

I just would like to understand if this specific inquiry is tied to the elections. Because I will just reference he's asking if there is room for keeping two agents here through August. And then above the national elections the time period appears to be late June, mid-July.

So was the election at this point the primary focus for the reason for wanting a plus number maintained on a larger security presence in Tripoli?

A My recollection is that we were equally concerned with our overall ability to operate safely and securely. And the second piece of this was the election.

Because there is the normal workload that exists in any embassy anywhere in the world and the security requirements that go with that, plus the idea of the additional work that would be associated with an election, both our internal embassy need to report on what was

happening, but also the prospect of high-level visitors for whom we are required to provide protection.

Q I'd just like to work our way up the chain here.

On the first page of this email from June 6 it appears that [REDACTED], Direct [REDACTED], replied. He wrote, "Hi, Chris/[REDACTED], sorry I didn't get back sooner. I wanted to crunch some numbers with my staff before I responded. Unfortunately, MSD cannot support the request. As an Office, we would gladly do it for both of you who have been so good to us, but we have two emerging requirements similar to Tripoli that requires the whole of our office essentially.

"When we were in Benghazi, DS provided High Threat Trained agents for that mission. Would that suffice for your needs? While not a situation I can directly control, I can sensitize DS/IP to your requirement."

First, what is your understanding of what DS/IP is here?

A Diplomatic Security/international program.

Q Okay. And we haven't talked about this. But we have heard that the mobile security deployments, the MSD teams, at this time were a fairly scarce resource in the Department.

Was that your understanding as well?

A That was the line that I got from Diplomatic Security. But, also, given what I knew of other emerging situations in the world, specifically, you know, Yemen, Syria -- were we even in Syria then? I don't know.

But certainly with the Arab Spring bubbling along, there were a

lot of demands. So I, as a responsible State Department colleague, I understood that MSD did have other demands placed on it.

Q Okay. So is your understanding of this email the Director of MSD is telling you that he would not be able to support a request for the second extension -- or extension of a second team in Embassy Tripoli because of competing demands and the lack of resources elsewhere?

A Correct.

Q I will also note that, in the course of providing that information to you, he also appeared to make a proposal for DS high-threat-trained agents.

A Uh-huh.

Q Is that right?

A Yes.

Q And just moving up the chain, the next email Ambassador Stevens writes just to you, "What do you think about his suggestion that we ask for High Threat Trained Agents? I suppose we should pulse [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]."

Who are [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]?

A [REDACTED] was our RSO, our regional security officer, at Embassy Tripoli. And [REDACTED], whose last name I cannot remember, was the assistant RSO relatively newly arrived.

Q Perhaps [REDACTED]?

A Perhaps. I really don't remember.

Q But not [REDACTED], who would have been the follow-on

RSO?

A No. [REDACTED] and I were not in country at the same time.

Q Okay. And, again, just moving up the chain, you replied -- this is the next day, June 7 -- to Ambassador Stevens and you wrote, "[REDACTED] & I have discussed this possibility before and are comfortable with the idea of high-threat trained agents instead of MSD."

And just to be clear, you had previously discussed this idea of using high-threat-trained agents instead of the MSD?

A Correct.

Q And I apologize if we didn't do this before.

But can you just -- to the best of your understanding, what is a high-threat-trained special agent?

A A high-threat-trained special agent is someone who has been through the Diplomatic Security's high-threat course. I have not been through the course myself. So I have no idea what they learn.

But my understanding is that they learn skills that enable them to work in an environment with a very high-threat rating as opposed to a normal RSO who -- you know, if they are going to serve in Luxembourg, for example, they would not have those specialized skills that come with the high-threat course.

I personally saw the high-threat training as something between a normal RSO and the MSD team, which had almost like paramilitary skills, in my mind. But I am not a security expert.

Q Okay. But here you seem to indicate that at least the RSO was comfortable with swapping high-threat agents instead of the MSD?

A Yes. I was as well.

Q So you agreed with the RSO?

A I agreed that it was the best opportunity in the face of what was clearly a no from the State Department on the MSD.

Q Okay. When you say the State Department, you are referring to the office of the MSD here?

A Yes.

Q Just moving up the chain, the Ambassador then replies to you, "OK, thanks. I will respond to [REDACTED] and ask for his support with DS/IP when our RSO sends in a formal request."

And I would just like to -- I think you may have touched on this a little bit earlier. But Director [REDACTED] here offers -- or proposes that he can sensitize DS/IP to your request. Here the Ambassador is saying that you can take Director [REDACTED] up on that offer and ask him to help with the DS/IP.

Why at this point in time would the Ambassador have sought the MSD director's help with DS/IP when requesting high-threat-trained agents?

A Because we had a difficult history with DS/IP responding to our requests.

Q That is a topic I think we'll visit perhaps in a future round.

I understand that you left post shortly afterwards. You

mentioned that a few times here. Did you have any mention on whether DS/IP did, in fact, provide high-threat-trained agents following this?

A I don't know -- I feel, if my memory serves me correctly, that we did probably send in the formal request before I left. Because we certainly had several cables that we had sent in requesting additional Diplomatic Security staffing, but I don't recall the timing.

Q And that is because you left post, you said, June 15?

A Correct.

Q Moving forward, when we started our discussion, you had mentioned at least two security incidents, the first being the June 6 attack, which we have tried to close out, if you will. You also mentioned an attack on around June 11 on the convoy of the British Ambassador while he was visiting in Benghazi.

Do you recall that incident?

A Yes.

Q You mentioned you recalled that very clearly.

A Yes.

Q Just generally, do you recall taking any immediate steps in response to that specific security incident to harden or improve the security posture in Embassy Tripoli or the Special Mission in Benghazi?

A As I said earlier, I remember having an Emergency Action Committee meeting pretty quickly. I remember actually the day of the attack on the British Ambassador speaking repeatedly to colleagues at



the British embassy to offer condolences, support.

Given that the attack happened in Benghazi, I think that our colleagues on the ground there were much more involved in helping provide the immediate support. And we had an Emergency Action Committee meeting the next day to try to make sense of it.

I personally was very concerned that it might not have been targeted at the British Ambassador, but could have been targeted at us, given the location where it had occurred and given that we had been storing the British embassy's vehicles on our compound. But it was unclear. It was very murky, difficult to determine exactly who was targeted.

We then sent in an Emergency Action Committee meeting cable that included some very specific requests for measures to increase the physical security of our compound in Benghazi. And that is a classified cable. So I think, if any further detail is needed, we should discuss it in the afternoon.

Q Okay. We are happy to do so.

I think at this point it makes sense for us to go and introduce Exhibit 3.

[██████████ Exhibit No. 3

Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Again, Ambassador, I'd like to give you a moment to read that. But just for the record, I will note that this is an email dated June 12, 2012, from Ambassador Stevens to ██████████, cc'g you and

others, with the subject "RE: Following up on UK convoy attack."  
Document number is C05409960.

I think it would be helpful to aid our discussion if we walk through portions of this.

A Uh-huh.

Q I would like to read a portion of this in the record. And we'll start with the beginning email. It starts at the bottom and moves on to page 2 here.

You wrote to [REDACTED] and others. And this is the day before; so, it is June 11. You stated, "Just to let you know - we've alerted GOL security contacts of the attack on the UK Ambassador's convoy to Benghazi, asked whether they have any information regarding threats to US diplomats or facilities, and also asked for extra protection for all USG diplomatic facilities. We'll hold an EAC at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the attack and will send a readout afterwards."

And just further in our discussion about some of the steps you'd taken in the immediate aftermath, it appears here you took at least three steps, including reaching out to your contacts, asking for threat information, and seeing if they could provide additional security resources. Is that accurate?

A Yes. Correct.

Q And do you recall whether you received additional information about additional threats to U.S. Government personnel or facilities in Libya at this time?

A I don't recall receiving additional information from the

Libyan authorities.

Q And did you make a request here for additional extra protection? Did you, in fact, receive that extra protection, if you recall?

A I don't recall.

Q Okay. I will note here that you do refer to the EAC, and I think you mentioned just briefly some of your discussion there.

Do you recall whether Ambassador Stevens attended that EAC?

A I don't recall. In my mind, this was a meeting that took place the next morning. So maybe there were two meetings.

The meeting that I recall -- and, again, maybe I was wrong. Maybe it was the night of. But Ambassador Stevens was definitely at the meeting that I recall. So I really don't remember if there were two, like one the day of and one the next day.

Q Okay.

A But I obviously had a lot of discussions with Ambassador Stevens about that. He was for sure in the meeting that I remember having happened the next day. And I am sorry to be so convoluted. Maybe my memory is wrong. It has been more than 3 years.

Q Okay. That's helpful. And I think in another setting we may be able to tease out a few more of those details.

A Uh-huh.

Q But had the Ambassador been there as Chief of Mission, would he have then chaired the EAC?

A Yes. Yes.

Q And to the extent we can discuss it here, I would just like to ask: Coming out of that EAC, was there a recommendation that Embassy Tripoli move to either authorized or ordered departure?

A No.

Q Was there a recommendation that the Special Mission move to either authorized or ordered departure?

A No.

Q Was there a recommendation that either the Special Mission or Embassy Tripoli suspend operations --

A No.

Q -- even if temporarily?

A No.

Q And, again, appreciating the difficulty with possibly several meetings in a very short time period here, to the extent you can, can you share with us what Ambassador Stevens -- those discussions you had with him during your meeting with him about this incident?

A I think that his views were very clearly encapsulated in this email that you have just shown me in Exhibit 3.

Q Okay.

A Ambassador Stevens, on the one hand, very much understood the seriousness of -- or the serious nature of this attack and, coupled with the attack that had just happened on our compound, understood that the security environment was not good, but also felt very strongly about the need to keep a presence in Benghazi for policy reasons, for reporting, for having contact with the revolutionary forces who were

still very much present in Benghazi.

So he, as I was leaving Tripoli, was literally wringing his hands about this decision, about what should be done about the future of the Mission.

And he felt strongly that the best solution was what is encapsulated in this email from Ambassador Stevens to [REDACTED], saying that we should probably scale down our presence a bit, you know, take advantage of the gap -- the natural gap that was there and reassess.

He was not ready to make a decision on the future of Benghazi's staffing on -- you know, in that period June 12 through June 14. And then I left on June 15.

Q Okay. I think we are going to get to that point. I would like to just read some portions of this email into the record.

A Okay.

Q Above the email I just read, [REDACTED] replies, "Benghazi convened an informal EAC." "We have suspended movements today/this evening and will also remain on compound tomorrow, Tuesday, June 12. Tomorrow afternoon we will assess the movements currently planned for Wednesday, June 13."

Again recognizing that there may have been several meetings in this time, do you recall participating in the Benghazi EAC at this time?

A I did not participate in the Benghazi EAC. Again, these were two separate missions. So we relied on Benghazi to do what they needed to do to assess their security situation and security posture,

and we also held a parallel EAC in Tripoli.

Q And there is a list of certain entities that attended that. Would this have been the right mix of personnel to attend an EAC?

A Yes. And it was the full list of personnel present in Benghazi. Actually, it wasn't the full list, come to think of it, because we had the information management officer and -- yeah.

Q So, again, here -- and just for the record, [REDACTED], who is she?

A She was the principal officer in Benghazi at the time.

Q And so they convened an informal EAC. And it looks like the recommendation coming out of that was that they would make some limited modifications to their security posture and their travel policy -- travel security policy. Is that accurate?

A Correct.

Q And did you consider those at that time to be prudent steps, given the June 11 incident?

A I think it was the only choice. I think they needed to kind of hunker down at that point.

Q There is an indication here that tomorrow afternoon they will reassess.

Do you recall if they took any further steps the next day?

A I don't recall.

Q Okay. Moving up to the next email, [REDACTED] writes, "Chris, I am getting quite concerned about the security situation for our folks in Benghazi. Maybe we should talk on the phone tomorrow at

your convenience. Just informally touch base. We are at a (possible) natural break in the action coming up, with ██████ leaving. We can bring ██████ and a few others into the conversation at the next stage, but I would like your sense of things first."

And above that, on June 12, Ambassador Stevens writes, "We share your concern. ██████ and I have been discussing recommending a pause in our Bgzi PO staffing to further assess the security situation there. As you note below, there is a natural pause coming up, in the two-week gap between ██████ June 14 departure and ██████ anticipated arrival at the end of the month. One idea would be to use this time to allow our RSO team in Benghazi (perhaps reduced in number) to continue to assess the threat environment and consider ways to mitigate. Those are our initial thoughts."

The Ambassador here refers to ██████ departure. I assume that that's the principal officer, ██████?

A Correct.

Q And he refers to ██████ anticipated arrival. Who is ██████?

A ██████, if I remember his last name correctly, who was supposed to be the next principal officer.

Q And there is -- they use the word -- the Ambassador used the words "natural pause coming" here.

So there was a natural break in the principal officer staffing in Benghazi at this time. Is that right?

A Correct.

Q And that 2-week gap was not driven by security concerns?

A No. [REDACTED] had a family situation that required her to leave Benghazi earlier than expected.

Q Okay. There is a reference here to discussions you may have had with the Ambassador.

Do you recall those discussions or some of the same meetings we were just talking about a few moments ago?

A They were, of course, the Emergency Action Committee meetings. But Ambassador Stevens and I had separate discussions, just the two of us. As I said earlier, he was literally wringing his hands about what to do because, for him, this was a very difficult problem.

Obviously, he understood the serious nature of the security threats in Benghazi, but he also understood the equally serious, in his mind, need to keep folks on the ground there to continue doing our policy work, our outreach, our reporting, about the situation in Benghazi.

Q Thank you.

It sounds like the Ambassador here at least may be proposing to take the natural break and allow the regional security officer on the ground to further assess the threat environment. Is that right?

A Correct.

Q Did you support that proposal or did you agree with Ambassador Stevens that that was the correct approach to take?

A I supported his decision.

Q With respect to the RSO assessment, do you recall if there was an RSO in Benghazi at this time?



A Presumably, if there was an RSO who was referenced in [REDACTED] June 11th email. I don't recall who that was.

Q Does the name [REDACTED] ring a bell?

A I really don't remember.

Q So you don't recall if an assessment did, in fact, take place or if there was anything that the RSO would have reported back?

A I left post on June 15. I cannot speak to anything that happened in Libya after that date.

Q Okay. So after you left post, did you continue to closely track developments in either Tripoli or Benghazi?

A No. I had 1 week in which I was outprocessing, as one is supposed to do from an assignment. And because I was technically assigned to Washington, I had to submit my final travel vouchers. I had to finalize whatever performance reviews, et cetera, from the time.

I was also preparing for an assignment in Iraq. So I had a number of things I needed to do then in terms of my inprocessing for Iraq. So I think I had 4 days in the State Department in which I was very, very busy with administrative stuff and then I was done with Libya.

Q Okay. Do you recall if at this point in time -- this is an email thread between the Ambassador, [REDACTED] -- for the record, who is [REDACTED]?

A [REDACTED] was the Director of the Office of Maghreb Affairs in the State Department.

Q You had indicated that the Ambassador at this time was wringing his hands over the decision. I would like to generally ask:

The Ambassador had served several months as the special envoy in eastern Libya, one of the principal players on the ground, if you will, during the formative moments of our Mission of special envoy to Libya and, at this point, had been the Ambassador for a brief period of time in Libya.

Was he considered to be expert on Libyan matters?

A Yes. Chris's views on Libya were very highly regarded. In addition to his service in Benghazi, of course, he had served previously as the DCM, my predecessor in Tripoli. He was there from 2007 until 2009.

So he had a lot of experience, probably more than anyone in the U.S. Government, about Libya. So people put a lot of stock in his assessment of the situation.

Q And that would include folks back at Main State?

A Yes.

Q So if the Ambassador at this moment in time -- and I apologize that this is a bit of a hypothetical -- had he made a recommendation to suspend operations in Benghazi or to consider the closure of that post, would that recommendation have received serious consideration or weight?

A That's a purely hypothetical question. I can't answer that. Chris did not make that recommendation at that time.

What I can say is that, as I said earlier, his views were highly respected and given serious consideration by the State Department.

Q Okay. To your knowledge, was Ambassador Stevens ordered

by anyone at the State Department to keep Benghazi open --

A No.

Q -- during this period?

A Not at all.

Q Thank you. With that, we will go off the record.

[Recess.]

RPTR ZAMORA

EDTR HOFSTAD

[1:20 p.m.]

Ms. Jackson. It's 1:20, and we'll go back on the record.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Ambassador, when we left, we were talking about security incidents and the response thereto. And like the last hour, I am going to jump around a little bit. I have some followup questions on some of the areas that we talked about. So it won't be as streamlined as the first hour we spent together.

But I did want to pick up where we left off right before we broke when we were talking about the June 2012 security incidents that occurred, both the IED blowing a large hole into the wall of the compound in Benghazi and the attack on the U.K. Ambassador.

And starting with the U.K. Ambassador attack, you stated in the last hour that you had some concerns that there was the potential that it was an attack against U.S. Government interests. Can you explain what your concerns were at the time and why you thought it could have been an attack directed at the U.S.?

A There were two main reasons.

One was the physical location of the attack. It occurred, I believe, on Venezia Street, which is right by our compound. And it was actually -- as I understood it, not having been there at the time of the attack -- close by our rear exit from our compound. And, also,

given the fact that we had been storing British armored vehicles on our compound, again, if someone had been watching, you know, did they know for sure whether that was British or American.

Also, around the same time, a figure named Abu Yahya -- is it Abu Yahya al-Libi? -- a senior Al Qaeda operative, had been killed, I believe, in either Pakistan or Afghanistan. So I was --

Q By the U.S. Government?

A Correct.

Q In a drone strike or something like that?

A Correct. In some U.S. operation. So, given that he was a Libyan, I was concerned whether or not there could have been some retaliatory action taken by Al Qaeda, you know, for that act.

So it was murky. There were a lot of things that were unclear, but I was concerned that there could have been links to the U.S. Government.

Q At that time, in June of 2012, the Brits were storing their vehicles and their weapons on the U.S. compound, the Benghazi compound; is that correct?

A Correct.

Q At the time the attack happened, had the U.K. Ambassador just left our compound, or was he on his way back to our compound?

A I don't know.

Q Okay. Do you recall what time of day it was?

A I don't remember.

Q Okay.

And that attack happened on or about June 11; is that correct?

A I believe so.

Q Okay. And it was just a few days before that that the IED explosion of the wall of the compound had occurred?

A Correct.

Q Four or 5 days before that?

A Uh-huh.

Q Okay. And that was a pretty large hole, as you understand it; is that correct?

A Correct.

Q Okay.

The wall that surrounded the compound, did it meet the standards of the State Department at the time?

A I believe that there were waivers in place for all of the physical security requirements. Maybe not even formal physical waivers, but the -- because this was a temporary facility. So short answer, no, to the best of my knowledge, it did not meet the physical security standards.

Q You described it as a temporary facility. What did that mean to you, and what was the distinction between a temporary and a permanent facility?

A With the qualification that I'm not an expert in these matters -- that's usually something that's handled by Overseas Buildings Operations and Diplomatic Security -- it meant that there was not the same requirements that you would have in place for, let's

say, a new embassy compound that was being built.

Q Okay. And who could make the determination that a facility could be occupied in a temporary status?

A I honestly don't remember who does that. I know that there were certainly communications back and forth with Overseas Buildings Operations and Diplomatic Security. I don't know who has the ultimate authority.

Q Okay.

And was that same designation as a temporary facility also true for the facility you were in in Tripoli?

A I believe so.

Q Okay. And were you then essentially able to occupy it as is, without these upgrades?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And was there a plan in place, to your knowledge, to bring the facilities up to the standards?

Mr. Evers. I'm sorry. You've mentioned two different facilities.

Ms. Jackson. Just as to each.

Mr. Evers. Okay. Thank you.

Ambassador [REDACTED]. For Tripoli, yes, we were working on a massive renovation plan that would create residential and office space that would serve as the interim embassy compound, I believe was the term that was used.

And for Benghazi, certainly we had put in requests for various

physical security upgrades to the facility, but there was not an overall plan to renovate it because this was a short-term facility.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Okay. At that time, in June of 2012, did you know how long the U.S. Government was going to maintain a presence in Benghazi?

A I believe that the memo that had been signed off by Under Secretary Kennedy authorized the mission for a year, if I remember correctly.

Q So that was for all of calendar year 2012?

A That's my understanding.

Q Okay. And that was a memo that had been signed towards the end of 2011, early 2012?

A That's my understanding, yes.

Q Okay. Were there other components to that memo, such as what the staffing should look like and the security should look like at the Benghazi compound?

A Without having looked recently at the memo, I couldn't tell you what exactly was included.

Q Then we'll look at it.

Did you have any role in reviewing it or providing information?

A Yes. I did see it in draft form. And then I believe I got a copy of the signed document, as well.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 4

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. JACKSON:



Q All right. Let me hand you what I've marked as exhibit No. 4.

A Okay.

Q And if you would take a moment and look at that.

For the record, this is document No. C05391930. It's entitled "Action Memo for Under Secretary Kennedy -- M." At the top, it is dated December 27, 2011. And the subject line is "Future Operations in Benghazi, Libya."

Oh, there has been a photocopying error. I'm going to give you another one marked exhibit 4. We'll take those back. We had a photocopying malfunction. There's an extra -- we can go off the record.

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Exhibit 4, is it an exhibit that you -- or is this information that you've seen before?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And, again, what were the circumstances in which you saw this memo?

A I saw it, I think, in draft form. I did not see the final version that was sent to the Under Secretary for his consideration, but I did see them, the come-back copy with the approved recommendations.

Q Okay.

And this memo, just generally, allows a diplomatic presence by

the U.S. Government in Benghazi, Libya, through all of calendar year 2012; is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

Does it have a component in it where it talks about what the security personnel should be?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what was that?

A I believe it was five Diplomatic Security agents.

Q Okay. And do you recall, would Diplomatic Security have signed off on this memo prior to it being sent to Under Secretary Kennedy?

A Given that I was not assigned by -- well, I technically was assigned to Washington, but given that I was not physically present in Washington, I don't know who cleared this document.

Q Okay. Is that the normal process within the State Department, is that all the various component bureaus or offices that are affected by a decision generally clear on it before it goes forward for approval?

A That's the general practice. But, like I said, I wasn't involved in the drafting or clearance of this document, so I couldn't say who did or did not clear this document.

Q Okay.

In the last hour, we talked about difficulties in staffing in Benghazi and in Tripoli for your security. Can you describe for us

a little bit of the difficulties that you had in the staffing in Benghazi? We focused on MSD and SST in Tripoli, but what were the difficulties in Benghazi?

A Well, as you see in this memo, there was an approved plan to have five Diplomatic Security agents present. And Diplomatic Security routinely referred to this -- or officials within Diplomatic Security referred to that as an unfunded mandate, because this was a mission that wasn't part of our normal staffing plan, so there weren't bodies or billets that, you know, could be assigned to that.

So it was a constant push and pull to pull people from other assignments, to have TDY, temporary-duty assignments for people from various Diplomatic Security field offices, and there were gaps that resulted.

Q Okay. And what happened when there were gaps? What were the ramifications of there not being a full complement of five agents in Benghazi?

A We felt that we didn't have enough resources to do our jobs and to adequately protect our personnel. So there was a period in the February 2012 timeframe where I believe they were down to one or two agents, which then prompted me to get involved and to push Washington to send more resources.

Q Was February a particularly sensitive time in Libya? Was it the anniversary of the revolution?

A Yes, it was.

Q Okay. And did that pose additional security concerns for

you and others in Libya at that time?

A Yes, but I would say every day posed particular security concerns. As I said earlier, it was a very fluid environment. So it was just very important to ensure that we had appropriate staffing.

Q Did you use this memo, exhibit 5, in any way to seek greater resources for Benghazi?

A Well, I certainly referred to the approved staffing levels when I was interacting with officials in the Diplomatic Security Bureau to ask for more staffing.

Q And what was their response?

A Well, it was part of an ongoing discussion.

Q Okay.

A So, I mean, a response at any given moment. If you, you know, asked for a more specific time, I could give you a more specific answer.

Q Okay. But you mentioned earlier that there were issues with not having permanent billets. Does that mean that it didn't go through the normal selection process for putting people overseas?

A Yes, that's correct. I mean, when you have an established embassy or consulate, there are approved staffing patterns, there are clear personnel procedures to get people out to post, whereas we were staffing Benghazi entirely on a kind of volunteer basis basically.

Q Sort of an ad hoc basis?

A Uh-huh.

Q Okay.

If there had been a more formalized relationship between Benghazi and Tripoli, would that have eased the staffing issue? And from this sense is what I'm asking: Would it have more formalized the procedure? Could billets have been added to Tripoli so that Benghazi could be covered?

Do you understand what I'm asking?

A I do, but I think it's a hypothetical question.

Q Well, in your experience, when you have more than one facility in a country, how does that normally work?

A I have never worked in a country with an embassy and a consulate.

Q Okay. Do you know from your training and experience and your length of time in the State Department how that generally works? Or what's your sense of how that works?

A I don't know. As I said, I've never worked in a country with an embassy and a consulate, so --

Q Was there any discussion in 2012 while you were still in Libya about formalizing the relationship between Tripoli and Benghazi to make it easier to staff?

A No, there was not.

Q And do you know why that wasn't? Had there been a firm decision that there was not going to be any connection between the two?

A There was a firm decision that Benghazi would be a special mission that was not a formal embassy or consulate.

Q Okay. And how did you acquire that information? Who told

you? Was it in a memo? How did you come to understand that?

A There were ongoing interagency policy discussions in the summer of -- I believe it was 2011. And I don't recall exactly how I was told of this policy decision, but I was aware of it. And it was a decision in which I did not participate; it was certainly made at a level higher than me.

Q Okay. And you said it was an interagency decision?

A There was an interagency process in general that was talking about our overall engagement with the new, post-Qadhafi Libya.

Q Okay.

If a post or consulate is tied to an embassy or otherwise some sort of formal relationship, is there any notification to Congress that's required, if you know?

A I'm not an expert in this area. The hearsay around the State Department is that, yes, when there is a formal diplomatic presence that is established, yes, there is a congressional notification process.

Q To your knowledge, did that concern play into the decision to keep Benghazi separate from Tripoli?

A I don't know what was the rationale that was deployed by senior officials in the State Department to make that decision.

Q Was that ever communicated to you by anyone?

A The rationale?

Q That notification to Congress was a concern.

A There was certainly speculation around the State Department

that that could be one reason.

Q Okay. And do you know why that would have been a concern? Was that part of the discussion and speculation?

A I was not part of the decisionmaking process regarding whether or how to interact with Congress on the mission in Benghazi, so anything that I would say would be pure speculation.

Q Okay.

In this timeframe when the decision was to go into Benghazi in the spring and summer of 2011 and there were these interagency discussions, did you participate in them at all? Did you attend any sub-IPC meetings, deputy committee meetings, IPC meetings, anything?

A Regarding the decision to go into Benghazi?

Q Yes.

A No, I did not.

Q Okay. What about the decision whether to resume operations in Tripoli?

A Yes. I was part of a -- and I should caveat all this -- I was part of a planning process that worked at a working level to figure out how to make the mission in Benghazi happen. I was not part of the policy decision.

So I sat around the table with colleagues from Diplomatic Security, Under Secretary Kennedy's team -- I don't even remember who else was there -- you know, just figuring out the logistics of how you make that happen.

And then --

Q And by "that," you mean the mission in Benghazi, how you make that happen?

A Yes. And then also a lot of working-level planning meetings for how to go back into Tripoli and how you make that happen.

Q Okay. And, as a result of these what I would call policy and planning meetings -- you may have called them something different.

A They were not policy and planning meetings, because the policy was already made. This was planning for implementation of policy.

Q Okay. How were those meetings memorialized? Were there briefing papers or action memos or information memos? Or how was the collective wisdom of the group communicated to the policymakers or others within the State Department?

A I don't remember. And I played no role in the memorialization. That was something that I believe was done by the NEA/EX team.

Q Okay.

You stated in the last hour that, as you were leaving Tripoli, you thought that in Tripoli you had the right combination of security assets, be it RSOs, MSD, SST, through the elections. Did I hear your prior answer correctly?

A Yes. I felt comfortable with the security staffing that we had in place in Tripoli.

Q Okay. At least through the period of the elections; is that correct?



A Correct.

Q And, as I understand it, you had two MSD teams at the time?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And you had an SST team?

A Yes.

Q And what is an SST team? What is it comprised of? What agency does it come from?

A I don't remember what the acronym stood for, but it was a -- it came from the Department of Defense, from AFRICOM. They were special forces members who were there to supplement our security in a static way. So they weren't, you know, providing close protection as we were moving around town, but they helped --

Q They were not? I'm sorry, were or were not?

A They were not providing close protection. That was not part of their duties. But they came in with a skill set that our Diplomatic Security teams didn't have. So, for instance, explosive ordnance disposal, because when we were first going back in, we didn't know the state of our embassy or our residences, so we needed someone who could respond to an EOD; medical skills that our teams didn't have. And I thought it was very helpful to have them there.

Q Okay. Were there like resources in Benghazi?

A No, there were not SST officials or resources like that in Benghazi.

Q Were there MSD officials in Benghazi?

A No.

Q Okay. And do you know why not?

A I wasn't part of decisionmaking for the overall staffing patterns and resource decisions that were made in the State Department.

Q Okay. Do you know whether those resources were ever requested by Benghazi?

A I don't believe Benghazi ever requested an MSD or an SST. That said, when there were staffing gaps in the Diplomatic Security component in Benghazi, I made the decision to send additional resources from Tripoli to Benghazi to augment their security posture.

Q Okay.

During the time that you were in Tripoli -- you mentioned the name of [REDACTED] before as the RSO. Was he the RSO during your entire time of return to Tripoli, as I would call it, from September of 2011 to June when you left?

A Essentially. I think he arrived in Tripoli about 2 weeks after I did, but yes.

Q Okay. And had he been your RSO at the time you went into suspended operations?

A No, he was not. He was new to Libya, entirely new.

Q But had he worked with you during the summer of 2011?

A No.

Q Did you know him before?

A I had done a telephone interview with him when he was applying for the job in 2010, well before any of this started.

Q How would you describe your working relationship with him?

A Professional.

Q Did you value his opinion?

A In certain respects, yes; in other respects no.

Q Okay. And could you elaborate on that?

A I felt that [REDACTED] really did not have the kind of tactical and operational knowledge to operate in that kind of environment.

Q And I would ask you to elaborate on that because I don't understand.

A [REDACTED] had come to us with his last overseas assignment having been an assistant RSO [REDACTED] doing consular investigations, office work -- very different from operating in a high-threat environment with militias duking it out, with, you know, possibilities of IEDs.

So I, as a matter of practice, made sure that anytime I discussed a security matter, of course, I included [REDACTED] because he was our regional security officer, but I relied far more heavily on the advice and views of our MSD teams.

Q Okay. And who was the leader of the MSD teams?

A It changed as the teams came in and out. When I first arrived, [REDACTED], who was the head of MSD, was there. And then there were a variety of senior officials from MSD who came out.

Q Okay.

In the documents we have reviewed, there were a lot of requests for additional security, both for Tripoli and for Benghazi. And [REDACTED] name appears in many of those communications. Was that his role, to communicate those requests to Main State?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And were you kept apprised of those requests that he made?

A I worked very closely with him on all those requests, and, in some cases, I was the one who asked him to make those requests.

Q Okay. Was there any request that he made that you did not approve of or did not concur with?

A No.

Q Okay. Did you believe that he was being overambitious with -- that may not be the right word -- with the number and nature of requests that he was making for security, either in Tripoli or Benghazi?

A No. I thought they were absolutely appropriate. And, as I said earlier, I coordinated all of this with him and, in some cases, asked him to make those requests.

Q Okay. So, in those requests that were made, would you put them on, sort of, the continuum of being grounded in realism as opposed to being an alarmist?

A I think they were grounded in a very accurate assessment of the security situation, which did not reflect [REDACTED] personal, you know, solo views. It, in fact, reflected the views of me, the Ambassador, the MSD team, the SST team, and other agencies present at post.

Q Okay.

In the last hour, you described a series of meetings that you had

at Main State in February of 2012 where, among other things, you discussed ongoing security needs for both Tripoli and Benghazi. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. How high up in the Department did you take your concerns? You've mentioned you met with Diplomatic Security. Did you discuss at any higher level security concerns?

A I had met with the Deputy Assistant -- then-Deputy Assistant Secretary, Charlene Lamb, and I also met with the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the NEA Bureau, Liz Dibble.

Q Okay. Did you go to the Under Secretary level with any of your concerns?

A No, I did not.

Q Did you have any meetings at the Under Secretary level while you were there?

A No, I did not.

Q Okay.

Did you have any meetings with anybody from the National Security Council when you were in D.C. in February of 2012?

Ms. Safai. Are you referring to Libya-specific issues?

Ms. Jackson. Well, yes. She was the DCM for Libya.

Ms. Safai. But she -- never mind. Go ahead.

Ambassador [REDACTED]. I don't remember, quite honestly. I'm thinking the answer is no, but sometimes when I was in Washington I was pulled in to participate in various ad hoc meetings. But I don't

recall going over and having a specific meeting at NSC. But this was several years ago, 3 years ago.

Actually, did I have coffee with someone? I may have. I'm really -- I'm trying to remember.

Ms. Jackson. We will help you out.

Ambassador [REDACTED]. Thank you.

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

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q I'm going to hand you what I've marked as exhibit 5. And if you would take a few moments to take a look at that.

And, for the record, this is a document that's numbered C05561876. At the top of the page, it is an email chain from John C. Stevens to [REDACTED], dated February 17, 2012. The subject line is, "Re: NSS, resources and the DC."

But on the back page of it is an email exchange from the witness, [REDACTED], dated February 17, to [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED], with the same subject line.

And we'll just give you a few moments to take a look at that.

As to exhibit 5 -- and, yes, we understand that these events were over 3 years ago.

A Yes.

Q Does this refresh your recollection of --

A It does.

Q -- your meetings and trip in February of 2012?

A Yes. Although I don't remember going over to the NSC, clearly I did. And I do remember having discussions with Ben Fishman -- is that his name?

Q Ben Fishman from the national security staff?

A Yes, about all of these issues, yes.

Q Okay.

So this is an email that you wrote on February 17, 2012; is that correct?

A Yes.

Q And as you've reviewed it, is it an accurate reflection of the issues that were raised and things that you discussed in February of 2012?

A Absolutely.

Q Okay. Did you try and be comprehensive and thorough when you were doing this write-up?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

I noticed that on the "to" line of your email, it is sent to the names I read before, [REDACTED] and -- is it [REDACTED]?

A Uh-huh.

Q -- [REDACTED], and [REDACTED]. Can you tell me who those people are and what role they played at the time?

A Yes. So [REDACTED] was the deputy office director in Maghreb Affairs. I'm not sure why I didn't include [REDACTED] -- maybe he wasn't there at the time -- because he was the office director. And

then everyone else on the "to" line was part of the Libya desk.

Q In NEA?

A Correct.

Q And then I see on the cc line, are those people who were also in NEA?

A Yes. Everyone except Liz Dibble was part of the NEA/EX office. And Liz Dibble, of course, was our Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary.

Q Okay.

I notice that Ray Maxwell is not included. Can you tell me why not?

A I don't remember why at the time I would have not included him. However, given that this was a resource issue, I thought it was very important to include Liz because her role as the number-two person in the NEA bureau was to oversee all of our resource issues.

Q Okay. When you were in for these meetings, did you meet with Ray Maxwell?

A No, I did not.

Q Okay. Was he the director of the Maghreb Affairs that included the country of Libya?

A He was the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Maghreb Affairs.

Q Okay. And Maghreb Affairs included Libya?

A Yes.

Q Okay.



Was there someone who was sort of specializing or handling Libya issues because they were so hot at the time, for lack of a better word?

A And handling in what sense?

Q Well, the person that you went to with concerns and things like that.

A In the State Department, you always go to your desk officer. And in the State Department there's a division between policy issues, which would be the desk officer, and then the administrative or management support issues, which would be the post management officer.

So, given this was a nexus of both of those issues, I included the mix of both the desk and the EX team.

Q But not the Deputy Assistant Secretary.

A No, I did not.

Q Okay.

How often did you talk with Mr. Maxwell?

A I think -- well, I paid a courtesy call on him before I went out to Libya. And I had one phone conversation with him the entire time that I was in Libya, which was related to a flag-raising ceremony. And, really, that was the extent of my substantive interaction with him.

Q And how often would you have contact with Elizabeth Dibble?

A I'm trying to think. I mean, it also wasn't very regular for me. But keep in mind, as the Deputy Chief of Mission, in normal State Department practice, it's the office director level. It's the Ambassador's job to deal with the higher-level people.

Q Would you say that you talked to her or communicated with her phone or email once a week, once a month?

A I couldn't quantify it. But I felt, again, given her role overseeing the resource issues, she was the one that I needed to loop in on things that involved resources.

Q Okay.

One of your concerns that you raised while you were out in February of 2012 was the issue of security assets in both Tripoli and Benghazi. Did you and -- and in February, Ambassador Cretz was still there; is that correct?

A Absolutely.

Q And let me ask this first. It's my understanding that Ambassador Cretz made a trip to Washington either overlapping or right after you were there. Do you recall that?

A Ambassador Cretz and I would have never been in Washington at the same time. That's standard practice. Either the Ambassador or DCM always needs to be in country at the same time.

I don't remember his travel schedule, quite honestly, so I couldn't answer that question.

Q Okay. But when you went back into Tripoli, you had set up 6 weeks in country, 2 weeks break, 6 weeks and that. So he would have followed you out of the country?

A He was the Ambassador. He took leave and traveled when he wanted to take leave. It wasn't as regular as a system. And there were also Chief-of-Mission conferences and other demands on his time.

Q Okay. Do you recall if he ever had a series of meetings in Washington regarding the security staffing in Tripoli and Benghazi?

A I don't recall.

Q Okay.

Going back to exhibit 5 for a minute, you had a meeting with Ben Fishman of the national security staff at that time. Had you had recurring conversations or meetings with him during the time that you were the DCM, while you were --

A Yes.

Q Okay. And how often would you communicate with him?

A Again, I can't quantify that. There were times when he would phone and want to discuss various issues. There were times when there were email exchanges, and certainly there were times when I saw him in person.

Q Okay. Did the frequency of those meetings increase, decrease, or stay the same when we look at the period of time from September of 2011 through June of 2012 as opposed to when you were in Tripoli before?

A It was much more intense interaction with the National Security Council staff after the revolution.

Q Okay. And what were the nature of those conversations? What type of issues would you be discussing with the national security staff?

A Usually policy-focused issues.

Q And could you give us a list or examples of those?

A Well, as you see in this email, there was a great desire on the part of the National Security Council staff for us to engage more with the Libyans and the desire to send out various experts in various subject matters, not necessarily experts in Libya, but -- I mean, the overall mindset, which was difficult for those of us on the ground, that the U.S. Government had done transitions in Iraq and Afghanistan with the full force and backing of the U.S. military and everyone and everything. And, you know, it was just a very different model. And the model in Libya was different, but the demands were the same.

So, as you see in this email chain, for example, I think we had, I don't know, like, nine armored vehicles when we were operating in Tripoli. And you can't run a mission with nine armored vehicles when everyone has to travel in armored vehicles.

So it was this constant push and pull of people saying, why can't we have someone to go out and do an assessment of the militias, or why can't we have someone to go out and, you know, engage on economic reform? Well, because I don't have a bed for them to sleep in, and I don't have a car or the Diplomatic Security agents to move them around.

So that was one example of the kind of discussions that we had.

Q Did you ever communicate to the national security staff that, you know, if you gave me some military assets, we could, you know, get out and about and do the things that you want?

A I did not ask for military assets because there was a very clear policy parameter that there would be no boots on the ground.

Q Okay. And how did you learn of that policy?

A It was, I believe, announced by the President of the United States.

Q Okay. And so how did you get SST resources? Because that was a military resource.

A Those were policy decisions in which I played absolutely no role. I was on a little bit of vacation at the end of August 2011, after our time at Embassy Tripoli expired and before I started my new assignment. And when I came back, I was briefed on the plans for the SST.

Q And that decision was made while you were out.

A Yes. And it was not a decision in which I would have been involved. That was at a much higher level.

Q Okay. So it was clear that you could not ask for military assets for additional protection.

A I didn't feel that I needed military assets for additional protection.

Q You needed just additional security assets?

A Correct.

Q Okay.

You've described the various things that the national security staff wanted you to accomplish or wanted your group to accomplish in Libya. Were you getting the same and similar requests through the State Department, or were these taskings that you got directly from the NSS?

A We had all sorts of brilliant ideas coming from all sorts of people all over government.

Q Of course you did. It was the Federal Government.

A Yes.

Q Would anything that was requested of you from the national security staff, would that be echoed or reiterated by State Department, or would they be separate and distinct from requests that you got from the State Department?

A It could be either or both. I mean, it's impossible for me to generalize.

Q Okay.

Ms. Jackson. Go ahead.

Ms. Betz. Well, you just talked about, sort of, this push that you felt from the NSS on putting these individuals on the ground. Did you feel like that push was greater than other pushes that you felt within the State Department or other agencies?

Ambassador [REDACTED]. Government-wide, there were an awful lot of people -- and this is my personal view. Government has grown explosively since September 11, 2001. So we have offices for stabilization, we have offices for -- I don't know what we have -- special envoys. We have all of these people who, in the Iraq and Afghanistan context, had some small piece of a very big puzzle.

Libya was not Iraq or Afghanistan. The policy decision was that we were not involved in Libya in the same way that we were involved in Iraq and Afghanistan. We did not have the administrative resources.

So we were bombarded every day by people with, you know, what they thought was the right way to fix Libya. And I can't tell you how many times we had to do conference calls, and, you know, as the DCM, I was the bad guy. I was the enforcer. "No, we can't do that. No, that doesn't make sense. If you want to do that, here's what we need in terms of resources to support that."

I mean, keep in mind, this was a situation where we were living, you know, four people to a room, eight people to a bathroom, which in a third-world country is never a good idea, with the plumbing.

So, again, people who thought, well, you know, but in Iraq we were able to do fill-in-the-blank, and there was just a complete disconnect that Libya was not Iraq.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q And, again, switching around here, with respect to Libya and prior to the Arab Spring, prior to suspended operations, how were decisions regarding Libya made by you and Ambassador Cretz? Such as, it's my understanding that the DCM or the Ambassador approves travel into country, gives country clearances, and things like that. Was Libya operating as a standard embassy prior to suspended operations?

A Prior to suspended operations, yes, we were operating as a normal embassy.

Q Okay. And, obviously, that changed once you went into suspended operations; is that correct?

A Yes.

Q When you were in Tripoli in exile, did you and Ambassador

Cretz retain your authorities and decisionmaking power?

A Ambassador Cretz retained all of his authorities as Chief of Mission throughout his entire time.

Q Okay. But did you, as Deputy Chief of Mission?

A Well, I had no more mission to manage.

Q Okay.

It is our understanding that, during that time and even for when Special Envoy Stevens went into Benghazi, that all decisions as to who could travel into Libya, whether it was Tripoli or Benghazi, was being handled by the Under Secretary for Management.

A Yes, that's correct. So I should amend my previous answer to state that, you know, the normal country clearance authorities that reside with the Chief of Mission were taken over by Under Secretary Kennedy.

Q Okay. When you went back into Tripoli in September of 2011, did Ambassador Cretz resume that authority, or did it stay with Under Secretary for Management Kennedy?

A Under Secretary Kennedy retained that authority, but I think we also had a role in terms of providing recommendations about what we needed and what we were comfortable with and what we could support. Under Secretary Kennedy and his team I always felt were very attentive to our needs.

Q Okay. Was that unusual, though, that those authorities did not revert back to the Ambassador once you'd gone back in country?

A I think that's impossible for me to generalize. I mean,



certainly, there are situations where, you know, the post is on an evacuation status and the Under Secretary has that authority to determine who goes in and out of the country. In some cases, he retains it; in some cases, he doesn't.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 6  
Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q I'm going to hand you what I've marked as exhibit 6, which is a June 10, 2011, document entitled "Action Memo for Under Secretary Kennedy -- M." It bears document number C05578649 from "NEA -- Jeffrey Feltman, Assistant Secretary," subject, "Request Authorization to Add Five State USDH personnel in Benghazi, Libya."

And I'll give the witness a few minutes to review this document.

In exhibit 6 -- are you familiar with this action memo, first?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And, in fact, you are on the cleared -- the list of persons who cleared on this memo; is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And it was when you were in Tripoli in exile?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And so you supported this memo going forward?

A Yes.

Q To your knowledge, did this memo go forward?

A I don't recall.

Q Okay. Because I notice it does not bear an approved or

disapproved signature.

A Uh-huh.

Q Okay.

Were there any events ongoing in Benghazi at the time that this action memo was drafted and cleared?

A Particular political or security events or --

Q Security events.

A I believe this was around the time that they moved out of the Tibesti Hotel.

Q And that was due to security concerns?

A I don't remember the exact timing, but, of course, there was first a car bomb at the Tibesti Hotel, and then there was very specific threat information that made the team move out in a hurry. And I don't remember the dates of that.

Q Okay.

If we go back and piece it together, you were there from mid to late May of 2011; is that correct?

A Uh-huh.

Q And did these events occur after you left?

A Yes.

Q Did they occur shortly after you left, within the next 30 days or so, if you recall?

A Yes, I believe within the next 30 to 45 days. I think they were in June, but this is, you know, 4 years ago, so I don't remember exactly.

Q Okay.

What can you tell us about what was -- the motivation for -- or the underlying rationale is spelled out in this document and -- is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

And, as I read this document -- and we need your input, because that's much more important -- but it seems like the U.S. Government and State Department has decided to have a long-term, more robust presence in Benghazi. Was that the purpose of this memo?

A I disagree with the characterization of "long-term."

Q Okay.

A This was still -- this was June. So this was, you know, what, 4 months after the revolution started, 3 months or 2 months after Chris and the team had arrived in Benghazi. There were increasing demands that were placed on the team. Certainly, when I was there, I was working from, you know, 8 in the morning till midnight. And there were two reporting officers there.

Just in terms of sustainability and getting the work done, 8 in the morning until midnight is never a good recipe, and, also, when you're trying to make sure that people are at a heightened state of alert that's appropriate for a very fluid security environment.

So it wasn't a decision to say, oh, we need a long-term presence. It was a decision that we don't have the resources in place to get the work done that needs to get done.

Q Okay.

And do you recall whether this personnel ever went to Benghazi, this level of personnel?

A This level of personnel did not go to Benghazi, but then later in the summer there was another decision memo that was in the works to think about the future staffing. So decisions were made later about what it would take. And this ties back to the Libya cell organization, to which I belonged.

Q Okay.

And do you recall that -- and was that discussion that you had later in the summer regarding -- was that an increase of staffing in Benghazi?

A It put forward -- it created the Libya cell, so that if events warranted, i.e., if the situation dragged on and there continued to be a standoff between the revolutionary forces and the Qadhafi forces such that we were unable to go back to Tripoli, we would need to bump up our presence in Benghazi. But if Qadhafi fled Tripoli, then we would use those personnel from the Libya cell to increase and reestablish our presence in Tripoli.

Q Okay. And that's ultimately what happened, right?

A Correct.

Q And so you, as a member of the Libya cell, were part of the Libya cell with an eye of the possibility of going into Benghazi.

A Correct.

Q Okay. That's very helpful, because I did not understand

that.

Prior to your leaving Tripoli as the DCM, was there any -- we've talked about discussions of possibly closing Benghazi. On the flip side, were there discussions about keeping Benghazi open into 2013?

A As I was preparing to leave Benghazi in June 2012, yes, there were discussions: What do we do? What's the future? What do we need? But they were very nascent discussions. So I could shed no light on, you know, what might have happened later as time progressed.

Q And you said in June of 2012 that everyone was concerned with the security situation in Benghazi, and there was a lot of discussion and deep concern over whether to keep it open or shut it down. Is that correct?

A I wouldn't say that everyone was concerned. That's a very global assessment. Certainly, I was concerned, Ambassador Stevens was concerned, our security team was concerned, because the trends were worrisome. It was a very different environment than had existed in 2011 when we first went into Benghazi. So there were concerns, yes.

Q Okay.

A But there was not a formal policy discussion at that time of whether to close or open or grow. It was very nascent.

Q You stated in the last hour that you supported the decision of the Ambassador regarding Benghazi; is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Was it your recommendation that he take a different course before he made his decision?

A I did not provide any independent recommendations to Ambassador Stevens. I felt that he knew Benghazi far better than I did, and I would go with his judgment on that.

Q Prior to your leaving Tripoli, were you aware that Secretary Clinton was planning a trip to Libya in the fall of 2012?

A I'm sorry?

Q Prior to your leaving Libya in June of 2012, were you aware that there were discussions that Secretary Clinton may visit Libya, and Benghazi in particular, after the elections?

A I don't remember --

Q Okay.

A -- quite honestly.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 7

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q I'm going to hand you what I've marked as exhibit 7. And, for the record, it is marked document SCB0045144. It is not an email chain that you are on, but at the top it's from Jacob Sullivan, dated January 24, 2012, to "H," regarding "FW: Libya information."

And I'd ask you to take a look at that, because my first question is going to be: Have you ever seen all or part of this document before?

A I have, because I read it in the Blumenthal emails that were just released.

Q Prior to that, had you ever seen this document before?

A No.

Q Okay. Were you aware that Ambassador Cretz was receiving some sort of email from Mr. Sullivan?

A I don't think so. And I was really trying hard to remember this when I was reading all of this online when it was released.

Q So, to your recollection, you were not consulted by Ambassador Cretz or played any part with providing information in response to this?

A No. And he, as a matter of practice, before the revolution and after the revolution, often communicated with people without including me.

Q Okay.

And just to make sure we've covered everything, this is from Jacob J. Sullivan. Do you know who Mr. Sullivan is?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And who is he?

A He, at the time, served as, I believe, the chief of staff -- not the chief of staff. He was something, I mean, a close advisor to Secretary Clinton.

Q Okay. He was part of the senior leadership of the Department?

A He was a close advisor to Secretary Clinton.

Q Okay.

And then it's initially sent to Gene A. Cretz, which would have been Ambassador Cretz; is that correct?

A Yes.

Q And Jeffrey Feltman, and who was he?

A He was the NEA Assistant Secretary.

Q Okay.

And so you don't recall -- having reviewed the Blumenthal memos, you don't believe that you were consulted with or reviewed any of them.

A Never.

Q Okay.

And in the last few minutes, I'm going to give you one other document that I'm going to mark as exhibit 8 and ask if you would take a moment and review that.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 8  
Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q And this does not have a document number, but it is on the letterhead of Osprey Global Solutions, LLC. It's to an Andrew J. Shapiro, dated 4 January, 2012, from a David L. Grange.

Have you had an opportunity to review this?

A Yes, I have.

Q Okay. Have you ever seen this letter before?

A No.

Q Okay. Do you have any knowledge of Osprey Global Solutions?

A I'm not sure. In the pre-revolutionary period in Libya, there were any number of defense contractors who came in and out of Libya trying to do business. I feel like David Grange was one of those



characters, but I don't remember. This is just sort of a vague recollection.

Q Okay.

And when you went back into Tripoli after September 11, did U.S.-based companies come in and discuss with you and Ambassador Cretz providing humanitarian relief or humanitarian infrastructure, rebuilding of Libya? Did various companies come and talk to you?

A Yes. In general, there were lots of companies coming in and -- yes, absolutely.

Q Okay. But you don't have any specific recollection if Osprey Global Solutions was one of those companies?

A I do not, but I don't have a clear recollection of any companies that came in, really, I mean, because there were many. And usually the people who would do the meetings would be our commercial officer and the Ambassador, if needed.

Q And who was the commercial officer at the time?

A A guy named [REDACTED].

Q Okay.

Do you know who Andrew Shapiro is?

A Yes.

Q And who was he?

A He was the Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs.

Q Okay. And what role did he play with respect to Libya?

A He was the Assistant Secretary of a bureau that had programs

and activities in Libya. And, obviously, he would have been involved in policy-related decisions relevant to those issues.

Q Would there be any type of record or log of any meetings that Ambassador Cretz would have had with U.S. companies who discussed with him providing goods, services, or other things in Libya?

A Not a formal log per se, but, certainly, his secretary would have kept a calendar. Although, in January 2012, we didn't have a secretary. So we kept his calendar by writing in pencil in one of those spiral notebooks, and I would brief the security team the night before. I mean, we were really a shoestring operation.

Q Okay.

And did representatives of U.S. companies actually travel to Libya and come and meet with you there?

A Yes, in general.

Q Okay. And would there be any type of security log of who was coming on the compound in Tripoli?

A I have no idea how the RSO kept records.

Q Okay. All right.

Ms. Jackson. With that, I see I have exhausted my hour, and so we will go off the record and take a short break and then resume in just a few minutes.

Ambassador [REDACTED]. Okay. Thanks.

[Recess.]

RPTR BAKER

EDTR HOFSTAD

[2:42 p.m.]

Mr. Kenny. The time is now 2:40 p.m.

Ambassador, thank you again. We appreciate your continued patience with us as we move into the afternoon portion here.

During our hour of questioning, I'm going to try to proceed chronologically to help guide the discussion, but I again may be jumping from topic to topic and exhibit to exhibit. So I'm going to do my best just to help steer, but if you have any questions about where we are, please feel free to let me know.

Ambassador [REDACTED]. Thank you.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q I'd like to begin with exhibit 1.

A Okay.

Q And we had a discussion earlier this morning about this document and about the reports here. This was referring to security conditions in Ajdabiya, if I'm pronouncing that correctly, that seemed to lead to at least some sort of pause or a consideration of whether the Special Envoy mission would withdraw.

And I would just like to read a portion of the original report here. I know that the email, the first email in the chain writes, "Per Special Envoy Stevens." So is it your understanding that, based on that, that this is a report that Special Envoy Stevens was patching

or sending back to Main State?

A As I recall the situation, it was actually a report of a phone call.

Q Okay. And do you recall for this particular report who the phone call would have been between?

A I don't recall. I know that I was on it because I'm referenced there. And, as I think I mentioned earlier, I recall talking with Chris on the phone about the situation, encouraging him to think about pulling the plug, and he wasn't interested in doing it at that point.

Q Okay.

A But I really don't remember who else would have been on the call.

Q Okay.

And I'll just note here it does say in the first point here that, quote, "He will monitor the situation to see if it deteriorates further, but no decision has been made on departure. He will wait 2-3 more hours, then revisit the decision on departure," close quote.

So it did appear that perhaps he was going to wait and then make another reassessment down the road about whether or not to pull out. And do you recall, was there a decision or did he ever make a recommendation that the team should pull out in this time period?

A As I recollect, I think he decided to stay.

Q Okay.

And do you recall if, for instance, the conditions or with this

particular situation in Ajdabiya whether -- let me back up. Was that recommendation tied at all to a change in the circumstances on the ground? For instance, if there was a security threat at one point, that that security threat had lessened or been reduced?

A It was tied specifically to the tripwires that Chris and the team had developed for whether or not they should pull out of Benghazi. And one of the specific tripwires, as I recall, was Qadhafi forces moving into Ajdabiya, because Ajdabiya was the next city before Benghazi. So, you know, if the Qadhafi forces were in Ajdabiya, they could very quickly be in Benghazi, and it wouldn't be safe for Chris any longer.

Q Okay.

A So, as I recall the situation, I think the fighting abated or the Qadhafi forces were pushed back, and Chris made the decision to stay. But this is my recollection of an event that was more than 4 years ago.

Q Sure. I understand.

And you used the term "tripwire." What is that?

A A tripwire is a -- what's the right word? It's a system that we have in place in the State Department, so, you know, if X happens, then you should consider doing Y. It's a way of keeping people honest. I think, you know, often when you're in a security situation it's, a boiling frog, right? The water is getting hotter and hotter. So it's a way of making sure that you say, oh, actually, we've passed whatever point makes us think that we need to take some action.

Q Okay. And, in this instance, is your recollection that there were tripwires in place at this time? Is that right?

A I believe so.

Q Okay.

A I recall that the tripwires were developed before the team went in.

Q Got it. And would you have participated in the drafting or development of those tripwires?

A I think I was involved, if I remember correctly.

Q And just to help us better understand how that tool can be used in a risk management or a crisis management scenario, if a tripwire is approached or if it's crossed, you had mentioned that it may also indicate that there's actions to take. Can you just walk us through, if a tripwire is crossed, what is the effect of that?

A There are actions to consider. And the way the State Department did it at the time, it was, you know, actions that would consider -- trigger authorization of -- sorry, I'm a little tired -- actions that would trigger discussions of authorized departure or actions that would trigger discussion of ordered departure.

It's not necessarily, if X, then Y. It's more like things you should be thinking about and some recommended courses of action to take. But it's ultimately the decision of the emergency action committee about what should be done in response to those individual tripwires.

Q I see. So it's meant to trigger an additional conversation

or discussion about ways to mitigate a risk or potential steps to take. Is that accurate?

A Yes.

Q You mentioned that there was -- or you didn't recall that there was a recommendation that he had given that you had pulled the team out, that it seemed that he wanted to stay. Do you remember that?

A Yes.

Q Was it your understanding that then-Special Envoy Stevens had received an instruction or some sort of direction that he would stay in Benghazi irrespective of the security conditions on the ground?

A No, not at all.

Q Okay.

You had mentioned in our first hour that, in this time period, or at least the initial Special Envoy phase, that you recalled that there were daily updates that may have been sent up or passed along to the Secretary.

I'd just like to ask -- I see here in this first email there are a series of acronyms or a potential mailing list here. And I was wondering, I see the second one on the "to" line is an "S\_SpecialAssistants." Who would that refer to?

A Those are the special assistants who worked for the Secretary of State.

Q Okay.

And when you'd indicated earlier that daily updates or updates would be passed along to the Secretary, would this have been one of

those mechanisms for doing so?

A Meaning through the S\_SpecialAssistants?

Q Yes.

A Yes, potentially. But I think the daily updates that I was referring to earlier were actually formal information memos to the Secretary of State. And this was a product from the State Operations Center, and I've never worked in the Ops Center, so I couldn't tell you how they send information to the Secretary.

Q Okay.

I'm sorry. So you used the term "information memo." Can you just describe for us what that is?

A An information memo is a formal document drafted by any office in the State Department when you want to inform the Secretary of State of developments on a particular issue.

So, in our embassy-in-exile days, so, say, March 1, 2011, until the end of August 2011, we did very regular information memos to the Secretary of State with the updates on the situation overall in Libya that we were gleaning from our contacts.

Q Okay. And was that separate, then, from the daily updates?

A Yes.

Q The information memos, for instance --

A Yes.

Q -- can require clearance. So were those submitted on a daily basis?

A Those were submitted fairly -- actually, maybe they weren't



info memos. Maybe they were notes to the Secretary, which has a more limited clearance process, and it's something that -- sorry, this is very bureaucratic -- but that an Assistant Secretary of State can send directly to the Secretary without having the whole host of offices throughout the State Department clearing.

So we did a number of products. I mean, number one would be, first, the phone updates that were coming up from Chris Stevens and his team that then we or the Ops Center would send in email form. Once Chris and his team had the appropriate coms in place, they were then able to do those updates themselves, daily kind of situation reports.

And then, separately, the Tripoli embassy in exile was doing regular updates -- I think they were notes to the Secretary, not information memos -- about what we knew about the situation on the ground.

Q Okay. And would those notes, would that just be passing? Were they essentially situation reports? Would they make recommendations or ask --

A They were not policy documents. In order to make recommendations, you would need to do a policy, like an action memo, that sort of thing. So we did not do that.

And I would note that these info memos or notes to the Secretary were in place of the political reporting that an embassy would normally do.

Q I see.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Do you know who the notes to the Secretary

were getting sent to?

Ambassador [REDACTED]. We submitted them to the line, just what we call the shorthand for the Secretary's executive secretary, the people who process paper for the Secretary. Again, never having worked there, I don't know what happens. It's sort of putting the paper into the sausage machine, so to speak.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. So it would be like a paper document goes into the executive secretary --

Ambassador [REDACTED]. And they distribute it.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Okay. Got it.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Okay. That's helpful. Thank you.

You mentioned that some of the information that would be passed along, it would be a substitute for or equivalent to what political reporting would otherwise be in a traditional setup or a traditional post.

A Uh-huh.

Q Was the reporting of Special Envoy Stevens in this timeframe, so shortly after his initial insertion into Libya, was that information useful to policymakers in D.C., in your view?

A The information, let's say, in April 2011 --

Q Yes.

A -- in that timeframe?

Q Yes. April through May 2011.

A Yes, absolutely.

Q Okay. And do you have, like, a basis for that? Would you hear or see feedback that this is great information, keep it coming, those kinds of things?

A No, but it was the information that was our only on-the-ground assessment of what was happening. It was the only vehicle with which to have substantive policy discussions with the Libyan revolutionary leadership. So no one stopped and sort of patted us on the back and said "atta boy," but it was clearly feeding very important policy discussions.

Q And, again, we're not Foreign Service officers, so you had mentioned at the beginning of our interview today that when you worked in the embassy in exile or embassy on the Potomac that you had reached out to contacts and those contacts would pass along information to you.

A Uh-huh.

Q So I was wondering if you could just compare for us the difference between receiving that sort of information secondhand versus having a U.S. official directly on the ground in a place like Benghazi in this timeframe?

A Sure.

Well, the information that we were doing, the embassy in exile -- let's say there was fighting in the double Nafusa, the mountains to the west of Tripoli. Chris and the team were in Benghazi very, very far away from that situation. So we, you know -- or if there was fighting in Misrata. So we were doing more, kind of, the reporting about what's happening.

Chris, of course, was doing reporting about what's happening, as well, but more focused on Benghazi and more focused on the outreach to the political leadership that was based there. So that's a very different function.

I mean, we were talking to, you know, let's say, someone who was an English-language school director in the, you know, Zintani area who suddenly picked up arms and was a fighter. Whereas Chris was sitting and having very serious discussions like what's your financial situation, what about the frozen assets, you know, things that moved the policy ball forward in a way that we couldn't while we were sitting in Washington.

Q Okay.

You had also indicated that you traveled to Benghazi and filled in as the Acting Special Envoy?

A Uh-huh.

Q I know you'd mentioned two occasions that that happened.

A Right.

Q During your time there, what was your sense of the mood in Benghazi? Was it a somber place? Was it exuberant?

A On my first trip, which was in May of 2011, it was quite exuberant, giddy even, and very, very friendly to the United States and to anyone who was participating in the NATO strikes. There was a great sense of relief.

---

I was also struck by the fact that Libyans were suddenly more open. I went to a university campus for the very first time in my time in

Libya because Qadhafi had never allowed us to do that. There was civil society that was popping up. People were working together to clear garbage and sweep the streets. It was a real grassroots revolutionary movement and was quite joyous.

When I was there the second time, it was much more somber. I was there when Abdul Fatah Younis, who was a prominent general, was killed, and there was a lot of concern that that would have sparked some intertribal fighting. So people were more worried when I was there. And they were also worried about the financial situation.

Q You'd mentioned that there was some pro-U.S. sentiment at that time.

A Absolutely.

Q Did you personally experience that in any way?

A Absolutely. Flags all over the place. People very happy to see us. You know, you'd drive by in what was clearly, you know, a foreign vehicle with foreigners, and people would flash the victory sign, honk horns. And, of course, in personal interaction, people were very, very grateful for everything that the United States had done.

Q So we understand that, at one point in time, Qadhafi may have threatened Benghazi and the people of Benghazi may have felt that they were under siege and their lives were in danger.

A Uh-huh.

Q Did you get the sense at all that the U.S., due to its role in the NATO-led intervention, that the people in Benghazi, that they were supportive or felt that the U.S. had somehow helped spare them

from a potential --

A Absolutely.

Q -- bloodshed?

A Absolutely. And I heard that from just about everyone that I met, whether they were private citizens who had nothing to do with the revolution or NGO activists or especially the members of the Transitional National Council.

Q The term "genocide" has been used to describe what possibly could have happened had Qadhafi moved on Benghazi I believe in the February-March 2011 timeframe. Is that something that you were tracking at all, back in Washington, back at Main State?

A In anticipation of what he was going to do?

Q Yes.

A Certainly, I was watching the military situation on the ground, yes.

Q Okay. And was that a concern that you had, what might happen if Qadhafi moved on Benghazi?

A I was concerned that a lot of people would die, yes. He was a rather ruthless character.

RPTR BAKER

EDTR HUMKE

BY MR. KENNY:

Q And just returning briefly to exhibit 1. So I think we described one mechanism the information can be shared from Special Envoy Stevens and the Department how that information might be disseminated. Was there a point in time where this type of reporting shifted and it became to approximate more closely what might be considered traditional reporting?

A In the 2011 timeframe, or?

Q Yes. Like did you have a sense of when this style of reporting changed or stopped?

A I really don't remember because it was when they had their full comms up and running and were able to start doing SitReps. That said, sometimes when there were breaking events, we would still get the quick phone call; and it was easier for someone sitting in Washington to sent the quick note around, but I couldn't tell you exactly when.

Q Sure. You had mentioned that for instance, Special Envoy Stevens had placed or you may have had multiple calls with him in any given day in the early 2011 timeframe. And I think you had indicated that had dropped off at a certain point in time. Do you have a sense of when that began?

A I don't recall.

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

Q But am I correct in understanding that it dropped off because he got more regular communication methods, and he started doing situation reps?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And so the daily sort of notes to the Secretary that you were doing, did those drop off at some point because the political reporting became more normal?

A They dropped off when Embassy Tripoli dropped off. You know, because we started to lose staff. We had staff members who were being reassigned, so I think that the pace naturally started to diminish, and I would say probably by about the June timeframe we weren't doing very many of those.

Q So June of 2011?

A Uh-huh.

Q Okay. And did you guys ever start that back up again?

A No, because then we went back into Tripoli in September.

Q Okay. And then when you were in Tripoli, you were doing the normal political reporting situations, SitReps?

A Yes. Once we had our comms up and running as well.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q You mentioned in the last hour in your capacity as acting envoy, you had reviewed certain properties in Benghazi?

A Uh-huh.

Q Do you recall, at that time what drove or what led you to



view other properties in Benghazi? Was that concern about security at the hotel? Was it contingency planning for a possible scaling up of the mission, or was it a combination of factors?

A In my mind the primary concern was the lack of security at the hotel. I can't speak as to what was in Chris' mind, but he certainly was the one who began that search. And certainly people in the State Department, specifically in Diplomatic Security and Overseas Buildings Operations, shared those concerns.

Q Okay. Do you recall participating in the preparation for any congressional delegation to travel to Libya in March, April 2011?

A Yes.

Q And which codels, do you recall?

A I believe that Senator McCain led a codel that went into Benghazi, and I spoke to his staffer extensively and also talked to two colleagues in the State Department and Chris Stevens as well about how we could support that and make that work.

Q In your view or to the best of your understanding, why did Senator McCain travel to Benghazi in that timeframe?

A I don't recall the specific reasons he gave.

Q Do you recall whether his intent to go there was to protest the U.S. presence in Benghazi?

A I really don't recall the purpose of his trip.

Q Also, during this period, do you recall participating or helping any briefings for Members of Congress related to Libya up here on the Hill? For instance, would you have helped to prepare Ambassador

Cretz if he were to come and provide briefings to Members of Congress?

A I don't recall having done that.

Q There were some questions in the last round about congressional notifications. And I would just like to ask whether in this time period the U.S. had actually formally recognized the Transitional National Council as the governing authority in Libya?

A I believe that happened sometime over the summer of 2011, maybe in the July timeframe.

Q Okay. And who was the TNC? Was this meant to be a permanent representative government within Libya? Was it something more like a caretaker government?

A It was the Transitional National Council meant to provide political leadership during the course of the revolution with the sense that once Qadhafi was gone, they would then help set up the mechanism for a free and fair democratic elections and a new system of governance.

Q So I'd like to move forward. We will go ahead and mark as exhibit 9.

[██████████ Exhibit No. 9

Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Again, just for the record, this is an email dated September 14, 2011 from ██████████ to ██████████ and others with subject, quote, "FW thoughts on the future of Mission Benghazi," close quote. Document number is C05389447.

Ms. Safai. Do you want to go off the record for a minute so the

Ambassador can read it?

Mr. Kenny. Certainly we can go off the record.

[Recess.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q So, again, you have before you a document marked exhibit 9?

A Uh-huh.

Q Do you recall this email?

A Yes.

Q I'd like to direct your attention to the first email in this thread which is an email, it begins on page 2, it's dated September 2 of 2011. This is a thread in which Special Envoy Stevens writes to you and others and he writes at the beginning, quote: "As the Department stands up a mission in Tripoli, the question arises as to how long to keep Mission Benghazi operating. I believe it would be prudent to maintain a small State-run presence here for at least 6 months. Here are some thoughts on why and how" close quote. And then there are a series of bullets that appear here. It looks to us that these appear to be some sort of policy rationale or justification for maintaining the presence.

I'd like to ask you about a few of these. The first bullet appears under a heading it's Political/economic/public diplomacy, and it refers to continuing contacts with the TNC leadership. The second one refers to engaging new GOL entities, Government of Liberty entities. And further in that point refers to AGOCO, the oil company.

The next bullet refers to monitoring political trends, Islamists, tribes, political parties, federalists, militias, and public sentiment regarding the new Libya. Special Envoy Stevens wrote, quote, "The revolution began in eastern Libya, and the views of these 2 million inhabitants will certainly influence events going forward," close quote.

And then the final point in this column reads, quote, "Demonstrate U.S. interest in the eastern part of Libya. Many Libyans have said that the U.S. presence in Benghazi has a salutary, calming effect on easterners who are fearful that the new focus on Tripoli could once again lead to their neglect and exclusion from reconstruction and wealth distribution. They feel the U.S. will ensure they are dealt with fairly," close quote.

On this last point here, I'd just like to ask, is that something -- you had spent some time in Benghazi as well as the acting envoy -- was that a concern that had been shared with you as well?

A No.

Q Okay. Do you recall if this related at all back to the third bullet which refers to monitoring political trends. There is a reference there to Federalists?

A Uh-huh.

Q Who or what are the Federalists?

A The Federalists were people, and still are, people in Libya who believe that there should be more authority given to the various provinces; and it's primarily led by political activists in the east

who feel that they have been repressed and disadvantaged over the years.

Q Okay. Did you agree with that particular rationale, that it was important to continue to monitor the Federalists?

A I felt that it was important to continue to monitor the situation in the east at large.

Q Okay. We'll just continue here. There's a second section that's called programatic. Under there the first bullet reads, quote, "Continue projects begun by USAID/OTI relating to strengthening civil society groups, medial training, and in capacity building in municipal counsel," close quote.

Did you agree with Special Envoy Stevens that USAID programs in eastern Libya were important at this time?

A Yes. I felt that USAID programs should be actually throughout the country.

Q And then the third bullet in this category reads, quote, "Commence other engagement activities, particularly in education. There is a large population of Libyan youth with high expectations for the post-revolution period. They are an important and receptive audience for U.S. engagement. Such engagement who help counter Islamist efforts in this area" close quote.

Did you agree with Special Envoy Stevens that education efforts in eastern Libya were an important part of the mission there?

A Yes.

Q And we touched on this a little bit earlier, but at this point in September of 2011, Special Envoy Stevens has spent nearly 5

months in revolutionary Libya, and I would just like to ask, in your view when he lays out a set of reasons like this for maintaining a presence in here, it sounds like for at least 6 months, is his recommendation, how much consideration would that have received back at Main State, specifically within the NEA Bureau?

A It received quite a lot of consideration.

Q Okay. And, again, he makes a recommendation or seems to suggest that it's prudent to maintain a presence in Libya for 6 months. Was that something that you supported?

A Yes, I did support that.

Q Okay. Can you explain why?

A First of all, this email was sent on September 6th. Qadhafi had just fled Tripoli. He was still on the loose, on the lam. We were not yet back in Tripoli. It wasn't clear if or when the leadership of the transitional office or Council would transition from Benghazi to Tripoli, if they all would, what would be there. And given the critical role that Benghazi had played in the start of the revolution and the execution, so to speak, of the revolution and the leadership, of course it made sense to have a presence there for another 6 months.

Q Thank you. That is very helpful. I think at this point we would like to mark, this would be exhibit 10.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 10

Was marked for identification.]

---

BY MR. KENNY:

Q And again for the record, this is an email dated November

1, 2011, from then Special Envoy Stevens to you and cc'ing [REDACTED] with the subject, quote, "FW Mission Benghazi future," close quote. The document No. C05409976. I'll give you a moment to review.

A Okay.

Q So in the first email in this thread which begins at the bottom of the first page, then Special Envoy Stevens wrote to you, [REDACTED], and Ambassador Cretz, on October 31, 2011; and in the email he appears to lay out a series of options. For instance, he writes, quote, "Here are a couple possible models for Mission Benghazi," close quote. And then below there's an option A which is, quote, "Slim down compound: Principal Officer, FS-02 level, management -- MGT/IRM, and possibly one USAID/OTI officer if they get requested funding, 4 DS, 1 admin LES plus guard force. Consolidate to Villa A," close quote. And then below it indicates the duration would be through September 30, 2012, 3 months beyond the projected TNC elections.

And I'd just like to understand, first of all, he's making a recommendation. The Special Envoy is making a recommendation for an FS-2 level. Where would that have been in relation to, say, the Special Envoy at the time? Would that have been a more senior or a more junior?

A It would have been a less junior level.

Q Okay. I'm sorry; less, more junior than?

A I'm sorry. It's a long day. Less senior than Special Envoy Stevens, yes. Chris was Senior Foreign Service. FS-2 is two levels below senior Foreign Service.

Q Okay. And on here it also under option A indicates, quote,

"Other Benghazi missions: UNSMIL, EU and UK intend to maintain small branch offices for the next 6 months to one year. Italians and Turks have consulates," close quote.

There is then what appears to be option B, which is, quote, "Virtual presence: End all 3 compound leases. Zero full-time State Department staff. Use hotels, as Spanish, Greek and foreign NGOs have been doing," close quote.

I would just like to understand this. The section option here would mean that the U.S. would essentially leave Benghazi except for day trips or remaining overnight in a hotel setup. Is that accurate?

A Yes, but I think there's additional information we would have to discuss in a classified setting.

Q Okay. I'll note below, that between the option A, the option B, Special Envoy indicated, quote, "My personal recommendation would be option A. There will be a lot of political activity in Benghazi in the coming year, not least of which will be elections and campaigning. A good number of TNC members, including the chairman himself, will be travelling frequently between Tripoli and Benghazi. MANPADs collection and USAID programming will also continue in the east. It would help us a lot to maintain a small platform in Benghazi through next fall," close quote.

In the next email chain above that, you indicate, quote, "Option A looks right to me," close quote. And I would just like to ask, because it appears you're favoring a slimmed down compound over what's referred to her as a virtual presence. Can you just explain for us why you



supported option A?

A Basically for all the reasons that Chris articulated in his September email on staffing. It was important to maintain a presence so we could have the political engagement to understand what was happening.

As Chris noted, not all of the leadership was in Tripoli at that time. And also we had programs that were ongoing, and particularly the MANPADs program which was quite a high priority at the time.

Q We'll just note this is the late October, early November timeframe so --

A Yes.

Q Embassy Tripoli has now been stood up by this point in time. Is that correct?

A Uh-huh.

Q Because you had mentioned, I think earlier, that some of the justifications in September -- I'm just trying to understand; would those have continued to carry forward, so for instance, the MANPADs collection?

A Yes, because this was still, it was still a fluid environment. I'm trying to remember exactly when the TNC declared victory over Qadhafi. It was like October 18. Well, Qadhafi wasn't even killed until October. Right? Anyhow, things were still very much in flux.

---

There wasn't a clear transition plan for what would happen after the TNC. There was a lot happening, and we did have programs in place

already in the east that needed to be managed from the east. Also needed a role in the west, but we needed a presence in the east for that.

Q I would just like to ask. I think we may have touched on this a little bit before, but were you ever told by anyone in Washington that regardless of a recommendation by the Special Envoy or anybody else on the ground, that there would be a continued presence in Benghazi?

A No. I mean, that said, there was the email by Under Secretary Kennedy at the end of the year where it was clear that there would be, but at this time there was no one directing the way things should be. There was an ongoing debate about what made sense.

Q So would it be fair to characterize how these proposals were being generated, how they were flowing up within the Department; was this kind of a ground-up process, if you will, as opposed to a top down?

A Yes.

Q So I'd like to fast-forward, if I may, and redirect your attention to exhibit 5, and this is the February 2012 time period.

A Okay.

Q So you were asked a series of questions about the email, the first email in this thread which appears on the second page.

A Yes.

Q And I'd just like to ask for you because it sounds like you had, at least based on here you say, my meetings were extremely productive. It sounds like you had a series of meetings during your

return visit to D.C. Is that accurate?

A Yes.

Q Okay. So is this readout then, or this email, is this an attempt to provide a readout of multiple meetings in one email?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And I note here that, this first paragraph, you indicated that you had wanted to make sure you were all aware of discussions I had with NSS, DS and EX Re: The resource issues. And first I would just like to ask -- we talked a little bit about the NSS before. You touched on the DS meetings. What were the EX meetings resource issues?

A I really don't recall, because as I mentioned earlier, I frankly didn't even remember talking to Ben Fishman about this. I remember generally the issues that were at play and how I felt about the issues that were at play, but the specifics of every single meeting that I had while I was in Washington, I remember some of them but clearly not all of them.

So in general, I talked with EX regularly about our staffing needs, our security needs, the asks that we had of the State Department. But my specific discussions with them at that time, I don't remember.

Q Okay. And when you say your staffing needs, would that also include diplomatic staff?

A Diplomatic staff, security staff, everything. I mean, we were in the process of trying to regularize operations after having suspended operations. And also in the February timeframe, we were

looking ahead to a summer transfer cycle in which we would be growing our staff, and so recruitment, you know, the benefits package, all of those management issues that go with it.

Q And I think we had touched on this a little bit before, but in terms of recruitment, is that a process that takes a long time?

A Yes.

Q To get the advertisements out. What is that process? For instance, if you wanted to have a political officer join as part of the Embassy or you wanted to have an RSO or an ARSO, how would that process work?

A Well, first the positions have to be established. It was complicated because we had abolished, I mean, we closed the Embassy, so making sure that we had the right positions on the books and then getting it through the personnel process so they could be advertised so people could bid so you could identify and vet the candidates, you know, try and make offers to people.

Q So the reason I had asked is you had indicated earlier that you felt some of the procedures at the Special Mission in Benghazi seemed to provide challenges in terms of the staffing there?

A Uh-huh.

Q But it also seems like Embassy Tripoli was having issues with staffing due to some of these same procedural issues is that --

A No. They were not the same issues. With Embassy Tripoli, we had the ability to formalize, bill it, and go through normal personnel procedures to fill them; but with the mission in Benghazi,

we did not have the same ability.

Q Okay. And how long would that have taken in Embassy Tripoli for instance, if you wanted to establish a permanent position to hire and bring somebody on? Would that have been a long process as opposed to, say, a TDY assignment, have a TDYer come on?

A It's a longer process than a TDY process, yes.

Q Okay. One thing I was hoping to understand, because there's a lot of information in this email. I note here you refer to resource issues, and throughout the course of today, you talked about resource issues. And as the Deputy Chief of Mission, you would have had responsibility for essentially all the resources at post?

A Uh-huh.

Q I would like to ask if there's a distinction that could be made between you say resources, is that strictly speaking, security resources; or would it include things like vehicles? You had mentioned beds, perhaps an availability of beds?

A It's missionwide. It's vehicles. It's personnel, you know, to work across the board. It's having the right facilities to support that so you don't have eight people sharing the same toilet, having the right life services contract. So resources at large means everything that it takes to run a mission.

Q Okay.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. For Tripoli and Benghazi or just Tripoli?

Ambassador [REDACTED]. I was focused on Tripoli for the most part because I didn't have any official responsibility for Benghazi, so when

I was asking for resources for Benghazi, it was usually in a supportive role when I felt that the principal officer there wasn't getting the traction or attention that he or she needed.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Were you aware of any efforts underway at this point in time to bring management issues, whether they were EX type issues, management issues that would have been traditionally handled by a management officer to fold those under Embassy Tripoli? For instance, so that a management officer in Tripoli would provide assistance to the IMO at the Special Mission? Were you aware of any of those discussions?

A There were some discussions, and in fact we of course sent people out as needed. We sent our facilities manager out to Benghazi at various points to look at the setup there and figure out what needed to be done to make improvements. I think we sent our GSO out there at some point also to do some things, so we supported as we needed to; but I don't recall any formal discussions to say, yes, we should put Benghazi under Tripoli. That was never on the table.

Q Do you recall whether there were similar discussions underway within the Bureau of Diplomatic Security that the RSO at Embassy Tripoli would provide increased responsibility for Special Mission Benghazi?

A Not that I'm aware of, or not that I can recall.

Q And so returning to this readout and your meetings. So in the last round I think you had indicated that there are lots of offices

within the State Department?

A Yes, there are.

Q Lots of people responsible for a myriad of topics. When you go to the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, you go to NEA/EX, the types of issues that you raise to them, does that depend on what would sort of fall under their purview?

A Yes.

Q So for instance, if you had an issue with attaining vehicles or having enough fully armored vehicles, who would you have approached over that topic?

A I think it was both NEA/EX and DS.

Q Okay. So that was a shared responsibility?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And, again, it looks like you had a series of meetings with NSS, DS and EX, and each of those entities has its own set of responsibilities; and occasionally it sound like those may overlap. What specifically were your discussions with NSS about Libya at this point in time?

A Given that I don't remember having met Ben Fishman, even though I wrote an email about it, I couldn't tell you what specifically I discussed with him other than what we have from the written record from my summary.

Q Okay. And I'll just note here it looks like the first part of this email refers to the NSS meeting. Would you agree with that?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And in the second paragraph it appears that you're referring to a request that they're staff up TDYers? Is that referring to technical assistance-type TDYers?

A Yes.

Q Okay. So that wouldn't be security TDYers for instance?

A Correct. It was the idea that we needed people to talk to the Ministry of Finance about economic reform; that we needed to do have an imbedded adviser at the Ministry of Interior, all sorts of very specific asks to promote transition.

Q And, again, recognizing it may be difficult to recollect with specificity, but do you recall in the course of your conversation with Dr. Fishman, that you made a request for security or security resources at Embassy Tripoli?

A I don't recall my exact conversation with Ben. I don't recall having met him in February. That said, as you can see in this email, I was very clear in all of my interactions with anyone who wanted to send out additional staff to Tripoli that we couldn't do it without additional cars and without additional Diplomatic Security agents.

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

Q Would you have been making a request to NSS for more Diplomatic Security agents?

A No, because they don't control Diplomatic Security agents, but I was making the point that it was impossible to lay on additional policy and programmatic demands on a mission that did not have the appropriate management and security platform to support those



activities.

Q And it looks like to me from reading this email -- tell me if I'm wrong -- that really the second paragraph, the one that starts NSS is extremely focused, is the one out of this email that applies to the meeting with NSS and that in meeting in NSS, it looks like to me, it's mostly NSS asking you for things and you pushing back that you can't do all those things. Is that an accurate --

A Yes.

Q So it's not so much that you would have gone to NSS to make requests to NSS for things. It's more that they're asking for things that you can't deliver. Is that --

A Yes.

Q Okay. I think that's helpful to understand. NSS wasn't, however, the only set of people asking you for things that were difficult to deliver. Right? You were getting requests from all over the place. Right?

A Correct.

Q And one of those places was Congress? Were you getting a bunch of requests from Congress for congressional delegations and beds and visits?

A We had a very firm rule that no one was supposed to overnight. We allowed, I think maybe Under Secretary Otero to spend the night. I mean, we tried to manage our visits so that they were in and out the same day. While I was in Tripoli -- I'm trying to remember how many codels we had. Was it just one? I really don't

remember.

Q Were you getting requests from other agencies?

A Yes, we had many, many requests, and we had, I don't know, a total of like seven or nine assistant secretaries or higher level visits in the 2 months in which we reestablished operations. It was at an excruciating pace.

Q And so that was difficult to manage?

A Yes.

Q Is that one of the reasons why Under Secretary Kennedy stepped into the role of sort of I guess approving who was allowed in and out of country?

A I don't know why Secretary Kennedy made the decisions he made. I wasn't privy to his thinking.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Did his role or involvement, did it help you in any way, if you were to tell someone in a senior level position that post didn't have the resources to provide or accommodate a particular visit?

A He was very helpful in that regard, yes.

Q I would just like to note, you were asked a few questions about an individual, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Maghreb Affairs, Raymond Maxwell, in this you were asked whether or not you included him on this email chain. It doesn't appear that his name is there, but if you move up to the second email, and this is from [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], at the bottom of page 1 it appears that Mr. Maxwell's name does appear on the cc line.

A Uh-huh.

Q And, again, who is [REDACTED]?

A She was the Deputy Office Director for Maghreb Affairs.

Q Okay. She notes there that she's adding [REDACTED] and Ray?

A Uh-huh.

Q And do you know why she added Mr. Maxwell to this email chain?

A Probably because she was doing the right thing and adding her bosses, but that's a guess on my part.

Q I have a few minutes left, so I'd like to move a little bit more quickly to this document. So again this is exhibit 11, I'll just mark.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 11

Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q This is an email dated March 28, 2012 from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED], ccing you and others. It has the subject, quote, "FW: Request for DS TDY and FTE support," close quote. And the email appears to contain -- we'll go off the record for just one second?

[Discussion off the record.]

Mr. Kenny. We'll go back on the record.

I'm only going to ask you about the third paragraph and the cable.

Ms. Jackson. Of the first set, the one sentence?

Ambassador [REDACTED]. I have your highlighted copy. Look at

this. Okay. Paragraph 3, and the highlighted thing was the Benghazi.

Mr. Kenny. Yes. It begins DS Agent Support in Benghazi. It's at the top of page 3, it's technically paragraph 3, but there's a bullet underneath.

Ms. Jackson. Oh, paragraph 3 of number 3, or subparagraph 3 of bullet 3.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q It's a paragraph entitled DS Agent Support of Benghazi.

A Okay. I have read through all of that paragraph.

Q Okay. And do you recall this email chain?

A Absolutely.

Q Do you recall this cable that's contained within the email?

A Yes, and I cleared it and I worked closely with [REDACTED] on the drafting.

Q Okay. Just note for the record, in this paragraph it's entitled DS Agent Support in Benghazi, there's a request for continued support for five TDY DS agents in Benghazi. Was that a request that you were involved at all in developing or drafting?

A Yes.

Q Do you recall what that specific recommendation was based on, that there should be five DS agents in Benghazi?

A It was based on the memo that was approved by Under Secretary Kennedy in December 2011.

Q Okay. Do you recall when this cable was sent, and I see here that RSO [REDACTED] forwards it to what appears to be his desk

officer back in DS/IP/NEA?

A Uh-huh.

Q Do you recall hearing what Main State or the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's initial response was to this cable?

A I don't recall.

Q Okay. Maybe this will help aid our discussion, and this will be exhibit 12.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 12  
Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q And this is an email that's dated March 30, 2012, from you to Gregory Hicks and Chris Stevens. Subject, quote, "DS issues," close quote. And it's document No. C05393218. I'll give you a few moments to read through that.

A Yes, I've finished reading it.

Q I guess I'd like to begin with the top email here, and I see the name Gregory Hicks appears, and I'd just like to ask who that is?

A Gregory Hicks was my successor as DCM.

Q Do you recall when he was scheduled to become the Deputy Chief of Mission?

A He was initially supposed to arrive at post in June, but for a variety of reasons, [REDACTED], he delayed his arrival.

Q Did you have any overlap with him in Tripoli?

A No, I did not.

Q I'd just like to begin the email thread at the top there. You wrote, quote, "Just fyi and please don't forward since the RSO who is in Bzi conducting a security assessment intended this to be a candid update of his ongoing discussions with DS," close quote. Below RSO [REDACTED] begins an email, quote, "A rather lengthy, exhausting, and at times heated call with DS/IP/NEA regarding our cable request, which the regional director described as a request for the sun, moon and stars," close quote.

And just at the outset here, I'd like to ask, RSO [REDACTED] refers to our cable request. Is it your understanding that that cable request is the same as 12 Tripoli 130?

A Yes.

Q On the second page, the second paragraph up from the bottom reads, and I quote, "I doubt we will ever get DS to admit in writing what I was told reference Benghazi, but specifically DS/IP was directed by DAS Lam to cap the agents in Benghazi at three and force post to hire local drivers. This is apparently a verbal policy only but one which DS/IP/NEA doesn't plan to violate. I hope that nobody is injured as a result of an incident in Benghazi since it would be particularly embarrassing to both DS and DAS if it was a result of some sort of game they are playing."

He concludes the email further down, quote, "I also explained that the hardest part of this assignment was not dealing with the Libyans or the environment at post, but managing the personnel and offices in

DS HQ, which are purportedly there to support post; adding that the only times I've been contacted by the RD for DS/IP/NEA was to criticize, admonish, or second guess a post level decision."

I would just like to ask, you were asked in the last round your opinion on RSO [REDACTED], and you said that you valued his judgment in certain matters but not necessarily all matters. Here he seems to provide an extremely bleak assessment of his interactions with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. I would just like to ask first, he came to you; did you have a chance to speak with RSO [REDACTED] about these issues?

A I spoke regularly with [REDACTED] about all of these issues.

Q Okay. And how did you respond to him when you received this?

A I don't recall what exactly I said, but certainly I had been engaged with senior level leaders in the Diplomatic Security Bureau for months trying to make sure that we had adequate resources. And as I indicated in my note to Chris Stevens and Greg Hicks, I did have the sense very strongly that people in Washington thought we could somehow just quickly transition from this very messy, unstable security environment where we had no staff to a system where all of a sudden miraculously we would have fully trained, armed, and professional same quality as MSD agents, focally engaged bodyguards.

It takes time and effort to develop that, and I felt like it was a constant battle to get Diplomatic Security to understand there wasn't a magic switch that we could flip, and we needed time, and we needed

continued support from Washington in order to get to the position where I agreed we needed to be, but it wasn't something that would happen quickly.

Q And when you say Washington, are you referring specifically to the Bureau of Diplomatic Security?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And who specifically within DS?

A I felt that Charlene Lamb was the decisionmaker, who many times I found her to be a roadblock and very unhelpful.

Q Okay. And when you say she was a decisionmaker, what do you mean by that?

A She was the person who controlled resources within Diplomatic Security.

Q For overseas posts?

A For my post. I couldn't speak to what her other responsibilities were, but it was very clear that she was the decisionmaker for anything related to Libya.

Q Okay.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Did you try going above her in DS?

Ambassador [REDACTED] I did not because as Deputy Chief of Mission, that wasn't really my role. I think, if I remember correctly, Ambassador Cretz did have discussion with the head of DS at that time, but I couldn't say that with 100 percent certainty because this was all, you know, 3-plus years ago?

Q Prior to this point had you been aware of what's referred



to as a verbal policy by DAS Lamb to cap agents in Benghazi at three?

A I was not.

Q Okay. Was RSO [REDACTED], did he seem surprised when he was informed that a policy had been made to that effect?

A I think he was surprised. I have no evidence to indicate that there was such a policy in place, by the way, because in all of my previous discussions with Charlene, we had talked about the five agents; and I believe there is a memo that sort of memorializes that meeting and that discussion with Charlene Lamb.

Q Okay. And in that meeting, did she commit to providing five DS agents?

A I don't remember exactly. I'd have to look at the memo again.

Mr. Kenny. Okay. We are out of time so we will go off the record.

[Discussion off the record.]

RPTR DEAN

EDTR HUMKE

[4:00 p.m.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q All right then, we are going reconvene for another session. This too will be unclassified.

A Okay.

Q So the same rules apply. If you think any question posed to you would go into a classified area, please just let us know, and we will hold it until the next round, where we will be asking you questions that call for classified information or potentially classified information.

A Okay.

Q In the last hour we continued the discussion about various security incidents that occurred in the summer of 2012 in Benghazi and we talked about an IED exploding at the wall. We talked about an attack on the U.K. Ambassador. Do you remember an event in Benghazi also around that time where there was a large Islamic rally in Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what can you tell us about what you recall from that event and what, if any concerns it raised?

A I don't remember when it happened. I remember that it happened. And I believe that's about it in terms of -- and I remember, you know, thinking about what it meant for the overall political

environment, but I don't remember anything specific beyond that.

Q And what were some of your concerns about how it affected the political environment?

A Well, it was a new development.

Q Something that had not been seen in Benghazi before?

A Certainly there had been Islamist tendencies and, you know, a city called Derna was a hotbed of extremist activity for quite a long time. But the rally in Benghazi represented something new in terms of an organized presence.

Q And the size of the rally?

A I don't recall the size.

Q Okay. Was it close in time to these other events, the attack at the wall and the attack on the U.K. Ambassador's convoy?

A I really don't remember.

Q Okay. Do you recall whether there were al Qaeda banners that were being flown?

A I can't recall.

Q Okay. I believe you have the exhibits before you, and if you could turn your attention to exhibit 9 and I just want to clarify one of your answers because I may have missed it.

A Okay.

Q You were asked in the last hour about essentially the political reasons for staying in Benghazi.

A Uh-huh.

Q And one of them on page 2 of exhibit 9 was at the bullet

point that says, quote "Demonstrate U.S. interest in the eastern part of Libya. Many Libyans have said that the U.S. presence in Benghazi has a salutary, calming affect on Easterners who are fearful that the new focus on Tripoli could once again lead to their neglect and exclusion from reconstruction and wealth distribution. They feel the U.S. will help ensure that they are dealt with fairly."

And I may just have missed your answer, did you say you agreed or did not -- did you share or not share Ambassador Stevens' view on this?

A I can't recall exactly what I said in the last session, sorry. I feel like I'm telling you and now I can't recall anything. But I had a slightly more nuanced view on this issue. And in fact the word choice of saying that the U.S. presence would have a salutary, calming affect on Easterners, I don't agree with at all. I don't think that the diplomatic presence anywhere is necessarily calming.

But what I did hear repeatedly from many people in the east is that, you know, historically, they had been dispossessed under the Qadhafi regime. They thought it was very important that there be a more equal distribution of resources and political power in a new Libya. And certainly there was a sense among Libyans if the U.S. had a diplomatic presence in the east that would somehow help them bolster their case and that's an argument that we heard repeatedly from many people. Bolstering a political case does not equal calming in my mind.

Q Okay. And is that then a summary of your nuanced take on this or was there more to that?

A That's a summary of my nuanced take.

Q Okay. And you said you don't believe the U.S. presence necessarily has a calming affect in any country?

A I can't generalize in that sense. Perhaps it does in, I don't know, Papua New Guinea or somewhere. But a diplomatic presence in is a critical part of doing business, if we judge whether it has a calming affect or not, that's not a relevant yardstick to measure whether we should be there, in my mind.

Q Okay. Now I would like to move on to exhibit 10, which I also hope you have in front of you, which is the November 1st, 2011, email chain between Chris Stevens, yourself and [REDACTED] about the future of mission Benghazi. And I believe you said that at that time, given everything that was going on, that you concurred with Chris Stevens' preference for a slimmed down compound; is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And for many of the same reasons that he outlined in here?

A Yes.

Q Did your view of whether we should continue our presence in Benghazi change after Qadhafi fell and they were moving towards the elections?

A No, it did not change.

Q Okay. You continued to believe that we needed to have a presence in Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Did you continue to hold that view in June of 2012 when the security situation seemed to be changing dramatically?

A I had in my particularly in my last 2 weeks in Libya I had concerns about the way the security situation was evolving. Given that I was about to depart the embassy, I think made a decision not to push my views one way or the other. I wanted to be supportive to my newly arrived Ambassador.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 13  
Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q In the last hour we also talked about your trip to Main State in February of 2012. And part of the reason that you were there were to discuss resources for Tripoli and Benghazi. I am going to hand you what I've marked as exhibit 13, I think. And I'm not sure whether we covered this in the last session, but there was a concern that Tripoli would be losing some security assets also; is that correct?

A I am sorry, I was reading this document.

Q Let me give you a few minutes to read this, it is a short exhibit. For the record it is document number C05395251, it is an email exchange from [REDACTED] to you, others are copied with a subject line M Update.

A Okay, I've read it. Thank you.

Q Part of the reason, or part of the meetings that you had when you were at Maine State a few days before this email was written was to lobby on behalf of retention of security assets in Tripoli; is

that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And you had a series of meetings regarding extension of the SST, MSD resources and other DS assets; is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Does this email formalize or tell you in some way that decisions were made to give you some of the assets or continue some of the assets that you requested?

A It appears that way, although I don't remember having received this email. I am sure I did because my name is on it but this really doesn't really stick in my mind.

Q Just to read it into the record, the email says, quote "Interesting stuff from M and DOD today" exclamation point. "While preparing for the February DC on Libya, M let us know that it will ask for the SST to be renewed beyond April. A/S Boswell has committed to make six additional DS agents available and send to Tripoli by early April. Eleven to 12 additional armored vehicles are scheduled to arrive by early week, early April. M will work informally with DOD on sharing their three vehicles in the interim period. And finally M will restart weekly Tripoli logistics meetings as of this Friday." End quote.

There's some acronyms in here so just to make sure, interesting stuff from M, would that be Under Secretary Kennedy?

A Yes.

Q Okay. DOD obviously is the Department of Defense?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And they owned the SST assets; is that correct?

A Correct.

Q It says while preparing for the February 23, DC on Libya.  
What is that?

A Deputies committee meeting.

Q Is that an interagency group that is hosted by the national security staff?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And so, is it your understanding that Under Secretary Kennedy is going to be attending that meeting and asking for the extension of the SST?

Mr. Evers. If you know.

Ambassador [REDACTED]. I don't know, but as a matter of -- I wouldn't say principle, as a matter of practice I think is the better word these sort of logistical support issues weren't necessarily part of the agenda of these meetings.

And M as far as I know wasn't planning on attending that. I don't know, I was in Tripoli at this point in time. So the people who were working on these DCCs would have been the Libya desk and the Maghreb affairs office.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q As I look at this email, it seems to say that your concerns regarding security resources in Tripoli were elevated to the under secretary level and your pleas for additional resources were heard?



A Yes.

Q Is that your assessment?

A Sure, yes.

Q Okay. Do you know if similar pleas for resources for Benghazi were taken to that level?

A I don't know.

Q Okay. Did Benghazi get any additional resources following your meeting?

A Not that I can recall.

Q Going back to exhibit 10 for a moment. You were asked in the last hour about the future of the Benghazi mission and I believe you were asked if the decision to remain in Benghazi was a ground up effort versus a top down effort. Do you recall that?

A Yes, I recall the conversation.

Q Okay. Was that the policy decision or the logistical decision or both?

A I think it was both. The State Department put a lot of stock into what the people on the ground thought about the situation, what we thought we could get done, what we thought we needed to get done. So I always had the sense that people in the State Department were looking to those of us in the field to come up with the recommendations for the future.

Q Okay. I am nearing the end of my unclassified questions, just a couple of other areas.

A Okay.

Q We understand that you left Libya on June 15th, 2012. Did you have any involvement in the response to the attacks -- into the monitoring or the response to the attacks that occurred on September 11th, 2012?

A No.

Q Okay. Were you not called back into service to work in the operation center or anything like that?

A No.

Q Okay. An ARB was convened following the attacks in Benghazi. Did you play any role in gathering documents to be presented to the ARB or be interviewed by them?

A I did not play any role in gathering documents. I should clarify that I was on medical leave from July 30th, 2012, until February 19th, 2013. I did not have any access to my State Department accounts. That said, I received a message from a colleague who was working in the Bureau of Information Resource Management who said, don't worry, we are accessing all of your documents, because I had heard, you know, that this was underway. And yes, I was interviewed by the ARB.

Q Okay. And was that from your home?

A It was from -- I was temporarily residing in Richmond, Virginia, which is not my home, but yes, I did it via an unsecured, totally unclassified telephone call with the ARB.

Q Did you ever have a classified session with them?

A No.

Q And did you talk to just one member of the ARB by phone or do you know if you were on a conference call with more than one?

A I was on a conference call with every one except Ambassador Pickering, he was not present.

Q Did you ever read the ARB report?

A I read the unclassified report.

Q Okay. We have not been introducing these, but because you have different counsel here with you today I am going to go ahead and mark one. But I am just going to read portions of it into the record and ask you specific questions. For the record. And I did not make more than just a couple of copies.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 14

Was marked for identification.]

Ms. Jackson. We agreed among ourselves that we would stop killing branches of trees by copying multiple versions of the ARB report for every single interview that we did.

Mr. Evers. Is this the 39-page unclassified version of the report?

Ms. Jackson. Yes.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q So what has been marked as exhibit 14 is the 39-page unclassified version of the ARB. Can you tell if this is what you've read before?

A It appears to be the same document.

Q Okay. I assume it's been a while since you've read the ARB

report.

A Yes, almost 3 years.

Q Yes. Overall did you agree with the findings of the ARB or did you have issue with one or more of its findings?

A Overall I agreed with the findings.

Q Were there particular areas in which you disagreed with the findings of the ARB?

A I don't recall. I would have to read all of the recommendations again to give you a more nuanced answer.

Q Okay. One of the overarching findings of the Benghazi ARB was that Congress has to be a partner in addressing the security risks at overseas missions. And that is one of the reasons -- one of the core reasons of this committee. Some will say this is the eighth congressional committee, but it is the only one that has been asked to look holistically at what happened in Benghazi from all angles of the attacks.

Other committees have looked at discrete events, discrete areas of their and our members, our majority members want to fully understand what happened in Benghazi. And once we are able do that, we can then see if there's need to use any of Congress' powers to help the State Department ensure that a Benghazi does not happen again.

And so, I want to talk to you about some of the recommendations that were made in the Benghazi ARB, and specifically look at specific recommendations and ask if you agree or disagree with those, and also ask you some questions about whether you've noticed any change in the

State Department since Benghazi.

A Uh-huh.

Q So that's my general purpose.

Now on page 5 of the report, at the very top it says, quote "Overall the number of bureau of diplomatic security (DS) security staff in Benghazi on the day of the attack and in the months and weeks leading up to it was inadequate. Despite repeated requests from Special Mission Benghazi and embassy Tripoli for additional staffing. Do you agree with that finding?"

A That the security staff was inadequate?

Q Yes.

A Yes.

Q Okay. What is the number that you think was needed to be in Benghazi for the compound of that size and the number of personnel that were on the --

A I'm not a security expert.

Q But you certainly have been in high threat posts before?

A I have, but I am not a security expert. The number that I work with is the number of five agents that was approved by Under Secretary Kennedy.

[Discussion off the record.]

Ambassador [REDACTED]. Sorry about that.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Were both Tripoli and Benghazi considered high threat posts?

A I am trying to remember, certainly Tripoli was considered a high threat post given that Benghazi wasn't an official post, I don't know that it had any sort of security rating.

Q Okay. But during your entire time in Tripoli was it considered a high threat post?

A No.

Q So before the revolution it was not?

A I don't remember what the threat rating was.

Q Okay. But it certainly was after you returned?

A Correct.

Q Okay. On page 6 of the report, about halfway down of what I would say is the second full paragraph, it says, quote "Communication, cooperation and coordination among Washington, Tripoli and Benghazi functions collegially at the working level, but were constrained by a lack of transparency, responsiveness and leadership at the senior levels. Among the various Department bureaus and personnel in the field, there appeared to be very real confusion over who ultimately was responsible and in power to make decisions based on policy and security considerations." Do you agree with those statements from the ARB?

A Given that this is an assessment of the conditions on the ground and the coordination that was happening after I left, I don't think I am in a position to comment on this either way. I can comment on my views about coordination -- I am sorry, communication, cooperation coordination up until June 15th, 2012, but this is looking

at what happened on September 11th, 2012, so I can't comment on that.

Q Okay. Then let's talk about up until June 15th. Do you agree that there was collegial communication, cooperation and coordination among Washington, Tripoli and Benghazi at the working level?

A Define working level. Was I working level?

Q Did you view yourself as working level?

A I viewed myself as having very close communication and coordination with the principal officer in Benghazi. I viewed myself as having very good communication and coordination with my kind of back office team in Washington within the NEA bureau.

So I felt that we did the best that we could in a very kind of ad hoc situation. But as I mentioned earlier in the day, I do think that there were issues related to the fact that there wasn't a normal sort of embassy consulate relationship, there weren't clear lines of authority. As DCM, I did not have oversight over the mission in Benghazi, which inherently tied my hands.

Q Okay. And that had not changed by the time you left in June of 2012?

A Correct.

Q Okay. Other than the Benghazi ARB, have you read any other ARBs?

A I don't think so.

Q The inspector general's office of the State Department did a special review of the Accountability Review Board process. Did you

read that report?

A I did not.

Q Okay. Are you generally familiar at all with what the inspector general did in that report?

A No.

Q Regardless of whether you read the --

A Not at all.

Q Have you read any other of the inspector general reports that have looked at various aspects and recommendations in the Benghazi ARB that have been done since the Benghazi ARB report was out?

A No, I have not.

Q Okay. Are IG reports shared with ambassadors?

A IG reports for our specific missions are shared with us as we are preparing to go out to post, yes.

Q So the State Department doesn't have a mechanism to share with ambassadors when an IG report looks at the management of the Marine security guard program, or how it vets local guards, or prioritizes physical security related requests?

A All of these IG reports are available to anyone on the State Department Web site who wants to take a look at them. So there's a mechanism available, yes. But were those reports formally transferred to me as Ambassador to Algiers, no.

Q There is no mechanism to push them out to ambassadors?

A I couldn't speak to that. I have not received any of these reports.



Q On the Benghazi ARB on page 8 the first recommendation deals with post nation support and again this is exhibit 14, I believe. And it says in paragraph 1, quote "The Department must strengthen security for personnel and platforms beyond traditional reliance on host government security support in high risk, high threat posts."

And then the second sentence from the end says, "the United States must be self-reliant and enterprising in developing alternate security platforms, profiles and staffing footprints to address such realities."

Do you agree with recommendation number 1 and in particular the two portions that I read?

A Yes, I mean always there's the need to have the proper balance with an acceptable risk and expected outcomes. That's very clear. But, you know, the idea that we must be self-reliant in developing alternate security platforms, there's a certain level of cooperation that has to exist within this government because unless you're operating with the full force and backing of the U.S. military, it is very hard to secure your outside perimeter. There is a certain level of cooperation with the host government that has to take place. I don't know how you can operate without that.

Q But how do you operate in an environment where there is no host government because there is a revolution transition?

A That's a very tricky question and I am not a security expert.

Q But from a policy standpoint -- let me back that out and ask a different question. Is Algeria considered a high threat post

right now?

A We are high threat for terrorism, yes.

Q How does the host nation support that you have in Algeria differ from what you have in Libya in 2011, and 2012?

A There is a strong, capable, effective host government that is very responsive to our needs in Algeria and I hope it stays that way.

Q Do you have any recommendations as to what the Department could have done differently, given that there was not a strong host nation support in Libya?

A I think the State Department did the best that it could under very, very difficult circumstances. I thought that the way that we utilized the MSD teams and the SST gave us a degree of flexibility that we would have never otherwise had. And in some ways, I think the way that we went back into Tripoli was good. I mean Benghazi when we went in initially also there were sufficient resources, there was sufficient attention.

When I look back at this, you know, there should have been more security resources in place in Benghazi. With all of the caveat that I was not whether the attack occurred, even had there been five diplomatic security agents on the compound at the time of the attack there is nothing we could have done to prevent that.

Q And when Envoy Stevens first went in, he had 10 to 12 DS agents for himself and Mr. [REDACTED]?

A Yes.

Q So would one of your recommendations be that the Department consider augmenting its SST and MSD capabilities so that they are available across the country or across the world?

A I am not a security expert. I can't make global recommendations for the State Department.

Q The Benghazi ARB recommendation number 5, which is found on page 9 reads, "the Department should develop minimum security standards for occupancy of temporary facilities and high risk, high threat environments and seek greater flexibility for the use of Bureau of Overseas Building Operations, OBO sources of funding so they can be rapidly made available for security upgrades at such facilities." Do you agree with this recommendation?

A It strikes me as a commonsense recommendation.

Q Do you know whether the Department has developed minimum security standards for high risk, high threat environments?

A I do not know.

Q Would it surprise you that they haven't?

A I don't know and I couldn't comment.

Q Okay. Ambassador ██████████, I think you will be sad to hear that I have run out of questions for the unclassified session. I know you would rather go on and talk to me for hours on end, but I am going to turn it over to my minority colleagues now. I do have some questions for our classified session and so we --

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q The time is 4:35 again Ambassador we appreciate your continued patience with us. I know it's been a long day. We hope to finish our unclassified portion in this round and then hopefully we can move to another setting and conclude the day.

I'd like to first return to exhibit 13 which was introduced in the last hour. If you have that in front of you.

A Yes.

Q It is the email from [REDACTED] to you. And I was just hoping I could clarify something I had jotted down in my notes. You were asked does this document or something to the effect of does this document show that concerns were elevated up to M. And as I sit here and read this, I see in reference to M a discussion about the SST being renewed, but then with respect to DS agents I see a comment about A/S Boswell, Assistant Secretary Boswell, agreeing or committing to make six additional DS agents available and send to Tripoli and then a continued discussion there.

And I'd just like to understand your understanding of whether the Diplomatic Security staff in issue whether that specifically, based on this email, this reading was briefed up to M?

A I have no idea.

Q Okay.

A And I would just clarify, you know, when the State Department staff write emails about M, and P, and other acronyms, you know, acronyms. Often especially someone like a desk officer, which [REDACTED] was at the time, is talking to the staffer, because the

staffer is aware of an issue, because M probably means M staff, not necessarily [REDACTED] isn't like chatting with Pat Kennedy in the hallway. You know, so it's --

Q Yeah. And I notice here on that first line there is -- it reads M let us know it will ask for the SST.

A Yes.

Q So referring obviously not to he --

A To an organization, not an individual. So I think that's an important distinction.

Q Okay. And so when we see M elsewhere would it possibly refer to both or most often --

A Yes, it can refer to both.

Q Moving forward, you were asked a series of questions about the Accountability Review Board process --

A Yes.

Q And your participation in that. I'd just like to ask a couple of questions about your participation with the ARB. Just first did you withhold any information from the ARB?

A No.

Q Okay. Were you ever under any pressure from anyone to withhold information from the ARB?

A No.

Q Do you feel that the ARB accurately captured your experience in Libya?

A For the most part, yes. But in reference to that question

that Sharon had raised about the coordination, I have to say when I read that I thought wait a minute. I felt that we were coordinating to the best of our ability.

Q Okay. Point taken, Ambassador, appreciate that.

At this point now we would like to shift gears a little bit and I am going to ask you a series of questions about some public allegations that have been made in connection with the attacks in Benghazi. We understand that the committee is investigating these allegations and therefore we are asking everybody about them to include yourself, I'll start with the allegation and then ask whether you have any evidence to support that.

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

A No.

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

A No.

Q It has been alleged that Secretary Clinton personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security to Libya. The Washington

Post fact checker evaluated this claim and gave it four Pinocchios, its highest award for false claims. Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security resources to Libya?

A No.

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

A No.

Q It has been alleged the U.S. mission in Benghazi included transferring weapons to Syrian rebels or to other countries. Bipartisan report issued by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence found that, quote "The CIAs ws not collecting and shipping arms from Libya to Syria." Close quote and that they found quote "no support for this allegation." Close quote.

---

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

Libya to Syria?

A No.

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

A No.

Q A team of CIA security personnel was temporarily delayed from departing the annex to assist the Special Mission Compound on the night of the attacks, and there have been a number of allegations about the cause and appropriateness of the delay. The House Intelligence Committee issued a bipartisan report concluding that the team was not order 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, quote "bad" close quote or improper reason behind the temporary delay at CIA's security personnel who departed the annex to assist the Special Mission Compound?

A No.

Q A concern has been raised by one individual that in the course of producing document 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 of 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 you these questions also for documents provided to Congress. Do you have any evidence that anyone in the State Department removed or scrubbed damaging documents from the materials that were provided to Congress?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that CIA Deputy Director, Michael Morell, altered unclassified talking points about the Benghazi attacks for political reasons, and that he then misrepresented his actions when he told Congress that the CIA quote "faithfully performed our duties in accordance with the highest standards of objectivity and nonpartisanship." Close quote. Do you have any evidence that CIA Deputy Director Mike Morell gave false or intentionally misleading testimony to Congress about the Benghazi talking points?

A No.

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

A No.

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

A No.

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

A No.

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

Republican staff report issued by the House Armed Services Committee found that quote "there was no stand down order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi." Close quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict the conclusion of the House

Armed Services Committee that there was no -- let me start over. Do you have any evidence to contradict the conclusion of the House Armed Services Committee that quote "there was no stand down order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi"? Close quote.

A No.

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

A No.

Ms. Grooms. That concludes our questions in the unclassified session. So I thank you very much for bearing with us and I think we will go off the record and go to classified.

Ms. Jackson. Can I ask one last question?

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q You've been so patient with us today and we really appreciate your being here, but as you sit here at the end of a long day for our unclassified session, as you reflect is there any question or answer that you gave that you would like to reflect on, change, add to, alter in any way before we lose you back to Algeria?

A No.

Q Anything else that you would like this committee to know before we go off the record in the unclassified session?

A No.

Q Thank you. Is that it? We'll go off the record for the unclassified session.

[Whereupon at 4:45 p.m. the committee proceeded in closed session.]

*Errata Sheet*

**Select Committee on Benghazi**

The witness' counsel on behalf of the witness reviewed the accompanying transcript and certified its accuracy by providing the following corrections. These corrections are reflected in the transcript as identified below.

<u>PAGE</u>	<u>LINE</u>	<u>ALL CORRECTIONS MADE BY WITNESS' COUNSEL</u>
9	10	Replaced "Tashkantu, Pakistan" with "Tashkent, Uzbekistan."
21	5	Replaced "MOS" with "OMS" in reference to the office management specialist.

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

INTERVIEW OF: [REDACTED]

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2015

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held in HVC-302, Capitol  
Visitors Center, commencing at 4:58 p.m.

Appearances:

For the SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI:

SHARON JACKSON, DEPUTY CHIEF COUNSEL

SHERIA CLARKE, COUNSEL

KIM BETZ, MEMBER OUTREACH LIASON

SUSANNE SACHSMAN GROOMS, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR/GENERAL COUNSEL

HEATHER SAWYER, MINORITY CHIEF COUNSEL

PETER KENNY, MINORITY SENIOR COUNSEL

BRENT WOOLFORK, MINORITY SENIOR PROFESSIONAL STAFF

For the U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE:

AUSTIN EVERS, SENIOR ADVISOR

For [REDACTED]:

RAEKA SAFAI, AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION

Ms. Jackson. Let's do our final session. We are reconvening and this session is going to be classified. We're going to try and keep it at the Secret level, but should any question that we ask to you require you to answer at a higher level, if you would flag that for us first. Everyone in this room is cleared to TS, most of us are cleared to TS/SCI, but if for any reason an answer would go into an SCI, please just again flag it to us, and then we will either withdraw the question or excuse certain people.

Mr. Evers. So what we talked about before, is that she is going to try to keep her testimony at the Secret level. And so if she believes she had to go to Top Secret, she will do that and in addition to that TS/SCI as well.

Ms. Jackson. Yes, yes.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 15  
Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Ambassador, before you you have what I've marked as Exhibit 15, it is actually a sensitive, but unclassified document bearing document number C05396560. It is an email exchange on Friday, June 15th, 2012, which we understand from our prior session was your last day as the DCM in Libya. And it is an email exchange between an [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and John Stevens with a copy to [REDACTED]. And it is -- the subject line, MANPADS MOU. Have you had an opportunity to review this exhibit?

A I have read it, but I should clarify I was traveling at this



time on June 15th. I flew out on a Lufthansa flight and I know that I left the compound on the morning of Friday, June 15th. So I was not involved in this interaction between [REDACTED] and Ambassador Stevens in any way whatsoever.

Q Well, the first line talks about this is the quote "follow on to loose ends left over from the Wednesday briefing I gave you." Were you present for that briefing?

A I don't believe I was.

Q Okay. And who was [REDACTED]?

A He was the political and economic section chief in Algeria who took over as acting DCM upon my departure.

Mr. Evers. You mean.

Ms. Jackson. Not Algeria.

Ambassador [REDACTED] Libya. Gosh, long day. Thank you for catching that. Took over in Tripoli. He arrived, like, the week that I was leaving so we had a week long overlap and then he took over as the acting DCM.

BY MR. JACKSON:

Q Okay. And you stayed the acting DCM until the arrival of Greg Hicks?

A That's my understanding, although I wasn't there.

Q That was the plan at least when you left?

A Yes.

Q Generally were you aware of the MANPADS program in Libya?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what can you tell us about that program, did it exist prior to your going back in in September of 2011?

A Initial discussions about the program began in the spring of 2011. I don't recall when exactly, but the guys from the PM/WRA office came over to Embassy Tripoli in Exile, and they were quite eager to get going on the program. I don't remember when it launched exactly.

Q But it launched some time before September 11 when you and others returned to Tripoli?

A I believe so. I believe, if my memory serves me correctly, they had gotten things going in Benghazi at some point over the summer of 2011.

Q And what was the MANPADS program in Libya?

A Well, there was a great deal of concern because Qadhafi had spent a lot of money and building pretty significant armaments. So there was concern that as a result of the fighting and the lack of control that was exercised over these arms by the Qadhafi military, then that they would fall into the wrong hands, into terrorist hands. So there was a big effort underway to try to track them down and destroy them.

Q Okay. And the State Department led that effort?

A Yes.

Q Was it an interagency effort offer a State-only effort?

A There was a State effort, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Okay. Will you describe for us then the State effort?

A I wasn't an expert in this. You know, they -- really, I wasn't an expert on this. I'm trying to recall. There were contractors involved, people who went around -- we knew sort of mapping of where we thought the things had been based on intelligence sources, et cetera.

So like I remember at one point the PM Bureau rep went down to a former arms depot and saw that it had been flattened in a NATO air strike and then trying to account for what we knew had been there, what might have been there. And then making sure that they would like sort of break the whatever component to make sure that these things were not usable.

There was an effort, as you see here to have an MOU that would essentially have been kind of a buyback program that the Libyans were resistant to do that.

Q Okay. And were you privy to that attempt to get the MOU for the buyback program prior to your departure from Libya?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And did you negotiate with any Libyan officials of the TNC regarding that MOU or proposed MOU?

A I think I personally did not. I think I remember working closely with the PM Bureau, and Ambassador Cretz, and then Ambassador Stevens to make sure that, you know, the talking points -- maybe I did deliver the talking points to the foreign ministry, but the ministry of defense interactions were usually done with defense attache and or Ambassador Cretz.

Q Okay. Did the State Department have more than one MANPADS program in Libya?

A I believe it was just one.

Q And that was to identify and render inoperable MANPADS?

A Yes.

Q Okay. [REDACTED]

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what [REDACTED] to your knowledge?

A I don't remember the specifics of it.

Q At all?

A I remember that [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q On Exhibit 15, at the very last line before [REDACTED] signs off, it says, quote "[REDACTED] was kind enough to set aside time today to get read into my programs." Would that be the State Department's programs?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And by read into, that meant it was a classified program?

A No, I think [REDACTED] was using that term which often in the intelligence circle means getting read in and getting the appropriate clearances simply to mean to get up to speed.

Q Okay. So the State Department did not have a classified MANPADS program?

A I believe the MOU was classified because we were always going back and forth with the documentation on the classified system, but the State Department program itself was not classified.

Q How logistically does the State Department go about it, or State personnel sent over to Libya to do this buyback program, or to find, identify, and render inoperable MANPADS, or do they rely on other companies to do that?

A There was a PM Bureau representative who was at post and [REDACTED] happened to be the one at the time. And then there was a contractor who I believe was identified here in this email.

Q Would that be the Control Demolitions International or CDI?

A It appears to be that.

Q Was there a company by the name of Sterling that was in country doing any type of MANPADS work?

A I don't recall.

Q Exhibit 15 also talks about that at the end of the contract for the Benghazi based contractor will be late December, early January. Were you aware of that, of how long the contract was to go?

A I don't remember quite honestly. I mean, this was complicated stuff and I sat regularly with the PM Bureau rep to make sure that I was up to speed but I have had a lot of other complicated stuff in my head since June 2012.

Q Is there anything else that you remember about the MANPADS

program in Libya?

A No.

Q Okay. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] is that correct?

A Yes.

Q In Tripoli and in Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what was [REDACTED]?

A At what period in time?

Q You went back in in September of 2011 through June of 2012?

A Well, the primary purpose was [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[5:08 p.m.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Okay. The term I have heard over the years is that [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]?

A Yes.

Q Do you know what [REDACTED] in Tripoli  
between September and June of 2012?

A September 2011 and June 2012?

Q Yes.

A Not off the top of my head, no.

Q Okay. [REDACTED]?

A Yes.

Q Okay. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]?

A In that time period, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

that we were concerned --

Q Weapons what? I am sorry.

A [REDACTED] in Libya that we were  
concerned about. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED].

Q And that part of it was being [REDACTED]?

A Yes.

Q In the period of September 2011 through June of 2012, did you have various intelligence products that were made available to you as the DCM?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what type of products or intel reporting would you review on a regular basis?

A The same sort of read book that I would read in any other embassy anywhere in the world. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED].

Q Okay. Would they have access to intelligence products from other U.S. Government agencies such as the Department of Defense or the CIA, NSA?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And so they would call through those and distill them and give you a read book?

A Yes.

Q So would you get any raw intelligence?

A Generally, as a State Department officer you don't get the raw intelligence. Things usually go through a finished product. As chief of mission, chief of mission often has more leeway, but as DCM, I did not.

Q Okay. Of the finished intelligence products, would you



get -- you would actually read the finished intelligence products such as something put out by the CIA or DIA or one of the other intel agencies?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And so you would not see them summarized in any way by State personnel, but you would see the finished intelligence product?

A Yes.

And by the way, if I could go back to the idea of, you know, did I see raw intelligence. Certainly, when there was information that came in that was threat related, they didn't necessarily [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

And there were definitely instances, especially both when I was in charge and also when I was DCM where there would be breaking threat streams that we were concerned about that would be shared before it was a finished intelligence product. But I don't want to make it sound like it was a very bureaucratic procedure. There was some fluidity in the way that we received information.

Q Okay. In February, March, April, and May of 2012, did you see any changes in the threat reporting that you were getting through the intelligence community channels as to the security in Libya? Was it changing in any way?

A It was. And one trend in particular that I was very concerned about was the presence of Mokhtar Belmokhtar, an Algerian national who was a -- and I don't know if he still is, because he might

have been killed in June. I don't know -- but an Algerian national who was the leader of Al Qaeda and the Islamic Maghreb.

So we, in Tripoli, were very, very concerned by his continued presence in Libya and what that might mean for the overall threat environment, the ability for Al Qaeda or other groups to carry out terrorist attacks.

Q In what respect were you concerned? Was he gathering up forces and weapons and planning terrorist attacks in Libya?

A Well, anytime there is a senior Al Qaeda leader in your country, you are concerned. We didn't have a whole lot of insights into what he was doing, but the fact that he was there for such a long period of time, you know, you can make estimates, guesses, about what he was up to, and it certainly wasn't something that we would have supported.

Q And you may have said this but I missed it, in what part of Libya was he suspected of being located?

A He was suspected of being in eastern Libya.

Q Okay. Were there other groups that you were concerned about in eastern and southern Libya?

A As I had mentioned earlier, there was always an extremist presence in Derna, a city in eastern Libya. We had no indications that those guys were up to anything bad, but the fact that this very prominent Al Qaeda leader was now in eastern Libya, in my mind, was -- I wouldn't say a game changer, but a very disturbing development.

Q And if you recall, when were you first aware that he was

in Libya?

A It was in late 2011.

Q So close in time to after you go back into Libya in Tripoli?

A A couple of months later.

Q Okay. And was your intelligence that he was still there at the time you left in June of 2012?

A No. He had returned to either Algeria or Mali. He had left. We knew that for sure.

Q Did the intelligence report that anyone else had been -- had taken his place from the AQIM network?

A I don't recall.

Q You talked earlier in our unclassified session about the drone strike that took out al-Libi.

A Uh-huh.

Q Was there intelligence reporting about the impact of that action by the U.S. Government?

A Yes, there was intelligence reporting about the impact, you know, on corporate Al Qaeda, and whether it was Afghanistan or Pakistan, wherever he was killed, we didn't know what that meant for -- you know, what the repercussions would be for what we knew then to be, you know, again, an Al Qaeda presence in Libya. So it was all very, very unclear.

Q Okay. And, again, can you tell me when al-Libi was killed?

A I don't remember the date.

Q Okay. During your time from late 2011 through your departure in June of 2012, did you read intelligence about Ansar Al

Shari'a?

A I don't recall reading intelligence about Ansar Al Shari'a, but it was certainly a group that we were starting to keep an eye on.

Q Were they having an increased presence in Libya, or why is it that there was a change?

A Again, this is all developments from more than 3 years ago, but it was an emerging group. You know, I think before kind of the springtime we weren't tracking Ansar Al Shari'a, you know. We were tracking various militias. And if I recall the events correctly, these groups, you know, which had been very localized militias started forming into something a little bit different that was worrisome.

Q Was it your sense that the individuals that you dealt with back at Main State were aware of the same intelligence that you were reading?

A No, it was not my sense. And in particular, with Mokhtar Belmokhtar, I was very concerned that my senior leadership in the NEA bureau seemed to be entirely unaware of the fact that Mokhtar Belmokhtar had been in Libya. And that was one reason why I wanted to see Liz Dibble, to discuss that with her.

Q Okay. And when you talk about your senior leadership, who are you referring to?

A The NEA front office. So I did not ever discuss Mokhtar Belmokhtar with the assistant secretary, but when I met with Liz Dibble in February 2012, I raised this. And it was the first she had heard of the fact that Mokhtar Belmokhtar was in Libya.

Q To your knowledge, did she have the same access to the intelligence reporting that you had?

A I don't know.

Q Okay.

A But there was a big disconnect because I was hearing [REDACTED] that, you know, the director of the CIA was being briefed on this situation every day, and my senior leadership in the State Department didn't -- I mean, within my bureau didn't seem to be aware of this. So was it so compartmentalized that the CIA wasn't sharing that information? I don't know.

Q Okay. Did you have confidence in [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]?

A Yes.

Q Did you meet -- and did you find he or she had good insight into what was going on in Libya?

A Yes.

Ms. Jackson. I think that is all the questions I have in this session, so I will turn it over to my minority colleagues.

Mr. Kenny. Go off the record.

[Recess.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q So we will go back on the record. Time is 5:20. Hopefully this will be our last round and we can conclude. We are still in classified session.

I would just like to ask one or two questions to follow up on the

discussion we were just having in the last round. You were discussing a particular individual by the name of Mokhtar Belmokhtar, I think is the name, which I am --

A Mokhtar Belmokhtar, MBM.

Q Belmokhtar, that is right. And I would just like to ask, you had mentioned that there were indications that he was present in Libya beginning in late 2011; is that correct?

A Yes.

Q And when did he depart Libya?

A It was sometime in the spring. I want to say the March, April timeframe --

Q Okay.

A -- of 2012.

Q Of 2012. So there was a period of time of a few months where this individual is located in Libya?

A Yes.

Q I think you indicated that it was eastern Libya, to your recollection?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And was there confirmation of the fact that he was present there or were -- was it more along the lines of -- what was the confidence level of --

A A very high degree of confidence.

Q Okay. And you had mentioned that you, in your consultations with PDAS Dibble that you had raised this as a potential

concern for her. And you said that she seemed to be unaware at that point in time about this individual's presence. When you told her this, was it your sense that she was concerned?

A Yes. She understood the magnitude of having such a senior Al Qaeda official in Libya. And the security implications. Promised to look into it and figure out why she hadn't been aware of this. Yes. So she did --

Q Okay. Do you know if she took any steps to follow up after that?

A I don't know, because I went back to Libya.

Q Okay. Okay. We will enter, this will be Exhibit 16 into the record.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 16

Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q This is a classified exhibit. It is marked "SECRET//NOFORN."

And Ambassador, I am just going to read into the record some descriptive information about this document. This is a cable, it is 12 Tripoli 39. It is entitled "Embassy Tripoli EAC Meeting - June 11, 2012." And I will give you a few moments to review that.

A Yes. I have read it.

Q Thank you. So I would like to circle back to a discussion we were having in an unclassified session about the June 11 timeframe, which is when the British Ambassador's convoy was struck in Benghazi.

And we touched on the Emergency Action Committee process, and you indicated that you recalled a series of meetings. You couldn't recall if one or the other was labeled as an EAC or there may have been multiple EACs.

So I would just like to ask, does this help refresh your recollection of the June 11 EAC?

A It does. And it also helps refresh for the previous one as well, because it looks like it was a core EAC, which was a much smaller group, which might be why it didn't really stick in my memory as much.

Q Okay. And is the process that you would have -- and could you maybe just explain real briefly. There is a core EAC. There could be a full country team EAC, just the difference.

A Yeah, so a core EAC would be a much smaller group, and now I am sort of remembering, because the Department came back and said, why did you only have a core EAC. And the reason was, we only had a core EAC because we already had a previously-scheduled meeting [REDACTED] and needed to have a classified discussion.

Q Okay.

A So that was, I guess, less memorable because I probably was thinking of it in the context of our usual coordination meetings that took place over there.

Q Okay. So this particular EAC then was held in a classified session. The document itself is marked classified. And so you could have -- if I could understand you correctly, it was held at a separate location so that you could have a free --



A No, sorry. So I was referring to whatever the day of the IED attack. There was a ref b, right, or whatever that was the -- I can't remember where I saw that. So there was a separate meeting that took place the same day as the IED attack which was a core EAC meeting, which I think was also probably a classified discussion.

Q So maybe it would be helpful, on the second page, in paragraph 6 --

A Yes that's the ref b meeting.

Q -- it specifies --

A The June 6 core EAC meeting.

Q So that is the June 6?

A Yes.

Q And that presumably was in relation to the June 6 attack on the wall?

A Yes.

Q Okay. So this EAC though --

A Was after the UK convoy attack, and it was held [REDACTED] and involved all of the people that are listed in paragraph one.

Q Okay. But because it was held in the classified session, the core team was able to have an unencumbered discussion about security and possible changes to the security posture?

A This was a full EAC. This was not a core EAC. Sorry.

Q This is the full EAC?

A The core EAC took place on June 6, which was the smaller group meeting --

Q I see.

A -- which I am speculating that I think it took place [REDACTED], because we met regularly, you know, several times a week with the Ambassador, pol/econ section, me, RSO, [REDACTED], to discuss the overall threat environment, security, you know. The FCS officer, for example, didn't need to be part of that discussion and didn't have the right clearances.

Q Okay. That is helpful. So it seems like there are two EACs in this time period, one --

A Yes, one was on June 6, which was the smaller group.

Q Okay.

A And then the June 12 meeting was the full EAC.

Q I am sorry, June 11?

A Eleventh, sorry. This is from this report, yes.

Q I think the cable -- it looks like the cable may have been sent on June -- may be dated June 12.

A June 12. Yes, it was sent the following day.

Q Okay. And so this particular EAC, is it your recollection that this EAC was focused primarily on the attack on the Ambassador's convoy but also with reference to the previous attack?

A Yes. In the context of the overall threat environment and what was a series of increasingly disturbing security incidents in Benghazi.

Q Okay. And I will just note here, did the Ambassador attend this EAC?

A Yes, he chaired this meeting.

Q Okay. And did you attend this as well?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And if I could direct your attention just to the fourth -- the paragraph that is numbered four.

A Uh-huh.

Q This paragraph reads, quote, "Given the proximity of the attack to the U.S. office in Benghazi, the EAC debated whether there was any possibility that the U.S. Mission, instead of the British, could have been the target of this attack, concluding that it was impossible to determine at this time," closed quote.

And I just -- we had a discussion that you recall a belief you may have had at the time or --

A Yes.

Q -- held at the time that those two were related. Does this help refresh your recollection about that?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And according to this, at least at this time it was impossible to determine. Was that also an assessment you shared?

A Yes.

Q Okay. That paragraph goes on, quote, "Tripoli's EAC agreed that it was prudent for Benghazi staff to stand-fast in the wake of this attack, as already decided by Benghazi's EAC. The EAC discussed whether to drawdown staff from Benghazi and agreed that no draw downs were needed at this time. However, the EAC agreed to revisit this issue

as more information was gathered. (Benghazi's EAC met separately on June 11 and determined that they would suspend off-compound moves on June 12. They also agreed to use two-car convoys when they decide to move off compound later this week.)," closed quote.

And just further to our discussion, and this may help refresh your recollection on some of the questions that you had been asked previously in the unclassified. And I apologize I was unable to use this document in that setting, but. It sounds like the recommendation here, that it was discussed whether Benghazi should be drawn down?

A Uh-huh.

Q Okay. And the EAC decided against that recommendation; is that right?

A Correct.

Q Do you recall whether that was a consensus viewpoint of the EAC?

A I really don't recall.

Q Okay. And just when it says the EAC discussed whether to draw down staff for Benghazi, is that referring to the Tripoli EAC?

A Yes.

Q Okay. We just talked a little bit earlier about the EAC process and how consensus viewpoints or how the EAC may drive towards consensus or cede consensus on specific issues. Do you remember with regard to this specific conversation or this topic what the various viewpoints were among the members of this EAC?

A I don't recall. But I do, if my memory serves me correctly,

I think Ambassador Stevens by this point was putting out the idea, you know, of having a gap in the staffing and reassessing later. So I think that people felt with that because there were just so many unknowns at this point in time.

Mr. Kenny. Okay. That is all we have. Thank you. We can go off the record.

[Whereupon, at 5:32 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.

---

Witness Name

---

Date

*Errata Sheet*

**Select Committee on Benghazi**

The witness declined to review the accompanying transcript.