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

INTERVIEW OF: [REDACTED]

Tuesday, August 25, 2015

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held in Room HVC-205,
Capitol Visitor Center, commencing at 9:56 a.m.

Appearances:

For the SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI:

CRAIG MISSAKIAN, DEPUTY CHIEF COUNSEL

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For the DEPARTMENT OF STATE:

AUSTIN EVERS, SENIOR ADVISOR

Ms. Clarke. This is a transcribed interview of Mr. [REDACTED] conducted by the House Select Committee on Benghazi. This interview is being conducted voluntarily as part of the committee's investigation into the attacks on the U.S. diplomatic facilities in Benghazi, Libya, and related matters pursuant to House Resolution 567 of the 113th Congress and House Resolution 5 of the 114th Congress.

Could the witness please state your name for the record?

Mr. [REDACTED]. Sure. [REDACTED].

Ms. Clarke. Thank you. And will you spell your last name for the record, please?

Mr. [REDACTED]. [REDACTED].

Ms. Clarke. Thank you.

The committee appreciates your appearance at this interview, Mr. [REDACTED]. My name is Sheria Clarke. I'm with the committee's majority staff. And I'll just take a moment to go around the room and have everyone introduce themselves.

Mr. Missakian. Good morning. I'm Craig Missakian with the majority staff.

Mr. Desai. Ronak Desai with the minority staff.

Ms. Sawyer. Heather Sawyer with the minority staff.

Mr. Rebnord. Dan Rebnord with the minority staff.

Mr. Evers. Austin Evers, State Department.

Ms. Clark. Thank you.

Before we begin, I'm just going to go over some of the ground rules and explain how the interview will proceed.

Generally the way the questioning has proceeded is that the majority will ask questions for up to an hour, and then the minority will have an opportunity to ask questions as well for an equal period of time.

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

Unlike the testimony or a 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 subject to review by the chairman of the committee. If these objections cannot be resolved in the interview, the witness can be required to return for a deposition or hearing.

Members and staff of the committee, however, are not permitted to raise objections when the other side is asking questions. And this has not been an issue we have encountered in the past, but I want to make sure you are clear on the process.

So this setting that we are in right now is an unclassified setting. We'll begin here. If any of the questions that you are asked, you feel that they require a classified setting, just let us know. We have reserved a classified setting that we more than likely will move to at a later point today. But if you are asked a question and you believe that it requires a classified answer, let us know and we will reserve that for that setting.

You are welcome to confer with counsel at any time throughout the

interview. If something needs to be clarified, we ask that you let us know. If you need to discuss anything with the counsel, we'll go off the record and stop the clock to provide you this opportunity.

We would like to take a break also whenever it's convenient for you. This can be after every hour of questioning or after a couple of rounds. Whatever you prefer. During a round of questioning, if you need anything, just let us know and we're happy to get it for you.

As you can see, an official reporter is taking down everything that's said today. We ask that you give verbal responses to all questions, yes and no, as opposed to nodding your head. And I'm going to ask the reporter to please feel free to jump in, in case you do respond nonverbally, or if it either of us begin talking over each other, just remind us to.

We want you to answer our questions in the most complete and truthful manner possible, so we'll take our time and repeat or clarify our questions if necessary. If you have any questions or if you don't understand any of our questions, please let us know and we'll be glad to clarify that for you.

If you honestly don't know the answer to a question or don't remember, it's best not to guess. Just give us your best recollection. And if you recall someone who may be able to answer that question for us, we appreciate it if you would provide that information.

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

Mr. [REDACTED]. Yes.

Ms. Clarke. And this also applies to questions posed by congressional staff in an interview. Do you understand that?

Mr. [REDACTED]. Yes.

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

Mr. [REDACTED]. Yes.

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

Mr. [REDACTED]. No.

Ms. Clarke. Okay. That's the end of my introduction. Does the minority have anything they would like to add?

Ms. Sawyer. Not at this moment. We thank you for appearing. Look forward to your testimony.

Mr. [REDACTED]. Thank you.

Ms. Clarke. All right. So the clock now reads 10 o'clock on the dot. We will go ahead and get started.

EXAMINATION

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q Okay. Mr. [REDACTED], we'll just start with a little bit of your professional background. Can you describe that for us.

A So I started in government about 18 years ago. My last job, my most recent job, was chief of staff for Secretary Hagel. Dates of that job were mid-September of 2014 to mid-February of 2015. I left the Defense Department in June.

I was the, prior to that, the deputy to our U.N. Ambassador in Washington from July of 2011 until September of 2014.

Prior to that, I was a director on the National Security Staff from about March of 2009 until I left to take the U.N. deputy job. So July of 2011.

I worked for 4 years prior to that for Chuck Hagel in the Senate on his personal staff, from early spring, February or so, of 2004 until the end of 2008.

And then, prior to that, I held several different jobs at the State Department where I joined in September of 1999. And I was in grad school before that.

Q Okay. Thank you. So prior to your time at DOD, you served as the deputy to the Ambassador to the U.N. Can you describe what your role was as the deputy?

A Sure. So I ran a relatively small office here in Washington, and we were part of the bureaucratic structure that reported to our Ambassador to the U.N. You know, initially for the first 2 years in my time there it was Susan Rice, and then Samantha Power. You know, that individual is largely based in New York. Most of structure is up there for USUN, which is what we're called, U.S. Mission to the United Nations. And I reported directly to the U.N. Ambassador.

Our function was largely focused on U.S. policymaking, as well as U.S. interests as it related to activities at the U.N., which for me largely meant the agenda on the U.N. Security Council.

Q Okay. And can you just kind of describe the interaction of the Washington office with the New York office? As the deputy, did individuals from the New York office report up to you or --

A Yeah. So it was a little bit of a strange bureaucratic structure. I had five advisers that worked for me in Washington. The typical structure in New York is you have the Permanent Representative, our U.N. Ambassador, and then I believe it's four ambassadors when you're at full strength up there, including a deputy permanent representative and then three other ambassadors.

The folks in New York generally didn't report through me to the U.N. Ambassador. It was more like a leadership team where the ambassadors up there, their job was largely focused on activities at the U.N., you know, what was going on across the street within the U.N. And they had, you know, a typical, almost an embassy-like structure of offices that worked on those issues. But they also got involved in supporting what we were doing and what the deliberations were down in Washington in terms of various policies. But it was largely the five staff that I had that reported to me and through me to the U.N. Ambassador.

Q Who were the 5 advisers that you had?

A Well, they changed over time. So I had [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] -- he left midstream -- [REDACTED] came on board, [REDACTED], and [REDACTED]. But not everyone was working all at the same time. Staff changes.

Q Gotcha. Okay. And those people were based in Washington

with you?

A Uh-huh.

Q As the deputy to the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., were you also a standing member of the Deputies Committee for the National Security Council?

A Yes. It's part of the policymaking process.

Q And can you describe -- in general, my understanding of the Deputies Committee is that there are standing meetings and then there are also meetings that arise when necessary. Is that accurate?

A Well, I guess I would say, you know, you say standing and as they arise. I wouldn't say it's as quite as rigid as that.

Q Okay.

A You had certainly -- it really depended on the issue. But there were some topics that had more frequent meetings and others that were more of a one-off. It really was at the discretion of kind of what the topic required.

Q So in your role in Washington, it sounded like, to me, from your description that your role was to kind of interface with State Department and the U.S. Government in general to shape the policy, and then you would provide that information to the U.N. Ambassador, and from there she would make decisions regarding her interactions with the actual U.N. in New York. Is that an accurate description?

A That was a large part of what we did, in part because many important topics were on the agenda of the Security Council, you know, in Africa and the Middle East, in Asia. So that was an important

foreign policy venue for the United States in terms of what we did, what we said, what our objectives were. So, you know, that certainly, you know, the positions that the U.S. Ambassador and the other ambassadors, and, frankly, the other members of the mission up in New York took would be informed by the policy positions of the United States. I mean, it's almost like any other multilateral venue.

Q Okay. In your role did you also support the other members of the USUN mission?

A Sure, yeah, other ambassadors, because they -- like, Susan Rice and Samantha Power, you know, particularly the senior folks, the ambassadors, they would need the guidance and, you know, policy positions from Washington. So there were times when I supported them. It really, you know, depended on the needs and requirements of what was going on in New York.

Q Okay. When it came to the Security Council, when there were meetings of the Security Council, for example, what was your involvement regarding any remarks that the Ambassador may provide at those meetings or any statements that the Ambassador would make regarding those meetings?

A You know, I was really not involved in drafting. You know, we had a political team, a political section, you know, focused on the policy issues, the diplomatic issues, that worked with, you know, my -- members of my staff who had more day-to-day responsibilities on certain issues. And then they would work with other members of the interagency. But my role would really be sort of to provide oversight

to review near-final drafts as a senior member of our team.

Q So with regards to your staff, did they have a division of topics or areas --

A Yeah. They had portfolios.

Q Okay. And can you describe how the work was divided? What were their portfolios?

A I can generally.

Q Yes.

A So, you know, we typically -- we had five people, and we had to cover basically all policy issues. So we were tiny compared to the State Department, compared to anywhere else. So each member had a range of issues. There was generally one person that did -- well, Africa was kind of split into two people.

Q Okay.

A We had one person that did congressional relations, sort of managing that across the board, sort of, you know.

Q Okay.

A And then budget and management and reform issues. So that was sort of one portfolio.

Africa was broken into two people. Usually one of those individuals also had sort of Asia issues as they came up. And then the Middle East was broken generally into two people. And we sort of divided. It evolved over time. So I can't say it was static.

Q Okay.

A You know, in part because we're so tiny, there's so many

big issues, so we had to sort of adjust depending on the strengths of individuals.

Q And did you receive -- so you have the individuals have their portfolios. Do they also receive input from, say, the bureaus in the State Department that, you know, the particular region that they were focused on? Would the bureau that focused on that region also provide them information or support regarding the issues that may arise?

A Yes. And we had a very close relationship with each part of the State Department, and different staff, you know, had to develop different relationships, depending on what their issues were.

Q You said that there was one person who was in charge of kind of congressional affairs. Was that person static during your time or did that -- did more than one person --

A No. It was [REDACTED] for most of it. And she left and her successor's -- actually her name is escaping me -- she came on right as I was leaving. It may come back to me later. But [REDACTED] was there for most of the time.

Q Okay. And then as far as the individuals that had Africa as a part of their portfolio, do you recall who those individuals were?

A So when I say Africa, I'm meaning Sub-Saharan Africa.

Q Okay.

A And [REDACTED] had part of it. [REDACTED] -- actually [REDACTED] is another member. She had part of it. And then [REDACTED] came on board when both of them left at different times.

And he's largely following Africa.

Q Okay. And so where would -- Libya would have fallen under the portfolio of the Middle East. Is that how --

A Yeah.

Q -- it was divided?

Okay. And who were the individuals that worked on that portfolio?

A So [REDACTED] covered Libya plus the Maghreb. So the northern tier of Africa and a little bit of the Gulf. [REDACTED] covered the Middle East piece and the countries around there, Syria, Jordan. And [REDACTED] covered the Gulf around Iraq, small Gulf states.

Q Can you describe what was your management structure, like as far as the individuals in your office? For example, if an issue that fell within one person's portfolio came up, did they usually discuss with you information prior to providing it to the Ambassador, or were they authorized to discuss, you know, arising topics immediately with the Ambassador?

A So it was -- my answer to that is kind of all of the above depending on the nature of the particular question, the urgency, where I was at the time. You know, we're -- again, we're a very tiny office, so, you know, I had to delegate a lot of responsibility to people. Each of these individuals is fairly seasoned, so, you know, they had a lot of my trust in terms of how they handled issues, and they would engage the Ambassador directly as needed.

Q If they engaged the Ambassador directly, would they -- was there a pattern and practice where they would come back to you and say, "Well, I talked to the Ambassador about, you know, X, and this is what we discussed"?

A Yes.

Q Was that typically the process, or can you describe kind of how that would play out? Is that the normal expected process or --

A Yes.

Q Okay. And generally would they provide that information verbally or was there a write-up following a discussion with the Ambassador?

A It was usually just conversation. I mean, we're all in one office. So they just -- I had an open-door policy.

Q Okay. So you were talking about you weren't involved in drafting, say, remarks, but you usually became involved once it was near the final product.

Were you involved at all -- when remarks were drafted that were going to be presented, say, to the Security Council, were those remarks vetted with, you know, maybe the bureau that -- the State Department bureaus that would have had that particular region that the remarks were regarding or -- describe for us the vetting process. Did it just come to you and then it was sent to the Ambassador or did it go to a broader spectrum of people?

A There would typically be a clearance process for any public remarks by a senior official, certainly, you know, remarks into the

Security Council, whether it's a public or private session, and there were both. And the process, you know, would involve, you know, a range of offices, you know, usually primarily in the State Department. And, you know, that was really the job of my staff plus the International Organizations Bureau at the State Department, which was the primary bureau at State looking at the U.N. to manage and support and, you know, deliver to the Ambassador what she, or if it was one of the others he, needed in a timely manner.

Q Were there instances -- I'm sure in your time there, in your tenure, there were instances where the clearance process included more than just the State Department?

A Yes.

Q And can you describe how that process played out and, for instance, if there were remarks that may have needed to be cleared by another agency or the White House, how was that clearance process?

A Sure. So, yeah, no, there were, you know, a range of times when you got input clearance from the National Security Staff, occasionally from other agencies, depending on the topic. You know, you would use your judgment in terms of who had equities in the process. And, you know, again, that would be run by the staff, you know, typically, you know, from a process standpoint over email to seek input into draft documents.

Q So can you describe for us in your time -- I want to focus now more on the U.S.'s involvement in Libya. So can you kind of walk us through how the U.S. became involved, your understanding of the

U.S.'s support of the U.N. Security Council resolutions, how that process evolved, and the role that you played, if any, in developing that process?

A Okay. So that's a big question.

Q It is.

A It spans a lot of time.

Q Yes.

A I joined in July of 2011. So to a certain degree -- you know, and I wasn't working Libya in my prior job.

Q Okay.

A So, you know, a range of decisions had already been made, actions been taken, prior to me joining.

Q Right.

A So, you know, I think first and foremost in the position as the deputy U.N. person down in Washington, you know, going from July 2011 forward would have been focused on how you -- how the U.S. thinks about the role of the U.N. in this process over the time of thinking through a post-Qadhafi era and then when we actually were there, what does that mean. You know, those are certainly the things that were front and center in my mind.

So the U.N. continued to play a fairly large role over time, particularly on trying to pursue a political track. They have a senior envoy there, or they did, up until not that long ago.

So the question of the role of the U.N. and the kinds of objectives that we as the U.S. thought the U.N. should have was a big part of how

we approached, how we, USUN, approached the question of Libya. You know, there was a range of other discussions that we had because the role of the U.N. was fairly large. It was on the political track, the security track, dealing with militias, disarmament. You know, if you look at the Security Council resolutions, there's a lot in there. So we had to think through what does that really mean.

Q In your role, did you have any insight -- it sounds like you were focused on what the U.S. thought the U.N. should be doing regarding Libya. Did you have any insight or any input into what the U.S. actually was doing in Libya apart from the U.N.?

A When you say the U.S. was doing, what do you mean?

Q Well, as far as the U.S.'s presence in Libya. It began in the early part of 2011, the U.S. sent in a special envoy. In the latter part of 2011, the Tripoli Embassy was reopened. What level of input or insight did you have into the decisions regarding reopening in Libya --

A Sure. So in terms of reopen -- in terms of our presence on the ground.

Q In terms of the presence --

A Okay.

Q -- on the ground, yes.

A Okay. So in terms of the presence on the ground, that really was not something that USUN had a direct or leading role in. That was really a question that was largely considered inside the State Department. You know, I was certainly aware of the nature of the

conversation and the kinds of considerations that went into it, I mean, just in terms of my interaction with the State Department and other officials. But it really was outside of the sort of direct purview of USUN in terms of how we approached the issue.

Q What was your understanding of the U.S.'s goals or interests in a presence in Libya based on your conversations with others?

A Sure. So I would say -- I mean, this was in part because these are views that I shared, because there was large consensus around this, was that we, the United States, needed to focus on trying to pursue in a post-Qadhafi world a political track that sought to ensure and improve security in Libya. And there were certainly large elements or a large interest in governance in terms of trying to help the Libyans put this place back together. I mean, there were sort of large, overarching objectives where, you know, coming back to what I said earlier, we tried to manifest those in the kind of role that we saw the U.N. playing to help support what the U.S. Government and other countries were doing on the ground in the post-Qadhafi environment.

Q When you use the term "political track," I think you said focused on pursuing the political track that sought to improve security, what do you mean by "political track"?

A I mean helping Libyans and different Libyan entities and their leaders find a process and agree on a process where they can start to discuss and eventually resolve a range of issues around political institutions, governance, structure of their political bodies, so that they can eventually move back towards a place where you've got

functioning -- a functioning government for the geographic area of Libya.

Q So it's my understanding that Ambassador Rice met with soon-to-be Ambassador Stevens in the spring of 2012. Do you recall if that meeting took place or if she had any interaction with him during that timeframe?

A I don't have any recollection one way or the other. It's certainly plausible that she did, but I don't recall the specific meeting.

Q Okay. Do you know what Ambassador Rice's view was regarding the U.S. presence in Benghazi? Did she support a continued -- following the reopening of the Tripoli Embassy, did she -- did Ambassador Rice support having a U.S. presence in Benghazi?

A So you're saying we've already opened --

Q Yeah. So this will be the --

A -- our embassy.

Q Right. So this will be the latter part of 2011, Tripoli has been reopened.

A Okay.

Q At that time, Benghazi was -- there was still a presence in Benghazi.

A Yeah.

Q Following the reopening of Tripoli, did you ever have any discussions with Ambassador Rice about her views on whether or not there should be a U.S. presence in Benghazi?

A Sure. So I don't recall any specific conversations around that very pretty narrow question, which to a large degree has a security component to it -- you know, is it safe for our people to be there? And that's really not something that USUN -- this is not our responsibility. Again, that was, you know, an issue for the State Department in terms of making judgments over safety and security of our personnel. I mean, we had -- Susan and I had a range of conversations about Libya, but I don't remember a discrete conversation about whether or not we should retain a presence in Benghazi at that time.

Q And I'm not asking necessarily from a security standpoint. I just wondered if you had a discussion with her about the benefits of having a presence in Benghazi regarding reporting, you know, because this would have occurred prior to the elections in Tripoli -- I'm sorry, in Libya -- and so just wondering if you had a discussion about whether there was -- in her mind, she saw that there was a benefit to having reporting from Tripoli as well as reporting from Benghazi.

A Okay. So I don't -- we never, to my recollection, had a conversation sort of along those lines, sort of the benefits or lack thereof of reporting from Benghazi.

Q Do you know or do you recall whether or not she supported having a presence in Benghazi?

A I don't know. I mean, we really just didn't talk about -- talk about that.

Q So you didn't really discuss what the benefits of receiving

information from individuals located in Benghazi, from a U.S. presence in Benghazi, being able to understand? Because we talked about kind of the political track and improving governance, and Benghazi was a very important piece of Libya. And you don't recall whether or not you discussed with her, being that Benghazi was important to Libya as a whole and you're at the beginning of a formation of a government that's trying to kind of get set up in Libya, her views on Benghazi, whether it was a needed or --

A No. I just don't recall any kind of conversation that sort of sliced the issue that way. I mean, we talked about reporting about Libya. We talked about the prospects for elections in Libya. We talked about, you know, a range of issues of what the U.N. folks were doing. But as it relates to whether or not the reporting was good from Benghazi, it just didn't come up.

Q Okay. So I think we'll shift gears a likely bit here.

BY MR. MISSIKIAN:

Q Mr. [REDACTED], I just want to circle back --

A Sure.

Q -- and maybe get at few more details.

On the issue of Libya generally, do you recall when that became an issue that you and Secretary Rice were focused on and how that happened?

A Well, again, when I came on in July of 2011, we're sort of -- I came in midstream into this issue, frankly. I mean, there had already been some action in the Security Council prior to that. It

was an issue -- right? -- that was --

Q Okay. So you kind of inherited it. Right?

A So anyone in my position would have had to have spent some portion of his or her time on Libya.

Q Did you have any interaction with the National Security Staff on the issue of Libya?

A I certainly did, because it was an issue that, you know, was -- you know, touched a number of agencies and -- yeah. No. I certainly did.

Q Did you come to understand the reasons behind the U.S. support of the U.N. resolutions or the rebels in Libya? I mean, did you come to get an understanding of the U.S. interest in doing so? And if so, how did you come to that understanding?

A Well, there had been a series of decisions made in terms of the kind of resolution that we wanted to seek -- again, prior to me joining in this position -- in terms of a decision by us to seek U.N. authorization and other language in the Council. So, you know, I certainly was aware, even before I took the job, just knowing from reading the press, you know, what those deliberations were and the decision. And so I inherited sort of a set of decisions, certainly as it relates to the Security Council and what we were seeking from them.

Q How did you get up to speed on the issue? I mean, obviously you came in, it was an issue that was existing. I mean, who did you speak to? What information did you consume? All of those kinds of

things.

A Well, you know, I don't recall the exact process. It's sort of like jumping into a speeding train to a certain degree. I mean, I'm sure I talked to my staff. I spoke with other folks in New York. This is what I would have done. Sort of the logical thing is to start with the immediate team. I had a range of conversations with Ambassador Rice at the time and --

Q Was there anybody in particular at the National Security Staff that you spoke to?

A Not that I recall.

Q Was there anybody there that you recall speaking to on the issue of Libya?

A Well, you know, as a matter of process, there, you know, there were meetings held. And so, you know, my colleague at the deputy level at the NSC was Denis McDonough, as my colleague over at State was, you know, Bill Burns. So, you know, those are two individuals I spoke to on a whole range of issues. I mean, it was, you know, part of my job.

Q Did there come a conversation with Mr. McDonough or anybody else about the U.S. interests in supporting the Libyan revolution?

A I don't recall a specific conversation. I mean, I just -- you know, in the course of business we would see each other regularly, but, no, I don't have any --

Q Did you have any general sense that came out of the conversations that you had on a regular basis?

A That we had interests?

Q Yeah. What were the U.S. interests in supporting the Libyan revolution?

A Well, I would say -- I mean, from my perspective, in terms of the U.S. interests, you know, I would -- I would, you know, define them as, you know, seeking to prevent the slaughter which appeared imminent as, you know, Qadhafi's forces moved west, and to support, you know, what appeared to be a real desire by large numbers in the Libyan people to have different political structure in Libya. You know, that's kind of as I got into the job and, you know, had to think about this more directly, you know, those were two of the main things that animated how I thought about, you know, what we were doing in Libya and how we had to react to events.

Q To your knowledge, were those interests or goals shared by the National Security Staff based on your conversations with Mr. McDonough or anybody else that may have worked with the National Security Staff?

A Yeah. Well, I would say, Craig, that, you know, my own understanding is that there had been decisions made based on, you know, those informed to a large degree on those two interests.

Q Those decisions were made by whom?

A Well, again, those would predate me.

Q Okay. Do you have an understanding as you sit here today?

A Yeah, I would say those -- it would have appeared to have been a general consensus of -- among the President and his team.

Q And your understanding of that general consensus is based on what?

A Well, the fact that we sought certain decisions in the Security Council, certain actions, and sought to mobilize international opinion around a desire.

Q That was a bad question on my part.

Was your understanding of that based on your participating in some of those discussions --

A No.

Q -- or having discussions with any of those individuals who had made the decision, or are you just essentially inferring it from the fact about what happened next, by what happened next?

A Well, I take it from the kinds of actions that we were seeking once I took the job that that flowed from a set of interests.

Q Okay. And you had -- I believe you said that there were a range of times or issues that would have to go to the National Security Staff for vetting or clearance. Could you be a little more specific about what kinds of issues or what times would require you to go to the National Security Staff for clearance or vetting?

A Well, I mean, it's a little hard to be more specific. A lot of it is dependent on the policy. Again, I'm talking even more broadly than Libya right now. You know, there's different processes that are in place, you know, for issues to be discussed, particularly ones where more than one agency has an interest in the topic. You know, there are different meetings that are held at levels in the government.

You know, you mentioned the Deputies Committee. There are meetings below that and meetings above it.

And so there would be conversations that focused on a range of issues. You know, something like a statement probably wouldn't be the topic of a meeting but would be handled in a more informal basis by staff and the sort of relevant staff in the interagency.

So, you know, it really depended on the issue and the nature of the discussion.

Q Okay. Focused just on statements, was there anything formal that you were aware of that required all public statements by senior officials to be vetted by the National Security Staff?

A What do you mean by "formal"? Like a directive?

Q Right. A directive. A memo. Something -- a direction and a policy that you had received in writing that required that.

A Not that I recall, no.

Q Okay. So there was just some things that was understood?

A Well, it was seen as the best interest of the administration to make sure that there was general agreement when a senior official would do or say something. That's relevant not just to the Ambassador to the U.N., but other senior officials in other agencies.

Q All right. Thank you.

A Okay.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q Okay. So I think we're going to shift our focus now to a more narrow timeframe and just turn our attention to the attacks that

occurred in Benghazi, Libya.

Can you just describe for us when you first learned about the attacks and how you came to know that information?

A So you're talking about -- there were a lot of attacks in Libya. Are you talking about --

Q Specifically the attacks on the U.S. facility in Benghazi.

A Okay. Okay. So if I recall correctly, I learned about it in the, you know, late afternoon, early evening of that day.

Q "Of that day" being September 11th?

A Correct.

Q And how did you come to learn about it?

A I don't recall specifically, you know, where the information came from.

Q And as you just mentioned, there were other events that occurred in Benghazi, Libya, prior to September 11th. And were you made aware of those events prior to September 11th? So, for instance, there were certainly security incidents that occurred in June and July of 2011.

A Uh-huh.

Q Would you have been made aware of those incidents?

A It would have been very likely that I was. I don't, again, have specific recollections. But as a general matter in a country where there's a lot of focus, there's a U.N. presence, you know, we tried to be oriented so that that kind of information got to us fairly quickly.

Q How would that type of information get to you?

A So we would either -- a number of different ways. We might hear about something from the U.N. directly in New York, and then our team would, you know, our folks up in New York would hear about it and let us know. We might hear about it from colleagues in the State Department. USUN doesn't have anyone outside of New York and Washington. So we're really reliant on, you know, either other arms of our government or open source to learn about, you know, events like that overseas.

Q In your role as deputy, did you have access to finished intel products?

A Yes.

Q And was that access directly -- did you have direct access to it or were you briefed on those products? What was your access? Can you kind of describe what your access was and how you came to that information?

Mr. Evers. And obviously to the extent that you can answer in this setting.

Mr. [REDACTED]. Yeah. So get into more detail, I assume, this afternoon. But I received it primarily through a daily morning intelligence brief.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q Okay. And was that briefing, if you can describe in this setting, was that briefing provided by your staff or someone else out of your staff?

A It was provided by an intelligence -- someone from the intelligence community.

Q Was that briefing kind of tailored to the USUN's interests or was that a broad briefing about events that may impact -- that were impacting the areas of, say, for example, for Libya. Would that have just been related to information that would be relevant to the USUN's mission or would that have been a broader detailed briefing?

A Generally speaking, it was tailored to my interests. I was the consumer of the product, you know, the binder that was put together. So, you know, it evolved over time as sort of my priorities shifted.

On the question of Libya, you know, over time I saw a range of intelligence. Again, coming back to the point I made about the kind of role the U.N. had, it touched on security. It touched on political. It touched on a range of issues.

Q When you were made aware of a security incident that occurred in Libya, would that have been a -- would you have been made aware of that through these briefings or would you have been -- you mentioned that you would sometimes hear it from New York, the office in New York, or you might hear it from other State colleagues. Can you kind of give a little more detail about how that information would have been relayed to you? Is this an email that's being passed? Were you receiving emails or updates from, like, the Ops Center? Or how did you come to have that information?

A It really varied. There was no one set way. I mean, I can recall -- without specifics, I can recall, you know, my staff coming

in and saying: Hey, we just heard X, Y, and Z, just wanted you to know. There were instances where information would come over email. It's sort of an all-of-the-above approach. So there was not any one particular conduit.

Q Did you have access to or did you receive information from the DS Command Center or the State Command Center?

A No, not directly.

Q Okay. So if you received that information, it would have been forwarded to you from someone who would have received it directly?

A If I had, yeah.

Q Were you able to receive briefings directly from the DS Command Center or the State Ops Center? Meaning, if you had a question about an event that was occurring and it was brought to your attention, did you have the capability to call or go down to the Ops Center and say: Hey, can you update me on this particular event?

A Yeah. It was always an option to reach out and ask for it. It was always an option.

Q So on the night of the attack, you indicated that you learned about the attack in the late evening. And I think you stated you can't recall specifically how you learned about the attack. Can you kind of walk us through what you did that evening as far as keeping Ambassador Rice updated on the events that were occurring?

A Uh-huh. So if I recall correctly, she was not in Washington, and I don't recall whether she was in New York or not at the time. But [REDACTED] covered Libya on my staff. Both he and I sought

to gather as much information which, over the course of the evening and into the next day, and for several days after, was fragmentary.

So, you know, I don't recall speaking with Ambassador Rice. I believe I sent one or more emails, as did [REDACTED], to her. But, again, it was a question of facts. What do we know? What's happened? You know, are there casualties?

Q In gathering the information that you and [REDACTED] sought to gather for Ambassador Rice, where did you seek the information? You mentioned that you had access to -- the capability of calling or going down to the DS Command Center or Ops Center and asking for updates. Did you in fact do that on the night --

A I didn't.

Q Okay. What did you do, what were the steps that you took to gather the information you provided to Ambassador Rice?

A Honestly, I don't recall specifically.

Q Okay.

A Both [REDACTED] and I, you know, reached out to folks that we thought might have it. [REDACTED] was as active, if not more, than me, since Libya was -- you know, it was one of -- you know, that was in his portfolio. But I don't have specific recollections of, you know, who I spoke to or who I reached out to.

Q Okay. So on the night of the attacks, can you describe what you recall about the events that had unfolded on the night of the attack? Just on September 11th, when you became aware of the event, what was your understanding of what occurred?

A I mean, it's difficult for me to put myself in the mindset of what I thought that night --

Q Okay.

A -- to be very honest. But, you know, my recollection is we received word of an attack severe enough that there was potential for loss of life among Americans and that, you know, effectively all of our capabilities are being mobilized to try to protect the Americans. And, you know, this is set in the context, remember, of incidents, protests, attacks at a number of U.S. facilities around -- particularly around the region. So we're already in a heightened state. And then we received this fragmentary information.

Q On the evening of the attacks, did you participate in any interagency calls or any interagency meetings regarding what was occurring?

A That evening?

Q Yes.

A Not that I recall of, no.

Q Okay. So you sought to -- you and Mr. ██████ sought to gather information regarding the attacks, and you sent some emails to Ambassador Rice to keep her updated, and that's happening the evening of the 11th. Can you walk us through the steps that you took on -- the actions that you took to keep Ambassador Rice updated on the morning of the 12th and throughout that day?

A Yeah. I mean, I don't recall specifics --

Q Right.

A -- in terms of what I might have done when. If I recall correctly, there was action in the Security Council to condemn the attack the next day. So that would have been -- you know, that's something that USUN would have been the lead on in terms of working that through the Security Council. So that would have required engagement with the USUN team, you know, particularly in New York, because they're the ones who are on the front lines of getting something like that through.

Q Did you participate in any interagency meetings regarding the events that had occurred the night before and through the morning of the 12th? Do you recall?

A I assume I did. I mean, something like this would have triggered a desire to have the interagency around a table to share information. But, you know, it's hard for me, you know, in my job as the deputy, just to step out of sort of this particular question for a second, you know, over the course of 3 years I attended hundreds and hundreds of meetings, phone calls. So it's very difficult for me to zero in on a specific one. But that would have been the logical thing to have happened the next day.

Ms. Clarke. Okay. We're getting close to our hour, and I think some of the information or documents that I'd like to show you related to kind of the information that you were receiving are classified. And so I think what we'll do right now is go off the record and we'll turn it over to our colleagues and see what they would like to do, if they would like to proceed in this setting for now.

Mr. Evers. Why don't we take a 5 minute --

Ms. Sawyer. Sure.

Mr. Evers. Do you guys have unclassified questions, or do you want to --

Ms. Sawyer. Yes. We do have some questions for this space, and then we'll have some in the classified session.

Mr. Evers. Does that work?

Mr. Missakian. Sorry. I didn't hear.

Mr. Evers. So we're going to take a 5-minute break. They have some unclassified questions. And then we can talk about how to proceed after that.

Mr. Missakian. Sure.

[Recess.]

Mr. Desai. Let's go back on the record. The time is approximately 11:04.

Mr. ■■■, good morning. To reintroduce myself, I'm Ronak Desai. I'm one of the counsels with the minority staff. I'm joined by my colleagues here today, Heather Sawyer and Daniel Rebnord. And on behalf of the entire minority staff and its members, we want to thank you again for your appearance here today. We also want to thank you for your service to our country.

There's a good chance we might get into some information that we discussed during the last hour. If we do retread some old ground, I apologize. It's just to make sure that we've fully captured your response and that we've gotten the information that we need.

EXAMINATION

BY MR. DESAI:

Q So to begin, just to clarify, one of the conversations you had with my colleague in the last hour was with respect to some of your roles and responsibilities as deputy ambassador. And I think one of the things that was discussed was that with respect to something like the Benghazi attacks, when an event happens and you're trying to apprise Ambassador Rice or Ambassador Power as to what happened, one thing that you would do, I think you said, is some fact collection and gathering to collect information and then pass that up. And one thing that I wanted to clarify is that when you say fact collection, you're not talking about doing, you know, reaching out to folks on the ground and doing first person fact collection and gathering to find out what happened and what folks on the ground are saying and those types of issues. Is that right?

A So, yes, that's right. It's more gathering information available to the U.S. Government. Again, it comes back to the fact that we have a small office in Washington, a presence in New York, and that's it. So we have -- we're reliant on other arms of the U.S. Government to get information.

And just to -- sorry. A small factual point. My title is deputy to the U.N. Ambassador.

Q Right.

A I'm not -- I don't carry the rank of ambassador.

Q Sure.

A Or I didn't at the time.

Q And when you said that you rely on other arms of the U.S. Government, it would be fair for me to think that you're talking about experts who are in fact responsible for doing this kind of fact collection and gathering on the ground and elsewhere, folks in the intelligence community, the FBI, and other similar entities. Is that right?

A Yes.

Q Okay. So you're not an analyst. You're not doing technical assessments of intelligence and things of that kind. Is that right?

A Correct.

Q Okay. Another topic that you discussed with my colleagues --

Mr. Desai. Please.

Ms. Sawyer. Go ahead.

BY MR. DESAI:

Q Another topic that you discussed with my colleagues in the last session, I think they asked you when you first heard about the Benghazi attack that happened on September 11th. And I think they also asked you about some other events and incidents that had taken place that day and maybe in the days preceding the attack.

One of those was an attack against our Embassy in Cairo, Egypt. Is that right?

A Yes. There had been an attack.

Q And do you recall what you learned about what had happened during that attack against our Embassy in Cairo that same day?

A I don't recall.

Q Would you have recalled that there was a protest there, that our walls at the Embassy had been breached, for example, and that protesters had gotten inside the compound in Cairo?

A Yes. That sounds consistent with -- you know, of what I think happened there, and there were incidents in other locations as well.

Q Do you remember where other --

A If memory serves, we had concerns about Khartoum, Tunisia, Egypt, as you mentioned, and then obviously Libya and Benghazi. There may have been others, but those are the ones that come to mind.

Q And it sounds like when these incidents occurred, you mentioned Khartoum, Tunisia, and obviously Egypt and Libya, it appears as if there was a very genuine and sincere concern about American personnel that are in these areas in the region as unrest is erupting across the region. Is that right?

A That's right.

Q Okay. And I think one of the things you also discussed in the last session with my colleagues was that, you know, once incidents occur, for example, there might be deputies meetings. And I think what you had told us that you've sat in a hundred of these --

A Hundreds.

Q Hundreds throughout the course of your tenure. Probably

more phone calls. So in an instance where there is an incident in Cairo or there's other incidences around the world, you said it would be logical for there to be meetings of this nature to discuss with other, I think you called it, equity or stakeholders in the process. Is that right?

A Yes.

Q So meetings that may have occurred during this time period weren't just exclusively limited to Benghazi and what happened there. Is that right?

A That's correct.

Q Okay.

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q Do you recall, as you were hearing about the unrest, do you recall hearing about -- and the protests that were happening throughout the region -- what the potential cause of that unrest and those protests was?

A Well, yes. As a factual matter, we were trying to understand motivations, what is driving this. There was focus on the video that had angered many Muslims, but that was just one potential focus. But, yeah, we were trying to understand why this was happening, in addition to reacting to it to ensure the security and safety of Americans.

Q And in terms of trying to understand the motivation for the unrest, the goal there in terms of understanding the motivation as the events are unfolding, what is the goal? Is it to try to fashion an

appropriate response to help quell the unrest or is it for other reasons than that?

A I would say as a general matter understanding motivation is intended to inform what we do about a particular incident. It inform -- it helps you understand the nature of whether it's, you know, a threat or a challenge. And certainly in the case of concern about the lives of Americans, we wanted to understand, you know, whether this was -- whether what we had seen in particular places might replicate, might continue in those locations, and what kinds of tools would be most appropriate for the government to try to prevent any further attacks or protests or, you know, risk of loss of life.

Q So with those kind of stakes, I would imagine that everyone is doing their best job to get the question as to what the motivation is right as quickly as they can. Is that accurate?

A No, I think that's right. I mean, it's -- no greater sense of urgency than to ensure the lives of, you know, our folks, Americans, overseas, that there's no, my own personal view, no more important role for policymakers in the government is to ensure that when we send folks abroad that they're protected as much as we can.

Q So, again, you would imagine that the folks trying to -- who are charged with the responsibility to uncover as quickly as possible the source of the violence, protests, and unrest would be making their best effort to get it right as quickly as possible?

A Right. That's correct.

Mr. Desai. If I can shift focus here a little bit, Mr. [REDACTED], I

want to ask you some questions about the preparation that went behind Ambassador Rice's appearances on the Sunday morning talk shows --

Mr. [REDACTED]. Okay.

Mr. Desai. -- on September the 16th, I believe it was, of 2012. And in the 3-1/2 years since the Benghazi attacks occurred, I'm sure you're aware that there has been a significant amount of scrutiny focused on her appearances on those talk shows which took place about 5 days after the attacks occurred. And there have been some folks, even some Members of Congress, who have accused Ambassador Rice of intentionally misleading the public on what occurred and intentionally conveying inaccurate information about the attacks.

Now, the minority's obviously taken the view that these questions have been addressed in full and they've been addressed exhaustively in places like the House and Senate Permanent Intelligence Committees' bipartisan reports that address this issue. But the issue is still being pursued by some. So as a result, I think it's prudent for us just to ask some questions and gain some clarity on what happened.

So to guide our discussion, I'm going to enter into the record a document.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 1

Was marked for identification.]

Mr. Desai. And just to identify it for the record, this is an email chain that contains a host of information. Let me identify it first. It has document ID number C05415285. The very top of the document identifies this document from being from September the 14th,

2012.

And why don't we go off the record for just a couple minutes. That way I can give you the opportunity to spend a couple minutes reviewing it and then we can get into it.

[Discussion off the record.]

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

So as an initial matter, starting on page 1, the subject here is, "PREP CALL with Susan," Saturday at 4 p.m. eastern. And your name appears at the very top left-hand corner of the document, but I do not see your name anywhere in the recipient list of the email.

So have you seen this document before, recall seeing it during your time?

Mr. [REDACTED]. I recall seeing it. I saw this document after Susan had made her appearances. I learned about the document in the course of the effort to respond to congressional requests for documents. I was not aware of it prior to the -- her appearance and did not see it, you know, as part of the prep process.

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q So you saw this sometime after. Were you involved in the preparation of Ambassador Rice for the Sunday shows?

A I was.

Q Okay. But you had not seen this particular document.

A I did not.

Q Some of the other recipients on that recipient list, the two, and I believe if you look down below, I just want to direct your

attention to page 4. I think it's the same basic group of recipients.

A Okay.

Q Generally speaking, who does that group include? Are there folks from the USUN staff?

A There are -- so on the email on page 4, I recognize one USUN official, [REDACTED], in the same -- on the top email on page 1 in terms of the recipient list.

RPTR MCCONNELL

EDTR CRYSTAL

[11:17 a.m.]

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q And then with regard to the other folks, in general, where are those folks?

A So I'm not familiar with all of the names. But there are several names of individuals who work at the White House and some on the National Security Staff.

Q Okay. And were you involved at all in the scheduling of Ms. Rice for the shows, the request that she appear on behalf of the administration on the shows?

A The scheduling of them? No.

Q Yeah, the requests that she appear.

A No.

Q So do you know how that came to be?

A I don't recall specifically. I mean, my job in this prep process was really to focus on the broader substance of issues, policies, events that may come up, and how we explain what we are doing and what we know. So not the mechanic side I was involved in.

Q Okay. And so do you know the initial email on page 4 comes from -- looks like Dag Vega. Do you know who that individual is?

A I don't. I believe he works or did at the time work at the White House, but I don't know him.

Q Okay. And that email appears to include -- well, it says,

"Here are the promos," a description of what each of the shows --

A Right.

Q -- is intending to cover. Does that seem accurate? Is that what that is?

A That seems like an accurate description of the email, yes.

Q And did you have a sense, even though you hadn't seen this document, as to what was going to be covered in the shows that the Ambassador was going to appear on, on that Sunday?

A What I recall is that my own, you know, thinking and approach to it was largely focused on the Middle East; could face a range of topics. And then, you know, again, as I approached it there could have been Africa issues. You know, she covers -- the U.N. Ambassador covers the world. So you have to anticipate a range of topics coming up.

Q So that does certainly seem consistent with a promotional description. So if you just take a look, and I'll have you take a look first at page 5, which the bottom one starts with "FOX News Sunday." The way they are promoting it is, "Anti-U.S. protests are spreading across the Arab world days after a deadly attack on the consulate in Libya. What should the U.S. involvement be in the troubled region." So it does indicate there that it's a potentially broader focus on the Middle East in line with what you anticipated?

A I think that's an accurate description of this, yes.

Q So it wasn't your understanding going into it that the only thing that Ambassador Rice would be asked to speak about was Benghazi, was it?

A It was not my understanding that that was the only issue.

Q And that she might be and likely would be called upon to talk much more broadly about, certainly, the unrest within the region.

A Sure, yeah.

Q And the foreign policy implications of that unrest.

A Correct.

Q So just moving up on the email, I just wanted to ask, I understand you didn't see it until after the fact, but the top line comes from Ben Rhodes to the group of folks. What was Mr. Rhode's position at the time, if you could explain for us.

A I don't recall his exact title. He was effectively, you know, the strategic communications director, the most senior person for strategic communications on the National Security Staff, would be how I would have described his role at the time.

Q And given this was preparation for a number of shows that were happening on Sunday on behalf of someone appearing for the administration, would it have been unusual for Mr. Rhodes to be sending out an email with some guidance on what should be said on those shows?

A You know, I don't work -- my job is not communications, so it's hard for me to speak more generally in terms of how this worked between, you know, any one agency or multiple agencies and the White House in terms of what was done.

What I can say is, to your point earlier, part of the anticipation is that once you have a senior official on camera with a reporter, particularly on Sunday shows, you should expect that any issue could

come up and that you want your official to be prepped with, you know, public points as to how to talk about what, you know, the administration is doing on a range of issues.

So some document like this -- again, I don't know who wrote it -- would be very consistent with the kinds of material that Ambassador Rice would have received, and this would have been one of a number of documents provided to her.

Q So before we leave this exhibit, I just want to direct your attention, and as you have explained it, part of the goal in preparing Ambassador Rice for that Sunday show was to make sure that she was ready to answer a range of questions. So just directing your attention to that first page.

A Uh-huh.

Q And the top line there says, "Goals." And I just want to take a look briefly at those goals.

The first bullet says: "To convey that the United States is doing everything that we can to protect our people and facilities abroad."

That point, is that consistent with what your experience had been during that week? So this is Sunday. This is 5 days after. We have already talked about the fact that not only were there attacks in Benghazi, but the unrest throughout the region. Was that top line kind of factually consistent with what had been --

A Yes, I would say that's factually consistent.

Q And it is the top point, and you have already stressed with us the importance of helping keep personnel safe overseas. Would you

have agreed that that would be an important thing for the Ambassador to be able to convey to the public?

A Yes.

Q Now, the second bullet says, "To underscore that these protests are rooted in an Internet video, and not a broader failure of policy."

With regard to that, did that resonate with, does that kind of factually seem to resonate with what your experience had been that week with regard to what was happening throughout the region?

A Yeah. It's a little hard for me to answer because, you know, I didn't see this until after the fact. So what I can say is that at the time, you know, I wasn't -- on Friday or Saturday, I didn't react to this point because I never saw it then. But what I can say is that there was an intense focus on gathering facts to understand what had happened and our best ability to understand why it had happened. And that was a focus of our -- of the entire government.

And, you know, generally speaking, this point would have been consistent with my overall mindset at the time in terms of the information that was available to the U.S. Government and what the experts and analysts concluded from that limited body of information.

Mr. Desai. I think you had just told us a few minutes ago that it was your understanding that these shows were going to ask Ambassador Rice about topics that went beyond Benghazi and that it was more about the larger policy of the U.S. in the Middle East to questions about what our role was there, what our involvement was there. So given that

was your understanding and that was the case, I understand that you didn't see this document until after her appearances, would that second goal here be consistent with making sure that she can answer a large and broad set of questions regarding policies in the Middle East and U.S. involvement in that general --

Mr. [REDACTED]. Yes, I think that that analytic conclusion is correct.

Mr. Desai. Okay.

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q Okay. And then I think one last question before we leave this. You know, I have looked through it. We gave you an opportunity to look through it. The only thing that I saw in this document specific to Benghazi was on the second page. It speaks throughout more broadly and it even gets into issues with Iran that has nothing to do with -- well, were not related directly to the other topics. But on that second page, and I'll just direct your attention toward the bottom of page 2 --

A Okay.

Q -- it's in a question format, and I propose -- I suppose they were anticipating a question might be asked, and that question says, "What's your response to the Independent story that says we have intelligence 48 hours in advance of the Benghazi attack that was ignored? Was this an intelligence failure?" That's the question.

A Uh-huh.

Q The text underneath says, quote, "We are not aware of any actionable intelligence indicating that an attack on the U.S. Mission

in Benghazi was planned or imminent. The currently available information suggests that the demonstrations in Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by the protests at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and evolved into a direct assault against the U.S. consulate, and subsequently its annex." End quote.

Now, I understand you didn't see this document. But at the time did that, when you spoke with Ambassador Rice and helped prepare her, did those subjects come up, whether or not there was actionable intelligence in advance of the attack?

A I don't recall that specific question as part of a conversation with her, certainly, between me and her. I don't recall having that discrete conversation.

Q And do you recall, even setting aside whether you had a discrete conversation with her about it, do you recall whether you had an understanding of whether there had been actionable intelligence in advance of the attack, specifically?

A My recollection of my own impression of what we as the U.S. Government understood what had happened as of, you know, generally the date of this document, so Friday, is consistent with the language in the answer here.

Q Okay. And that would include the second sentence, which says, "The currently available information suggests that the demonstrations in Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by the protests at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and evolved into a direct assault against the U.S. Consulate and subsequently the annex"?

A That's correct.

Q And did you, when you saw this, you said you saw this document not on the 14th, but some time after, did you have an awareness at all of where that sentence, in particular, and that information came from?

A In this document? I don't. I didn't at the time and I don't.

Q And you don't even sitting here today?

A No.

BY MR. DESAI:

Q So at the time when you were preparing Ambassador Rice for her appearances on the Sunday talk shows, were you aware that around that same period, specifically the Friday before, that the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence had requested the intelligence community to formulate unclassified talking points that Members of Congress could use to talk about the Benghazi attacks?

A I became aware of it, yes.

Q And when was that?

A Over the course of, I would say, the Saturday, so the 15th.

Q Right. And you became aware Saturday. So it looks like the request was made from Congress to the intelligence community Friday, and then you became aware the next day.

So if I can enter another document into the record. I will mark this one as exhibit 2.

[█] Exhibit No. 2

Was marked for identification.]

Mr. Desai. So let's just go off the record for a minute or 2 just to give you the opportunity to review this document.

[Discussion off the record.]

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

BY MR. DESAI:

Q So this is a document, looking at page 1, it's an email. The top line says it's from [REDACTED] to yourself and [REDACTED]. To identify the document for the record, it is C05415286. It carries with it a date of September the 15th.

So if I can just direct your attention to the first page, to the middle portion. You write to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], "I'm going to email Jake on the Libya points [REDACTED] references below unless either of you are linked into this effort. Please let me know." End quote.

So just to confirm my understanding, these Libya points are the talking points that you and I just discussed a couple of minutes ago. Is that right?

A That's correct.

Q And in this you're conveying to Mr. [REDACTED] and Ms. [REDACTED] that you're going to reach out to Jake. That is Jake Sullivan, is that right?

A Yes.

Q And where was he working at the time?

A He was at the State Department, deputy chief of staff.

Q Okay. So you were going to reach out to him regarding these

talking points. [REDACTED], Ms. [REDACTED], responds to you saying, "Please do -- I have not reached out."

And if I can direct your attention to the very last page of the document, it says here, I know it's a little bit difficult to read because some of the markings have gotten in the way, but it appears to say, quote, "HPSCI request: Late this week CIA Director Petraeus gave the HPSCI a hot spots briefing and was asked for unclassified talking points that its members could use about incident in Benghazi."

Further down it says, "The first draft apparently seemed unsuitable (based on conversations on the SVTS and afterwards) because they seemed to encourage the reader to infer incorrectly that the CIA had warned about a specific attack on our embassy. On the SVTS, Morell noted that these points were not good and he had taken a heavy editing hand to them." End quote.

So that first sentence here about the request from HPSCI to then CIA Director Petraeus, that seems to confirm our understanding that the request for these talking points originated with the intelligence community. Is that right?

A I think that -- yes, that's right in terms of the readout.

Q Okay. And then later on when it says here that, "On the SVTS, Morell noted that these points were not good and that he had taken a heavy editing hand to them," who is Morell referring to, just for the record?

A That would be Michael Morell, CIA.

Q And what was his position at the time?

A I believe he was the deputy director.

Q Okay. So it appears as if he had then played a fairly significant role in taking the lead in formulating these talking points and then had taken what is referred to as a heavy editing hand to them. Is that right?

A I mean, that's a correct reading of the SVTS.

Q Okay.

A Just to clarify, this is a readout of a SVTS that I did not participate in.

Q And just for the record, what's a SVTS?

A It's a secure video teleconference.

Q Okay. And the one that's being referenced here, when did it take place, if you recall?

A I don't recall specifically. I believe it was 8 a.m. on Saturday based on the subject line on page 1.

Q Okay, and you did not participate in that SVTS?

A I did not.

Q Okay, great.

Ms. Sawyer. And then also just to be clear for the record, you also did not participate in the actual drafting of these particular talking points?

Mr. █. I had no role in the drafting or revising of the talking points.

Mr. Desai. And no one else in USUN did either?

Mr. █. That's correct.

Ms. Sawyer. And do you know, or are you aware to the extent either Mr. Sullivan or anyone else had any requests, if any requests, would you have known what they were about the talking points?

Mr. [REDACTED]. No.

Ms. Sawyer. So you didn't really have any visibility into who made whatever edits to the talking points were made?

Mr. [REDACTED]. No. I mean, contemporaneous with the process, no. I mean, a lot is in the public sphere now, but contemporaneous with the process, none.

Mr. Desai. I will now enter into the record another document that I'll mark as Exhibit 3.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 3

Was marked for identification.]

Mr. Desai. And we'll go off the record again for a couple of minutes to give you the opportunity to review it.

[Discussion off the record.]

Mr. Desai. Go back on the record.

BY MR. DESAI:

Q So looking at the top of this document, this is an email from Mr. Sullivan to yourself. It's dated September the 15th, 2012. It carries a document ID number of C05415290. And if just briefly, if I can direct your attention to the bottom of the document. I know there are a lot of redaction markings across this. But at the bottom of the document it appears that michaeljm sends this out to a host of individuals. It says, "Per the discussion at Deputies, here are the

revised TPs for HPSCI. Let me know what you think."

There appears two talking points underneath this. The first one which reads, quote, "The currently available information suggests that the demonstrations in Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by the protests at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and evolved into a direct assault against the U.S. Consulate and subsequently its annex. There are indications that extremists participated in the violent demonstrations." End quote. Mr. Rhodes then responds and says, "This is good by me."

Moving further up the chain, Mr. Sullivan then sends this, responds and says, "This looks good." He marks two small edits. "1. We call it 'the US mission' or the 'US diplomatic post' because it is not actually a Consulate. And, "2. There is a missing 'of.'" So the second edit appears to be a grammatical one of a missing word.

He then sends this chain to you. He forwards it, and he says, quote, "Check out the below. You and [REDACTED] should confirm with Ben that Susan can deploy tomorrow." End quote.

So in this document it appears that Mr. Sullivan has forwarded you talking points. Is that right?

A Uh-huh, yes.

Q And when he says, "You and [REDACTED] should confirm with Ben that Susan can deploy tomorrow," what was your understanding of what he meant there?

A That he meant that we should confirm that these are, indeed, the finalized points for Susan to draw from on the Sunday shows.

Q Very good. And just if I can direct your attention again to the bottom of the document, the first talking point here, which says, again, quote, "The currently available information suggests that the demonstrations in Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by the protests at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and evolved into a direct assault against the U.S. Consulate and subsequently its annex," end quote. That's the same language that we had seen in the "Goals" and "Top-lines" preparation materials that we looked at in exhibit 1, I believe. It was the second sentence of the third question of the document, if I'm not mistaken. That's the identical language. It appears as if this talking point had been a part of those preparation materials that was sent out on Friday. Is that correct?

A I think that's right. I haven't done a word-by-word comparison, but it certainly seems that that's the case.

Q Okay.

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q And then did you actually then go ahead and reach out to Ben Rhodes to ask him if it was appropriate for Ambassador Rice to use these talking points as parts of the preparation?

A I don't know if I did or if [REDACTED] did. I don't recall.

Q Do you recall whether there was an answer -- whether you used these talking points when you helped prepare Ambassador Rice for the talk shows?

A Well, they were -- again, I was not with Susan for her appearances. I actually was out of town. So I was neither in

Washington, nor with the Ambassador. This was done remotely. But the final points were provided to her in some form, presumably in written form.

Q Okay. And when you say the final points, you are talking about the points --

A I'm talking about the points --

Q -- that are reflected --

A I believe, yeah, down at the bottom.

Q Okay. And that second point there that we haven't focused on as much says, "This assessment may change as additional information is collected and analyzed and as currently available information continues to be evaluated." That point, that the assessment may change and that the collection and analysis of information is ongoing, was that a point that you discussed with Ambassador Rice as an important point to convey?

A Well, I mean, I don't have an explicit recollection of that. In part, it goes back to the point we were talking about earlier, that we were focused on a broader set of potential questions that she might get from the interviewers. But my recollection is also that when she was asked about this on the shows, she made a point in at least some of her interviews of highlighting the fact that we were still gathering information and that, you know, this is what we know right now and it may change.

Q And was that consistent with what your experience had been that week, that the assessment was still ongoing, that facts were still

being gathered from the best of your understanding --

A Correct.

Q -- that you were not the person responsible for the fact gathering?

A That's right. That was the general premise for a lot of our thinking.

Q And so was it your understanding that what Ambassador Rice was seeking to do was to convey to the American people and the world the best available information at the time?

A Yes, that was her approach and the approach of the government.

Q And with the understanding that that information might, as more facts developed, actually change?

A Correct.

Q And that is kind of the risk if you do go out to speak, understanding there might be very valid reasons to want to inform the public as to what you know, when you know it, even if it might change, but there is a risk that facts could change, is that right?

A You're right, there is a risk and balance that we have to strike.

Q And that the fact that an underlying fact may change is not indicative that there was an effort to mislead the public from the get-go, is that --

A There was no effort to mislead at all.

Q So everything in those talking points was consistent with

what, certainly, your personal belief and the belief of, as far as you understood it, the administration was at the time?

A Yes, it was consistent with what we were -- what, certainly, myself and someone like the Ambassador were being given as consumers, as policymakers of the information that the government, U.S. Government had collected from sources. So folks who provide the information and analyze it make judgments. We have policymakers. And as a policymaker and consumer, this was consistent with what we knew at the time.

Mr. Desai. And I think you just mentioned a couple of minutes ago that you do, in fact, recall Ambassador Rice saying on the various talk shows that this is the information that we have now, but this could change in the future as our assessments that are being provided by the IC and whomever else changes. Do you recall saying that?

Mr. [REDACTED]. That's correct.

Mr. Desai. Okay, very good. Now, obviously, after her appearances, as I mentioned at the outset of my questioning, a lot of scrutiny was placed on what she said and there was a fairly robust discussion on what her intentions were and whether or not the information and the assessments had in fact changed.

So if I can enter into the record yet another document to help guide our discussion, and we are at exhibit 4, I believe.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 4

Was marked for identification.]

Ms. Sawyer. Yes.

Mr. Desai. And, again, we will go off the record for a couple of minutes just to give you the opportunity to review the document, which is a little bit longer than the others so far.

[Discussion off the record.]

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

BY MR. DESAI:

Q So this is a document, I'm looking at the very top of page 1, from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED]. She is forwarding it. You appear right underneath that, from yourself to Ambassador Rice. September 28th, 2012. This has a document ID of C05415305.

And I want to start at the bottom of the document, the end of the document, rather, on page 7, and I'm just going to briefly walk you through this just to help guide our discussion.

So it appears that someone, [REDACTED], forwarded an article from FOXNews.com to a whole slate of individuals. The article has a title, quote, "U.S. officials knew Libya attack was terrorism within 24 hours, sources confirm," end quote.

And effectively this article is alleging that the administration knew that the attack had been motivated by terrorism. And it further appears that this article reflects some of the criticisms that were being leveled against Ambassador Rice about the motivations of the attack and her intent with respect to the accuracy of the information that was being conveyed on the Sunday talk shows. Is that right?

A That's a fair description of it, yes.

Q And who is [REDACTED], just for the record? Do you recall?

A I don't know who he is.

Q Okay. So moving further up the chain, Robert Cardillo, if I'm pronouncing that correctly, forwards this to a host of folks. And do you know who that is?

A Robert is the senior official working for the DNI.

Q And what's the DNI, just for the record?

A Director of National Intelligence.

Q Okay. And so he is a member of the intelligence community, is that right?

A Yes.

Q And the other individuals on this, if you can identify them, are they also members of the intelligence community, the ones that -- if you can tell either by their email address or by their name?

A Which email are you talking about?

Q From Mr. Cardillo to -- still on the same -- he says, "I am fairly sure the answer is 'no.'"

A Oh, okay.

Q "And I've asked Matt and Nick to lay out on a timeline the evolution of our IC assessments from 12 September on."

A So Matt and Nick at the time were both intelligence officials as well.

Q Do you know with what agencies they were with at the time?

A They were -- I think it generally falls under the DNI, and they were part of the leadership for the National Counterterrorism Center, NCTC.

Q Okay. So we have here senior officials from the intelligence community discussing this and the accusation that's being leveled in the article. So if I can direct your attention to page 5 of the document, the "from" has been redacted from the notes from an @DNI.gov email address and he sends this out, or he or she sends this out to a host of individuals.

Quote, "NCTC has already made great progress in documenting the chronology of what we knew and what we published. My reading of that draft is that we can easily debunk Fox and refute the hits on Susan's statements on Sunday, 16 September. As I read the laydown, her comments were consistent with our intel assessments at the time." End quote.

I think you mentioned Denis McDonough was your counterpart as a deputy at the White House?

A Yes.

Q And this is also going to UCIA.gov, is a Central Intelligence Agency official, is that right?

A Yeah, someone with a UCIA.gov address received this.

Q Okay. And who was John Brennan at this time, if you recall?

A At the time he was a deputy national security advisor on the National Security Council.

Q Okay. So whoever this individual is at the DNI -- I'm sure we can figure it out -- this person seems to be expressly confirming that Ambassador Rice's comments were in fact consistent with the intelligence community's assessment of what had happened at that time.

Is that right?

A I think that's correct.

Q Okay. And then if I can direct your attention to page 2 of the document. So as we move up, it seems as though this goes through various email traffic with respect to how they want to respond. At a certain point it looks as if Ben Rhodes is added to the email chain, and there's some talk about a statement being put out to address this particular accusation.

On page 2, again, someone from NCTC.gov, their name has been redacted, says: We can draft a statement. "I just spoke to Robert and will loop in and Shawn Turner. I expect our statement to make these points: The IC's job is to follow the facts wherever they lead. This was a chaotic situation at the outset; we had more questions than answers as the event unfolded. Our collection has been limited and fragmentary. Our understanding of the attack has evolved as new information has become available. We have taken care to be precise about the facts and about what we knew and did not know. At every opportunity, we have reported these facts based on the developing intelligence."

So does the information that's being conveyed in these particular bullet points reflect your understanding of how this all evolved at the time, that this was evolving and that her comments, in fact, did reflect the IC's assessment at that time?

A Yes, that's a correct characterization.

Q And now I'm going to move to the very first page of the

document. At the bottom of that page there seems to be a draft statement here and, "It includes the following key point about our assessment." Quote, "Our understanding and analysis of the events of September 11 has evolved as new information has become available over the last 17 days. In the immediate aftermath of the attack, there was information that led us to assess that the attack began spontaneously following a protest earlier that day at our embassy in Cairo. As we learned more about the attack, our initial assessment shifted." End quote.

So that again also reflects this idea that as information was coming in, the facts have changed, the assessments were changing as well. Is that right?

A Yes.

Q And this is an idea that I think we explored in one of the earlier exhibits, that was in talking point number two, that the assessments may change as information is changing. Is that right?

A Yes, that's correct.

Q Okay.

Now, at some point as a result it appears that the intelligence community changed their internal assessment of what happened. Is that right?

A Yes.

Q And do you recall when that internal assessment changed and when the IC did that?

A I don't have a specific memory of a date.

Q All right. So the exhibit we just looked at was dated September the 28th, I believe. Is that right?

A Yes.

Q And that seems -- I mean, that appears to be almost 2 weeks after Ambassador Rice first appeared on the Sunday talk shows. Is that correct?

A It was less than 2 weeks.

Q Yeah, about 12 days or so. And you mentioned that you do recall that the IC did, in fact, change their assessment as to what happened. Is that right? You just don't recall when they did that?

A Yeah.

Q Would September 24th sound at all familiar with respect to when they did that? Possible --

A Possibly. What I can say with certainty is, it was sometime after Susan appeared on the shows.

Q Okay. So, Mr. [REDACTED], at this point I want to shift focus again with the time that I have remaining. I have got about 7 to 10 minutes or so.

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q And before we do that, I just had one other question that you may or may not recall and we can talk about it later in the classified setting.

A Okay.

Q But around the same time as the Ambassador appeared, do you recall hearing that there had been some reports from the field that

there was not a protest in Benghazi prior to the attack on the temporary mission facility?

A We probably should go into this more afterwards, but I do recall hearing about those reports, but it was after the fact, again, those were post her appearance on the shows at some later date. I do recall that.

Q And do you recall hearing whether, when Mr. Morell was initially notified, whether or not that initial notification changed the intelligence community analysts' opinion?

A When Michael was notified of a field report that there was no protest, is that what you're asking?

Q Right. Whether that initial reporting immediately changed his assessment?

A I don't know. That's something that happened within the intelligence community. Again, as a policymaker, I have no insight, no direct role in that.

Q Okay. And you just don't have a recollection as to whether or not you were informed as to whether his initial notification had changed the underlying assessment?

A None.

BY MR. DESAI:

Q So what I'd like to do is ask you about a series of public allegations that have been made with respect to the Benghazi attack. And we understand that the committee is investigating looking into some of these public allegations, and as a result I have to ask you about

every single one of them. But by asking you about these allegations I do not want you to think that either I or any of the members or staff of the minority of the select committee believe that these specific allegations have any merit. And you will see that there's a handful of these allegations.

So the way I would like to proceed is, I will state what the allegation is, and I will ask you whether or not you have any evidence to support the allegation that is being made. And if you don't, we will move on to the next allegation until I'm at the end of my allegation list.

Is that fair?

A Uh-huh.

Q Do you have any questions?

A Nope.

Q Great.

It has been alleged that Secretary of State Clinton intentionally blocked military action on the night of the attacks. One Congressman has speculated that, quote, "Secretary Clinton told Leon Panetta to stand down," end quote, and this resulted in the Defense Department not sending more assets to help in Benghazi.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton ordered Secretary of Defense Panetta to stand down on the night of the attacks?

A No.

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

of the attacks?

A No.

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

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton was personally involved in providing specific 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 risks posed by Colonel Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for military operations in Libya in spring 2011. Do you have any evidence that Secretary of State Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risks posed by Colonel Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for military operations in Libya in spring 2011?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that that the U.S. Mission in Benghazi included transferring weapons to Syrian rebels or to other countries.

A bipartisan report issued by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence found that, quote, "The CIA was not collecting and

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

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

A No.

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

A No.

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

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

A No.

Q Putting aside whether you personally agree with the decision to delay temporarily or think it was the right decision, do you have any evidence that there was a bad or improper reason behind the temporary delay of the CIA security personnel who departed the Annex

to assist the Special Mission Compound?

A No.

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

A No.

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

A No.

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

A No.

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

Do you have any evidence that CIA Deputy Director Mike Morell gave

false or intentionally misleading testimony to Congress about the Benghazi talking points?

A No.

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

A No.

Q It has been alleged that Ambassador Susan Rice made an intentional misrepresentation when she spoke on the Sunday talk shows about the Benghazi attacks.

Do you have any evidence that Ambassador Rice intentionally misrepresented facts about the Benghazi attacks on the Sunday talk shows?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that the President of the United States was virtually AWOL as Commander in Chief on the night of the attacks and that he was missing in action.

Do you have any evidence to support the allegation that the President was virtually AWOL as Commander in Chief or missing in action on the night of the attacks?

A No.

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

provide security and medical assistance in their current location. A Republican staff report issued by the House Armed Services Committee found that, quote, "There was no stand-down order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi," end quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict the conclusion of the Republican House Armed Services Committee that there was no stand-down order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi?

A No.

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

Do you have any evidence to contradict Chairman McKeon's conclusion?

A No.

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

A No.

Q With that, I think we're done. We can go off the record.

[Recess.]

Ms. Clarke. We can go back on the record. We are back on the record and the time is 12:49. This is continuing our discussion in an unclassified setting, and when we finish this discussion, we will proceed to a classified setting?

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q Mr. ■■■, I just wanted to follow up with you regarding some of the discussion that we had in the last hour regarding the prep that Ambassador Rice received prior to her appearances on the Sunday talk shows on September 16th, 2012. And I know that you stated that you were not in town that weekend. But I just had a few other questions for you, and so if you can answer them that would be great. If not, I understand.

We took a look at, in the last hour, at exhibit 1.

A Okay.

Q Which was a series of top line points that were being discussed. The subject matter, the subject of that email is "RE: PREP CALL with Susan; Saturday at 4:00 p.m." And I'm not sure if you answered this question the last hour, but did you participate in that phone call?

A I did.

Q Okay. And do you recall who the other participants were?

A I recall some, but not all of them. We had ■■■ on from USUN. And Ben Rhodes was on. ■■■, who was one of my

staff, was on the email -- or on the phone call. There were others. I just -- I don't recall who they were. Those are the ones that I remember.

Q Okay. Do you recall -- so you said Ben Rhodes. Were there any individuals, other than the USUN individual, were there any other people from the State Department that participated in that call?

A There were no State Department people.

Q Do you recall if there were additional individuals from the White House that participated?

A Yes, there were.

Q But you just don't recall their names?

A I don't know who they were.

Mr. Evers. Do not talk over one another.

Mr. [REDACTED]. I'm sorry.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q And during that call -- look at exhibit 2. So the call is scheduled for Saturday at 4, which would be the next day, correct, on September 15th?

A Yes.

Q And so exhibits 2 and 3, we looked at those previously, and there was a discussion about the talking points. It appears that on exhibit 3, you received the talking points that were drafted by the intelligence community at around 2:45, so prior to this phone call, correct?

A So you're right on when I received them. I don't recall

when the conference call happened.

Q Okay.

A So it was sometime in the afternoon on Saturday, but I don't know if it was for earlier or later. Schedules shift.

Q Understood. Do you recall during that conference call whether you specifically discussed these talking points?

A I don't recall specifically. The broader focus of the conference call was on the range of topics that were likely to come up. We did briefly discuss the attacks in Benghazi. I recall that. I don't recall specifically that these specific points came up in the prep call. So I'm not saying they didn't, I'm not saying they did. I don't recall.

Q I'm going to mark -- I think we're up to exhibit 5.

[█ Exhibit No. 5

Was marked for identification.]

Ms. Clarke. And we'll just go off the record for a moment while you take time to review this.

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q Okay, we can go back on the record.

So I've introduced as exhibit 5, it's an email, which I note that you are not on. This email chain begins with an email from Matthew Olsen. It's dated September 15th, 2012, at 11:15 a.m. And if you look at the first email in this chain and the second email in this chain, they appear to be the same emails that are included in the chain that

you are on, on exhibit 3.

A Well, I was forwarded the email chain.

Q Yes. But on the email chain that you were forwarded, the first two emails, the one from Michael Morell and the one from Ben Rhodes, also appear to be the same ones on exhibit 5?

A Yes.

Q And as I mentioned, you were not on this email, but this email is a response by Michael Olsen regarding the talking points. He says, "Michael -- This looks good to me" -- I'm sorry, it's by Matt Olsen -- he says, "Michael -- This looks good to me." And he goes on and lists talking points that ODNI sent to Representative Ruppertsberger yesterday afternoon based on his request.

During your discussion on the 15th, where you talked a little bit about the talking points, do you recall if there was a discussion about these talking points that were sent to Representative Ruppertsberger?

A No, I have no recollection of any conversation about this longer set of points.

Q And had you seen these talking points previously?

A Previous to now.

Q Today, yeah.

A I have seen them -- I have seen them previously, but it was after -- it was not during the prep, it was after Susan's appearance on the Sunday shows.

Q And do you recall when in time you saw these talking points?

A I don't. No.

Q Was it close in time or was it later on?

A No, ~~no~~^{not} close in time -- I define close in time as within a few days of it. It was not within a few days.

Q Within a few weeks?

A Perhaps within a few weeks. I really don't. I mean other than -- you know, it was not something that came out in the immediate aftermath of her appearance.

Q Do you recall how you became aware of these talking points?

A I don't.

Q I think in the previous hour you discussed that you -- I think you mentioned that you were not aware of how Susan Rice, Ambassador Rice became -- was selected or the decision was made for her to do the Sunday shows. Is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q Do you recall when you were notified that she was, when in time were you made aware that she was actually going to appear on the shows?

A My recollection is a little hazy. It would have been no earlier than, you know, like the Friday before. It was relatively short in time between when I understood that she had agreed to do it and Sunday.

Q Okay. And how did you become aware of the fact that she was going to be on the shows? Do you recall?

A I don't recall specifically. I would assume it would have been from another member of the USUN team that advised me that this

is happening.

Q You said that you were not in town that weekend, and so some of the participation that you had in her prep was done remotely, correct?

A Uh-huh.

Q Do you recall, was [REDACTED] the person who was with Susan Rice when she was appearing on the shows, or what was -- can you describe your knowledge of [REDACTED] role in the prep?

A So [REDACTED] position was as communications director in USUN. So she was the senior press comms person for our team, for the Ambassador. She would have had lead responsibility for this set of appearances as she would have for any significant appearance in the press. Was she with the Ambassador that weekend? I don't know. I don't recall. But it was, you know, this was her area of responsibility.

Q Do you know if Ambassador Rice met with Secretary Clinton on the Friday before the talk shows?

A I don't recall.

Q Do you know -- as far as the shows, Ambassador Rice appeared on five shows and they typically air within a short timeframe of each other. Were any of those shows taped the night before, to your knowledge?

A I don't remember. They may well have been, but I don't recall the mechanics of when she did which show.

Q Turning back to exhibit 1, I had another follow-up

question. I think in the last hour you were asked, because your name appears at the top --

A Uh-huh.

Q -- you were asked whether you received this email, and you stated that you did receive it subsequent to the sent date in preparation for gathering docs to be provided to Congress and that during that process you became aware of this email. Do you recall how you became aware of this email?

A I received it from [REDACTED]. I mean, she was the one -- she was the recipient of the email, so she provided it to me.

Q Okay.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q Mr. [REDACTED], I'm just going to ask you some additional follow-up questions?

A Sure.

Q Bear with me. I'm just going to flip through my notes.

A Sure.

Q Going back to the day of September 11th, I think you testified earlier or stated earlier that you heard about the attacks in Benghazi sometime late afternoon, early evening. Is that correct?

A Uh-huh, that's my recollection.

Q Okay. As best as you can recall, had you heard about the protests in Cairo prior to hearing about the attack in Benghazi?

A I believe I had. But, you know, it's a general -- it's a general recognition of sequencing. But I don't have a specific time

on when I learned about that either.

Q Okay. So as you sit here today, you can't in your mind say whether or not you heard about the protest before or after you heard about the attack in Benghazi?

A I'm sorry, repeat.

Q I'm sorry, let me withdraw that and rephrase it. So as you sit here today --

A Yeah.

Q -- can you say whether or not you heard about the protests in Cairo before or after you heard about the attacks in Benghazi?

A I believe my general recognition is learning about the incidents in Cairo first.

Q Okay. What do you recall hearing about the incidents in Cairo?

A That there were protests outside of our Embassy and they appeared to be in some way related to the video which was causing anger throughout the Muslim world. Beyond that, it's hard to recall.

Q Okay, thank you. And focusing again on September 11th, let's just establish this: When did you leave the office on September 11th, if you recall?

A Craig, I don't remember.

Q Okay. Was it early into the morning on September 12th?

A No, it wasn't that late. But it was late in the evening.

Q Okay. Fair enough. And at any time during the time you first heard about the attacks in Benghazi and when you left that night,

did you hear of any information to suggest there was a connection between what had occurred in Cairo and what had occurred in Benghazi?

A No, I don't have any recollection of the two. The focus really was on understanding the facts of what was going on at our facilities in Benghazi.

Q And as you sit here today, can you distinguish the facts you learned about what was going on in Benghazi on September 11th versus what you may have heard later in that week? In other words, I mean, does anything stand out about what you learned the night of the attack versus what you may have learned in the days that followed?

A You know, other than that there was an attack and there were indications that grew stronger over the course of that evening and into the next morning that there were American casualties and likely Americans dead, I mean that's what stands out in my mind, was a growing deepening fear that we had lost Americans.

Q And now kind of expanding the timeframe to go from the night of the attacks through, say, that Saturday, September 15th. At any point during that time did you receive information that suggested there was a connection between the protests in Cairo and the attacks in Benghazi?

A I mean, my recollection is the points say, that were developed, you know, the information that our government had, that was, again, provided certainly to USUN consumers, suggested, you know, some indication of some tie, a tie that was not fully understood but some tie between the two.

Q Okay. Let's do it that way. Let's zero in a little bit. I think you were referring to a statement that appears a couple of times. Let's start with exhibit 1. On page 2, do you have that in front of you?

A Yeah.

Q There's a question down towards the bottom, and I'll read the question. It says, "What's your response to the Independent story that says we have intelligence 48 hours in advance of the Benghazi attack that was ignored? Was this an intelligence failure? "

And then there's a proposed response, and I'll read that into the record as well. "We are not aware of any actionable intelligence indicating that an attack on the U.S. Mission in Benghazi was planned or imminent. The currently available information suggests that the demonstrations in Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by the protests at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and evolved into a direct assault against the US Consulate and subsequently its annex." And I believe that you stated a couple of times that the information you had at the time was consistent with the statement that I just read.

A Yes.

Q So what I'm trying to do is try to get an idea of exactly what information you had available to you at the time that led you to conclude that that information that you had was consistent with this statement. So as best you can, put yourself back into that timeframe, September 11th through September 15th, and tell us what information you had available to you that was consistent with this statement in

exhibit 1?

A Sure. Okay. So I'll start by saying I don't recall a specific intelligence product, you know, as a classified document that I could point to. I would say that, as I mentioned earlier, you know, I received a daily intelligence book that was a compilation of material both -- you know, of all sorts of intelligence material. And it certainly would have been the case that on Wednesday the 12th, Thursday the 13th, Friday the 14th, my book would have included whatever available intelligence, whether it was finished or unfinished, that would be appropriate for a relatively senior policymaker to receive, would have been included. That's at least what I was hoping for.

But I don't -- I only know what I am able to have access to from the intelligence community. But I can't point to a specific document. I don't recall seeing something on the Wednesday or Thursday that I could pull out other than, you know, I would consume intelligence at least on a daily basis in the morning based on what was available for policymakers.

Q Okay. So other than the intelligence information you may have been receiving, either in your daily briefings or through some other source, was there any other information that was available to you that you can recall that you believe to be consistent with the statement that I read from exhibit 1?

A I don't -- I think the answer to your question, other sorts of information that I can recall that would be underlying for this statement here, I don't recall receiving, you know, whether it was from

the State Department or others, I don't recall specific information. I mean, again, you know, it's hard to underscore as a consumer of this, we are, you know, reliant on knowing and receiving what our intelligence community judged. You know, we are not analysts.

Q Sure. I'm not asking you to pass judgment on the quality of the information. I'm really trying to get at, you stated that the information you had available to you was consistent with the statement in exhibit 1. I just want you to tell me as best you can, as best you can recall, what information you had available at the time that led you to reach that conclusion. It sounds like it's the intelligence information that you were receiving as a consumer of intelligence information.

A That's right.

Q Okay. That's fair.

Now, the conclusion that have drawn, the information you received from the intelligence community at the time was consistent with the statements in exhibit 1, when did you draw that conclusion? For example, you could have drawn it today, when you looked at this statement and you made that conclusion in your mind today. Or you could have drawn that conclusion at some point in the past. When was it?

A I mean, I guess, struggling a little bit with the question, what I would say is, you know, in the moment of time, we would have conversations at a classified level about what's going on. The question is not, is that -- it's really a question of, okay, if at, you know, a fully classified level this is what we know, this box, which

would be in my binder of intel material, it's, okay, what part of that can you say publicly? What part of that can you explain publicly? And that's a task for the intelligence community to decide, okay, based on this all-source assessment, here is what we can extract from that and make it public.

Again, we rely on the intel community to ensure that there are two sides of the same coin. One is classified, one is unclassified. But they're both intended to say the same -- as much of the same thing as possible.

Q I think I understand that, maybe it was just my bad question. But the conclusion you have drawn, that the statement here in exhibit 1 was consistent with the information you had at the time, is that a conclusion you drew for the first time today or did you draw that conclusion prior to today?

A Yeah. I wouldn't call it a conclusion. I'd call it an assumption that the folks who are responsible for providing both the classified judgment and then, based on that classified judgment, the complementary unclassified judgment, are doing their job correctly. So I, you know, assume that it's, you know, one and the same thing but just intended to be handled in different ways because one is classified and one is unclassified.

Q Do you recall there being any difference between the classified material you were receiving and the unclassified statements about the same information that were being made publicly?

A I don't. I don't recall any differences.

Q At any point in time between the night of the attacks and September 15th, do you recall receiving information that there was an actual protest in Benghazi prior to the attacks on the consulate?

A Say that again. There was --

Q Right. During that time period from September 11th to September 15th, 2012, did you receive any information that there was a protest that preceded the attacks on the U.S. facilities in Benghazi?

A I would say that I received analytic material from our intelligence community, whether it was written or verbal I don't recall, but it's reflected again in the talking points which we talked about, that the judgment at the time was that it was a protest that spontaneous -- that, you know, evolved into an attack, that that was the judgment based on the currently available information again. So contemporaneous with that, you know, in that timeframe.

Q Okay. So other than that?

A Just, yeah, I don't have -- like, USUN does not have independent sources, right, as I have said, you know, we rely on the intel community to provide us. So it was not as if I was out trying to corroborate or disprove something that I got from the intelligence community.

Q I understand you weren't out interviewing witnesses, but there might be other sources of information, potentially. For example, you may know people at the State Department still. You may even know people in the NEA department that covers Libya. So it's possible you could have picked up the phone -- I'm not suggesting you

did -- you could have picked up the phone and called somebody in that department to find out what was going on. So there could have been that avenue of information.

A Sure.

Q As opposed to the information you were getting from an intelligence source.

A Uh-huh.

Q So putting aside the intelligence sources for a minute.

A Yeah.

Q Did you have any other information that was coming to you in any form during that time period?

A Yeah, I mean there may well have been reports that I saw, either I received or my team received from various folks at State who were working with the folks, you know, the State Department folks who were working with the State Department people deployed in Libya. There may well have been.

I mean our office as a general matter, I mean we were physically housed in the State Department, a close relationship with State Department colleagues on a whole number of issues. So as a general matter, substantial amount of sharing of information, both what we have with them and what they have with us on any number of issues.

Q As you sit here today, you just can't recall any --

A I don't recall.

Q Sure.

A I mean, you know.

Q In your response to my colleague's questioning, I believe you said, correct me if I'm wrong, that there was some discussion about marshalling all of the U.S. capabilities or mobilizing all of the U.S. capabilities to protect Americans.

A Uh-huh.

Q Now, in your response, were you referring to military capabilities?

A I was speaking more generically. You know, the deep motivation and desire of senior folks is to make sure that we do everything possible to protect Americans.

Q Now, one of my colleagues had asked you a question about the U.S. military response to the attacks in Benghazi, and you testified or stated that you didn't have any information that the Secretary gave a stand-down order or anything like that. Do you have an understanding of any discussions concerning the use of the U.S. military to go into Benghazi?

A No, I don't. I was not involved in any way in any of those discussions.

Q Coming back to the night of September 11th, we have seen an indication that there was a SVTS around 7, 7:30 that night. Do you recall participating in that? And to give you a little bit of context, I think the Secretary of State herself may have participated in that call, if that helps.

A I don't recall, no.

Q This may seem like I'm jumping around a little bit. I'm

just going through my notes.

A That's okay.

Q Back to exhibit 1, I believe you said that [REDACTED] sent you this document and it looks like you must have printed it out from your account. Is that fair?

A That's right.

Q Did you have a conversation with Ms. [REDACTED] about the document or about the production to Congress in general?

A The only conversation I recall having with her is calling her up and saying, "Hey, what do you have?" and she forwarded me this document. That's it. It wasn't a substantive conversation.

Q Were you the point person for producing documents to Congress? Is that why it was coming to you? Was she sending it to you? In other words, why were you involved in the production of the document that she had?

A Well, it was -- so, you know, there's a request for material related to this. I don't remember the exact parameters of the request. And I, you know, others in the office, [REDACTED] and a few others up in New York, were pulling together documents. And I don't remember the exact genesis for why I called her to ask, you know, what relevant documents, I do have a recollection of the phone call.

Q And also, on exhibit 1, I believe you were asked a question about bullet number two under the heading "Goals"?

A Uh-huh.

Q And I'll read it into the record. It says, "To underscore

that these protests are rooted in an Internet video, and not a broader failure of policy."

You were asked some questions that suggested to me that you have an understanding of what Mr. Rhodes meant when he wrote that. Is that true? I mean do you have an understanding of what he was referring to there? And if so, what is that understanding based upon?

A So I think what we talked about was that even though I didn't have this in front of me in the prep process for Susan, our approach to preparing her for the appearance was to anticipate questions that she might get asked in the context not just of the events in Benghazi, but the broader uprising and violence against American facilities we were seeing.

And it's in that context in my mind that when the point that you highlight says "these protests," it's a reference to the larger question and series of incidents that we faced that appeared to be motivated in a number of different cities by this video. That's the basis for saying I have a sense of the thrust of that talking point.

Q And have you ever had a conversation with Mr. Rhodes about his email, or about that bullet, or the talking points in general?

A No.

Q Have you ever had a conversation with Mr. Rhodes about the attacks in Benghazi?

A I don't recall. You know, I may have. But I really don't recall.

Q That's fine. Have you had a conversation with anybody

about the contents of this document?

A No.

Q Going back to the prep session with Susan Rice prior to her appearances on the talk shows, you have been asked some questions about that. I just want to fill out some additional details.

First off, how long did that prep session go?

A It was somewhere between 30 minutes and an hour, would be my general recollection.

Q Okay. And I believe you said that the Benghazi portion of this discussion was very short.

A It was -- yes, it was one part of the discussion. I don't know if I used the words very short. What I would mean to imply is it was certainly not -- it didn't feature prominently, it was one element of the broader conversation we had.

Q Yeah. I think the word you used was "briefly" discussed?

A Yeah. I think briefly is probably more accurate. It was very short.

Q Which surprised me a little bit, because obviously Benghazi was a big part of that week. Did you anticipate that that would be a focus of the talk shows? I mean certainly that was suggested, I think, by some of the promos?

A Yeah, I think we -- again, we thought it was going to be -- it would certainly come up. But, you know, would also remind the broader context. I mean, this is -- we were facing incidents across the region more broadly in the Muslim world. Certainly, the loss of life in

Benghazi as we got the facts made it rise in importance, but we did not anticipate it to be the sole issue that could come up. And, again, our responsibility for a senior official is to have her prepped on everything.

Q And as best you can sitting here today, and I know it's been -- a little time has passed, tell us what was said and who said it during that conversation, whether you can recall generally or specifically.

A I really don't have very many specific recollections. You know, my -- I was not the lead on this call. You know, this is really for -- to prep her for what she says publicly. So I was far more in listening mode, and really it is hard for me to recall, honestly, you know, 3 or 4 years ago.

Q You don't recall anything that was said by anybody?

A You know, did [REDACTED] speak? Yes.

Q Uh-huh.

A Did Ben speak? Yes. Do I remember exact thrusts of what each of them said? I don't.

Q It doesn't have to be exact. If you recall generally the sense, do you have a sense of what Ben Rhodes said during that call?

A I mean, you know, I would say, you know, what's in this document, exhibit 1, in terms of top-line points, generally, you know, to my recollection, are consistent with kind of the tenor of the call in terms of how we thought we should frame up, you know, we're recommending to Ambassador Rice that she frame up the issues. But I

really don't have -- I just don't recall specifics.

Q Okay. And, again, I don't want you to get hung up on whether you recall exact language or not. I'm really just kind of looking for your best recollection. If it's a general sense of what was said, that's fine. But take us through it a little bit, the mechanics of one of these prep sessions. Does somebody pretend to be an interviewer and ask the Ambassador questions and then she responds? I mean how does that work?

A Sure. So it was generally more of a conversation. And I believe [REDACTED] in her role as the Ambassador's communications director kicked off the call, you know, but it wasn't a murder board, for example, over a phone call. It was more of a conversation of topics that might come up and, you know, an exchange between Ambassador Rice and folks on the phone. So it wasn't -- it was much more free flowing.

Q Do you recall if any documents were circulated prior to the call?

A I don't.

Q Would that have been typical?

A Would what have been typical?

Q You know, as part of preparing the Ambassador for whatever she was being prepared for --

A Sure.

Q -- would somebody have prepared a document that would be sent to her that she could use as reference material or talking points, as we have seen in exhibit 1, something like that?

A I think the standard process would be for any event for the Ambassador, she'd get some paper briefing material. In this case the material probably consisted largely of unclassified points. Whether it was drawn from previous statements by senior officials or working talking points within the administration on particular issues, this is an example of something, you know, that's along those lines. You know, as a general matter, when dealing with reporters or the press, you know, you typically do things in a question-and-answer format.

So she would have gotten some level of material, but that wouldn't have been the responsibility of me or my office. That's, you know, the communications shop pulls together those things when it's a question of her appearance before the press in any way.

Q Would you have received a copy of those documents?

A It would have varied. In this case, I didn't, in part just because of the geographics of it. I mean I was, you know, not in Washington and not with her.

Q Okay. And I believe you said that the goal at the time as far as Ambassador Rice was concerned was to convey to the American people the best available information known at the time. Is that fair?

A Uh-huh.

Q So her job was not necessarily to, you know, parrot what was in the talking points, whether it be exhibit 1 or the HPSCI talking points, but to convey to the American people the best information that was known at the time. Is that fair?

A Yeah. Yeah, it is.

Q Prior to the talk show appearances by Ambassador Rice, did you have any conversations with Jake Sullivan about the attacks in Benghazi or the fact that Ambassador Rice was going to appear on the talk shows?

A Well, we talked about the email exchanges.

Q Right. I knew there were some email exchanges, but did you have any --

A We had phone conversations.

Q -- face-to-face or phone conversations?

A Between the attack and then Susan going on the shows on Sunday morning?

Q Yes.

A You know, I may well have. I don't recall a specific conversation. So I'm not, again, saying it didn't happen. I certainly don't -- I don't have a discrete memory of one particular phone call or hallway conversation or conversation, you know, sit-down meeting.

Q Okay. Did you have conversation with anybody after the Ambassador appeared on the talk shows about what she had said on those talk shows?

A You want to time bound that? Because if it's unbounded, then sure. I mean it's a pretty large public record of the controversy around what she said. So, yeah, I had conversations, but if you're asking me over a discrete time period it's harder for me.

Q No, my question really wasn't time bound. So who have you

had conversations with about the controversy that followed in the wake of her appearances on the talk shows?

A Oh, I couldn't give you an exhaustive list. I mean talked to Ambassador Rice. Talked to, you know, various people within USUN.

Q Okay. Maybe I can help you to break it down a little bit. Let's start with Ambassador Rice. When was the first time you had a conversation with her about her appearance on the talk shows and the controversy that followed?

A I don't recall. I mean I had multiple, but I don't recall the first conversation.

Q What can you recall about the content of any of those conversations?

A We discussed certainly over the course of conversations ensuring that what she actually said on the shows was consistent with the points that we had been provided by the intelligence community. So that was certainly a topic of conversation. Over the course of time, so I'm not pointing to one particular conversation but over the course of time, as we have talked about in exhibit 4, I spoke with her about the evolution of the intelligence community's assessment as we understood kind of how the IC shifted its judgments. So that was, you know, another major point of conversation.

Q Okay. Moving -- anybody in the State Department that you had a similar conversation with?

A You know, I don't -- again, I don't recall specific conversations. My colleagues in the State Department, the senior

people that I worked with, you know, Jake, the deputy secretary, you know, Bill Burns, Wendy Sherman, I mean these are the people that I worked with on a daily basis on a range of issues. Do I recall discrete conversations with them about Susan's appearance on the talking show? No.

Q That's fair. What do you recall generally about your conversations with Bill Burns or Wendy Sherman, for example?

A I mean it would have been topics along the lines of what I discussed with Susan. Was she accurate based on the material that was provided to us as part of the prep, how do we understand what the IC, how the IC has evolved its judgments over time, you know, and just seeking to ensure -- I mean just talking about that.

Q Would that have been the same conversation with Jake Sullivan? You mentioned you may have had conversations with him as well.

A Could well have been.

Q But, you know, as you sit here today, you just can't recall?

A I just don't recall. I mean I don't -- yeah.

Q What about anybody in the White House or the National Security Staff?

A Again, you know, I probably had conversations about this topic with, you know, Denis McDonough, the deputy national security advisor at the time. I don't recall others, you know, on the NSC staff. But to sort of set it in context, my recollection is those conversations, you know, ones with the NSC officials were, you know,

less than what I'd -- were just less in scope, less in frequency than others with State, within USUN.

Voice. Can we take a second break here?

Mr. Missakian. Sure.

[Recess.]

RPTR KERR

EDTR ROSEN

[1:35 p.m.]

Mr. Missakian. I don't think I have any additional questions.

Ms. Sawyer. We didn't want to make it overly not worth your time, so we did have just a few additional questions, so we are back on the record.

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q Mr. ■■■, thank you again for your time, and I had a few more questions before we move into the classified phase.

I feel that during the entire day you have worked hard to help us understand the context within which the Benghazi attacks occurred, what was happening that day, that week, even really the week after. It came up again in just this last hour of questions.

So I wanted to share with you, just briefly, a couple of documents. I'm going give you both simultaneously. One, because the top document is just to refresh your recollection as to how the second document came about --

A Okay.

Q Because I know it's been 3-1/2 years, if my math is correct. So what number are we on?

Ms. Clarke. Exhibit 6.

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q Okay. So I'm going to mark for identification purposes

these documents as exhibit 6 and 7.

[█ Exhibit Nos. 6 and 7
Were marked for identification.]

Mr. Evers. Which one is 6? Is that 49?

Mr. Missakian. 6 is 49.

Mr. Evers. Thank you.

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q So before you dive into them, I'm going to give you a couple of minutes to look at them. Just for purposes of identification, the one that we've marked as exhibit 6 bears the identification number SCB0052749, one, two, four-page document. The top email has you as the sender, and it's sent on Wednesday, September 19, and then what I was going to focus on with you is kind of that first email that starts on the bottom of page -- the second to last page also from you.

And then for identification purposes, exhibit 7 bears the identification number SCB0052811. It's a six-page document. I believe, and I'll ask you to confirm that document 7 is the ALDAC referenced in the email chains that are in --

A Okay.

Q -- document 6, but we'll go off the record, and I'll give you a chance to take a look.

[Discussion off of the record.]

Ms. Sawyer. We can go back on the record.

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q So turning your attention just to exhibit 6. I believe

that's the document with Bates -- with the identification number 52749. And the second to last page down at the very bottom, it's an email from you to Jacob Sullivan, who we've talking about earlier today as being at the State Department, and looks like some other folks within, including Mr. Burns, I think whose name --

A He's on there.

Q -- came up. And it has a message below that says, quote, "Following yesterday's meeting on messaging, [REDACTED] and I talked just now about sending a cable to posts around the world asking ambassadors to go in this week to urge that their, cap, UNGA speeches include a condemnation of violence. We could use the core messages paper that we discussed in yesterday's meeting as the basis for the cable. Thoughts?"

Do you recall, having seen this document, why you -- you suggested that? It seemed to me, as a potential example, you explained to us in the first hour how your shop's role was to find ways in which U.N. could support important U.S. policy objectives. This, to me, seemed an example of that, but I wanted to get your sense of what you were trying to accomplish here.

A I think that's generally right. I mean -- I mean, I'll say I don't -- it's hard for me to recall this specific little activity on the 19th, but the general -- the broader point is, you know, every year, usually the third week in September there's a high level week at the U.N. where heads of State come into New York around the world for UNGA, so in my message, "their UNGA speeches" is a reference to

statements by other heads of State at the U.N. General Assembly, that third week. You know, our President typically goes up for a brief period of time, so it's a big deal, and you have the biggest gathering of heads of State in any given year.

The attack that happened a week prior, we're looking at UNGA happening, you know, probably starting the next Monday, so I can hear the conversation, you know, even though I don't recall it specifically, I can hear myself having a conversation with [REDACTED] where we talk and what we should -- what can we do, what can USUN and states do to have countries, when they come to New York, and have their heads of State speak, speak out against this kind of violence, and that's the thrust of this effort.

Q And then there's some additional, you know, back and forth up the chain, and this chain ends with you again sending a message. It looks at this point as if, based on your message, my main reaction to the ALDAC. Can you first explain what an ALDAC is?

A Yeah, an ALDAC is -- so the State Department has embassies and posts around the world, and one of the ways that the State Department formally communicates with their post is through a cable, so it's a, you know, formal process where some document -- and this is the example of a cable gets transmitted. An ALDAC is a cable that is sent by the State Department to all diplomatic -- I think it stands for All Diplomatic and Consular posts.

Q Throughout the world?

A Throughout the world. So this -- this message here,

exhibit 7, would have gone, effectively, to every single diplomatic post that we have around the world.

Q So I think you answered one of my questions, which is the second exhibit that I had given you, exhibit 7, is the cable, the ALDAC that came out of this discussion?

A That would seem to be the case, yes.

Q And you, on that second page, are -- it shows, among the many other recipients it went --

A Right.

Q -- throughout the world. On the second page it says, USUN/W: R --

A That's me.

Q So you did also receive this?

A So that's just -- sorry to be bureaucratic about it. That list of people at the top is intended to reflect who cleared on it.

Q Great. So all of those individuals would have seen this, had the opportunity to comment on this, and ultimately --

A In theory, that's the case. And in this one, you know, clearly I read it since, you know, the exhibit 6. I can't speak for every single other person on that clearance line whether they personally read it or they had some staff member read it. I mean, most of these folks here are fairly senior front office people for the different bureaus.

Q Okay. And in that summary on the first page, just to draw your attention to that, it leads with, "The widespread violence across

the Middle East and the Muslim world, directed at U.S. and other diplomatic posts, threatens our ability and the ability of other nations to conduct effective diplomacy, and thus to ensure peaceful relations between nations. The upcoming opening of the United Nations General Assembly in New York is an opportunity for the collective nations of the world to reaffirm their commitment to avoiding violence in response to speech and to the sanctity of diplomatic posts."

So seeing that summary, does that, again, reflect the experience that you had from the day of the attack through the ensuing weeks about the unrest throughout the region?

A Yeah. I mean, that's consistent with -- yes.

Q And the desire here is to help quell ongoing unrest and speak against it?

A Yes. Yes, broadly speaking, and achieving that objective that you just described by urging other countries, other leaders, other governments to join us in speaking out against this kind of violence.

Q And the background references in what's number 3 down there, provides kind of a what's happened to date. It says, "Since September 11, 2012, there have been widespread protests and violence against U.S. and some other diplomatic posts across the Muslim world. The proximate cause of the violence was the release by individuals in the United States of the video trailer for a film that many Muslims find offensive. Diplomatic compounds have been breached in several countries, including Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen. In Benghazi, Libya, four U.S. personnel were killed in the violence, including the

U.S. Ambassador to Libya, J. Christopher Stevens."

So there, there's a discussion, in particular, of the video. What was your sense about -- and again, in the context of the unrest, what the desire and need to actually talk about the video was?

A Say that -- what's the question again?

Q My question is, that specifically references that the cause of the unrest throughout the region, the proximate cause, it says, is the video trailer for a film that many Muslims find offensive. Why, in particular, was there a need to talk about and mention the film?

A Well, I think the film featured prominently in discourse around the world in terms of evaluating what had happened outside our facility, what was happening, you know, the protest, the attacks, but also it's a question of -- it's reflected a little further down, freedom of speech, and some governments -- we -- the U.S. Government is fairly confident, would seek to take steps that we weren't prepared to take given our view on the freedom of speech.

So as we -- you know, this cable is intended to try to appeal to as broad a set of governments as possible to join us in how we talk about what's going on, and so the most straightforward way is to take on the issues that we knew would be on their minds, and you know, certainly, at this time, our judgment in terms of the broader dynamics that were driving the broader set of incidents that we were looking at, the video seemed to be relevant as a driver.

Q And so one of the -- is it fair to say one of the interests of the United States certainly would be to not quell free speech. At

the same time, and if you take a look at page 4 in the "Talking Points," the second tickle down -- trickle down says, "The United States Government had absolutely nothing to do with the video that sparked recent protests around the world against U.S. and other diplomatic missions."

Was it your understanding that part of the goal here was also to make clear that to the extent the video had caused anger, that people understood that the United States was not responsible for --

A For the video.

Q -- that video?

A Correct. I don't see the point. I'm sorry.

Q It's on page --

A Still page 3.

Q Flips -- bears the mark number --

A Right.

Q -- down at the bottom, 52814?

A Right, right.

Q And to the extent there was that effort made, was it your understanding that there was a sincere concern that given the risk of ongoing violence, that there was a need to do that to try to distance the U.S. to help protect our people at least?

A Very much so.

Q And there is a reference within this very document to the risk of ongoing protests, right, on page 2, number 4. It's marked "Sensitive But Unclassified"?

A Yes.

Q "Protests are continuing this week, and we anticipate a fresh surge of protests against U.S. and other diplomatic posts this Friday, September 21st." It goes on to mention some additional materials that may be offensive.

So if you could help us explain, both to our members and the American people. I mean, there have been many questions about why did the government continue the talk about a video, and because the focus has always been so narrow on Benghazi or protests, not even just a video, but why did they continue to talk about protests? Why did they continue to talk about this video? This cable seems to be that there's a juggling of very serious concerns about the safety of our personnel overseas, ongoing protests.

Can you just try, as best you can, explain to us so that we can finally explain to Members of Congress and the American people why, in this context, there was the need to talk about this, the protests, and talk about the video in relation to the protests?

A So, you know, in Muslim countries, the Friday morning prayer is the most significant weekly religious event; and often, when there are -- when sentiment is inflamed, you see a spike in violence on Fridays, and this is a reference to the fact that we had ongoing concern about views of the United States which fed, in part, by the video, and that we are coming up on another Friday.

I don't recall specifically the French weekly magazine cartoon, but, you know, reading the paragraph you highlighted, the thought

process is there is yet potentially another incident that could be explosive in Islamic societies as it relates to the United States or to western countries. And there remained, fundamentally, concerns about the security of Americans, particularly in Muslim countries, particularly in embassies where there may have -- where the security of our compound may present, you know, potentially more vulnerability to some kind of protest or other incident.

Q So this cable and discussion of protests and discussion of the video were not an effort to spin a particular political narrative?

A No.

Q Were they an effort to conceal the facts about, in particular, what had happened in Benghazi?

A No.

Q Were they an effort to avoid embarrassment for the administration with regard to what in particular had happened in Benghazi?

A No.

Q Just returning briefly to exhibit 1. That is a document, and that's the document that we started with. My colleague asked you some questions about in their last round. It's also a document that has been called by Judicial Watch, among others, as a smoking gun with regard to supposed evidence that there was a concerted effort to mislead the public about what happened in Benghazi. Do you believe this document is a smoking-gun document that shows that?

A I do not.

Q And why do you not think that this is a smoking gun?

A Well, I know we talked about this previously. Again, reading the document now and when I saw it subsequent to the fact and trying to put myself in the context of September 11, that week leading up to Susan's appearance, it is generally consistent with our approach, our understanding, factual understanding of what had happened, and reflective of the broader questions that were very front and center in policymakers' minds about safety and security of Americans across a large portion of the world.

Q Well, thank you. I think that concludes the questions that we had as follow-up to the last hour, so --

Mr. Missakian. Just a couple of follow-up questions.

BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

Q With regard to exhibit No. 7.

A Yeah.

Q Did you take any part in drafting the cable that is the attachment to exhibit 7?

A I don't recall any drafting part. That would not have been my role.

Q And the top of page 2 it says, "Drafted By."

A Uh-huh.

Q "S/P: JSullivan." Does that mean that Jake Sullivan drafted the cable?

A In theory, yes, it does, but if you were to look at the -- you know, I read through this exhibit 6, it would seem that someone on

his -- you know, his staff drafted it.

Q Okay. Help me out here. What are you looking at on exhibit 6 that would suggest that?

A So [REDACTED], which I guess this is page 2, bottom half.

Q Yes, I see that.

A [REDACTED].

Q Uh-huh.

A [REDACTED] works -- worked at the time for Jake.

Q Did you have any conversations with either Ms. [REDACTED], with Jake Sullivan, or with anyone else on Jake Sullivan's staff about the content or the purpose behind the statement contained in the cable that is part of exhibit 7?

A You know, I don't recall specific phone calls. I mean, clearly, I suggested the whole process, but I don't have a recollection of then sort of -- you know, a conversation where I went through in nitty gritty detail of, you know, what it should say. Frankly, part of my desire in -- I mean, in why I would send an email like this is the State Department is a very big organization. They've got a lot of people that can draft and clear and develop. You know, I've got a staff of five covering the world, so this would have been something where I, you know, collaborate with State and hopefully piggyback on the fact that they are a much, much larger organization.

Q And you were asked some questions about the motive of the drafter of the cable, and I think you were asked something to the effect

was it the motive of the drafter to draft this cable in a way that would mislead somebody about what had occurred either in Benghazi or in the broader region. And I'm just trying to understand your basis for understanding the motive of the drafter and the reasons why certain statements were put in.

A So I would say that -- I wouldn't say the motive of the drafter. I would say the intent of the cable.

Q Okay. So you understand that distinction?

A Uh-huh.

Q Okay. And the intent of the cable was based on your original email, that suggestion?

A Right.

Q Okay. Thank you.

Ms. Clarke. I think that concludes all of our questions in the unclassified setting. I just have a couple of classified questions. I don't know if it will take long.

Mr. Evers. Can we do a 5-minute break?

Ms. Clarke. Yeah, that's fine.

[Whereupon, at 2:08 p.m., the committee proceeded in closed session.]

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 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</u>
77	2	Replaced "No, no, close in time" with "No, not close in time."

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SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI,

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U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

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WASHINGTON, D.C.

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INTERVIEW OF:



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Tuesday, August 25

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Washington, D.C.

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The interview in the above matter was held in HVC-302,

23

Capitol Visitor Center, commencing at 2:10 p.m.

24

25

1 Appearances:

2

3

4

5 For the SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI:

6

7 CRAIG MISSAKIAN, DEPUTY CHIEF COUNSEL

8 SHERIA CLARKE, COUNSEL

9 HEATHER SAWYER, MINORITY CHIEF COUNSEL

10 PETER KENNY, MINORITY SENIOR COUNSEL

11 RONAK DESAI, MINORITY COUNSEL

12 DANIEL REBNORD, MINORITY PROFESSIONAL STAFF

13

14 For the U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE:

15

16 AUSTIN EVERS, SENIOR ADVISOR

17

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19

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25

1 Ms. Clarke. So we're back on the record. I would note
2 for the record that we are now in a classified setting. We
3 are proceeding at a secret level. The information that we
4 have appears to be at a secret level. The witness, if there
5 is any information that you believe in your testimony would
6 go above that level, notify us of that information.
7 Otherwise, we'll proceed at the secret level.

8 So I just have a couple of documents I wanted to show
9 you that were marked as classified, and these relate to some
10 of the topics that we have talked about today. We're on
11 exhibit 8.

12 [REDACTED] Exhibit No. 8

13 was marked for identification.]

14 Ms. Clarke. So I'll give you a moment to look at this,
15 and we'll have a discussion about it.

16 And I'm going to go ahead and mark exhibit 9, because
17 I'll have questions about this one as well, that you can take
18 a look at.

19 [REDACTED] Exhibit No. 9

20 was marked for identification.]

21 [Discussion off the record.]

22 Ms. Clarke. We can go back on the record.

23 EXAMINATION

24 BY MS. CLARKE:

25 Q So, Mr. [REDACTED] I've handed you what's been marked

1 exhibit 8, and for the record, it's identified as Doc No.
2 05415302. It's a document that has been marked as
3 "Confidential," and it's from [REDACTED] to you and other
4 individuals with USUN, and it appears to be summarizing a
5 SVTC that was chaired by Denis McDonough on the 16th. Did
6 you participate in that SVTC?

7 A I don't believe I did. I don't recall it. Again,
8 I was out of town that weekend.

9 Q What I wanted to focus on was near the bottom of
10 the first page. There's a discussion regarding Libya. And
11 the last bullet point states, "Morell is having his analysts
12 consider the disparate views of the field leadership."

13 Do you recall having a discussion with [REDACTED] about
14 what that bullet point was referring to?

15 A I don't recall a specific conversation. What I do
16 recall -- again, the dates are not precise in my memory -- is
17 that it emerged subsequent -- in subsequent -- over some
18 subsequent period. Certainly it emerged to me in my position
19 at USUN that the CIA was learning -- you know, we were
20 learning from the CIA that there were views of their folks in
21 the field.

22 Again, this is after Susan's appearance, but my approach
23 to that issue was that's an intelligence community issue. We
24 rely on the analysts, CIA and elsewhere, to take all source
25 information and render a judgment. So --

1 Q And do you recall what the disparate views of the
2 field were?

3 A At the time of this email?

4 Q Yes.

5 A I didn't know what they were at the time of the
6 email, other than the fact that there were disparate views.

7 Q Okay. You said that over the course of time,
8 during this timeframe and after Ambassador Rice's appearance
9 on the talk shows, that you began to learn that there were
10 different views. Do you recall what those -- what you
11 learned about the field leadership views regarding what
12 happened in Benghazi?

13 A One of the main issues centered around the question
14 of whether there was a protest outside of our facility in
15 Benghazi, and that in fact was one of the issues that where
16 the set of facts and then the judgments off those facts
17 evolved over time.

18 Q And do you recall specifically what the field, the
19 individuals in field thought about whether or not there was a
20 protest?

21 A You know, it's a little hard for me to
22 disaggregate. Again, a lot has been written, a lot has been
23 in the press on this question of who thought what, when. So
24 it's hard for me to disaggregate kind of what I thought.
25 But, you know, my recollection, my understanding is that part

1 of the issue was that the agency had folks on the ground who
2 felt there was no protest.

3 But, again, as a policymaker and as a consumer, the
4 desire -- you know, our role is to let the intelligence
5 community assemble the facts and render judgments on them.

6 So this was, you know, an emerging set of facts, and there
7 was a great desire by myself and other policymakers to know
8 whether that would change the intelligence community's
9 judgment.

10 Q So I would like to take a look at what has been
11 marked as exhibit 9, and for the record it's Doc No.
12 05415931. And this is a email that you sent to some
13 individuals regarding a SVTC that you participated in --

14 A Uh-huh.

15 Q -- on the 17th. And just -- can you, kind of as
16 background, when you're referring to the NSS SVTC, is that a
17 -- was that the same thing as the Deputies Committee meetings
18 we were talking about earlier. Describe what type of meeting
19 this was, if you can?

20 A Both of these exhibits, 8 and 9, that we're talking
21 about reflect the fact that, as we talked about, we had
22 widespread concerns about both incidents that had occurred
23 and potential incidents that were coming -- potentially
24 coming down the pike at our facilities. So there were
25 relatively frequent meetings convened by the White House that

1 brought a range of stakeholders from the interagency
2 together --

3 Q So were those --

4 A -- to discuss security. I don't recall the total
5 number. But, you know, the reality of today, taking
6 ourselves out of Libya for a second, is we have State
7 Department people, we have DOD people, we have FBI people, we
8 have intelligence community people, there are a range of
9 people at any given post around the world. And in many of
10 these posts there's heavy presence from other agencies, other
11 than the State Department.

12 So, you know, logical that the NSC in its coordinating
13 capacity convenes all of these stakeholders together to talk
14 about what's going on in each of these countries, what's our
15 body of information, and then what are each of the agencies
16 doing to ensure the safety and security of our personnel.

17 So, you know, you had senior people around the table and
18 on the screens. I can't give you a full list. I don't
19 recall it. There were a lot of interested parties. But they
20 were senior people from around the interagency, and we tick
21 through topics like this very frequently.

22 Q So your email, in the body of the email it says
23 "Susan," but I don't see her listed -- her email address

24 listed in the "to" or the "cc" line. And so when you say --

25 A The mechanical process, the way this worked, you

1 know, this is during the week, she's got a tremendous
2 schedule. So the woman I sent it to, [REDACTED], at
3 the time was the special assistant up in New York. Her job,
4 among others, was to receive information like this, print it
5 out, and, you know, compile it for the Ambassador.

6 Q And so you go on to talk about -- and I'll just you
7 quote. You said, "You should know that Michael Morell told
8 the group that the CIA has reviewed all field reporting from
9 his Stations (Tripoli and Benghazi) in Libya, and the CIA's
10 assessment of the attack on Benghazi is unchanged and
11 consistent with what you said on the shows yesterday. Morell
12 said explicitly that we have no/no indicators of
13 pre-planning. He said that the one new piece of raw
14 reporting that has been published in the last 24 hours about
15 possible foreknowledge of some Libyan officials does not/not
16 change this assessment."

17 A Uh-huh.

18 Q Can you kind of just walk us through that
19 discussion during this particular meeting that was convened
20 by the NSS.

21 A Uh-huh.

22 Q How did -- if you recall, who addressed the issue
23 regarding the CIA's field reporting? It seemed to be a
24 followon from the meeting that occurred the day before where
25 Morell said that he was going to have his analyst consider

1 the disparate needs of the field leadership. Can you just
2 walk us through what you recall about that conversation?

3 A I don't recall much of the conversation. I mean,
4 it comes back to the fact that I sat through hundreds of
5 these. So I really can't say much more than, you know, what
6 my readout reflects.

7 You know -- yeah. On that particular topic, I don't
8 have much more to recall. I mean, we had a sort of standard
9 agenda for this set of meetings, which was to go through all
10 the countries where there were concerns of vulnerabilities,
11 whether it was, you know, physical vulnerabilities of our
12 facilities or larger likelihood of potential protests. And
13 so, you know, both of these are very reflective of the kinds
14 of conversations we were having at the time.

15 But this particular issue of what Michael said about a
16 review, I really -- I don't -- I have really very little
17 recollection.

18 Q Based on what you -- your readout here, it seems
19 that there is some concern from perhaps Ambassador Rice or
20 someone was concerned about what she had said on the shows
21 the day before and whether they were consistent with the
22 intel that the CIA had at the time.

23 Do you recall having a discussion close in time to this
24 email with Ambassador Rice about the developing information
25 that the CIA had regarding whether or not there was a

1 protest?

2 A No, I don't recall. But, you know, it's a very
3 natural thing for her to focus in on. The judgment by any
4 official publicly about drivers for this incident at that
5 time were reliant on intelligence information. So if you
6 have a suggestion on Sunday that things might be shifting, if
7 I were Susan, I'd want to focus in on that as well, to
8 understand, well, are we in a different space on Monday than
9 we were on Saturday or Sunday morning? Very natural for her.
10 That's what I would want to do.

11 Ms. Clarke. I think those are all the questions I have.

12 Ms. Sawyer. What number are we up to?

13 Ms. Clarke. Ten.

14 [REDACTED] Exhibit No. 10

15 was marked for identification.]

16 EXAMINATION

17 BY MS. SAWYER:

18 Q So, Mr. [REDACTED] I'm going to show you what we've
19 marked as exhibit 10 for identification purposes. It's a
20 document that bears the identification number C05415807.
21 It's a two-page document. And it's an email chain between
22 you and Ambassador Rice with some other individuals on it. I
23 was going to ask you a couple of questions about that, so
24 I'll give you a moment to take a look.

25 So that document, the first email in the chain starts at

1 the bottom of page 1. It's an email from you. It's
2 addressed to Ambassador Rice and cc'ing some other
3 individuals, looks like, within the USUN staff. Is that
4 correct?

5 A Uh-huh, yes.

6 Q And that one bears the date and time of
7 September 12th at 3:49 p.m. So this would have been the day
8 after the attacks in Benghazi and the unrest and protests in
9 Cairo and elsewhere. Is that --

10 A Yes.

11 Q -- accurate? And do you recall whether this was
12 the first or if there had been other -- this doesn't have a
13 subject line. It's been redacted. But it says in the first
14 line of your email, "Susan -- below are the key points from
15 this afternoon's SVTC." That's S-V-T-C.

16 A Uh-huh.

17 Q Do you recall whether this was the first or if
18 there had been a prior meeting?

19 A I don't recall whether this was the first or the
20 prior.

21 Q But fair to say that this was pretty --

22 A It's pretty fast.

23 Q In the short aftermath of the attack.

24 A Yeah.

25 Q The first, I think, you know, four bullet points

1 there, it references Denis. I assume that's Denis McDonough?

2 A Yes.

3 Q And it sounds like he's giving an update as to the
4 status vis-a-vis Libya. So Tripoli, Benghazi.

5 A Yes.

6 Q And then that last bullet on the page says, "There
7 is real concern about the prospects for further violence,
8 particularly on Friday following the prayers (e.g., the MB in
9 Egypt has called for peaceful protests on Friday). NSS has
10 tasked an NSS/State gameplan for diplomatic outreach between
11 now and then to key countries to urge further statements of
12 calm and security support for our Embassies."

13 We've talked a fair amount about the unrest in the
14 region. Does that reflect the concerns that were being
15 expressed about the broad unrest --

16 A Yes.

17 Q -- and the steps that --

18 A Yes, and the particular concern about Fridays.

19 Q The upcoming Friday. And you explained that
20 earlier, that Fridays were a day of particular concern. It
21 sounds like there was concern on the first Friday following
22 the attack.

23 A Correct.

24 Q And as well on the next Friday.

25 A Correct.

1 Q So it wasn't something that had died down
2 immediately overnight.

3 A That's correct.

4 Q And this was an issue of ongoing concern and
5 ongoing discussion.

6 A That's correct.

7 Q The next page, the very top bullet point says,
8 "State is undertaking a further review on Embassies with
9 heightened risk to consider if further drawdowns are needed."

10 Do you recall the extent -- I think some of the other
11 documents that were just shown to you as exhibits, and we'll
12 return to them, indicate drawdowns, but there were actually
13 drawdowns occurring at embassies other than the embassy in
14 Cairo and in Libya. Is that --

15 A That's correct.

16 Q Now, the third bullet point says, "The IC is
17 working vigorously to gain more information on who attacked,
18 why, and whether there are AQ ties."

19 It's my understanding that "AQ" generally refers to Al
20 Qaeda. Would that have been your --

21 A Correct.

22 Q It goes on to say, "Right now, we still don't know
23 much except for uncorroborated information."

24 So that there, I think, reflects what you have been
25 telling us that the role, responsibility in determining who,

1 why, and whether there were particular ties fell to the
2 intelligence community.

3 A That's correct.

4 Q And as of the 12th, they were fully on that job,
5 and they had asserted that they were on that job.

6 A That's correct.

7 Q And the purpose of meeting in this, as you've
8 explained it, kind of interagency and getting the
9 stakeholders would have been to allow them to brief the other
10 parties as to their best assessments as they were developing?

11 A That would be one purpose for the meetings, yes,
12 from the IC perspective.

13 Q Great. It goes on to say in the next bullet point,
14 "NSS is continuing outreach in the U.S. to religious leaders
15 to encourage more statements disassociating themselves from
16 the anti-Islam videos."

17 What there would have been kind of the goal with regard
18 to outreach within the United States to religious leaders
19 about these videos?

20 A Well, it goes to the broader concern we have, that
21 the videos were inflammatory and that in some parts of the
22 world the United States more generally was being tied
23 directly to the videos, complicit in them, having helped
24 generate them. So the desire was to create voices inside the
25 United States, other than the U.S. Government, that might be

1 viewed as credible in terms of seeking to distance the U.S.
2 as a country from the videos.

3 Q And again, a desire to distance the U.S. and help
4 calm the unrest at base went to the security of our personnel
5 overseas.

6 A That's correct.

7 Q And in that next bullet point it says, "Per
8 standard practice, the FBI has the lead on investigations
9 regarding the deaths of AmCits. That has begun."

10 So do you recall -- it sounds here as if as of the day
11 after it was already clear through the interagency that the
12 FBI would be investigating the attacks.

13 A That's -- yes, that's reflective of that. I mean,
14 this is really far beyond the purview of the USUN, but as
15 participating in interagency meetings you'd hear reports from
16 other agencies as to things that are within their remit.
17 That's clearly within their remit, not ours.

18 Q Sure. And you were relaying that information to
19 Ambassador Rice so that she had the up-to-date information --

20 A Correct.

21 Q -- from the interagency as to where the government
22 stood.

23 A Correct.

24 Q Now, again, briefly, just returning to exhibit 8.

25 A Pardon?

1 Q Just returning to exhibit 8 --

2 A Eight.

3 Q -- for a moment, yes. And that was document with
4 an identification number at the bottom 5415302. It is the
5 summary of a SVTC on September 16th by [REDACTED]

6 A Yeah.

7 Q I think you've already said that you didn't attend
8 that particular, that [REDACTED] attended.

9 A I don't believe I did, right.

10 Q And he, similar to the note that you had sent, he's
11 providing a summary to keep both the Ambassador and the team
12 updated on what the interagency is saying about not just
13 Libya, because it's covered, but certainly other unrest in
14 the region. Is that the purpose of this?

15 A That's correct.

16 Q It indicates up at the top the SVTC was chaired by
17 Mr. McDonough, and it indicates a running time of about
18 2 hours and 15 minutes.

19 A Uh-huh.

20 Q So that's -- is that a -- that's a --

21 A That's long.

22 Q Yeah. It seemed to me like a long period of time.

23 A It's a long meeting.

24 Q So this was a pretty exhaustive overview of -- and
25 it indicates right there, the conversation first dealt with

1 countries of primary focus, and it lists one, two, three,
2 four, five, six -- at least seven. At the top of the next
3 page is a little -- seven different countries, Tunisia,
4 Sudan, Egypt, Yemen, Libya, Afghanistan, Pakistan. And there
5 is discussion within about particular steps are being taken.

6 You'll see that in Tunisia there's a drawdown underway.

7 There's also a drawdown under way in Sudan.

8 A Uh-huh.

9 Q There's concerns in Egypt about weapons that might
10 be used to target the Embassy. In Yemen, there's concern
11 because there has been the praising of the killing of the
12 Ambassador and the calling for more attacks on U.S.
13 diplomats. They mention Libya, and they say Tripoli was
14 described as calm. It is there that my colleague asked you
15 about the comment that Morell was having his analysts
16 consider the disparate views of the field leadership.

17 In addition to these countries of primary focus, there
18 is also a mention later, if you look on that second page,
19 page 2, of Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Ethiopia, and it says
20 "were briefly mentioned," as well as these other discussions.

21 So, again, just to make sure that we fully understand,
22 this seems to reflect that there was truly broad, serious
23 unrest in the region, and that was a major concern throughout
24 the interagency.

25 A Yes, that's a correct characterization.

1 Q And on that same exhibit that we were just talking
2 about, exhibit 8, the time stamp is, that Mr. [REDACTED] seems
3 to send the summary around, is 1:19 in the afternoon. That
4 16th is the day that Ambassador Rice appeared. So in all
5 likelihood, I would imagine this summary did not go out until
6 after she had appeared on the Sunday --

7 A I believe that's correct. I mean, my general
8 recollection is she was done and her interviews had aired by
9 mid-morning on Sunday.

10 Q And the meeting itself, do you happen to recall
11 when this meeting --

12 A I don't know when it occurred. I don't know.

13 Q -- that 2-hour meeting? And do you know whether or
14 not it referenced in there, as my colleague asked you about,
15 about Morell, meaning Deputy CIA Director Michael Morell, as
16 having his analysts consider the disparate views of the field
17 leadership, do you recall whether you had, prior to seeing
18 this at 1:19 or sometime after 1:19, that's when it was sent,
19 whether you had heard that there were disparate views of
20 field leadership?

21 A I have no recollection prior to this email.

22 Q Of having heard --

23 A Of having heard anything about disparate views.

24 Q And then just turning briefly to exhibit 9. Again,
25 it's a Document Identification No. 5415931, and that's the

1 summary that was provided by you, this time on the 17th.

2 A Uh-huh.

3 Q And, you know, that first paragraph indicates that
4 Mr. Morell had said explicitly -- well, that the CIA -- and
5 I'm just looking at the second full sentence.

6 A Okay.

7 Q "You should know that Michael Morell told the
8 group." And it goes on to say, "The CIA's assessment of the
9 attack on Benghazi is unchanged and consistent with what you
10 said on the shows yesterday."

11 So putting those two documents together, and given that
12 it was 3-1/2 years ago, to the best of your recollection, as
13 of the 16th, you were not aware that there was a disparate
14 view from field leadership, and then as of the 17th, the day
15 after, Mr. Morell had informed the interagency that that
16 fact, the disparate view had not changed their assessment as
17 of that point in time?

18 A That's correct.

19 Ms. Sawyer. Okay. If we could just go off the record,
20 just take a second, make sure we don't have anything else for
21 you.

22 [Discussion off the record.]

23 Ms. Sawyer. Okay. We can go back on.

24 So, Mr. [REDACTED] I think that's the end of the questions that
25 we had for you, you know, barring some additional questions

1 from our colleagues. You know, we thank you for your time and
2 your patience with our questions. We very much appreciate
3 your appearing before the committee voluntarily. So, you
4 know, thank you for that, and, again, as my colleague said at
5 ~~the outset, for your service, longstanding service to the~~
6 country.

7 Mr. [REDACTED] Thank you.

8 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

9 Q Just a few follow-up questions --

10 A Sure.

11 Q -- to exhibit No. 10.

12 A Okay.

13 Q Mr. [REDACTED] had you reviewed this document prior to
14 today?

15 A I don't think so. I mean, prior to today, meaning
16 any point since I sent it?

17 Q Yes.

18 A I may have seen it once or twice, you know, in the
19 course of pulling together material. I mean, I'm the one
20 that printed it out.

21 Q Okay. It's not something you reviewed to prepare
22 for your interview, for example?

23 A No.

24 Q Now, let's start at the very bottom, the email that
25 you sent on September 12th, 2012, at 3:49 p.m.

1 A Yeah.

2 Q This is meant to be a summary of the SVTC. Is that
3 correct?

4 A Yes.

5 ~~Q Now, having read through your summaries, do you~~
6 believe it, to the best of your recollection, to be an
7 accurate summary of what was said during that SVTC?

8 A I believe so.

9 Q Okay. As you sit here today, is there anything
10 that you would change or add or correct?

11 A No.

12 Q Now, would it have been your practice to take
13 handwritten notes during the SVTC and then translate them
14 into an email summary like we're looking at here?

15 A Sometimes yes, sometimes no. It really depended.

16 Q Would somebody else have been on the -- I assume
17 this was a video teleconference. Would there have been
18 someone else from your staff participating with you?

19 A Again, sometimes yes, sometimes no. It really
20 depended.

21 Q Do you recall one way or the other whether or not
22 anyone else participated with you on this particular video
23 teleconference?

24 A I don't. I don't recall.

25 Q Now, the statements that you've included in your

1 summary, is it fair to say that some of those could have come
2 from Mr. McDonough or other participants in the call?

3 A Yes. It was intended to be a summary of
4 discussion. It's certainly not intended to -- I didn't make
5 ~~most of these --- you know, these weren't my comments for the~~
6 most part. This was a summary of discussion.

7 Q As you sit here today, can you recall where any of
8 these specific comments came from?

9 A No. And in fact, you know, I hate to say it, I
10 mean, I don't even recall who was on the screens. I mean, it
11 says here Denis chaired it, which would have been logical,
12 but I couldn't tell you who from the other agencies
13 participated in this one SVTC.

14 Q Okay. Moving up to the email above that. This is
15 an email that you sent also on September 12th, 2012. Now
16 it's 7:21 p.m.

17 A Uh-huh.

18 Q To Susan Rice. I assume the "PC" referred to in
19 there refers to Principals Committee meeting?

20 A Yes, that's correct.

21 Q And I gather that Ms. Rice did not participate in
22 that Principals Committee meeting?

23 A That's right. I mean, I think this is accurate.
24 Presumably, I did in her stead.

25 Q Okay. Is that something -- is that a meeting she

1 would have normally taken part in?

2 A Yes.

3 Q Okay. Do you recall why she didn't take part in
4 this particular meeting?

5 ~~A I don't. I don't know where she was. To be more~~
6 accurate, I don't recall where she was.

7 Q And, sorry, dropping back down.

8 A Yes.

9 Q Did that meeting, the meeting you're summarizing in
10 the bottom email, was this a standing meeting or was this an
11 ad hoc meeting that was called specially, if you remember?

12 A Just to clarify, when you say standing meeting; you
13 mean something scheduled several days in advance or --

14 Q Right.

15 A My recollection and what I would assume is that
16 this was called, since the discussion was based on the
17 summary focused exclusively on Libya and the incidents in
18 Libya, that this was not standing insofar as it was scheduled
19 days in advance at the White House, or the NSC scheduled it
20 as a result of what had happened on the 11th.

21 Q And how soon after the meeting do you believe you
22 would have summarized it and sent out this email to
23 Ambassador Rice? I see it's sent as 3:49.

24 A Yeah. I think relatively quickly, given the topic.

25 Q Now, going back up to that next email. Beyond what

1 you've said in here, do you recall anything that was said on
2 the subject of the attacks or the perpetrators during the
3 Principals Committee meeting?

4 A I don't.

5 ~~Q Do you recall who participated in that meeting?~~

6 A I don't.

7 Q There's a sentence here where you say, quote,
8 "There are a few additional pieces of sensitive information
9 that I will convey when I see you tomorrow," end quote. What
10 information were you referring to?

11 A I don't recall.

12 Q If there had been notes taken during that
13 Principals Committee meeting, where would those notes reside?

14 A Great question. They've probably been destroyed
15 as, you know, classified information. You know, I'm no
16 longer in the position. I don't -- so honestly, I don't
17 recall --

18 Q Okay.

19 A -- what would have happened to these particular
20 notes.

21 Q All right. Thank you. I don't have any further
22 questions.

23 BY MS. SAWYER:

24 Q Can I, before we go, just ask you a question,
25 somewhat housekeeping --

1 A Of course.

2 Q -- question on this exhibit that we were just
3 looking at, which is exhibit 10.

4 A Uh-huh.

5 ~~Q These were summaries that you had done. You had~~
6 marked them originally unclassified. If you just look at
7 that document.

8 A Uh-huh.

9 Q And we were just talking about potential sensitive
10 information. You said, presumably, you take pains, as you're
11 creating these, and particularly if you mark them
12 unclassified, to do your best and make your best judgments
13 not to include classified information? Is that true?

14 A Correct.

15 Q So you certainly, at the time you sent this, would
16 not knowingly or willfully have been including classified
17 information in the summary that you were providing Ambassador
18 Rice?

19 A Correct.

20 Q And there's still a need at times to communicate on
21 -- I've heard the phrase "high side, low side" often -- on
22 the low side to be able to get information to, in this case,
23 your principal as quickly as possible?

24 A Correct.

25 Q Here is an example. You'll see on this document

1 there's a box in the email that my colleague was just asking
2 you about that indicates that someone else had determined
3 that a portion of what you had done they believed to be
4 potentially confidential, and they had marked it. Does that
5 ~~sometimes occur where someone else will review material~~
6 later, perhaps for FOIA purposes or some other purpose, and
7 come to a different determination than the originator may
8 have made?

9 A Honestly, I don't know. I don't -- I've never been
10 involved in any process like that.

11 Q So you're not aware of kind of how that came to be
12 --

13 A No.

14 Q -- in this particular instance?

15 And this communication that you were sending, this
16 summary that you were trying to provide to update Ms. Rice,
17 this was on an unclassified network?

18 A I believe so, based on the sort of markings of it.

19 Q Okay. And then in terms of -- first of all, I just
20 want to make clear. You are not even certain that you took
21 notes on this particular SVTC or any of these particular
22 SVTCs that we've talked about with you, right?

23 A Correct.

24 Q So you are not even convinced that there were any
25 notes at any point in time. Is that accurate?

1 A Correct.

2 Q And certainly you did not destroy those notes in
3 order to avoid giving them to anyone, they were -- to the
4 extent they even existed, they were destroyed just in the
5 normal course of

6 A The normal course of business, for no other intent.
7 Ms. Sawyer. Okay. I think that's all that I had as
8 follow-up. And, again, thank you.

9 Ms. Clarke. I just have one question.

10 Mr. [REDACTED] Okay.

11 BY MS. CLARKE:

12 Q On exhibit 10, I note that the second sentence, it
13 says: There are a few pieces of sensitive information that I
14 will convey when I see you tomorrow. And you're writing to
15 Ambassador Rice. Do you recall if you actually saw
16 Ambassador Rice on Thursday, September 13th?

17 A I don't.

18 Q Do you recall whether you traveled to New York
19 during this timeframe?

20 A I don't recall. I don't believe I did. So it
21 would more likely have been her coming down to Washington.
22 But I don't have a discrete recollection of seeing her on
23 Thursday the 13th.

24 Q And then, for the record, what does -- we've been
25 referring to SVTC. What does S-V-T-C stand for?

1 A So what I think it stands for, secure video
2 teleconference.

3 Q And so secure video teleconference, does that mean
4 that it's a classified teleconference?

5 A Correct.

6 Q And so your summary of the information that was
7 disclosed during that teleconference, you endeavored to try
8 to provide an unclassified summary of a classified meeting.
9 Is that correct?

10 A Correct.

11 Q But the information that was provided that was
12 classified was not something that you classified -- that you,
13 yourself, classified but was relayed to you by another agency
14 or another individual who would have designated it as
15 classified?

16 A Correct.

17 Ms. Clarke. I think those are all the questions I have.

18 Mr. █████ we just want to again thank you for your time.
19 I think those are all the questions that we have for today.
20 We appreciate your patience with us. And I thank you again
21 for your service.

22 Mr. █████ Okay. Thank you.

23 Mr. Evers. Thank you, everybody.

24 [Whereupon, at 2:55 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

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Certificate of Deponent/Interviewee

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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 did not respond to multiple contacts from the State Department requesting corrections to the accompanying transcript.
