

RPTR ZAMORA

EDTR SECKMAN

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

---

INTERVIEW OF: JEFFREY DAVID FELTMAN

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2015

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held in Room HVC-205,  
Capitol Visitor Center, commencing at 8:30 a.m.

Present: Representative Gowdy.

Appearances:

For the SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI:

SHARON JACKSON, DEPUTY CHIEF COUNSEL

KIM BETZ, MEMBER OUTREACH LIAISON

SUSANNE SACHSMAN GROOMS, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR/GENERAL COUNSEL

PETER KENNY, MINORITY SENIOR COUNSEL

RONAK DESAI, MINORITY COUNSEL

ERIN O'BRIEN, MINORITY DETAILEE

For the U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE:

ERIC SNYDER, SENIOR COUNSEL

LAURA DECK, ATTORNEY-ADVISED

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

Ambassador Feltman, could you give us your name, please, for the record.

Mr. Feltman. Jeffrey David Feltman.

Ms. Jackson. And, Ambassador Feltman, please accept our thanks for being here today and your appearance before this interview.

I've introduced myself before but, again, I'm Sharon Jackson, and I am with the committee's majority staff.

And then we'll have everyone go around the table and introduce themselves for the record. You are accompanied here today by --

Mr. Snyder. Eric Snyder, State Department.

Ms. Deck. Laura Deck, State Department.

Ms. O'Brien. Erin O'Brien, minority staff.

Mr. Desai. Ronak Desai, minority staff.

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

Ms. Betz. Kim Betz with the majority staff.

Ms. Jackson. Before we begin -- we'll see who's knocking on the door. We just did the introductions, sir, could you introduce

yourself?

Mr. Kenny. Peter Kenny, minority staff.

Ms. Jackson. Before we begin, I'd like to go over the ground rules and explain how the interview will proceed. The way the questioning proceeds is that a member from the majority will ask questions for up to an hour, and then the minority staff will have an opportunity to ask questions for an equal period of time if they choose. We generally adhere to this 1-hour time limit to each side. We've made some adjustments in the past, but we generally go back and forth an hour at a time.

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

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

Members and staff of the committee, however, are not permitted to raise objections when the other side is asking questions. This is not an issue that we really encounter, but it is a rule that we are governed by.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. It's not actually a rule. Procedure.

Ms. Jackson. It's a procedure.

So this session is to begin as unclassified. So if any question calls for a classified answer, please let us know and we can reserve it until we move to a classified setting. And we have a classified setting reserved for this afternoon.

You are welcome to confer with counsel at any time throughout the interview, but if something just needs to be clarified, we ask that you make this known. If you need to discuss anything with counsel who has accompanied you today, we will go off the record and stop the clock and provide you that opportunity.

We will take a break whenever it's convenient for you. This can be -- we typically do this after every hour of questioning, but it can be whenever you prefer. If you need anything, such as a glass of water or the use of the facilities or to confer with counsel, please just let us know and we'll go off the record, stop the clock, and allow you to do that. We're trying to make this process as easy and as comfortable as possible.

As you can see, we have an official reporter who is taking down everything that you say and I say to make a written record, so we ask that you give verbal responses to all questions as opposed to nods of the head or shakes of the head. And I'm going to ask the reporter to please feel free to jump in in case you respond nonverbally.

Similarly, we should try and not talk over each other so it's easier to get a clear record. We want to make sure that your questions are the most complete and truthful and that we get them down in order.

So we'll take our time during this interview and repeat or clarify questions if necessary. If for any reason you don't hear all of the question or don't understand it or just need it clarified in some way, please just make it known. We'll be happy to clarify or repeat our questions.

We are trying to get the most complete and truthful answers to the questions that we have today. So if you honestly don't know an answer to a question or don't remember, it's best not to guess, but we do ask that you give us your best recollection. And if there are things that you do not know or can't remember, please, if you can, inform us as to who might have that information and be able to provide a more complete answer to the question.

And now, there are a few rules that do govern us. Do you understand that you're required to answer questions from Congress truthfully?

Mr. Feltman. Yes.

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

Mr. Feltman. Yes.

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

Mr. Feltman. Yes.

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

Mr. Feltman. No.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. Well, that's the end of the preamble.

Does the minority have anything that they would like to add at this time?

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. I think we just wanted to thank you for coming in. I understand that you are at the U.N. now, not a U.S. Government employee, and that you were only in country for a couple of days, and so we've really taken a big chunk of that timeout of your December, so I really appreciate your taking the time to come in.

Mr. Feltman. Thank you. Yes, I am traveling to Central Asia tomorrow, and that's why I have a small suitcase. I start the trip today.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. I see that the clock says 8:36, and so I will begin the first hour of questioning.

#### EXAMINATION

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Ambassador Feltman, you are currently at the U.N. What is your position there?

A I'm Under Secretary General for Political Affairs.

Q And, generally, what does that entail?

A It would be akin to being sort of a foreign minister or Secretary of State if the U.N. were a country. So I'm the chief foreign policy adviser to the Secretary General. I oversee the diplomatic and political work of the United Nations globally. That's different from, say, development work or humanitarian work; it's the political and

diplomatic work that I oversee.

Q And you've been in that position since early July of 2012?

A July 2, 2012.

Q Okay. And you had been with the State Department for approximately 30 years before that?

A A little bit less, something like 27 years.

Q And what was your last position with the State Department?

A The Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs.

Q And how long did you have that position?

A I had that position from -- confirmed in, I believe, August 2009 up until my retirement from the State Department in May 2012.

Q Okay. And what were your duties and responsibilities as the Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs?

A To oversee the U.S. diplomatic relationships or U.S. political interests in the 19 countries that fell into that bureau's responsibility. That's the area of the world starting from Morocco stretching through Iran.

Q And that included Libya?

A And that included Libya.

Q Okay. Where had you been posted prior to becoming the -- or what positions did you have prior to becoming the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs within the State Department?

A I was acting in that position from December 2008 until my confirmation in August, so I was acting for several months. Before

that, I was Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, which is the number two in the Near East Bureau. That was from February 2008 until December 2008 when I became acting Assistant Secretary. Before that, I was the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Lebanon from 2004 to 2008. I've also served in Jerusalem; Tel Aviv; Baghdad; Amman, Jordan; Tunis, Tunisia. Those were my postings in those particular -- in that particular area.

Q Ambassador Feltman, I want to direct your attention to September 11, 2012. Where were you on that night? Were you at the U.N.? Were you in the United States, or were you traveling?

A I was in New York. I was at the United Nations during office hours and then at home in my apartment after office hours.

Q Okay. And how did you learn about the attacks in Benghazi?

A I had called the State Department on some other business, U.N. business, and I had talked to Liz Dibble, the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State at the time, on -- I don't remember what the issue was I called her about. And she said: By the way, there's an attack going on at the U.S. Mission -- the U.S. office in Benghazi.

And that was how I first heard about it was from a former colleague from the State Department.

Q And was that during business hours? Do you recall approximately when that was?

A It was in the business hours. It was in the afternoon. I don't remember what time it was, but it was some time in the afternoon.

Q Okay. But certainly before 5, 6 o'clock at night in the

evening?

A It may have been -- the U.N.'s business hours are until 7 p.m., and I don't remember what time.

Q All right. And what did Liz Dibble tell you, if anything, about her understanding of what was going on in Benghazi?

A She just said there's a big problem in Benghazi, and they're worried, and that was about it. She said, you know, we're worried about Chris, who's a friend of hers, a friend of mine, and that was all.

Q Did you know that the Ambassador -- that Ambassador Stevens was missing at the time --

A No.

Q -- or unaccounted for?

A No.

Q Approximately how long did this conversation last?

A I have no idea. That part of the conversation was very brief, but I simply don't remember the subject, why I called her.

Q Did you receive any further information the night of the attack from the State Department or from U.N. officials or -- and then I'll ask, my followup question is, what, if anything, did you do in response to learning that there was an attack going on in Benghazi?

A Ambassador Shalgham, who is the Libyan Perm Rep to New York, called me at several points throughout the evening with cell phone numbers of people he said who knew where Chris was, who claimed that Chris was alive. You know, so Ambassador Shalgham called me, which was appropriate, I was a U.N. official. He was working at the U.N.

He was the Representative to the U.N.

So I would try to call these cell phone numbers that Ambassador Shalgham gave me, because I was concerned about my friend, and none of them panned out. None of them led to anything.

I received a phone call from Libya sometime that evening. It was after I was -- I think I was getting ready to go to bed. I think it was like something, maybe 9, maybe 10 o'clock or something. And I recognized the number as being a Libyan number, and so I, of course, answered it. It was to my personal phone. I don't know how the person got the number.

The person did not identify himself except to say he was a friend of Chris Stevens and that he too had information that was sort of vague about Chris being alive, and at that point, I called Beth Jones, who was the Assistant Secretary of State, I think in an acting capacity, you know, my successor, via the ops center to say I had gotten this phone call, and, you know, here's the number if there's anything.

And I don't think it panned out because it simply wasn't true what the information was that the person said. But yes -- so I did have further conversations as just outlined.

Q Now, this the phone call that you received from a Libyan, did that person identify themselves?

A No. And I asked, and he did not identify himself, refused, and just said he was a friend of Ambassador Stevens.

Q And did he give any details as to where he was? Was he on the compound? Was he at a hospital? Was he in transit?

A It was vague. It was all in Arabic. I speak Arabic, but my Libyan Arabic is not so great. It's a different accent. So I questioned him several times, and he would say: He's at a hospital. He's outside. He's at a friend's. It, frankly, didn't make sense. And I don't think it was all just the linguistic issue, which is why I thought, well, this -- you know, I'm concerned about Chris being a friend of mine, but this is really an issue for the State Department, not for the U.N., which is why I used the ops center to call Beth Jones.

Q Okay. And, again, you recognized it as a Libyan number, but you did not recognize the incoming number?

A No.

Q Okay. But it came to your personal cell phone?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Did you, within the U.N., take any actions? For example, did you have any U.N. officials or personnel in Benghazi, Libya, at the time?

A I'm not sure I understand why this is relevant. But certainly, we had -- you know, we had staff in -- U.N. staff in Libya. And as would happen anywhere around the world, we had a -- you know, we had a security assessment meeting to decide what sorts of actions, if any, needed to be taken by the U.N. staff.

I, frankly, don't remember what we decided. We probably decided, you know, to hunker down and not move off of our -- out of our offices until there was more clarity. But I, frankly, don't remember. But, yes, we did meet to talk about what our own security posture should

be afterwards.

Q You've described for us phone calls with Liz Dibble and Beth Jones and calls to the ops center. Did you have communications with any other U.S. Government personnel regarding the Benghazi attacks that night, such as anyone from the National Security staff, anybody from the agency or DOD, any other U.S. Government personnel?

A No one like that, no one from the agency, no one from the NSC, no one from DOD, not even from U.S. Mission of the U.N. I do remember, and I maybe remember incorrectly, because it may have been the following day, but I do remember having phone calls with Liz Dibble but not official, just sort of like: This is terrible. You know, we feel awful.

Liz is a friend. Liz is a friend of Chris. I'm a friend of Chris. And so I had conversations with Liz about just how horrible this was, but I don't remember if they were that night or the following day. They were probably the following day because it wasn't clear to me until the following morning what had happened.

Q Okay. And when you had those subsequent phone calls with Liz Dibble, did she provide to you anymore clarity on what she understood had happened?

A No. It was all solidarity calls with a close friend was what it was.

Q Okay. So nothing about the nature of the attack --

A No.

Q -- how quickly it was, who they thought were the

perpetrators of the attack?

A No, we were talking about things like what do we say to Chris' family, you know, those sorts of things. We were talking about things that friends were talking about. We weren't talking about things that were official.

Q Okay. Do you recall if during any of these conversations you learned about the subsequent attack at the CIA Annex?

A I don't know when I learned about the subsequent attack. It may have been the news reportings the following day. I don't remember.

Q Okay. You don't recall -- you recall not getting any calls regarding --

A I got no calls regarding the attack.

Q Were you aware of the demonstration earlier in the day in Cairo?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And how did you learn of that?

A Through the news.

Q Okay. At any time, did you have any conversations with anyone regarding comparing and contrasting what happened in Cairo versus what happened in Benghazi?

A No.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. You mean someone from the U.S. Government?

Ms. Jackson. Anyone.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Well, I'm sorry. And I say that only

because at some point, my understanding was that you weren't going to go into like internal U.N. deliberations, seeing as he's not a member of the U.S. Government, and we're not asking the U.N.

Mr. Snyder. Also we haven't had a chance to talk to counsel at U.N. because we weren't aware that he'd be talking about U.N. business. It could be dicey for the witness and his current employment having not, you know, sorted that through. So if you want to ask about conversations -- and, by the way, there probably aren't any with U.N. officials -- but if you want to ask about conversations with U.S. personnel, that would be fair game. Otherwise, we're going to have to break and go and just make sure that he's not running afoul of some U.N. issue.

Ms. Jackson. Well, why don't we just ask the foundational questions of did you have any, who were they with, and then we can make the assessment.

Mr. Feltman. I really am not going to talk about any U.N. job here, and this is already very awkward for me in terms of my U.N. employment to be doing this. And I really do not want to speak about the conversations I had in the U.N. I did not talk about this with any U.S. Government official.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. Fine.

Mr. Snyder. That's good.

Ms. Jackson. Just want to close the loop.

Mr. Snyder. Thank you.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Did you have any conversations with Susan Rice regarding the attacks?

A The following day, I went -- on September 12, there was a Security Council session, I believe it was on the Middle East. I think it was, you know, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where I had to brief the Council. This was a public, you know, open -- they call it open briefing in the Chamber, which means it's televised and all that. And before that meeting started, Susan Rice came up to me and just gave me a big hug and said, I'm sorry.

Q Okay. And did you brief on the Benghazi attack?

A I made a reference to it at the beginning.

Q So no briefing as to --

A No briefing. The Security Council did not ask me to brief on Benghazi, but given the news, I thought it was important to acknowledge that it had happened at the beginning of this briefing. So I acknowledged it happened and then went on.

Q Did anyone brief on the Benghazi attack --

A No.

Q -- during that meeting? Okay.

Did you have any subsequent conversations with Ambassador Rice regarding her appearing on the Sunday talk shows?

A No.

Q So you were not a part of any prep sessions with her or consulted in any way regarding what she might say on those shows?

A No.

Q Okay. Ambassador Feltman, I want to move back in time to early 2011, when the Arab Spring occurred and the Embassy in Tripoli had closed and there was a decision made to send in Chris Stevens as the special representative or envoy. So I want to go back in time to that.

What can you tell us about how the decision was made to send someone -- that turned out to be Chris Stevens -- into Benghazi in the spring of 2011?

A I think it's worth keeping in context the fact that the U.S. Government's policy toward the uprising in Libya evolved over the course -- very quickly evolved but evolved because of the changing situation on the ground. As soon as Qadhafi very early on, in mid-February, started cracking down with extreme violence against the demonstrations, the U.S. position initially was to try to, you know, pressure Qadhafi to stop that.

Qadhafi was impervious to pressure from any corridor to stop cracking down on the demonstrations with violence. He was killing the people who were protesting for, you know, for liberty. It quickly evolved into trying to persuade Qadhafi it was time to step down. And it was in that context that the U.S. started engaging with the representatives of the uprising, you know, that later became known as the Transitional National Council.

You know, Benghazi had been long neglected by Qadhafi, in fact, oppressed by Qadhafi. It was a symbol to Qadhafi of the previous regime. The Libyan monarchy had its roots in the east. And so

Benghazi was basically ripe for this type of uprising, given the decades of repression under Qadhafi that suffered, even compared to the rest of Libya.

But in this attempt to try to convince Qadhafi that it was time to leave, that it was better for him, for his family, for his country to leave, you wanted to show the inevitability that he was going to go anyway. So part of that was to increase the representation, increase the engagement with the Transitional National Council as part of the leverage against Qadhafi, to show Qadhafi it's time for you to exit stage right.

And it was also important to show the people of Libya who were courageously standing up to this terrible violence that the U.S. was trying to be supportive of what their struggle stood for, you know, human rights, you know, freedom and all that. So it was in that context the decision was made to, first, start engaging more directly with the TNC -- and Hillary Clinton met with TNC officials on her travels in Europe -- and to send a representative to Benghazi.

Q Prior to her meetings with these people, can you describe for us the interagency process that occurred, if there was one? Or was this solely a State Department-driven initiative, or were there other players that were participating in the decision to intervene in Libya?

A You know, there were so many interagency discussions at the time. Remember, the entire region, the entire region was in turmoil, you know, Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, the Syria revolution was starting,

Bahrain. The entire region was in some kind of turmoil. So we're constantly having interagency meetings and interagency discussions. What the interagency discussion was in February, in March of 2011 about Libya per se, I simply don't remember.

Q Okay. Was the National Security staff involved?

A It's hard for me to imagine they weren't involved, but I can't remember specific meetings that we may have had about this.

Q Okay. Were there conversations between the State Department and the CIA about going into Libya?

A I did not have any conversation with the CIA about going into Libya, but that doesn't mean that others didn't.

Q Were you aware of any other discussions, even though you may not have personally participated in them?

A You know, a lot of this is -- was sort of the natural way of doing business between the various agencies. So, I mean, I don't remember specifically the conversations we may have had, and in terms of more details, probably we should talk about in the other setting.

Q Okay. Let me ask if you can answer this, and if not, we'll reserve it for the other setting: [REDACTED]

Mr. Snyder. I would think that would definitely be for another setting.

Mr. Feltman. I can't talk about that.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Okay. We'll go into another setting on that.

What was the Department of Defense participation in Libya in February, March 2011, if they had any?

A I don't remember the February, March period having an active DOD presence. Perhaps documentation that you've reviewed more recent than I have would show that they have, but I don't remember.

Q Do you recall at this point when the NATO airstrikes occurred?

A Well, they couldn't occur before mid-March because mid-March was the adoption of Resolution 1973 by the Security Council. And so the NATO -- the French had the first strikes just after the Security Council resolution was passed, so the NATO airstrikes would have begun soon after that March 20 resolution was adopted.

Q [REDACTED] --

A [REDACTED]

Q [REDACTED]

Ms. Betz. We'll go into the other setting.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Actually, this part has been a little unclear. Who actually appointed Chris Stevens to go into Benghazi? Was it a Presidential appointment, or was it an appointment by the Secretary of State?

A I believe it was by the Secretary of State.

Q Okay. Is there a difference between a special envoy and a special representative in --

A You'll have to ask the lawyers. I don't know.

Q Okay. So -- all right. Did you know him to be the Special Envoy or Special Representative, or were those terms used interchangeably?

A I don't remember. I truly don't remember. And I'm not sure what difference there is, but lawyers maybe know. He was not accredited to the Transitional National Council. We didn't break our diplomatic relations at this point. He was not accredited. So -- because it was not a recognized government. But he was sort of -- he was sort of a liaison presence.

Q And for those of us who come from outside the State Department, can you elaborate on the significance of that, of what accreditation means, not breaking diplomatic relations? Help us understand that.

A Accreditation is the process by which a head of state will appoint his or her representative to a foreign court or foreign country. That person is usually known as an ambassador. The recipient country -- recipient monarch or head of state -- has to provide concurrence with the choice of the sending country.

So there's a diplomatic process by which -- in this country, of course, it includes a Senate confirmation as an additional element. But a head of state will send a letter of accreditation -- send a request for agreement, it's called, to a foreign country.

The foreign country will, in most cases, in an overwhelming majority of cases send a letter accepting the agreement, providing agreement, in which case the ambassador then goes with letters of

accreditation to that country from the head of state. That's a typical appointment of an ambassador. The practice is followed globally with variations, depending on local circumstances, such as the Senate confirmation process in the United States.

The Transitional National Council was not a government at that time. So there was -- it would have been inappropriate for the United States to send a request for agreement to Benghazi or for Chris Stevens to be carrying letters of accreditation, nor, of course, was he at that point confirmed.

But the TNC had asked in the meetings with Hillary Clinton for representation to be able to work directly on a continuing basis with the U.S. Government, which is why a decision was made to send a representative to Benghazi.

Q Okay. And it's our understanding from a review of the records that there were some meetings in early to mid-March in Paris that Chris Stevens attended with the Secretary and Ambassador Cretz. First of all, were you present at those meetings?

A No.

Q Okay. Were you involved in coordination of those meetings, such as getting Chris Stevens there or preparing information for use in those meetings?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And would you describe what you did.

A Well, I, you know -- it was a variety of things. First, whenever the Secretary of State travels and is going to have meetings

on issues in a particular bureau's area of expertise, that bureau is responsible for doing the preparatory work in terms of the paperwork, you know, the talking points, the briefing papers.

Now, did I, myself, write those briefings papers? Of course not. I have staff that did that. But on a subject as important as Libya, I would pay particular attention to what was said, so I may have edited the papers that were prepared for her as they came to my office for approval. I don't remember exactly. But that would be typical when she was going to have meetings in Libya, in Paris, I would be signing off on the paperwork that was in preparation for her.

I also would be the one proposing to her staff: Hey, it's a good idea to have Chris Stevens there too since the decision has been made to send him, so let's include Chris Stevens in the meetings.

So those are the sorts of things I would be involved in.

But I intentionally did not travel because, again, the entire region was in an uproar. And for me to be going with the Secretary when she already had Gene Cretz, who was the Ambassador to Libya, and she was having Chris Stevens go, it would have been too many resources on one issue when we also had to worry about Yemen and Bahrain and Egypt and Tunisia and Syria.

Q Okay. If you could help us understand the decision to pick Chris Stevens -- because we did have Ambassador Cretz who was back in the U.S.; there was [REDACTED] who was the deputy chief of mission -- I mean, was there a reason not to pick someone who had been evacuated from Tripoli? Was there a reason to pick someone who had

not been currently assigned to Libya to go in and meet with TNC?

A Chris was perfect for this position. Chris had the Arabic skills. He had the Libya exposure. He was a new face for a new situation in Libya. He had the people skills. He was exactly the right person. Gene Cretz and [REDACTED] are extremely competent, good professionals who played a very, very important role, before, during, and after the uprising. But Chris Stevens was the right person at the right time for that job.

Q Did Chris Stevens, in his expedition, have any type of official status when they went into Libya?

A If you're asking, "did he have such things like a Libyan entry visa," no, that would have been asking the Qadhafi Government to give him a visa, which would have been quite odd, and we didn't want to give Qadhafi a veto over how we were going to deal with the TNC. But he certainly had the official backing of the, you know, of the U.S. Government so he went in officially to manage our relationship on a day-to-day basis with the TNC.

Ms. Betz. Well, and let me clarify because I think you hit something that is of interest to the committee, is that you clarified that we never broke official status with the official Libyan Government, but yet there's sort of a parallel track, if you will, of Stevens going in. And so that's -- you know, understanding the resources that went into that, any interaction, you know, with an official status, just understanding the background of sending him in in sort of this unofficial status is helpful for us.

Mr. Feltman. Again, the overall goal was to try to limit the need for a military solution, to focus on a political solution, and convince Qadhafi that his time was over. So you close down the Embassy in Tripoli -- of course, we closed it down earlier for security reasons -- but you have no representation in Tripoli, but suddenly you have somebody in Benghazi.

You know, psychologically, did this have an impact on Qadhafi's thinking to realize that the U.K., the U.S., France, Italy, whole lists of countries no longer had representation in Tripoli, but they had representation in Benghazi.

Now, the TNC, as I said, wasn't a government at the time. You know, there's certain attributes that a government has that we didn't think they had achieved those attributes yet. They very much wanted to be recognized as the legitimate government of Libya, and I'm not sure that any country actually recognized them within that period as legitimate government. I don't think they did. But it was important to show who -- which Libyans did the U.S. think were appropriate interlocutors at the time.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Now, you've just described -- I'm going to use "process" for lack of the appropriate word that I'm struggling to find right now -- of the United States Government and other governments, other foreign governments going into Benghazi to show Qadhafi that he should leave power and to avoid military intervention. We've seen other documents where you describe what was going on as the Libya experiment.

Is that what you meant by the term "Libya experiment," that the U.S. Government and other foreign countries were going into Benghazi as a show of support to the rebels to avoid having military intervention? Or does the term "Libya experiment" mean something else?

A Well, first of all, if I said "to avoid military intervention," I misspoke. We were hoping to limit or shorten military intervention. Military intervention had already started.

Qadhafi started -- Qadhafi is the one who started using the military in the first place, but then after the Security Council resolution there were the civilian protection mandates being acted upon by NATO countries. So we were hoping to be able to hasten the transition away from Qadhafi and therefore limit the military use. It wasn't a question of avoiding military at that point.

I'm not sure what I meant by -- I don't remember using that term, but I'm sure you have documentation that shows I did. I don't know what I meant. But there were very strong U.S. interests in Libya, but I wouldn't say that they went so far as to be the sort of state-building interests that term may suggest in hindsight.

You know, securing Libya's chemical weapons stocks and the precursors to chemical weapons was a key U.S. interest. Trying to limit the outflow or use of the MANPADs stocks was a key U.S. interest. U.S. had long-term commercial interests in Libya. We had human rights accountability interests in Libya. But there were others who had stronger interests in Libya, you know, European countries. And so I'm

not sure what I meant in hindsight about using the term "Libya experiment."

Mr. Snyder. If you used it. Like, I don't know if there's a document you want to show him. I don't have anything in front of us now.

Mr. Feltman. I simply don't remember. That wasn't something that I would have used so frequently that it sticks in my mind, if I used it at all.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q And that's helpful to us too, that it's not a term that you recall at this time.

A No.

Q Can you describe for us, during the time of deciding to send Chris Stevens in and when he first went into Benghazi, how the reporting structure within the State Department occurred? How did -- I mean, Stevens would report into the State Department. How would that information flow? How would the information get to you? What would you do with the information?

A Before he went?

Q Well, during the March, April timeframe because as we understand it, he was -- it took a couple of weeks for him to get into Benghazi because of conditions on the ground, because of weather, because of the ferry. But he was either in Crete or Malta or someplace waiting to go in.

A Yeah, this was all -- but this whole -- this was all a very

quick evolution. You know, the Libyan uprising starts in mid-February. The Security Council passes the resolution in mid-March to the start of the NATO strikes. By early April, Chris is there. You know, it's actually a fairly quick timeline.

And I don't remember -- I remember having discussions about how we were going to get Chris in there. There was some reluctance on DOD's part because of, you know, not wanting to have boots on the ground, so we had to look at various options. But I don't remember it being a terribly long period.

I do know that at some point -- and I don't remember when -- we started a 7 a.m. phone call with Chris Stevens. It may have been after he got to Benghazi, but it may have started before. I don't remember. And it was in that 7 a.m. phone call, 7 a.m. Washington time, phone call with Chris Stevens was extremely important because it was able to allow us to convey the information he was getting on the ground to the principals at the State Department and beyond at their morning meetings.

I didn't participate in those 7 a.m. phone calls. My staff did. But I was briefed at 8 o'clock every morning at what had transcribed on those phone calls that was of significance that I should know, so that I could then go to the meetings with Secretary Clinton that took place afterwards and make sure that she knew.

So there was a communication, a regular communication in addition to whatever was sent by email, in addition to whether cables came later, but in addition to whatever was a written product and in addition to

my own phone calls with Chris. We wanted to make sure that every day that we touched base with him.

Q Okay. And then would you describe for us your -- did you have daily meetings with the principals of the State Department? Were they weekly meetings? How often would you brief senior officials within the State Department?

A I saw the Secretary of State in the formal meetings she had with her senior staff three times a week. And in those three-times-a-week meetings, she would often say to somebody, you know, stop by my office, you know, let's keep talking afterwards. And often that person was me because, again, Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Bahrain, Syria, Libya. So when she's asking someone to stay after to talk about something after those formal meetings, it was likely me.

But far beyond that, we had constant meetings on various issues dealing with what we call shorthand Arab Spring. And she may call a meeting -- she may have called a meeting on, say, Egypt. But in that meeting on Egypt, if there was something that she needed to know, wanted to know, or I wanted to tell her on Libya, that would come up too.

So it's very hard for me to characterize how often I would have seen her because I saw her on so many different subjects dealing with the Arab Spring at that period and that it's hard to specify how many times Libya might have come up versus any of these other issues we were working on.

Q Okay. And given the nature of events that were occurring and that things evolved, did those meetings also evolve and decrease

in frequency, intensity over time, throughout 2011?

A I don't remember any let-up in the sort of feeling of intention and focus until my retirement. I mean, it was -- I felt like I was -- from the time the Tunisian uprising began in December of 2010 until my retirement in May of 2012, I felt like it was just a marathon the whole time.

Q So taking a step outside of coordination within the State Department, were there interagency meetings ongoing from the time -- from the U.N. resolution, and let's just go through the first 3-month time period, so the rest of March, April, May, and into June during that time. Were there regular, recurring interagency meetings that you attended or that you that you were aware of others within the State Department attended?

A There were constant interagency meetings.

Q And let me be specific, regarding Libya.

A On all of these topics. And they occurred at different levels. There were interagency task forces -- I'm not sure what -- I forget -- I'm using U.N. terminology because I've forgotten my U.S. terminology. But they were principal's committee meetings on Libya as well as other topics. There were deputy's committee meetings as well as other topics. There were meetings at my level. There were meetings at my staff level. The meeting schedule was pretty brutal on Libya as well as other subjects.

Q Okay. And with regard to Libya, who were the other interagency partners that were participating in these meetings? Just

the agencies, not specifically what would have been said.

A They were what you would expect for a foreign policy security issue. You know, DOD was there. The agency was there. You know, NSC, State, those were there for all of them. And then you would have others, depending on what the issues would be. You would have representatives of various counterterrorism organs being there.

But it would depend on what the -- you know, there was an agenda for meetings that was established and depending on what the agenda was. But I can't think of a single meeting that wouldn't have included State, DOD, agency, NSC.

Q Okay. And who were your counterparts within those other -- the other members of the interagency? Who did you primarily deal with from the national Security Council and from the agency, from DOD, from --

A You know, I would deal with whoever I needed to deal with. I would deal a lot with Denis McDonough on these issues. You know, I would call my counterparts at DOD. I mean, there were constant contacts and conversations among all of us working on these issues.

Q Okay. So you didn't have a primary point of contact in each of these agencies?

A No, I would call who I needed to call. I was able to get through to whoever I needed to get through to. I mean, obviously I wasn't calling Secretaries, but below that level.

Q For example, did you work with Ben Fishman at the National Security staff?

A Ben Fishman would work with my staff.

Q So he would be a level below yours?

A Ben Fishman would work with my staff. He traveled with me once to Benghazi in August 2011, but Ben Fishman worked with my staff.

Q Okay. And who on your staff would he primarily work with?

A I'm guessing the people who worked in the Office of Maghreb Affairs is who I remembered; you know, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], you know, those people.

Q Can you --

A And he would attend, you know, many of these meetings, but if there was a meeting at my level or higher he would be along the wall.

Q And all of those names just triggered something. Can you describe how NEA was structured and who within NEA was working on Libya issues during this time of, say, the first half of 2011 or throughout 2011 if it was constant?

A We had an Office of Maghreb Affairs that was headed by [REDACTED], I believe, to that whole period. I may not have the chronology exact, who had a deputy and who had desk officers. And, you know, the desk officers for, you know, say Morocco would help out with Libya because Libya was obviously at that point a much higher priority.

But we also had the added benefit of officers from Embassy Tripoli. Embassy Tripoli had been evacuated. And so for part of 2011, we had sort of a surge capacity provided by the talent from Embassy Tripoli. It was back in Washington.

At the beginning of all of this, in fact, throughout the spring

and the summer, the Office of Maghreb Affairs reported up to Deputy Assistant Secretary of State [REDACTED], who also covered the Arab Gulf. This was traditionally NEA's organization because the Arab Gulf and North Africa had traditionally been quiet. And so while they're geographically removed, they're different from other parts of NEA, which were always in some sort of chaos -- the other parts of the NEA world, not NEA the bureau, but NEA the countries.

Q You mean, NEA was not in chaos?

A 2011 you could've asked me that question.

But, you know, you often had -- you know, you had things in Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Egypt that would require a lot of attention, so you had different structures. But the Arab Gulf, you know, the six GCC countries, North Africa tended to be quiet. So they reported to one DAS. This became untenable. You had the Arab Gulf in uprisings, in Bahrain in the counterreactions of Bahrain, you had very serious problems in Yemen, and you had Tunisia and Libya. You couldn't have one DAS doing all this.

So sometime, I believe it was in the fall, we were able to get approval for another DAS position, just so that we could split those two portfolios and have one DAS concentrate on the Arab Gulf, one DAS concentrate on North Africa, and then that DAS, of course, would report to the PDAS, report to me.

Q When Libya was erupting and was the hot spot, did you designate a particular person to focus more -- from your senior staff, from your front office -- on Libya? For example, we see a lot of

interaction with Liz Dibble who was your principal.

A Well, but Liz Dibble didn't come on board until that fall. Ron Schlicher was still PDAS at the time the Libyan uprising began, if I remember correctly. Isn't that right? I think that Liz Dibble -- let me think. When did we move from Ron Schlicher to Liz Dibble? I believe that Liz Dibble did not begin work until, for me, until September 2011, and Ron Schlicher was the PDAS when all this began.

And Ron and I basically had -- we never formalized a division of labor on these crisis points, but Ron had served in Egypt and had very close ties with Egypt. So when we needed to have a particular focus on Egypt, for example, Ron was better equipped -- having local knowledge -- than I was. If there was something with Syria, given my time in Jordan, Israel, and Lebanon, I could focus on that. So we didn't have a formal division of labor, but we tended, given the need to manage all these crises at once, to look at where the comparative advantage was for each of us to work.

Q And that makes perfect sense. Did you have this unofficial division of labor with respect to Libya? Because, obviously, we're interested in talking with the people who were focused on Libya.

A As I recall, Ron worked a lot on the management issues regarding Libya: You know, how do we get Chris Stevens into Benghazi? What sort of -- what do we need to be asking for in terms of infrastructure support for Libya? And I worked more on the policy: How are we engaging with the TNC? What should we in NEA propose as

the U.S. priorities in those interactions? That sort of thing.

So that was more of a traditional role where the PDAS is working on the management of the bureau and management of the post, and the Assistant Secretary is working on the broader policy issues.

Q And did that sort of division continue when there was the handoff to Liz Dibble as your PDAS?

A Yes.

Q I have about a little over 10 minutes left.

How many times did you travel to Libya after Embassy Tripoli closed at the end of February of 2011? You talked about a trip in August of 2011 that you took with Ben Fishman. Had you been in Libya before that when -- and, in particular, to Benghazi to meet up with Envoy Stevens?

A I believe I was in Libya five times in 2011. I went to Benghazi in May of 2011. I went to Benghazi again in August of 2011. I went to Tripoli in September of 2011. I accompanied Secretary Clinton to Tripoli in October of 2011. I accompanied U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Susan Rice to Tripoli in November 2011. So I believe I was in Libya five times in 2011.

Q Did Ambassador Rice also go to Benghazi in November?

A Oh, yes. Yes. Yes, you're correct. She went to Benghazi in 2011.

Q Did she go to both Tripoli and Benghazi or just one or the other? We understand it has been a while, and you do a lot of travel.

A She went to both.

Q Both. In your trip to Benghazi in May, in late May of 2011, can you -- did you go -- you went just to Benghazi at that time. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q In Libya. And met up with Chris Stevens?

A No. Chris Stevens was on a much deserved R&R at the time, and I was there when [REDACTED] was heading up the small office we had.

Q She was the acting envoy at the time?

A Acting whatever the title was, yes.

Q She went in to relieve Chris Stevens at the time?

A Yes.

Q And what was the purpose of your visit?

A To basically reinforce the engagement that we had with the TNC to make some policy points to the TNC in a way that can reinforce what the local reps are doing. This is, again, part of diplomatic practice. You know, if one of the local representative is always saying to one's contacts, we suggest, you know, this or that or the other or we would like to see this, that, or the other, it always helps to have headquarters reinforce that point, you know, whether it's by visits, by phone calls, or whatever.

So I was there to basically reinforce the policy points with the TNC and, again, as part of this effort to show Qadhafi that people weren't dealing with him anymore.

I also had the occasion to meet with a broad range of civil society

representatives when I was there to show that the U.S. wanted to hear from, engage with, a broad spectrum of Libyans, that it wasn't simply that we were dealing with the head of the TNC, that we were trying to understand the broader Libyan context.

Q And when you say "civil society," I just want to make sure that I understand what you're talking about. Are you talking universities and educators, healthcare professionals? What is within your definition of "civil society"?

A In this case, we met with students. We met with women's groups. We went to a hospital to meet with medical professionals. We met with human rights activists. Benghazi had been, you know, essentially closed for decades because of Qadhafi's repression, and this was an important way to show sort of a reopening of the world with a city that traditionally had been an internationally open city.

Q Either prior to this trip or during this trip, were there discussions about how long to have the Benghazi expedition or the Stevens expedition continue in Benghazi?

I guess, let's take a step back first. What was the initial plan when he went in? Was he to be there for a day, a week, 30 days, 6 months, or was it more fluid than that?

A It was more fluid than that, but it was certainly the idea was to be there more than a day or a week. The idea was to be there for long enough that we would have the type of insights into TNC thinking that you can't get from a single meeting, that we would have the type of access to other decisionmakers in the TNC that you can't have when

you only are meeting with one or two persons.

We needed somebody who could better understand what was happening, what was motivating the leadership of the TNC, what were they thinking. So the idea was not that this would necessarily be years and years and years but certainly more than a few weeks.

Q Okay. And then when you -- either prior to your trip or during your trip in May of 2011, were there discussions about continuing the presence in Benghazi for an indefinite period of time, maybe not years but at least the foreseeable future?

A Yes, there were. And the discussions were, what's the appropriate -- when I was there, part of our discussions were, what's the appropriate platform for maintaining a presence for that period in Benghazi?

Q And by "platform," do you mean number of personnel?

A Number of personnel, communications, location. You know, at the time we were in a hotel --

Q The Tibesti Hotel?

A The Tibesti Hotel. And so the discussion had already started about what were the alternatives to being in a place like that.

Q Okay. And had there been some review of compounds and villas at that time?

A Yes, it had started, and it was very difficult because there were not that many places available or appropriate.

Q Okay.

A And we were, frankly, in competition with the British, the

French, the Italians, everybody else.

Q Everybody always wanted the best place.

A Yeah.

Q For the least amount of money.

Had there been similar discussions back at Main State regarding a continued presence in Benghazi prior to your going to the May trip?

A I'm sure there were, but I don't remember.

Q Okay. And do you recall approximately when it was that the decision was made to have a longer-term presence in Benghazi? Was it before your trip, during your trip in May, shortly after your trip, or some other period of time?

A I don't remember.

Q Was it certainly before you had your August trip?

A During the August trip, Chris and I talked about, frankly, our shared view that we needed to maintain a longer presence in Benghazi than the fall of Tripoli might otherwise suggest. I was in Benghazi when the battle for Tripoli began, and it was clear that this time, it was inevitable that Qadhafi was leaving Tripoli even though he wasn't, of course, found and killed until later.

And so Chris and I did talk in that August trip about the fact that both of us believed that we needed to maintain some kind of presence in Benghazi for the foreseeable future. We didn't talk about how long, but given the history of Libya, given the history of the revolution, given the need for Benghazi to remain supportive of whatever government took form in Tripoli, we thought it was politically extremely important

that we maintain some kind of presence in Benghazi beyond the fall of Tripoli.

Q In the course of those discussions, were there any benchmarks that you discussed that we need to be in Benghazi until this happens, or we need to be in Benghazi until the following three things happen, such as, you know, government being reestablished in Tripoli or, you know, Qadhafi completely out of power?

A We were thinking beyond those. We were thinking things like the elections that were to be scheduled, and in August 2011, we didn't know when there would be elections. We knew eventually the TNC or its successor would have to have some kind of elections to provide legitimacy to the governing structures, and we thought that it was important to maintain some kind of presence in Benghazi through whatever the electoral calendar was, passed the initial elections, and perhaps a little bit beyond to see things. So we were talking about things like that.

Q And were there other factors in addition to or apart from the elections that were important benchmarks to meet?

A Part of this was the historic realities of Libya. Libya emerged as an independent country in 1951 through a U.N. resolution, oddly enough. It's one of the few countries created by a U.N. resolution. And it was created out of three separate parts, you know, one part in the south, Fezzan, and then the part in the east, Cyrenaica, and then Tripoli in the area in the west. And the east and the west remain rivals.

I mentioned Qadhafi repressing Benghazi for decades. And Libya, if it's going to hang together as a unified state -- and we all hope it will regain that unified state approach -- it's going to have to -- Libya is going to have to transcend this division. And we thought it was important to maintain a presence to help show the people of Benghazi they were not reverting back to their neglected, oppressed state of being under Qadhafi.

So there was -- part of this was just historic reality of how you -- what you need to do to help keep Libya together as a unified state post-Qadhafi.

Ms. Jackson. Well, I see I have about 2 minutes left, and before I go to another topic, I think I will just stop.

Ms. Betz. Can I just ask one followup question?

Ms. Jackson. Oh, yes, Kim.

Ms. Betz. So, to that point, why not make the mission official?

Mr. Feltman. Because we knew we would never get the resources from Congress that we needed to make it official. This is a time of diplomatic retrenchment globally. We do not get the security resources or the diplomatic resources or the positions from Congress that we need.

So what we were trying to -- what Chris and I were trying to figure out was, how could we make a compelling enough argument that in the zero-sum game that we have in terms of our budget and our resources, that we could find enough resources to keep Benghazi operating through the critical transition period?

We didn't think we had any hope of keeping it there permanently because we would never get the type of budget support out of Congress we would need. This is a time when the U.S. reduces diplomatic presences, doesn't expand them.

Ms. Jackson. With that, we'll go off the record.

[Recess.]

RPTR BAKER

EDTR HUMKE

[9:53 a.m.]

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

Q Let's go back on the record. I'll just reintroduce myself. My name is Susanne Sachsman Grooms. I'm the Staff Director on the Democratic side of the Select Committee. And again I want to thank you for being here today. I think we have an incredibly distinguished diplomat in front of us, so we will try not to embarrass ourselves with our knowledge of the Mideast.

So I just want to start by covering a couple things that went over in the last round just briefly to clarify a couple different points. One of the things that you were talking about was a series of lots and lots of constant communications, interagency meetings, discussions with the Secretary, discussions within the Department, and with external interagency, in the 2011 time period about the Arab Spring for lack of a better term. Is that right?

A Yes.

Q Okay. It sounds like your memory doesn't particularly distinguish between specific discussions about Libya during that time period versus, you know, generalized lots of discussions about all of these different topics where Libya would have been included when relevant. Is that accurate?

A Yes, to an extent. It's hard to describe how different it

was working in NEA in, say, February 2011, versus February 2010. At the time in February 2010, I wouldn't have thought of NEA as being a quiet area of the world, but in comparison to what hit us in February of 2011, February 2010 was quiet. And it wasn't just NEA. It was the entire U.S. Government was focused on what was happening in all of these different countries. Everything was unfolding at once and going in different directions.

The way that Yemen was evolving was certainly different than the way that Tunisia was evolving, from Egypt involving, Syria, Libya, et cetera. So often meetings would go from one topic to the other. Now not necessarily at the NSC. The NSC would call my meetings on various subjects, and you would stick to the agenda at the NSC.

But if I had a meeting with Hillary Clinton, as I said earlier on Egypt, but I needed her to know something about Libya, the discussion would easily evolve into a Libya discussion because that was my target of opportunity because she was right in front of me, and I could tell her something she needed to know about Libya. Or she could take the opportunity to raise something she wanted to tell me on Libya. So while the NSC meetings would be distinct based on agendas, often our discussions at the State Department were more free form, looking at this entire region.

Q And when you speak about it becoming sort of a marathon of a job and a marathon throughout the region until the time period when you retired, you're talking about the whole region?

A Yes. We joked to ourselves that NEA stood for never, ever

again will I bid on this job.

Q And as part of the evolution, you were talking a little bit about how the NEA Bureau itself had to establish a new Deputy Assistant Secretary spot. Is that right?

A Yes.

Q Is that the spot that Ray Maxwell ended up taking?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what did his DAS spot entail?

A The DASes in NEA were responsible for geographic subsets of the region and/or functional areas, and his area was North Africa.

Q So that included Libya?

A That included Libya.

Q Okay. I think he, and I don't know if you've sort of seen this before, but he came before a previous committee to Congress and alleged that he had been sort of excluded from, and not involved in, Libya matters. From your point of view at the time you were there, was he still a reporting structure for Libya matters?

A He was still the reporting structure for Libya matters, and he cared particularly about the staff who worked for him sort of in the office of North African affairs. He was an advocate for making sure that I understood the pressures they were under in terms of producing papers, policy recommendations, et cetera. So he often engaged with me on basically protecting our own staff from the workload.

Q You also talked in the previous round about some issues or concerns that you had with obtaining congressional support for staying

or setting up the post in Benghazi. At the time, and this would then be in spring of 2011, there was bipartisan support for intervention in Libya. Right?

A Yes.

Q And so was the concern more a financial one?

A Yes, but it wasn't a concern about the short term. We knew we had support for engagement with the TNC. What this was, was the -- let me start over. When we started to look at the U.S. presence in Libya, what it would be like after the fall of Tripoli -- this was when Chris Stevens and I were talking about this in August of 2011 -- our working presumption was, it's impossible to open a new permanent diplomatic presence in Benghazi because of the budget realities.

I'm not sure the State Department has ever gotten its full requests funded by the U.S. Congress, so given the fact that it would be untenable for us -- we would look out <sup>of touch</sup> ~~to lunch~~. We would look as though we didn't understand the reality for us to propose having a permanent presence here -- what do we really need now to help get through the transition? That was the context. It wasn't complaining one way or the other. It was just accepting certain realities of how the State Department has to do business given the fiscal climate in the United States right now.

Q And I think you talked previously about the importance of going into Benghazi and the importance of engaging with the TNC to ensure that there would be a unified government. Can you explain what the importance of having a unified Libyan Democratic Government would

be to the United States Government in terms of counterterrorism, and chemical weapons, and MANPADs, and those sorts of things?

A If you permit me, I will go back a little bit historically. You know, there were decades when the U.S. did not have a diplomatic presence in Libya. You know, Qadhafi and his green revolution overthrew the monarchy in 1969. In the early 1970s, the U.S. withdrew its ambassador. By the late 1970s, U.S. Diplomatic Mission had been closed after it had been attacked and burned.

During that period, from the time the U.S. had no diplomatic presence, up until the settlement for the Pan Am 103 attack, you saw many, many examples where Libyan behavior was contrary to U.S. interests -- Pan Am 103 is the one that's most obvious -- but in terms of what Libya did to support revolutions in Africa, what Libya did in terms of supporting terrorist organizations. There's a whole list of things that were of great concern to the United States.

After the settlement in 2003, and the return of U.S. diplomats to Tripoli in 2004, the U.S. was engaging with the Qadhafi Government to promote U.S. interests. To build on the renunciation of weapons of mass destruction, the renunciation of terrorism in the Pan Am settlement that Qadhafi had done, but it was never the type of collegial relationship in which you could easily pursue U.S. interests.

So, of course, our aspiration was to see the type of government in Tripoli that would be able to engage with the United States and others on areas of mutual interest, and would be able to represent all of Libya, would be able to project a unified front when it came to controlling

counterterrorism, when it came to -- working on counterterrorism, excuse me. When it came to the protection of the remaining chemical weapons and things like that because there was always a risk that this country would split apart. And many of our discussions with TNC representatives were about that well-intentioned advice, but the need for inclusion, the need to show in word, and act, and representation that the TNC was capable of representing the interests of all of Libya, not just the interests of Benghazi.

Q And just so we have a sense of this sort of immediate need, when we went into Benghazi, especially following the fall of Qadhafi and in that 2011 timeframe. Can you give us a sense, though, of what the importance would be of the country not splitting apart, of having a centralized control of the MANPADs, chemical weapons, the militia, those sorts of things?

A Unfortunately I think we can see the risk of the country's split when we look at Libya today. But you've asked me about 2011, at which point the risks that we see manifested today were there but hadn't yet come out. But, you know, look at the MANPADs. MANPADs are a relatively easy to use weapon. They pose a risk to civil aviation. Plus it's, I understand, relatively simple to take explosive material out of MANPADs and use it for other purposes.

So there was a real danger, a real risk, to the smuggling of MANPADs across Libya's long and porous borders to other countries. And there were many concerns raised by the Egyptians about these things, the risk of these flowing into Egypt. The Israelis were concerned

about the explosives, the MANPADs themselves then going into Gaza through the tunnels from the Sinai. The African countries to Libya's south were concerned about the outflow of weapons. It was extremely important that we had local authorities willing to work with us to figure out how to try to control this risk. The U.S. was not going to put boots on the ground. So we needed to have a proper authority to be able to work with us on this. The chemical weapons were similar.

The Organization For the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, OPCW, based in the Hague, has the responsibility for monitoring the destruction of chemical weapons and chemical precursors when countries sign on to the Chemical Weapons Convention, as Qadhafi did as part of that 2003 settlement. And there was an ongoing program to destroy Libya's chemical weapons that had been proceeding under the Qadhafi Government, but it hadn't been completed yet, so there were still chemical weapons and precursors at a facility called Waddan in southern Libya, that needed protection. And we needed an authority that was able to have the capacity, the legitimacy, to protect that. So those are the sorts of things. Those are among the immediate concerns we had.

Q And when you talk about the risks being, in 2011, the risks being that Libya would become what it essentially is today, did you and did Chris Stevens in your discussions with him, feel that engaged diplomacy within Libya and specifically within Benghazi would help prevent Libya from becoming the way it is essentially today?

A I don't think any of us had an exaggerated sense of what

diplomatic efforts alone can achieve, but we certainly saw diplomatic engagement as important tools to try to achieve these goals, not the only tools, but the ones that were under our responsibility as State Department foreign service officers.

Q There has been, I think, much made and probably more in the election realm, but maybe not always in the election realm, about a lack of a U.S. strategy to deal with the change of government in Libya in the Arab Spring. From your perspective where you were sitting, was there a U.S. strategy -- I mean I've seen strategy documents -- but was there a U.S. strategy that you all were engaged in and trying to develop and implement?

A Yes, but it even predates the Libyan uprising, or it continues through the Libyan uprising. Because there was a policy to pursue limited U.S. objectives in Libya that preceded Qaddafi's fall. It included some of the issues we have already talked about, which is counterterrorism and protection of -- well, protection against proliferation of weapons, promotion of certain commercial interests, but it also included trying to encourage a more representative Libyan Government. More respect for human rights that were sadly lacking under the Qadhafi Government. So these basic policy objectives remained throughout this period. Of course, the Libyan uprising provided a new impetus to some of them and new opportunities and new challenges in trying to pursue them.

Q I want to talk a little bit -- so I'll go back a little bit to the last round where we left off because we were talking a little

bit about, I think, late 2011 and your discussions with Chris Stevens about extending the U.S. presence. Let me just start by talking for a couple minutes about Chris Stevens himself. Did you consider Chris Stevens to be an expert on Libya?

A Yes, as much as anyone is an expert on Libya.

Q From our discussions with a number of people within the State Department and previous committees, a lot of people talked about giving a fair amount of deference to Chris Stevens' policy views about Libya because of his expertise. Do you agree?

A Yes. I do not like trying to second guess people who are in the field, who are working on issues on the ground in ways that we at headquarters can't possibly understand.

Q And so in the fall of 2011, when you would have been talking to Chris Stevens, would you have given a lot of weight to his views about the extension of U.S. presence in Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q And you shared those views?

A Yes, largely.

Q And do you recall specifically what he -- and I understand it's been a long time -- but what he did say were his views about why it was important to stay at that time?

A We had sort of an on-and-off discussion about this when I was there, particularly in August when we were there together, but we had an on-and-off discussion about it over the phone or if we would see each other elsewhere as well because we knew we had kind of an uphill

climb on this.

The normal response would be once the government's in Tripoli, we didn't have anything in Benghazi before that, then you close down Benghazi. That would be sort of a normal response given the budget climate, given all the other complications. And so Chris and I would talk about did we really think this was essential. Why did we think it was essential. And it had to do with, again, the fact that Libya had been essentially a divided country before, where Benghazi had been neglected, oppressed even by Qadhafi, but yet Benghazi was where this uprising had begun. It was where the Libyan revolution had begun, so it was important that Benghazi feel part of this process. We felt that having a small diplomatic presence in Benghazi -- it would not be the Embassy.

Clearly the Embassy would be accredited to the government in Tripoli -- but that that would keep our presence as well as the presence of others, because we were not the only ones looking at this, as well as the presence of others, would keep Benghazi as part of the political equation. Because if you didn't have Benghazi feeling invested in what was happening in Tripoli, you had the risks of the country splitting again, is what we clearly thought.

Q And were these sort of ongoing discussions sort of throughout the fall, so you had your trip in August 2011? It looks like you were back in Tripoli in September, October, and then November. Were these sort of ongoing discussions with him during that time period?

A They were ongoing discussions, and of course they included

others as well, because we needed to muster our arguments. We needed to muster our rationale. We needed to feel confident ourselves that this was the right thing to do before we would propose something that was going to be, you know, financially difficult.

Q And it looks like, from the documents that we have seen, and I think some people we've spoken to, that the actual decision didn't get made to stay in Benghazi until December of 2011? Is that accurate?

A Yes, yes. And you're referring to the memo to Pat Kennedy.

Q Yes.

A Yes the decision was made in December, but of course there were a lot of preliminary discussions before that memo was sent forward to Pat Kennedy.

Q And preliminary discussions throughout the State Department? Is that what you mean?

A Throughout the State Department, but this was also, I'm sure, was also included in discussions at the NSC.

Q And do you recall what the NFC's views were?

A I don't recall any questions about it. I would remember objections to this.

Q And how would that have been sort of phrased? Would that have been sort of discussions and recommendations that started from the field with Chris Stevens, and then were you joining with Chris Stevens, and you would be then recommending that path forward to the NSC?

A I mean, what I remember is that we proposed this to the State

Department. The State Department had that responsibility. I don't remember exactly how we discussed it with the NSC.

Q It would have been a State Department decision?

A It would have been a State Department decision.

Q And the memo was signed off by Under Secretary Kennedy. Would it have been his decision within the State Department?

A Yes, it would have been Pat's decision, but I can't imagine that Pat didn't also consult, inform others, including the Secretary on something that was this significant.

Q On the issue of the large policy decision about staying in Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q Can you sort of describe the process for the memo itself, how it gets worked?

A The memo is, you know, drafted below my level. It's approved by me, and that's not just a nominal approval. On something that important, I read, and thought about it, probably made edits. I don't remember. But it's only written after there's been enough consensus among various stakeholders in the State Department. So this memo was only written after, you know, Diplomatic Security, other parts of the State Department, would have been in concurrence that there was a need to stay, so there was a lot of preliminary meetings before somebody started typing out this memo.

Q And from what we can see, it looks like -- well, did Chris Stevens to your knowledge have input into the memo?

A I'm sure he did.

Q Were you aware that some of the language that's actually in the memo appears to be sort of cut and pasted from one of Chris Stevens' emails?

A No, I'm not aware, but I'm not surprised.

Q And you're not surprised because?

A Because Chris was on the ground. Chris would be making the strongest arguments. Chris had a unique perspective that as smart as we may think we are at headquarters, we lack. I'm actually happy if my desk would be using arguments that Chris Stevens formulated because I think he was in a better position than any of the rest of us to know.

Q Yeah. Great. So much has been made from the fact that the memo is specific as to how many Diplomatic Security slots should be in Benghazi and how many, you know, in the year moving forward. Do you remember how that information got into the memo?

A It would have gotten into the memo by the discussions between NEA and DS.

Q Now, you had talked about lots of preliminary discussions on the policy decision of moving forward and keeping a diplomatic presence in Benghazi throughout the Department, with the NSC.

Would the level of detail of how many particular Diplomatic Security agents have been involved in those conversations, or is that a decision that DS would have made and would have just sort of been inputted into the memo?

A I don't know because by the time the memo came to me, those

words were already there. I would not have signed this memo. Actually I didn't sign the memo. I think I was travelling when the memo was sent and somebody signed on my behalf. But I approved it remotely. I wouldn't have approved this memo had DS not have cleared the memo. This would not have been something that we would have done independent of DS. So I assume that DS was comfortable with the numbers that were in that memo.

Q And did you generally defer to Diplomatic Security on diplomatic security matters?

A Yes.

Q Did you trust their judgment?

A Yes. I have served in some dangerous places throughout my career, including places where I know that I was a target, and DS has protected me extremely well throughout my career, including on my travels as NEA Assistant Secretary in some really problematic places. And so I have every reason to trust the professionalism of Diplomatic Security.

Q And so when you received the memo, did you sort of stop and question the DS presence, or was your view on it more of an overall policy, should we stay in, kind of a view?

A It was the latter. It was more of the policy view. I assumed that my staff and DS were in agreement on the DS requirements. Had there been a problem with DS, my staff would have alerted me, and they did not, so I did not focus on it.

Q And we have heard the term split memo or dissent memo.

Could Diplomatic Security have issued one on this action memo?

A Diplomatic Security cleared this memo.

Q Yes. I mean like in theory could they have?

A Yes. In theory you could always have a split memo that says NEA says this; DS says this, and you ask for a decision by the principals, but DS joined this memo.

Q Yes. And in the memo, it talked about extending through, it was obviously through the end of the calendar year of 2012. Why until the end of the calendar year of 2012?

A We thought that that would get us past the critical elements of transition, that there was supposed to be elections the following summer. I think they actually took place in August, although the date wasn't set when that memo went forward. And it would allow the government to take off as it would be formed out of those elections. So it would provide us the ability to have some understanding of the leadership circles in Benghazi, hopefully some influence over what the people in Benghazi were thinking through that election and transition period.

Libya is a big country. If we only had a diplomatic presence in Tripoli during those elections, I think we would have gotten a very distorted view of -- I was already gone from the State Department at this point, but I think it would have been a very distorted view if you are only reporting what's happening in Tripoli during something as critical as the first elections after Qadhafi's fall.

Q And do you recall whether there were sort of discussions

at the time about reevaluating later, right, to see whether there would be an extended U.S. presence or whether the plan was just to leave at the end of 2012?

A The idea was to look at it again.

Q I want to switch gears and show you an exhibit. I'm going to mark this as exhibit 1, and it's a letter that the committee has received from, I believe, 33 former ambassadors, former career ambassadors. I just want you to take some time to read it because I assume you haven't seen it.

[Feltman Exhibit No. 1

Was marked for identification.]

Ms. Betz. For the record, I think this is the first time that the majority has seen this letter.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Oh, okay. It's my understanding that a copy of the letter was sent to the majority and the minority.

Ms. Betz. It just may be us, so we'll double check, but just for the record.

Mr. Feltman. It's also been widely published.

Mr. Snyder. If we can take a few minutes and read it.

Mr. Snyder. Okay.

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

Q Before you were the Assistant Secretary, you were the Ambassador to Lebanon? Is that right? Well, not directly before.

A Not directly before but previously.

Q And you were the Ambassador to Lebanon during the 2004, 2008

under the Bush administration?

A Yes.

Q So you also would have been a career ambassador. Is that accurate?

A Yes.

Q A career Foreign Service?

A Yes.

Q And following the committee's hearing with Secretary Clinton, the committee received a letter from these 33 former career ambassadors. It identifies misunderstandings that they felt our members had or some of the members had during the hearing that were reflected during the questioning. Do you recall whether you had an opportunity to watch the hearing with Secretary Clinton?

A I do not own a television.

Q Okay. Wonderful for you.

A Actually the answer should be then no. But that didn't answer the question. The question is no. I certainly read the news coverage afterwards, but I did not -- and I heard excerpts on the radio, but I did not watch it.

Q The letters from 33 former career ambassadors, do you know some of these individuals?

A Many of them, the majority.

Q And do you respect their viewpoints?

A Yes.

Q I just want to go through some of the points within the

letter and ask you whether you agree with them because they said, and I'm quoting here: "Our experience in how ambassadors function and how they interact with the Department and with the Secretaries of State they serve, was at variance with understandings expresses in some lines of questions raised by the committee." And that's an important point, I think, that if the committee has been misunderstanding things, that we need to understand them better. And frankly you're our first ambassador here since we received the letter, so I think it will be helpful to walk through it, if you don't mind.

In the first page, that bottom paragraph, it reads: "Each of us had ample access to the Secretaries we served. However, that access more often than not, was conducted through a range of senior professional colleagues across the Department, each of whom was empowered to make decisions in the management and policy spheres. The normal chain of command is through regional and functional assistant secretaries, not directly to the secretaries. Skilled career Foreign Service ambassadors understand the need to move questions to decision at the right level and to work those decisions up the leadership chain as needed. We believe this experience is in keeping with sound organizational practice and compatible with what we have seen in the private and nongovernmental spheres in which our activities currently are focused."

Do you agree with that statement?

A Yes.

Q In your role as Assistant Secretary for NEA, were you part

of that normal chain of command that's sort of referenced within there?

A Yes.

Q And why do you think that chain of command functions well?

A It enables an ambassador, chief of mission overseas, to have immediate access to the part of the State Department that's most focused on his or her portfolio. That Assistant Secretary has the responsibility to make sure that other principals who need to know, know what the issue is if it's appropriate to be going beyond that. But often things that are of great concern at a particular post can be solved by the regional bureau that's working full-time to backstop that particular post. It would be untenable to expect the Secretary of State to be able to respond to each request from every Ambassador of, I think, the U.S. has diplomatic relations in over 190 countries.

Q Do you believe that when you personally raised up issues to the Secretary of State, that she treated them with the appropriate level of attention, thoughtfulness, and care?

A I was in senior leadership positions for the State Department when I was in Beirut, earlier when I was in Jerusalem, and then, of course, when I was in Washington. And I felt that whether I was trying to get something to Condoleeza Rice in the case of Jerusalem or Beirut, or trying to get something to Hillary Clinton in the case of my Washington tours, that I had absolutely the attention I needed from both of those Secretaries with whom I worked most closely.

Q And when you had a crisis and you needed attention, did you feel that you could get their attention?

A Absolutely.

Q What about when you raised issues with other management within the State Department like Under Secretary Kennedy? When you brought issues that needed to be addressed to his attention, do you think he took you seriously, and he treated those issues appropriately?

A We often called Pat Kennedy the miracle worker at NEA because he was the one who could often help us find the solution to something that was vexing us. He's tough. He has the responsibility for helping us find the resources we may need in a very tight budget climate, or in making sure that we have thought through extraction capabilities if there's something of risk. So he was a very tough counterpart, but he more often than not would find a way to address a problem that we could identify for him, so, yes, he was essential to my ability as Assistant Secretary to support my overseas posts.

Q And you felt when you went to him that he was actively trying to help solve the problems that you brought to him?

A Yes. If he thought something simply wasn't realistic that we were proposing, he would be straight with that. But more often than not, he almost seemed to relish seeing what seemed to be an intractable problem and finding a way to overcome that challenge.

Q And you were there when the Embassy in Tripoli evacuated. Right? Let me be more specific. You were in the NEA Bureau as the Assistant Secretary when the Embassy in Tripoli evacuated?

A Yes.

Q And can you explain how that worked and whether that was

sort of a good example of seeing Under Secretary Kennedy in a crisis situation?

A It was very complicated for a number of reasons. Securitywise, Libyan government, bureaucratic restrictions, exit visas, permissions, things like that, as well as meteorological, the weather. The weather didn't cooperate with us very well. This was a joint effort by DS, NEA, with management, Pat Kennedy, being the key person, to all of us playing very specific roles. I had to work with Bill Burns, the then Deputy Secretary, to try to get the permission of the Libyan government to let us leave because the Libyan government didn't want us to leave. It was a diplomatic defeat for them to see embassies departing. It showed that they weren't able to control the security of their own capital, and I think that they could probably play it back and realize that we weren't going to come back as long as Qadhafi was there. So we had a real diplomatic political problem. Then the logistical problem was how do you get people out given the security and things? And it was Pat Kennedy who was able to find a way to charter the boat from Malta that came in to the port in Tripoli to physically move these people. Again, the weather didn't cooperate with us. It wasn't the easiest thing. Pat looked at every detail of the physical movement of the people, while we looked at the diplomatic efforts of it, and security looked at the security aspects to make sure it could happen. I don't think there was anyone that was more important to that evacuation in Washington than Pat Kennedy. On the ground, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was essential, but in terms of Washington, it was Pat Kennedy

who was essential.

Q Was that a, and maybe there is no typical, but was that evacuation in your view sort of the typical process for how to work through an evacuation?

A I don't think there is a typical evacuation. I hope there never is.

Q At the time of the evacuation, I think we have seen some documents reflecting that there was a delay in the decision announcing U.S. policy against Qadhafi until after we could get the U.S. personnel out of Tripoli. Is that what you recall?

A You know, Qadhafi was very unpredictable. He was under threat, but he was certainly under pressure because of the uprising that was taking place. Given the history of what Qadhafi had done around the world, you had to take into account all contingencies. It may have been very, very remote, but what if Qadhafi had taken our diplomatic personnel as sort of human shields or hostages? You had to take that into account. Again, it may have been remote, but we had to play out all these contingencies; and so, yes, the decision was our statements in the initial days of the uprisings had to take into account the safety of our personnel and the safety of American citizens on the ground.

Q And that was a decision made by the State Department. Do you know who sort of made that decision, or was that just a consensus?

A I remember it was a consensus because it was such commonsense.

Q It was a consensus decision to take into account in U.S. policy and put it at the forefront of the safety of our Embassy personnel?

A The safety of our personnel has to take precedence in a situation like that. You can develop lots of ways to get messaging across to Qadhafi that what he was doing was unacceptable, and we did. We were speaking to his aides and advisers directly. We were using others who had influence on him to pass the message privately that what was happening was absolutely unacceptable. But your public messaging -- which is what governments typically react to because they have to show a public response to a public message -- you have to take into account the absolute essential responsibility of the U.S. Government, the State Department, for protection of American diplomats, other personnel, facilities, and American citizens.

Q And it goes without saying, but I'll ask it anyway, it was a policy decision that you agreed with?

A Yes.

Q I'm just going to take you back to the letter. On the second page where we had left off it reads: Ultimately if an Ambassador believes an issue is sufficiently critical to merit the Secretary's attention, the Ambassador has both the means and the responsibility to make certain it does. In the event of an urgent need for direct contact with the Secretary, however, none of us expected to use direct email contact as there are more effective ways of communicating. For example, the State Department Operations Center, which operates 24/7,

provides better access to senior officials than does any direct cell phone number and can track down department principals any time, anywhere. Do you agree with that statement?

A Yes.

Q And can you explain the importance of using the ops center when you're outside of the U.S., or outside of headquarters?

A Sometimes you can use the ops center in headquarters. The ops center knows where the Secretary is at all times and what the Secretary is doing at all times. So the ops center can reach -- I'll say her, because it was -- I'll use the pronoun her because it was a she -- at any time. And if the Secretary is like in a meeting with the President, the ops center would be able to find someone to pull the Secretary out if needed. If I had a direct cell phone and she had turned it off, what good is that? I needed to reach her urgently. The other thing is, the ops center, with permission of the callers, of the people on the phone, can take notes to alert others of the information. If you're having a one-on-one conversation with the Secretary, and you need follow-up, if you're an Ambassador and you call the Secretary and say, Madam Secretary, I need X,Y and Z, do you expect the Secretary of State herself to drop her entire schedule and then call up Pat Kennedy and say, Pat, we need this; call up Eric Boswell and say, Eric, we need this. You would want someone else to be on the call as well to make sure that the action items agreed upon are followed up, not because the Secretary will neglect, but because that's not the best use of the Secretary of State's time.

So that's the reason why I think using the ops center -- those are two reasons, the ability to reach the Secretary at all times and to know what the Secretary is doing, whether it's appropriate to interrupt or not, and to be able to make sure that action by other parts of the State Department are followed up upon.

Q And you would use that maybe even if you were in the same building as the Secretary?

A Yes. But there were a variety of things I could do and did do. I often would simply stop by Jake Sullivan's office. If there was something where I wanted the Secretary to know something, but I didn't need to engage with her directly and she had a very busy schedule, I would drop by Jake and say, Jake, can you make sure the boss knows X, Y or Z. And then Jake would tell me later if she had any reaction to X, Y or Z, or she perhaps would call me when she had a break and say, hey, I got your message, and I agree with what our proposing or whatever. So it wasn't always using the ops center. It was using whatever means was most appropriate and most convenient at the time.

Q And is it fair to say that your standard practice was not to email the Secretary's unclassified email account in order to get matters to her attention?

A I responded to emails that she sent me. I do not believe that there's a single email I initiated with her. I would have thought it would be inappropriate, you know, email address notwithstanding, whatever the email address is, I think it would have been inappropriate for an Assistant Secretary to email her directly when there are so many

other ways to get her information.

Q And so the lack of extensive email communication between you and the Secretary in her unclassified email account, doesn't reflect a lack of communications between the two of you or the lack of information that was flowing up from you to the Secretary. Is that accurate?

A That's accurate. I think it would be rare if we were both in Washington that we didn't see each other on a daily basis.

Q In here, just further down in that paragraph, it says, quote, "We did not expect the Secretary of State to read each of the hundreds of thousands of cables sent annually to the Department. We knew the Department cables sent under the Secretary's name were only rarely approved by him or her." Is that accurate?

A Yes.

Q And this, I think this particular claim is probably a reference to some allegations that we had seen before that the Washington Post Fact Checker had sort of checked already. Is it fair to say that lots and lots of department cables bear the Secretary of State's name in the signature line, but that does not mean that she approved the decision?

A Yes.

Q In the next paragraph it says, quote, "Ambassadors are given wide latitude in how they operate in the field. We were expected to use our good judgment paired with internal vetting processes in deciding where to travel in country. The same was expected in deciding

with whom Embassy staff should meet. Decisions all the more critical in war zones and other crisis situations." Was this true for the Ambassadors in the NEA Bureau when you were there and for you when you were the Ambassador to Lebanon?

A Yes. The exceptions being that if there is a designated terrorist entity, ambassadors would not be able to freely meet with representatives of terrorist organizations, but in general, yes, this is accurate.

Q And you had spoken previously about giving ambassadors sort of a wide latitude as to how they operate in the field and to their judgments about the field. Can you explain why that is better than sort of micromanaging things from D.C.?

A I don't think the 6,000 mile screwdriver works very well. It was important for me as Assistant Secretary to make sure that the chiefs of mission in NEA countries understood the realities of Washington. They needed to know if they had policy recommendations that simply were not feasible, if they were proposing ideas that were contrary to overall U.S. policies.

It was my job to steer them, to help them understand Washington realities, but it was their job to make sure Washington understood the realities that they were experiencing and they knew about on the ground. And for me to second guess who they were seeing, how they were interpreting interlocutors' views, interlocutors who I may not know or may have only met in very formal settings but they knew quite well, would have just been wrong and would have distorted the foreign policy

process, would have distorted our ability collectively to understand what was happening in any particular country.

Q And if they needed something from you in terms of resources, would they reach out to you?

A Yes, but it wouldn't start that way. It would start at a far lower level and perhaps be worked out without me ever knowing that there was a resource request from a certain post, or perhaps I would be told by my own management people, my own executive office, hey, we need such and such for this embassy or this ambassador, and we have figured out how to do it by shifting this around. Do you approve? And I would approve it without ever having the conversation with the Ambassador. If the Ambassador were not getting any satisfaction at lower levels, at that point the Ambassador may reach me. And I traveled quite frequently, and so ambassadors would often take the opportunity of my travel and take that opportunity to talk to me about issues that they had of concern about Washington support.

Q The next paragraph goes on to say, "In many countries rule of law is rarely what it should be and security issues in some of these countries can be dire. The Secretary has leadership responsibilities for the security of all of those under his or her charge. However, in carrying out that responsibility, any Secretary must rely heavily on senior subordinates and on ambassadors, who have a designated and specific authority in this regard, to flag when a security issue is not being dealt with adequately.

Diplomacy carries inherent risks especially in high-threat

posts. Ambassadors understand these risks and constantly make decisions of how much risk to take and for what purpose. They know that absolute security is not possible and that these decision rarely will be clear-cut. However, they need the latitude to make difficult day-to-day decisions, relying on advice from security professionals and the expectation that they will receive appropriate support from Washington."

Do you agree with those statements?

A Yes.

Q Now the NEA Bureau, especially during your time in that 2011 timeframe, was full of dangerous places. Can you speak to how to balance the policy needs for being in those countries with the security risks?

A It's something that one has to monitor constantly. This is not, as we learned in 2011 in NEA, if we didn't know it already, this is not a static region where you can make a decision today on how one is going to operate in any one country and expect to just be able to continue that procedure. You have to look at this constantly. It's why all embassies are required and do develop tripwires. They develop tripwires in several areas. They develop tripwires on when one might need to draw down Embassy staff, and if you're in a dangerous place, you have tripwires on what travel outside of an embassy compound, often a very fortified embassy compound, what tripwires would close down those sorts of travel requirements. I know this very well from, of course, my time in Beirut. The tripwires are an essential tool because

they're a reminder of what you all collectively agreed were warning signs. Because if you're someplace and the situation is slowly deteriorating, you may not recognize that deterioration, so your tripwires remind you of what it was you said need to alert you.

Q Would that have been a top-down analysis or a sort of bottom up where you gave deference to the ambassadors?

A In my experience, it tends to be a bottom-up where it's developed between security staff, other parts of an Embassy, say, but ultimately approved by the Emergency Action Committee of any post that includes the input of all of the heads of all of the agencies represented at that post.

Q And these ambassadors also talk about relying on the security professionals. I think you also spoke to that. Why would you rely on the security professionals on these sorts of decisions, the security professionals in the field, on these sorts of decisions?

A They have the responsibility, they have the skills, they have the knowledge of best practices. They are the ones who have, I would argue, the proven track record, of fulfilling these responsibilities.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. I think my time is up. So I will say thank you.

Ms. Jackson. Off the record.

[Recess.]

RPTR ZAMORA

EDTR HUMKE

[11:09 a.m.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q I have 11:09, and we'll begin our next hour of questioning.

The minority covered several topics that's on our list, which you'll be happy to know, because it will cut down the number of questions that we overall have. But I do have some sort of follow-up, add-on questions to what they covered.

But first, going back to my first round, we talked about your five trips to Libya in 2011. And you talked about Ben Fishman traveled with you in August of 2011. Did any other U.S. Government personnel, State Department, or interagency personnel travel with you in August of 2011, other than Mr. Fishman?

A My special assistant.

Q And that was?

A His name is [REDACTED].

Q What about your trip earlier in May of 2011?

A I'm sure I had a staff assistant with me because I tended to travel with the staff assistant to make sure that I stayed connected with Washington, but I don't remember who it was.

Q But no other interagency personnel accompanied you on that trip in May of 2011?

A No.

Q Okay. I believe your next trip was then to Tripoli in September. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And did anyone travel with you other than a staff assistant?

A No.

Q And then there was the October trip that you went with the Secretary. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And I assume she traveled with any number of people on that trip. Did you actually travel with the Secretary, or did you travel --

A I was on the road someplace else in the Middle East and North Africa and I met her in Malta and flew in and out with her from Malta.

Q And that was a day trip into --

A Yes.

Q Was there any discussion that she would go to Benghazi?

A I don't believe so, but there had been talk in the spring about a possible trip to Benghazi that never quite worked out for a number of scheduling and other reasons. But I don't believe that September trip included the possibility of Benghazi.

Q Okay. And when the Secretary was there, the embassy in Tripoli had reopened. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Did Chris Stevens come from Benghazi over to

Tripoli?

A I don't believe so.

Q Okay. And was there a reason that he didn't come over to meet with the Secretary?

A I don't believe so.

Q Okay. During the time that the Secretary was in Tripoli that day, were there meetings or discussions about a continued presence by the State Department in Benghazi?

A If there were, it was quite light and in passage. She had a very, very busy schedule going to see a variety of Libyan officials, meeting with representatives of Libyan civil society, delivering a speech. It was a jam-packed day and it wasn't the type of quiet time to have sort of policy discussions like that.

Q Okay. Do you recall any meeting with just the embassy staff and the Secretary that day where discussions about embassy staff, or the vision and future of our diplomatic presence in Libya was discussed internally with State Department personnel?

A She typically met with embassy personnel on her travels more to show support for them rather than have any type of sort of, you know, you can't discuss policy in a town hall, in a town hall-type setting. But I don't recall such a meeting in Tripoli. I either forgot that there was one or perhaps for a number of reasons it didn't happen.

Q And then I believe you also traveled, I think it was, in November of 2011. Is that when Ambassador Rice came to Libya?

A Yes.

Q Did you travel with her?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And I don't remember. She went to Tripoli and Benghazi or one or the other?

A She went to Benghazi and Tripoli, in that order.

Q Okay. And other than your staff assistant and perhaps a staff assistant traveling with her, were there any other representatives of other government agencies or any other U.N. people that traveled in November?

A I wasn't U.N. then. I was State Department. I was still State Department. She had her own staff from the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. That's different from the U.N. Those are also U.S. Government officials, work at the U.S. Mission of the U.N. Samantha Power went from the White House and then there were, you know, various others, but it was a State Department, U.S. Mission to the U.N. with Samantha Power in trip.

Q And do you recall the purpose of Samantha Power being along from the national security staff?

A I think it was natural for her to be included on one of these trips. First of all, she was the one who was the person at the White House who was watching international organizations, looking at the U.S. role in the United Nations, and after all, the effort in Libya was under the United Nations umbrella. So I think it was appropriate for her to witness firsthand what this U.N. mandate had at that time wrought.

Q Going back to your trip in August of 2011, and I believe that's the one that Mr. Fishman accompanied you on. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Was there discussions with Mr. Fishman about the overall U.S. Government involvement in Benghazi during that trip? Or actually, let me ask it this way: What was the purpose of Mr. Fishman going to Benghazi in August of 2011?

A His responsibilities at the NSC included Libya. I don't think they were limited to Libya, but he was the primary staff-level person dealing with the Libya policy at the White House. I don't think he had been to Libya. When he asked me if he could come with me, I welcomed it as a way to help him understand the challenges and opportunities that Libya presented by having a little bit of on-the-ground awareness.

Q Okay. And do you recall if he made subsequent trips to Libya after that?

A I don't know.

Q Okay. If you could just educate us a little bit on what the NSC brings when we're in a place like Libya or we're intervening in another country. I mean, from my reading, Libya was rather unique in what was happening because there was an overthrow of a government as opposed to what was happening in some of the other countries in North Africa.

But explain to us, if you could, or educate us, please, about how the NSC guides and directs what the U.S. Government's role is in a

country such as Libya?

A The NSC plays an important coordinating role. As much as the State Department professionals would like to think that we have a monopoly on representing the U.S. in any country abroad, in fact, that's not the case. And, you know, DOD had interests in Libya. Other agencies we can talk about elsewhere have interests in Libya.

And the NSC basically disciplines us all to try to come up with consensual approaches to things that affect all of our interests. Now that I work at the -- I don't want to talk about the United Nations that much but --

Q Right. And we'll steer clear.

A -- but the United Nations doesn't have such an organ. So I see the value in hindsight of having one part of a bureaucracy that's primary purpose is to make sure that the various other components of the bureaucracy are working in as collaborative a fashion as possible.

Q So the NSC would be the coordinating agency that would direct the State Department to say we want to do X, Y, and Z. We want humanitarian relief. We want support for educational opportunities. We want election monitoring people in Libya, for example. And you, State Department, are in charge of ensuring that these types of personnel get in. Would that be -- I'm just trying to understand how the NSC would undertake its coordinating role?

A There's several roles that the NSC plays in situations such as you described. First of all, there are -- and I'm going to talk more generally than just Libya -- there are often policy directives

that come out of the President, you know, presidential policy directives. The NSC will make sure, to the best of its ability -- that the rest of us are developing our own activities in accordance to those policy directives that come from the White House.

So there is a certain discipline that the NSC is designed to impose on the various components of this government. A second area also I would put into the disciplinarian for coordination. Let's say that the State Department had a certain proposal for an activity in any country, could be Libya or elsewhere. The NSC, through its coordination meetings can say, hey, these other agencies have an interest in that activity or have some equities here. You need to make sure that you're coordinating, you're not just going on your own.

The State Department is being the diplomatic arm of the U.S. Government. The Secretary of State is representing the President to foreign diplomats, can also use the NSC to make sure that other parts of the system are recognizing or supporting that lead role that the State Department does have. So I look at the NSC as being useful in imposing sort of coherence onto the system.

Now, it doesn't also work. This is not a perfect system. And, yes, there were times when we might be annoyed that the NSC is calling another meeting when I felt I had other things to do. But the lack of that coordinating role that I've seen elsewhere makes me appreciate that much more the structures that are set up here.

Q And during your time, and especially focusing on 2011, did the NSC have specific policy directives that they wanted accomplished

in Libya?

A You know, yes, but these were derived collaboratively through this interagency process that we touched on earlier.

Q Okay. Was there a presidential directive on the Middle East overall as a region?

A There was one that was in development, but I don't believe it was issued before I left. I may be wrong.

Q Okay.

Ms. Betz. Not one in 2011? That was issued in 2011?

Mr. Feltman. Maybe there -- I simply do not remember. But we had -- again, I don't feel any lack of, or any shortage of, engagement with the NSC to make sure that, from my own part, I was abiding by policy directions that came from the White House. But in terms of an overarching -- perhaps there was. I simply don't remember.

Ms. Betz. Would they play a role in logistics? Would they make sure staffing was adequate? I mean, did they have a role in sort of the logistics or resources within these policy directives?

Mr. Feltman. They would often ask us what we were doing to implement them, but it wasn't the same as directing staffing, no.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q What was happening in North Africa, in the spring and summer of 2011, in the political upheaval realm, was Libya different than other countries such as Egypt and Tunisia? I mean, how was the -- was the Arab Spring revolution the same in Libya or different than its surrounding countries?

A There were similarities and differences in all of these countries. The similarities were the mobilization of youth. The sort of collapse in the legitimacy of leaderships in all these organization -- in all of these countries, you know, that the legitimacy that Qadhafi had from his -- from the revolution had completely eroded. The legitimacy that Mubarak had, had eroded. So there were a lot of similarities between the phenomenons, the uprisings.

But, of course, how they developed in each country were sui generis based on a number of factors, not only that country's history but how the leadership reacted to those uprisings. Mubarak stepped down. Bashar al-Assad and Qadhafi tried to suppress through violence. Ali Abdullah Saleh in Yemen ultimately negotiated a way out of office.

So how these revolutions -- if you call them revolutions -- how these uprisings proceeded varied. But the fundamental feeling of youth disenfranchisement, of lack of opportunities, of lack of legitimacy by governments, these were similar. These were shared across the region.

Q From a different perspective, can you compare and contrast for us how the governments were able to evolve from these uprisings and talk about -- what I'm wanting to focus on is the capability of the new government to govern.

A Again, there's similarities and differences. But one of the characteristics of the Arab states, that went through uprisings in 2011 and after, one of the similarities from 2010 and before was

that you had strong leaders with weak legitimacy. You know, Bashar al-Assad, Qadhafi, Ben Ali in Tunis, Mubarak in Egypt, these were strong leaders who controlled the levers of the state to benefit their ruler and their supporters. They were strong leaders but they had weak legitimacy.

What happened after these uprisings is you had governments authorities that had strong legitimacy. They had overthrown the dictators. They had removed the dictators, but they were weak leaders. So you had the reverse which allowed, in the case of Egypt, for more or less, a return to the -- you know, after -- you know, it took a couple years but you had a return to the previous authoritarianism in Egypt.

In Tunisia you had a negotiation among the two political parties that led to elections and power sharing that's actually a positive way forward, although it's still weak. In the case of Libya, you've had, unfortunately, that strong legitimacy shatter under the differences between the various constituencies inside Libya. So you had similarities at the large level and then individual developments at the country level.

Q So why did Libya shatter?

A The institutions of Libya were not as strong as the institutions in Egypt or in Tunisia, for example. Qadhafi had hollowed out the institutions, including the armed forces of Libya over the course of his rule in favor of using a policy of fear to have everything revolve around him, meaning that the TNC and then the government that moved back to Tripoli, you know, in, what, September, August, September

of 2011, did not have the same institutional framework on which to develop their own authorities that was present in Cairo or in Tunis. There was a much greater challenge for the authorities in Libya.

And there were also far greater divisions in Libya than there were in, say, Tunisia. Tunisia is a relatively homogeneous country with a -- that's majority middle class, majority owning houses. It's a country that has some strong social foundations -- social economic challenges as well. I don't want to underestimate those.

But in Libya you had the historic divisions between east, west, and south. You had very strong tribal loyalties. Some of the tribes having supported Qadhafi and having benefitted from Qadhafi's rule that were suspicious of the changes. You had an Islamist secular split in Libya as well. You had -- some of these divisions were present in Tunisia as well but not to the extent that there were in Libya. It made the challenge in Libya much greater than the challenge of governance in Tunis.

Q So looking back, what could've been done or what should've been done by the U.S. Government to, if we could, prevent Libya from shattering?

A I don't think that -- we all wish that Libya today looked better than Libya does, without question. I don't think that the United States or any other country can assume that we could have, quote, saved Libya. Obviously, hindsight forces us to think again about decisions that were taken throughout 2011 and 2012.

But let's face the facts: The Libyans did not want foreign

intervention or foreign interference in their internal affairs. They accepted the U.N. Security Council resolution, the civilian protection mandate that NATO then implemented as a tool toward overthrowing Qadhafi. They did not accept a role for NATO troops to come in and secure Libya afterwards. The Libyans made a lot of decisions themselves that have contributed to the sorry state of Libya today.

But the knowledge that we all had that Libya could shatter, we didn't think it was inevitable but that it could shatter, is what has led to some of the things we're discussing today. Why it was that Chris Stevens and I both believed we should maintain a presence for some time in Benghazi, to from try to use our diplomatic interventions to understand if the country was starting to split, if there was anything that we could do to try to influence it. Because I really don't believe that in a country as complicated as Libya that only having a presence in Tripoli would have given us sufficient understanding.

Q So one of the things this committee is to do is to make recommendations. So is a recommendation that if we go into a country like Libya again under -- well, hopefully there are no more countries like Libya, but if we were to go into a country that is facing a similar situation, should we put more personnel in at the beginning? Should there be more of a -- not -- a surge or more personnel from across the spectrum in there? I mean, what would be a recommendation in hindsight of what could have been done differently?

A Please remember that I did retire from the State Department

in May 2012 so the discussions that took place between May and September of 2012 in the U.S. Government I'm not privy to. So what options were considered then I don't know.

You ask a very tough question because we do have the lesson of Benghazi, you know, behind us. And one could argue that contradicts my basic belief which is that we need to have diplomatic presences in critical areas around the world, despite the risks.

And I'm very proud to have served in the Foreign Service where people are willing to go out and serve in these sorts of places, despite the grave personal risk that they face and the personal hardship they often have, separation from families, et cetera. So I do believe that we need to be in places that are dangerous, and we need to find a way to mitigate the risks as best we can, but we're never going to eliminate the risks.

The other thing I believe strongly is that we have to make sure that even if the embassy walls are very high and very thick for obvious security reasons, that we are not closing ourselves off from the broadest spectrum possible of political opinion, of influence, of access to influence makers in a particular country. And so that means that we're going to have to find a way of developing and cultivating a wide base of contacts in countries like Libya to give us insights, influence, et cetera.

Libya is particularly challenging. As I said, there were no diplomatic relations. There were no diplomats in Libya for decades. The U.S. diplomats went back into Tripoli in 2004 and worked in very

restrictive environments. You know, Qadhafi was paranoid about U.S. engagements, so the embassy had faced lots of challenges.

And my salutes to Gene Cretz and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], and all the people that worked there for how creative <sup>they</sup> ~~there~~ were in making contacts with Libyan society despite the fact that the Libyan Government didn't want them to meet with other Libyans. The Libyan Government wanted to maintain a monopoly on contacts with the U.S. Government.

But in most countries an embassy will develop over decades rich contact base, credibility with a wide number of civil society organizations, with universities, with students groups, with lawyers. In Libya, none of that existed, and that was why it was almost heroic what Gene and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and Chris and all these people did.

Ms. Jackson. Would you like to take a break? Let's go off the record.

[Recess.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q I want to turn now to the -- what we call the extension memo from December of 2011 that went out under your signature to Under Secretary Kennedy that we discussed or what you discussed in the last hour. And you had described a process of a series of meetings and discussions and essentially consensus before the memo goes up. Is that correct?

A Consensus among those other parts of the State Department

that had interests or whose support was essential, such as Diplomatic Security, yes.

Q And was OBO another essential partner or stakeholder in the memo, if you recall?

A I don't recall but there would have had to have been -- what I can say for sure is if OBO wasn't part of the process, Pat Kennedy would have made sure that once that memo got there that OBO was included. If we had somehow neglected, I don't remember.

Q Okay. Because they were going to be dealing with the physical security aspects of the villa compound that was going to be leased. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. OBO?

Mr. Feltman. OBO and DS.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q So I just want to makes sure I understand this clearance and consensus process. Is that -- would it be fair to describe that as a commitment from those components of the State Department that they are going to support the expansion into Benghazi as written in that document?

A I believe it reflects -- yes, I believe it would reflect an understanding by all those that were involved in development of that memo, what the responsibilities were that we were all undertaking, and if this memo were approved.

Q Let me take a step away from that particular memo. Were

there any other justification memos that had to go up? For example, was there a policy memo that went to the under secretary for political affairs -- and I don't remember if it was Wendy Sherman at the time, but I think it was -- saying we have a policy political reason for being in Benghazi through the end of 2012? Were there any other corresponding memos that would be approved, or were you on the political affairs sides the person that made that decision by being the author of the memo?

A I do not know if there were other memos that would have been, as you say, accompanying this one or not, you know, parallel, complementary memos. But certainly, I had these discussions with my bosses at the State Department about why Chris Stevens and I both thought that we needed to maintain a presence in Benghazi.

Q Okay. And we're just trying to understand the decision-making flow within the State Department. Would you typically see those types of parallel policy type memos go up, or would you just see more of the, what I would say is more the logistical type memos go forward?

A I mean, there was an earlier -- I know that there was an earlier policy memo that went forward, but it preceded this one, I believe, where we talked about what are the U.S. interests in Libya, what are the U.S. policy goals in Libya in the coming period, where we would say explicitly we're not here for state building. We're here for these specific things.

So I know that there was a memo that went forward so that there

was -- to make sure that we had a general understanding and consensus from our superiors what NEA was pursuing was, in fact, approved above just the NEA level.

Q And would that have gone to your under secretary for political affairs, or would it have gone to the deputy secretaries or to the secretary?

A I'm guessing it went to the deputy secretary with clearance from the under secretary of political affairs, but that's merely a guess. I don't remember. That typically would have been what I would have done and relied on Bill Burns to make sure if there was something specific for the secretary to see that it would have happened.

But, again, I want to underscore, I had ready access to the secretary. I don't think that anything that I would have put in any of these memos would have surprised her just because of the sort of ongoing discussion we had about the Arab Spring.

Q So at the time that the memo to Under Secretary Kennedy went out under your signature, you were confident that it was going to be approved because you had -- it had been massaged, if you will, through all the people who needed to be aware of it and be the decisionmakers?

A I was confident that we had done our best to build the consensus that would lead to a yes. You're never sure when you sign a memo to Pat Kennedy if you're going to get that yes no matter how much homework you've done ahead of time, because Pat Kennedy is the one that's going to be responsible for making sure that we can do what we say we're going to do.

He's the one that's going to be responsible for making sure that the contingencies have properly been followed. He's looking at this not in the NEA context only. He's looking at this in the global context of what resources we have available in terms of financing, staffing, security, et cetera.

So yes, I had a fairly good sense that we had addressed the questions that Pat Kennedy was going to ask me, but I didn't know for sure whether Pat Kennedy would say yes when I sent this memo forward. I hoped he would and I thought he would.

Q Do you recall, did he have any questions or concerns that came back to you after the memo went to him?

A I don't recall.

Q Okay. If he did, who would have been in that process to have known any concerns that he had?

A Had Pat felt strongly about something, Pat would have picked up the phone and called me or Pat would have said, Jeff, come to my office. Pat picked up the phone regularly when he felt the need to. And then his -- I don't know what her title was at the time -- but his -- [REDACTED] who worked for him was in direct contact constantly with my executive director, [REDACTED].

Because, again, we had management issues, I mean, across the region. Embassy Sana'a was the -- was breached by a mob the day after Chris Stevens was -- no, Embassy Sana'a was breached -- because I was still assistant secretary at one point. Anyway, there were all sorts of management security issues that we had because of the reactions of

the Arab Spring that we had to be working directly with Pat Kennedy's office all the time. And so that was usually [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED].

Q And, granted, it's a few years down the road, but just so that I'm clear, you don't recall Pat Kennedy communicating any objections to any component of the December 2011 extension memo prior to his approval of it?

A I don't recall, but perhaps you have documentation he did. But I don't recall.

Q Okay. Actually, we don't have any documentation to that. We're just trying to confirm that the lack of documentation -- that we're interpreting the lack of documentation correctly.

Mr. Kenny. But, Sharon, just to be precise on that point, because you referred to it as a December 2011 memo and we understand there were various drafts and iterations of that. So when you say he had a objection, do you mean with the final or --

Ms. Jackson. With what was approved, yes.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Well, let me just follow up on that exchange. Unless there was an objection, would the signer or the approver, such as Under Secretary Kennedy, would they have seen the drafts, or would you grab the consensus first and then send up one memo?

A I would not send a memo to Pat Kennedy if I didn't think it had a good likelihood of him signing it. This was not just to put me on the record that I thought we should be in Benghazi. This was

to actually try to make sure we were in Benghazi.

And I don't know how [REDACTED] or the various components of M that signed off on -- that were part of the consensus building. I don't know how they operate with Pat Kennedy. I don't know if they showed him earlier drafts or not. I don't know. But I do know that the draft evolved based on the conversations we had with his office and the subcomponents under him.

Q Okay. And, again, just to wrap up this area, when all the different agencies or subcomponents cleared on it, you understood that to be their commitment to provide whatever resources were covered by their world?

A Yes.

Q I want to switch gears to something that you mentioned in passing before, and that is the Libyans were very resistant to having any type of foreign partners having a military presence in their country. And is that a correct recitation of what you said before?

A Yes.

Q Did our Department of Defense want to have a presence in Libya post revolution?

A They wanted to have, you know, defense attache, that sort of office, a traditional defense diplomatic presence. And we also asked DOD for, you know, some security support. But DOD most definitely did not want to have, quote, boots on the ground.

Q Are there other types of Department of Defense missions in a country which they call like mill-to-mill relations or something like

that, or is that what you're referring to when you talk about the defense attache, or are those two different things?

A A typical embassy will have two defense components in it. A defense attache, who is the head of all the defense activities, and a defense attache is essentially the military advisor to the Ambassador who represents DOD diplomatically with local counterparts who does things like that.

The other component tends to be the part of defense that will work on military sales, on military training. If you have an assistance program with a certain country, it will go through the military assistant's office, which typically falls under the DATT, but it's somewhat independent. So that's a typical military presence is a defense attache and a military assistance office.

Q And is the assistance office equipment or training or a combination of both?

A It depends on the country, but it can be both. It can be sales, it can be grants, it can be training. It depends on what the country is.

Q Okay. I'm going to mark an email exchange as exhibit number 2 and ask you to take a look at that.

And Ambassador Feltman, I'd like to note for the record that Chairman Trey Gowdy has joined us here today.

[Feltman Exhibit No. 2

Was marked for identification.]

Mr. Feltman. Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Gowdy. Ambassador, how are you?

Mr. Feltman. I'm fine, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q And for the record, this is an email exchange dated July 26, 2011, between at the top, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. It's subject line is "RE: [REDACTED]."

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Is it correct that this witness is not a party on any of the issues?

Mr. Feltman. I'm not a party to the --

Ms. Jackson. Yeah. But he may be aware of the issues that are discussed in here, and that will be my next question, if he is aware of the issues discussed in this.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q So if you would just take a couple minutes and look at that.

A Okay.

Q Ambassador Feltman, this email discusses generally a DOD presence in Benghazi. Are you aware of that issue being discussed at that time?

A I don't remember.

Q Okay. And in particular, on the second page of that email, the one that is July 26, 2011, at 11:04 a.m. between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], the third line says, "As you know, Chris and [REDACTED] have not welcomed the idea of DOD presence in Benghazi at this point, but we can listen." And signed, "[REDACTED]."

Do you know what they would be referring to based on the review

of this email exchange?

A I do not know the specific case in question. I do know that there was great clamoring from all across the U.S. Government to put personnel in Benghazi. And the facilities and ability to move people around were quite limited, and so we were constantly, constantly trying to resist a huge expansion or a huge surge in visitors. We had to manage the visitor load because, you know, people wanted to be part of New Libya, and they wanted to show that their department agency was there.

And so we had very complicated visitor rotation schedules to make sure we weren't overwhelming a very small staff that had a very important task. So I assume this is in that context, but I don't remember the specific case.

Q Do you recall that [REDACTED] was the DATT, the DATT, liaison with Embassy Tripoli, or he was the Department of Defense attache?

A The last time I was in Embassy Tripoli before the evacuation was in December 2010, and yes, I met with the DATT there.

Q And was that [REDACTED] at the time?

A I believe so. The name rings a bell. I believe so. Because the name doesn't ring a bell from this email exchange. The name rings a bell from something else from my distant past.

Q And just to tie the loop in here, [REDACTED] was on your staff at the time in NEA?

A Yes, she was the Libya desk officer.

Q Okay. And so she would have been the appropriate person

to be having these conversations?

A Yes. If this issue reached my desk or my ears, it must have been at the point of resolution, because I simply don't remember it.

Q And who's [REDACTED], if you know?

A [REDACTED] was the head of the political section in Embassy Tripoli, so she was part of what we sort of jokingly referred to as Embassy Tripoli on the Potomac.

Q In exile often?

A Yes.

Q And so this being in July of 2011, it's when they were in suspended operations from Tripoli and had been brought back here?

A By that summer, we were encouraging staff from Embassy Tripoli to find onward assignments because we realized that the Embassy Tripoli, as we had known it would not be going back in any form like we had it. So we were encouraging people at that point to go. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are both extremely talented professional officers.

Q And it's my understanding that the rotation process for movement within the State Department typically occurs in the summertime?

A Yes, and people have kids at school, people have, you know, obviously their professional obligations are paramount but we also try to keep into account family friendly policies.

Q Okay. During your time at NEA, was there a continued push for a military presence at some level in either Tripoli once it reopened or Benghazi?

A What I remember is the -- again, is the trying to reconcile the number of parts of the U.S. Government that felt they had a need to be present in either place with the realities of the physical and security resources available to us. I don't remember specific discussions with DOD. I just remember the overall thing, that there was an incredible pressure to find ways to move more people into both of those posts. And we were always having to find ways to limit, accommodate, whatever the answer was at the time.

Q Okay. DOD also provided security assets in Libya for you. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And that was in Tripoli?

A In Tripoli.

Q Okay. Do you know why there weren't DOD security assets in Benghazi?

A I don't remember.

Q Okay. Were they ever considered?

A I don't remember.

Q Was there any legal or policy restriction on having the DOD SST in Benghazi, for example, it wasn't an officially-recognized post?

A I don't know. I mean, I will say that reopening Embassy Tripoli was seen as particularly problematic. We knew that there were Qadhafi elements that were still around. The U.S. was obviously the leading country in NATO that had led to the air strikes. There were even, at that time, clashes between militias that were more Islamist

and militias that were more secularist in the Tripoli area.

And an embassy traditionally is often the focus of popular protests against certain policies. And so there was -- and an embassy also -- the embassy also was going to have many, many more components than Benghazi was, so there was a lot of discussion about how to provide the type of security that would allow Gene Cretz to go back, and his staff.

Q But you don't recall similar conversations regarding Benghazi?

A There were security discussions on Benghazi, without question. But I don't remember discussing DOD assets in terms of Benghazi.

Q Okay. But then just to clarify, as -- you don't recall that there was any legal or policy impediment to having an SST in Benghazi such that it wasn't an officially-recognized post?

A I don't know. I don't remember, but I don't know if there are or not.

Q Who would have an answer to that?

A I suppose Defense lawyers.

Q Department of Defense lawyers?

A I suppose. I don't know.

Q Was it your assessment that there was a higher anti-western sentiment in Tripoli versus Benghazi in the fall of 2011?

A Yes.

Q And did that continue through your time until the end of

May 2012?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Was there an anti-western sentiment also in Benghazi?

A There was an anti-western sentiment in Eastern Libya, particularly in the Derna area, which is something we can talk about in another setting. But certainly my sense when I was leaving the department, when I retired in May, was still perhaps wrongly that the security risks were higher in Tripoli than in Benghazi.

Ms. Betz. Did that sentiment change, particularly end of 2011 into 2012?

Mr. Feltman. I would say that it changed but not fundamentally. You know, that, yes, there were question marks we had over -- I had over Benghazi as well. But, again, I could have been wrong about what the real situation was like in May of 2012, my last month of U.S. Government service, but I still assumed that the greater risks were in Tripoli, certainly the greater exposure was in Tripoli. The number of people, the type of facilities we had in Tripoli was far, far greater exposure than in Benghazi.

So, you know, yes, I think that -- yes, my evaluation changed somewhat from 2011 but not fundamentally.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Do you recall discussions in late 2011 and early 2012 of having Chris Stevens go into Tripoli as the charge prior to his nomination as ambassador?

A It was a crazy idea I had. It did not get any traction anywhere else, and it was right that it didn't get any traction. I was wrong in proposing it.

Q Can you elaborate on that?

A You know, I was thinking of just how good Chris was and how symbolically important it would be for Chris, who was there in Benghazi when the revolution, as they called it, was unfolding and succeeding, for having him in Tripoli, I thought that would be really, really important symbolically. It would add more weight to the U.S. return to Tripoli.

But Gene Cretz and [REDACTED] are really good. They had contacts. There was another type of symbolic importance to have them return because they had been -- Gene had been more or less forced out by Qadhafi in December 2010, to have him go back also had political importance. So yes, the idea of sending Chris in to Tripoli was mine, but others in the State Department, in hindsight, I think, rightly, said no.

Q And who were those others?

A I don't think anybody else said yes.

Q Well, just on the off chance that someone else might have said yes, I want to mark as Exhibit 3 -- if you could take a few minutes and look at that.

[Feltman Exhibit No. 3

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q For the record, I would note that this is an email exchange of October 22, 2011, between Cheryl Mills and H. The subject line is "FW: Secretary in Tripoli." And I'm going to focus on the middle exchange but take a few minutes and review this. And it also bears document number State SCB 0045106.

Have you had an opportunity to review that?

A Yes, I have.

Q The middle exchange that is at 2:36 p.m. in the middle sentence is from Cheryl Mills to Gene Cretz. And, again, Gene Cretz was the then-ambassador in Tripoli at the time. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And Cheryl Mills was the chief of staff and counselor to the secretary. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Middle line says, and I quote, "I think we will move forward with seeking to have Chris become charge in January and then nominate him subsequently so he can begin serving."

Do you understand this to be a reference to your idea of having Chris Stevens go in as the interim head in Tripoli pending his nomination?

A Yes.

Q And this is the secretary's chief of staff who is concurring with your idea. Is that correct?

A It appears so.

Q Okay. You had not known that?

A Well, if I had, I'd forgotten it.

Q Do you know why it didn't happen?

A I don't know why it didn't happen, but it could very well be that somebody pointed out that if we knew we were going to nominate Chris that we probably shouldn't be sending him there ahead of agreement, of Senate confirmation, et cetera, et cetera; that it could have been -- it could have had to do with the prerogatives of your sister body up here.

Q And the country and the Libyans?

A I don't think that the Libyans would have had a problem with Chris since they accepted the agreement later.

Q Do you recall any discussions that you had regarding interfering with the prerogatives of the Senate and confirmation as the reason, and if so, who were those conversations with?

A I would suspect -- I don't remember, but I would suspect that both H. and Pat Kennedy would have said, Jeff, you're crazy.

Q Do you recall specific conversations where they said that?

A No, I do not.

Q Do you recall specific conversations with Pat Kennedy alone?

A Not on this subject.

Q Okay. It's our understanding that Ambassador Stevens or soon-to-be Ambassador Stevens came out of Benghazi in late November 2011 and then returned to Libya as ambassador in late May of 2012. Does that coincide with your understanding?

A Yes.

Q And, in fact, he went in just as you were leaving the State Department. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Did you have contact with him in that period between November of 2011 and May of 2012?

A Periodically through the, you know, through the confirmation process, yes, and then particularly in May, because I'm still sick that I had to miss his swearing-in ceremony because I needed to go to a White House meeting on something or other. And so we were communicating about that.

Q Was Chris Stevens kept involved with what was happening in Libya during that period when he left his envoy before he went back as ambassador?

A I don't remember what he did when he came back -- when he came back from Benghazi, but once he was nominated he was in a very special spot that all nominees to be chiefs of mission are in, which is that you have to prepare for your confirmation hearing. You have to have consultations on the hill. You need to stay informed about what's happening in Libya so you can answer questions, but you no longer can take decisions because you're not yet confirmed.

It would be presumptuous of any ambassador or nominee to play a decision-making role on an issue for which you've been nominated but haven't yet been confirmed. So Chris would have had to be kept informed of Libya, but he no longer would have been in a key decision-making

role in Libya until confirmation.

Q Okay. Why was he brought out in November?

A I mean, he'd been there since April. You know, the conditions were very, very difficult in Benghazi. We knew in November -- we hoped -- I don't remember when the White House agreed to nominate him. I don't remember the chronology. But we, by November, hoped that he would become the nominee for the -- to be the ambassador and we hoped that he would get confirmation. And we were just being humane, that he needed to have some kind of break to have a little bit of normalcy in his life. It was not -- it was far from a normal existence, the life he lived in Benghazi.

Q So Chris Stevens comes out in November of 2011 and then the ~~extension memo to Pat Kennedy is not submitted until late December.~~ Did Chris Stevens have any role in crafting that? I mean, when he came out, did he come back to Main State? Did he take a vacation for a month? What was his role, if any, in the extension of Benghazi?

A Certainly, the intellectual arguments mustered in that memo were influenced by, in some cases authored by, Chris Stevens. At what point I don't know, but it was before his nomination, so it was not inappropriate for him to be playing that kind of role. He had some personal things he needed to take care of as well. He took some time off for health reasons.

Q Do you know if he, prior to his nomination, had any meetings with DS or OBO regarding the amount of security that was needed in Libya or the physical security that was required both in Tripoli and Benghazi?

A It would have been typical for an ambassadorial nominee to go around to talk to all the various parts of U.S. Government that played a role in the post he or she was assumed to take after confirmation, but I don't know his specific calendar.

Q Okay. But that would occur after his confirmation?

A No. It can -- after his?

Q Confirmation.

A No. You can talk -- the rules are that you can talk to people about your post once you've been nominated as long as you're not assuming confirmation, like you can't be taking decisions as if you're going to be confirmed. But once you're nominated, you're free game to talk to people about the post you're going to receive inside the U.S. Government. You don't talk to foreign interlocutors about your post until confirmation, but you can talk to U.S. Government officials about it.

Q Okay. What about that period prior to nomination? He comes out in November. He's not nominated until January sometime. What about that time period? What are -- are there any rules governing what he can and cannot do then?

A I don't remember what he did, if he went back to his -- we had snatched Chris out of an office in State Department. I believe it was INL. We had taken Chris back in the spring for Benghazi. And I don't remember if he went back to that office or what he did, but I am confident that we talked to him about his experience, about his thoughts, about his analysis.

We would have been very shortsighted not to use him as a resource as we were trying to analyze various aspects of Libya policy given the fact that he had the type of on-the-ground experience in Benghazi that the rest of us lacked.

Ms. Jackson. I see that I am almost out of time, but I would ask, Mr. Gowdy, do you have any questions for the witness?

Mr. Gowdy. No, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson. Then we will conclude our second hour of questioning and go off the record and take a short break to at least discuss logistics.

[Recess.]

RPTR BAKER

EDTR SECKMAN

[1:06 p.m.]

Ms. Jackson. By agreement of the parties, the majority staff is going to continue asking questions, hopefully until we're done, hopefully in about 30 minutes or so. And then we'll turn it over to our minority colleagues, and then we're going to recess to a brief classified session this afternoon.

So what I want to do first is hand you a document that I'm going to mark as exhibit 4, and it is document C05579435.

[Feltman Exhibit No. 4

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q And it's marked unclassified in an action memo for Under Secretary Kennedy, and dated May 1, 2012. The subject line is "Request for permission for TDY travel of USG personnel to Tripoli, Libya." And I'll give you a minute or two to review that essentially 1-page document.

A Okay.

Q During the course of our investigation, we have learned that it was not unusual when an embassy went on authorized departure or ordered departure, that Under Secretary Kennedy would take over making certain decisions regarding that overseas post during the time period of ordered departure. Is that in keeping with your understanding of how State Department would operate?

A Yes. I have been at many posts on authorized ordered departures over the years given places where I've served, and the rules are that M approves travel to those posts.

Q What I'm unsure about and what I'd like to ask you about is, this is a memo dated May 1, 2012, when Embassy Tripoli had resumed -- and in fact, the memo says that operations were reestablished on September 22, 2011. However, it remains an unaccompanied status. If, on May 1, 2012 -- Ambassador Cretz was there, was he not?

A I believe so.

Q And is it typical that the Ambassador is the person who authorizes travel to a particular embassy?

A Yes.

Q Do you know why this and what we have seen are other memos were still going to Under Secretary Kennedy in May of 2012?

A I don't remember why.

Q Is there anything in the procedures or rules of the State Department that take away this authority from an Ambassador?

A I'm not aware, but I want to refer back to an answer I gave earlier, which was the incredibly tight constraints on housing, beds, logistical support at Embassy Tripoli. And if I had been Gene Cretz at that time, which of course I wasn't, I would be telling agencies, my own as well as others across the board: I'm sorry, I can't take your TDY right now because there is not a bed. Agencies don't like to hear that. Each agency or part of agency would believe that its

mission is more important than anybody else's mission, so perhaps -- I'm speculating here -- there was some internal decision that M could help on this, could help insulate Gene, who had other things to do, with very limited staff, than trying to sift through who were the most important visitors at a post that could not receive everyone who wished to go.

Q Well, I guess I'm just a little confused about that, or it sort of begs the question because Under Secretary Kennedy had 11 offices and bureaus to supervise, and he had a myriad of -- I think at the time the number was 275 overseas posts. It seems like very sort of in-the-weeds decisions to be making given that the Embassy had been reopened for 7, 8 months at the time.

A I'm not copied on this memo. I don't remember seeing this memo, but I have full confidence that [REDACTED], who did work for me, who was really good at her job, would have been following some understanding that we collectively had about how to deal with this.

Q So she would be a person who would maybe have some better understanding or clarity on this particular memo and why these decisions were still going to Under Secretary Kennedy?

A I don't preclude that I knew about this. I simply don't remember.

Q Who else in the NEA front office would have insight on why this was still occurring?

A I would assume that her boss, [REDACTED], who was the EX director and who she was acting for according to what's written here

on this memo, would have been aware, and perhaps the PDAS. Again, I may have been told about this. I may have been briefed about this, but it's not something that 3-1/2 years later, 3 years, or several years later, I remember.

Q I also want to return to the December 2011 memo that extended Benghazi operations into the end of 2012, and I have a copy of the memo if you would like to review it, but I just wanted to ask you, do you recall that that memo called for a principal officer and an IMO, or a management officer and five DS agents?

A I don't recall the exact wording of that memo.

Q Let me pull out that memo.

A Something now 4 years old.

~~Ms. Jackson. So I'm going to mark this as exhibit 5.~~

[Feltman Exhibit No. 5

Was marked for identification.]

Ms. Deck. Just to be clear, when we spoke about the December 2011 memo to Pat Kennedy earlier today, this is the memo that was being referred to. Is that right?

Ms. Jackson. Yes. At least we were.

Ms. Deck. That was my understanding?

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q And for the record, exhibit 5 does not bear a document number, but it is an action memo for Under Secretary Kennedy dated December 27, 2011, from NEA, Jeffrey Feltman. Subject: Future of operations in Benghazi, Libya. And I'll allow the witness a few

minutes to review this. And just for direction, the second full paragraph on page 2 discusses the staffing.

A Okay.

Q And reading from page 2, the second paragraph, the second sentence, it says: Headed by an FS-02 or GS-14 officer, this office would work in close coordination with Tripoli on political and economic reporting; public diplomacy; and commercial work in the eastern part of Libya and serve as, quote, "host," end quote, for the activities of USAID, PM, and any other government TDY personnel in Benghazi. Because this would be a smaller operation, Benghazi would continue to be supported by one IRM TDYer for communications and management issues and one NEA TDY reporting officer in addition to the TDY head of operations.

And then the last sentence reads: "With a full complement of five special agents, our permanent presence would include eight U.S. direct hire employees, two slots for TDY PM and USAID officers, and one LES program assistant."

Does that refresh your recollection as to what the staffing was suggested for the expansion?

A I can read what I approved at the time. I don't remember the specific numbers, but I can read what's in this memo.

Q Can you tell us what an FS-02 or and GS-14 officer is?

A ~~And~~ <sup>an</sup> FS-02 or GS-14 officer I would say would fall in the upper ranks of the mid-level of career professionals. These are not senior Foreign Service officers. It's not even threshold of being

senior Foreign Service officers, but it's someone who has more than entry level experience. It's someone who has had some management experience before, someone who would be, probably had been head of a section of an embassy before, had this person served overseas, so somebody who is past the midranks going upward.

Q And in this memo that is extending the operations in Benghazi through the end of 2012, where it's talking about needing five Diplomatic Security agents, is that then the considered assessment of what was needed to protect the people as outlined in this memo?

A Could you repeat the question, please?

Q Okay. The number of five DS agents, was that the then considered opinion that you needed five DS agents to provide security for this mid-level reporting officer, the IRM TDYer and the NEA reporting officer?

A It would be the considered opinion of those that contributed to this memo who are listed on the clearance page of what was needed in terms of the American security personnel.

Q Okay. And then if the post is also augmented by host nation security?

A In general, that is the case. In a country like Libya, or any number of other countries, diplomatic missions often have to create their own local guard force if the hosts are unable to provide the type of security that we would require.

Q Is it your experience that an ambassador generally requires greater security than a FS-02 or GS-14 officer?

A You know, this varies widely from place to place what the security requirements are. If you're asking me, in general, does an ambassador require more security than an FS-02 officer, the answer would be yes because of the visibility of the Ambassador, the political importance of the Ambassador, the targets to those who might not like the U.S. Government. But I cannot speak about the specific requirements of anybody in Libya past May 30, 2014.

Q But prior to May 30 --

A 2012, I'm sorry.

Q 2012. Yes.

A I'm sorry.

Q Prior to your departure from the State Department, was it your understanding that the Ambassador, whether it was Ambassador Cretz or Ambassador Stevens in those few days that he was there in those few days as Ambassador, would have required a higher level of security than a political reporting officer in the country of Libya?

A It's not something that the NEA Assistant Secretary is going to get involved in unless an ambassador or Pat Kennedy asks the NEA Assistant Secretary to get involved in. These decisions are made by the Ambassador with his chief security officer, the head DS agent on the ground, based on evolving circumstances. I don't think that we -- I think that one should assume that in any post, including Libya, there's an ongoing discussion between whoever is the senior American and whoever is his or her senior security officer about what's the appropriate posture given the circumstances as understood at the time.

Q Do you recall that when he was in Benghazi, then Envoy Stevens had 10 Diplomatic Security agents assigned to his personal protection?

A I don't remember how many he had. Obviously, I would have been a beneficiary when I visited, but I don't remember how many he had.

Q When you would go to visit, would the security detail be augmented in any way? Would you bring DS agents with you when you traveled, or would they be augmented from Egypt or Tunisia or elsewhere?

A When I went to Libya, there was no augmentation because of my presence. If I went to some post that had a lower security profile but I had a higher security threat, there was higher security threat information, DS may send someone there. But in the case of Libya, I relied on what was available on the ground when I visited.

Q When you were visiting with Libya, did you always attend meetings with Envoy Stevens?

A Yes. In May of 2011, my meetings included [REDACTED] because Chris Stevens was back. But in all of my meetings in Libya, when I was working for the U.S. Government and all of my meetings as Assistant Secretary of State -- and that was before my retirement -- I would naturally include whoever was the lead American in those meetings.

Q So there was no sort of divide and conquer, and you each were doing different meetings at the same time that would necessitate there being two teams of security?

A No, we did not divide and conquer, no.

Q Did you have conversations with Chris Stevens regarding the security in Libya and in Benghazi in particular right before he left in November? So let's focus on the time period of your trip there in August through the end of the year?

A I don't remember any security conversations between my trip in August and November with Chris Stevens on security. If there were, they were nothing significant that sticks in my head.

Q During the time when he had been nominated and pending going back to Libya as the then Ambassador, do you recall having discussions with him regarding the security situation in Libya?

A No.

Q Do you recall having conversations with Ambassador Cretz regarding the security in Libya?

A Yes, but they were general conversations. Things like, I could ask Gene: Are you getting what you need? Are you getting along with your DS colleagues? Do you share the same assessments of what's needed? Those are the sorts of conversations that the Assistant Secretary has with chiefs of mission, and those are the sorts of conversations I had with Gene Cretz after he went back to Tripoli.

Q Did he express frustration with you that he was not getting what he asked for in Libya?

A I don't remember. I don't categorically say no, but I simply don't remember. What I remember is his frustration with the number of people who wanted to come to Libya that he could not

accommodate.

Q Would you read cables that were issued by Embassy Tripoli if they pertained to security matters or requests for security?

A Mixed because sometimes I would; sometimes I wouldn't. I knew that others on my staff were monitoring this, and I would, you know, rely on others to alert me if there was something that they felt was not being addressed that should be addressed. They were, as I said before, I was monitoring developments in 19 countries during a time when the region was in turmoil, and I tended to read in many cases summaries of cables rather than entire cables.

Q And who would have been that person that would have kept you apprised of issues?

A It would have been [REDACTED], [REDACTED], Ray Maxwell. It would have come up the system to me. We had morning meetings every day with the senior leadership of NEA, and that was an opportunity, those were operational meetings. Those were not policy meetings. Those were meetings where we could say: Okay, what has to happen? It could be operations. Like what's the paper we need to get from the Secretary of State because she's traveling today, or it could be about how do we make sure that this congressional visitor to Benghazi is going to be well taken care of. And security issues would come up in those meetings if those working for me felt that I needed to engage on something -- I needed to call Pat Kennedy, I needed to call Eric Boswell, I needed to make decisions -- things like that when I was Assistant Secretary.

Ms. Jackson. I'm going to hand you what I've marked as exhibit 6, which is an email exchange at the top, but it includes a cable, which is known as 12 Tripoli 130.

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

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q The email exchange at the top is from a [REDACTED], dated March 29, 2012. And the subject line is: "Request for DS TDY and FTE support." It bears document No. C05389197. I'll give you as much time as you need to review that.

A This cable reminds me of one thing that Chris Stevens was doing after his deployment after November 2011 in Benghazi. He took the FACT course. I remember he took the FACT course before he went out to Tripoli as Ambassador.

Q Is that the Foreign Affairs Counterterrorism Training course?

A Yes.

Q Was that a requirement for individuals who were going to serve in Libya?

A Libya and other posts of similar problematic security profile, yes.

Q The high-threat posts?

A Yes.

Q Was that generally restricted to war zones, near war zones?

A War zones, near war zones, places that had a particular

security threat against American personnel.

Q And how long was that course? Do you recall? Was it a matter of a week, or more like 4 weeks or 6 weeks?

A It was an evolving course. When I took it myself, I think it was only a week, and I think it was expanded to 2 weeks, I believe.

Q Going back to exhibit 6, this is a -- would you agree with the summary that this is a cable sent in by Embassy Tripoli for security support for the U.S. State Department personnel at the Embassy and in Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q And in particular, on the third page of this, it says, in the paragraph entitled DS Agent Support in Benghazi, it reads, Post requests continued supported for five TDY DS agents in Benghazi on 45- to 60-day rotations.

Do you know, are you aware that this cable was not granted in full by DS?

A No.

Q This was never brought to your attention?

A Not that I recall, but I would be very surprised if people in the bureau were not working on this, working on the basis of this cable. It's a very well-argued cable. It reflects many of the issues I have raised today, such as the incredible number of people wanting to go on VIP visits and TDY, so it reflects the reality that I remember more than 3-1/2 years ago, so I'd be very surprised if my staff, who I had full confidence in, weren't working on this at DS.

Q But would it surprise you that the State Department, given what you've told us about the Ambassador is the person on the ground and is supposed to know the situation on the ground and what security resources are needed to protect his people, that the Ambassador did not get what he requested, given that you've described this as a very well-reasoned cable?

A I can't speak for this cable because I don't remember the work -- I don't remember the cable or the work that was done afterwards. I do know that when I was Chief of Mission in Beirut, I asked for lots of things, including regarding security, that I did not get. There was constantly a dialogue and discussion between what our essential needs were, what we thought would make it easier or safer to do our jobs, and what was available in Washington. When I was Ambassador in Beirut, I would have loved to have had more armored vehicles to allow more Embassy officers to get off the compound more frequently. That just wasn't possible because of cost issues. So I suspect that there was an ongoing discussion between DS, NEA, and Embassy Tripoli, about which of these could be met, how security needs might otherwise be addressed through alternative means. I think this is a very well-argued cable, but it doesn't mean that I think that everything in here was absolutely essential to Tripoli security. I don't know. I wasn't part of those discussions.

Ms. Betz. Then going back to exhibit 5, when there is a specified number of agents, would that be the essential number of agents that you or NEA with DS concurrence felt was a minimum number of agents or

essential to the operating of the mission? I guess the bottom line is trying to reconcile what was cleared here, what was being requested here, and then, you know, ostensibly not being fulfilled when an Ambassador was making these requests.

Mr. Feltman. I do not remember and perhaps didn't know at the time, but I certainly don't remember what were the exact numbers of people in different areas of Benghazi or Tripoli's work in spring of 2012. I simply don't remember. It's been a long time, and I've done a lot since that time. But, yes, I see the number five on a memo I approved in terms of DS agents in Benghazi, and I see that number five repeated here, so there's a consistency between these two memos that reflect what must have been an NEA, DS, Embassy Tripoli understanding of what Benghazi needed for support. But how this was followed up on, I simply don't remember.

Ms. Jackson. And I guess what we're trying to understand is why if DS was cleared on five, does an Ambassador have to write a cable saying we want five?

Mr. Feltman. I can't speculate on what happened in 2011 and 2012.

Ms. Jackson. And just again, using documents to go back in time, since it is difficult to remember, I'm handing you an email exchange, dated February 9, 2012, from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED], bearing document No. C05390170, and the subject line is, RE: Draft email for your clearance, lack of security staffing at Benghazi undermining mission. I'll give you a few minutes to review that document.

[Feltman Exhibit No. 7

Was marked for identification.]

Mr. Feltman. Okay.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Do you recall that, in February of 2012, that this issue was brought to your attention?

A I recall this was brought to my attention at some point, but I don't know when it was brought to my attention.

Q Okay. As we read the bottom of page 1 of this document, it appears that [REDACTED] has drafted an email for you to send on and/or perhaps drafted an email for [REDACTED] to send on to you. Is that your reading of this memo?

A It's my reading of the memo, but I note that I'm not copied on this, and I don't remember receiving this email. I remember the issue. I don't remember receiving the email. Perhaps you have documentation I did.

Q We don't, which is why we're asking the question as to whether you recall receiving this?

A I don't recall receiving the email. I remember the issue, but I, again, point out that this has been now nearly 4 years ago.

Q Was this a recurring problem that was brought to your attention?

A It was a recurring problem that was brought to my attention across NEA. I don't remember it being specific to Libya. This memo has a particular critical need in Libya, but we were always having to look for the resources. Whether it was security resources, financial

resources, OBO resources, or Embassy, there was a constantly looking across a rapidly change NEA region to figure out how in a time of frozen or declining resources overall for the State Department, we could have what we needed, what we felt we needed.

Q Do you recall elevating this issue to Under Secretary Kennedy as is suggested in this email exchange?

A I talked to Pat Kennedy about many issues. He initiated discussions. I initiated discussions. I talked to Eric Boswell about many of these issues, but I simply don't remember whether this specific issue was raised. I suspect it was. This is a pretty serious one.

Q Why is this a serious issue?

A If we're talking about having the presence that, according to [REDACTED], is on lockdown because of lack of security resources, well, then there is no reason -- one could question why we're there. And that would, of course, concern me.

Q And was [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] some of your most trusted employees in NEA?

A I had many trusted employees of NEA, but, yes, they were among the people who I had full confidence in.

Q At the top of this email, [REDACTED] writes to [REDACTED], she goes: "Also, the Secretary asked last week if we still had a presence in Benghazi. I think she would be upset to hear that, yes, we do but because we don't have enough security, they are on lockdown."

Were you ever in a meeting where the Secretary asked if we still

had a presence in Benghazi?

A No. That part of the memo surprises me.

Q Do you have any reason to believe that [REDACTED] would have misspoken in any way?

A No.

Q Was she a very careful person?

A In my experience, yes.

Q One last area, and then I'll conclude. Did you know an individual by the name of [REDACTED]?

A I met him when I was in Benghazi.

Q What was his role or association or affiliation with the Benghazi mission, if he had one?

A In terms of his contractual relationship with the Benghazi mission, I don't recall. I think there was something -- I don't know that he was a locally engaged staff or he had some contractual relationship. We eventually had some contractual relationship with him, but I don't remember what it was. But, in general, he was someone that is familiar to all of us who had served overseas working for the Foreign Service, which is someone who befriends a mission and has the ability to open doors, provide contacts, provide analysis. It's important not to be over relying on any of these people because you never know what their agendas may be, but it's also important to take advantage of any help that they could have in providing local contacts, local understanding, local context. He was one of those that every, every American who serves overseas has, the type of contact every U.S.

diplomat serving in a political and leadership role would have.

Q He's the person who sort of has his ear to the ground, if you will?

A Yes, he would have his ear to the ground. But, again, one cannot, and Chris did not, over rely on any one person. Nobody has a monopoly on information in any country.

Q Were there other Libyans that you're aware of that had a contractual relationship with the Benghazi mission?

A I mean, I met other locals when I was there, so we must have had some other local staff in some relationship because I did meet with locals there. These are not the sorts of things that the Assistant Secretary is going to get concerned about, unless it's brought to his attention that one needs to.

Q Actually, let me rephrase. In the relationship or undertaking the duties that [REDACTED] did, being sort of your eyes and ears and making introductions, was there any other Libyan under contract or being paid in any way that you're aware of in Benghazi?

A No, I'm not aware of any others, but if the question is intended to suggest that we only talk to people who [REDACTED] would set up for us, that answer is clearly no.

Ms. Jackson. That was not the intent of the question at all. That's all the questions I have. Let's go off the record.

[Recess.]

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

Q Let's go back on the record.

A I would like to mention something again about exhibit 7, which was an email exchange between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] about Benghazi and Benghazi being on lockdown. Because as I said, this surprises me. It surprises me that this was written in this particular way, because, A, I have total trust in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] based on the experience I had working with them. But, B, I also had sort of an ongoing conversation with Secretary Clinton about developments in the Middle East and North Africa, and I don't know what the explanation is for what's written here, but I can't imagine that she would have been surprised at having a presence in Benghazi. So I'm not quite sure what to make of this. I want to make that clear because the decisions of personnel -- not numbers -- but where people were in the Middle East was something that interested the Secretary greatly, and I'm convinced that she knew that we had maintained a presence in Benghazi beyond the return to Tripoli in the fall of 2012 -- the fall of 2011.

Q Okay. So just to make the record clear, we're looking at exhibit 7, and the part that you were finding surprising was the statement in here written by [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] that, and I'm quoting, that "also the Secretary asked last week if we still have a presence in Benghazi." That's the part that you're talking about?

A Yeah. I don't know because I wasn't part of this exchange, but I can see the Secretary saying: Hey, we still have those people in Benghazi, don't we? I could see something like that, that she's affirming the knowledge that she had, but this more than any of the

other exhibits that you guys have shown me today sort of surprises me, and I don't quite understand it because I know the Secretary knew that we still had people in Benghazi.

Q I wouldn't worry about it too much. I think we have already spoken to [REDACTED] about it, and it doesn't seem that there was very much to it.

Let's stay on that document, though, because we're on it anyway, and I want to draw your attention to the lower part of it, not that upper part that you were talking about, but the original sort of email from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] with the subject line, "Draft email for your clearance," ostensibly for [REDACTED] clearance. Within that email, which you never received and you have already explained you don't recall, she is talking about issues with being able to, issues with not having enough security such that posts could travel off of post. Is that right? So it's, and I'll quote: "Post needs a minimum of three agents to facilitate one movement at a time in town and one to remain on compound." I'll quote: "DS staffing has dropped to two agents several times over the last few months between rotations, which has prevented the PO from leaving the compound. DS tells post it is unlikely they can fully staff Benghazi due to broader staffing challenges across NEA and has suggested we adjust our expectations about movements and outreach."

So is it fair to say that this is a discussion about whether there's enough DS agents to fulfill the mission in terms of exiting the post and meeting and engaging with individuals off post?

A That's exactly what it's about. I also do want to underscore that people also come to us. When I was in Benghazi visiting Chris in August -- visiting Chris -- when I was in Benghazi having meetings with Chris in August of 2011, we combined going off compound to see certain officials with receiving others on the compound. So this is -- the idea of not being able to move off compound is a severe constraint without question, but it doesn't preclude contacts all together.

Q And, also, is it fair to say that nothing in this email is raising a specific concern about the security of the people on compound, as in we don't have enough agents to defend the compound and keep our people safe?

A This memo, as I read it, is about getting people off compound, what is required to get people off compound to meetings elsewhere.

Q Around this same time period, [REDACTED] came into D.C. and met with Deputy Assistant Secretary Lamb about some of these issues. Were you aware of that?

A I may have been at the time. I don't remember.

Q And if she was meeting with DAS Lamb, is it possible then that that conversation was being worked at a lower level below you, that it never got brought to your attention?

A I mean, yes. In general, the State Department, like other organizations, tries to address problems, overcome challenges, come to solutions, at lower levels. If it can be done at the desk officer

level, it doesn't go higher. If it can't be done there, it goes office director and on up. So if [REDACTED] and Charlene Lamb were working on something, it wouldn't necessarily have come to my attention. Even if they had reached an absolute block in the ability to reach consensus, it would have gone to the DAS or PDAS level before coming to me.

Q Do you recall whether anyone, Ambassador Stevens, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], Ambassador Cretz, or anyone else asked you for help to intervene and ensure that they received more security assistance in Benghazi?

A I simply don't remember.

Q And if they had done that, what would you have done?

A I would have started by talking to Eric Boswell. I would have referred back to the memo that we talked about today, the December memo, in which there was a clear consensus of what the needs were in Benghazi and how to address them at that time. And I would have, had Eric and I not been able to come to agreement between ourselves, which would have been rare -- Eric and I usually could -- then I would have asked to see Pat Kennedy.

Q Do you recall having that experience happen?

A I don't recall this. It happened a lot where I would talk to Eric or Pat about issues, but what the specific subjects were that I talked with them each time 4 years ago, I don't remember.

Q And would you recall if it had not gotten resolved, essentially so -- if this issue in Libya had gone on, you would have talked to Eric Boswell; he would have told you no. Or you would have

talked to Pat Kennedy, and he would have said no to you. Would you recall if that had not gotten resolved in any way?

A I don't recall. I don't recall one way or the other, but I think I would have recalled if we had had a big fight about it.

Q And did anyone in Benghazi or Tripoli ever tell you that they thought that the security situation in Benghazi had gotten so dangerous that they recommended evacuation?

A No.

Q And if they had, would you have taken the request seriously?

A It would have depended on the source, and I would have wanted others to look across the spectrum of information we had available to us to evaluate in the context of what else we knew. But it is a serious allegation, so I would not have just dismissed it without further consideration.

Q And certainly if the Ambassador, Ambassador Cretz or later Ambassador Stevens, had recommended evacuation?

A Oh, had they recommended -- I thought you meant just the random Muhammad on the street. Had Chris Stevens or Gene Cretz made such a recommendation, that would have been extremely serious. It would have been taken seriously by all of us in Washington.

Q Let's go back up to essentially the top of that exhibit 7, talking about the Secretary. There have been some allegations to the effect that Secretary Clinton's attention shifted to neglect of Libya or that her level of care or concern fell in 2012. In your view, did Secretary Clinton essentially check out on Libya in 2012?

A No.

Q Did she turn a blind eye to Libya in 2012?

A No.

Q Did she turn a blind eye to Benghazi in 2012?

A No.

Q Did she ever say or do anything that suggested to you that she did not care about the Department's personnel in Libya?

A Oh, Heavens, no.

Q Or that she didn't care about the Department's personnel who were assigned in Benghazi?

A No.

Q And you say, "Heavens, no," I assume because --

A She was always asking me how people were doing. She knew how hard it was for people at these posts in this time of great turmoil. She knew how hard NEA was working. She came down to NEA a couple times just to give us sort of a morale boost. I don't remember her specifically asking about this or that post. I just know that she was always asking me: How are your people doing, Jeff?

Q And in her conversations with you, it was your impression that she took the safety and security of American personnel overseas seriously?

A Yes.

Q Let me turn your attention to exhibit 6. This went over in the last round too, and I just want to bring your attention to the sort of DS agent support in Benghazi. So this is a cable that I believe

you said in the last round you don't recall whether you ever saw, from March 28, 2012, from Tripoli to D.C., to provide extra security in D.C. In that first line, it reads, and this is the sort of first full paragraph on the second page of the cable: "DS Agent Support in Benghazi: Post requests continued support for five TDY DS agents in Benghazi on 45- to 60-day rotations." Is there anything about that sentence that implies to you reading it now that they were not getting the support for five TDY DS agents? I mean, it says "continued support."

A I read what I read, which is continued support, that there must have been some concern that at some point, given the limitations on DS resources globally, that there was a worry that at some point, DS may say: We can't do this any longer.

So, to me, this reads as putting down a marker. You know, those people you agreed to back in that December 27 memo, we still need them.

Q I now want to shift quite a bit to your time at the U.N., and I'm not going to ask you about conversations or discussions at the U.N., but I do want to just briefly talk so we can sort of draw some lines around your actions at the U.N.

When you were in your position at the U.N., you had already retired from the U.S. Government in May. Is that right?

A I left the U.S. Government entirely in May. I retired and took a break, took a break in service before I was hired by the U.N. of 5 weeks or something. So as of May 30, 2012, my only -- I have two connections with the U.S. Government. One is I'm a retiree. I have

a Foreign Service pension like my colleagues who have retired from the Foreign Service. And, second, the United States is an extremely important member state of the United Nations, and in that context, I continue to engage with U.S. officials on issues on which the U.N. is working, as I engage with Russian, South African, and Brazilian officials.

Q But from your capacity in the U.N., would your statements from a position at the U.N. be on behalf of the U.N. or behalf of the U.S.?

A I work for the United Nations. I do not work for the U.S. Government. I have taken an oath of office to the United Nations that I do not represent the interests of any member state. I represent the principles and the values of the charter of the United Nations, to the best of my ability.

Q So just two quick followups from exhibit 6, which is the cable from March 28, 2012. Are you aware of whether or not this cable was responded to by Diplomatic Security?

A I am not aware.

Q And do you see any action items for NEA within this cable?

A I would hope that my staff would be following up with DS on this cable. The action itself is in DS' purview. But Embassy Tripoli personnel are in Tripoli. NEA staff is in Washington, so I would have expected my staff to be representing Embassy Tripoli's interests in seeing some of these issues followed up on, so I hope that the very fine staff that worked for me was following up on these issues

once this cable came in.

Q So, at this point, I'm just going to move to something that we do with all the witnesses. I'm going to ask you a series of questions that we ask every witness about a series of public allegations that have occurred since the attacks.

A These are identical questions?

Q Identical questions to every witness. It's our understanding that even where the questions may have been answered by another investigation, that our colleagues in the majority are still pursuing some of these allegations, so we ask the same questions to everybody just to make sure that we have covered them. What I'm asking for is not sort of an opinion, but just whether you have firsthand information, and if you don't, we'll just simply move on to the next one, and there's about a dozen, so please bear with me.

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

A No.

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

A No. I, again, had left the U.S. Government service months before the attack.

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

A No.

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

A No.

Q It has been alleged that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risks posed by Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for military operations Libya in the spring of 2011?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton --

A No.

Q Let me just ask it, sir. Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risks posed by Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for military operations Libya in spring 2011?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that the U.S. mission in Benghazi included transferring weapons to Syrian rebels or to other countries. A bipartisan report issued by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence found that, quote, "The CIA was not collecting and shipping arms from Libya to Syria," end quote, and that they found, quote, "no support for this allegation," end quote.

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

A No.

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

A No.

Q A team of CIA security personnel was temporarily delayed from departing the Annex to assist the Special Mission compound, and there have been a number of allegations about the cause and the appropriateness of that delay. The House Intelligence Committee issued a bipartisan report concluding that the team was not ordered to, quote, "stand down" but that instead there were tactical disagreements on the ground over how quickly to depart. Do you have any evidence that would contradict the House Intelligence Committee's finding that there was no standdown order to CIA personnel?

A No.

Q Putting aside whether or not you personally agree with the

decision to delay temporarily or think it was the right decision, do you have any evidence that there was a bad or improper reason behind the temporary delay of the CIA security personnel who departed the Annex to assist the Special Mission compound?

A No.

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

A No.

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

A No.

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

A No.

Q It has been alleged that CIA Deputy Director Michael Morell altered unclassified talking points about the Benghazi attacks for political reasons and that he then misrepresented his actions when he told Congress that the CIA, quote, "faithfully performed our duties

in accordance with the highest standards of objectivity and nonpartisanship," end quote.

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

A No.

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

A No.

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

A No.

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

A No.

Q It has been alleged that a team of four military personnel at Embassy Tripoli on the night of the attacks who were considering flying on the second plane to Benghazi were ordered by their superiors

to stand down, meaning to cease all operations. Military officials have stated that those four officials were instead ordered to remain in place in Tripoli to provide security and medical assistance in their current location. A Republican staff report issued by the House Armed Services Committee found that, quote, "there was no standdown order issued to military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi," end quote.

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

A No.

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

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

A No.

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

to deploy?

A No.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Thank you. Let's go off the record.

[Whereupon, at 2:19 p.m., the committee proceeded in closed session.]

## 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>
46	15	Replaced "out to lunch" with "out of touch."
86	4	Replaced "there" with "they."
111	23	Replaced "And" with "An."

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

INTERVIEW OF: JEFFREY DAVID FELTMAN

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2015

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held in HVC-302, Capitol Visitor Center, commencing at 2:27 p.m.

Appearances:

For the SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI:

SHARON JACKSON, DEPUTY CHIEF COUNSEL

KIM BETZ, MEMBER OUTREACH LIAISON

SUSANNE SACHSMAN GROOMS, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR/GENERAL COUNSEL

PETER KENNY, MINORITY SENIOR COUNSEL

RONAK DESAI, MINORITY COUNSEL

ERIN O'BRIEN, MINORITY DETAILEE

For the U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE:

ERIC SNYDER, SENIOR COUNSEL

LAURA DECK, ATTORNEY-ADVISED

Ms. Jackson. We will go back on the record. We are in a classified setting at this time. We anticipate that -- or at least I anticipate that any question and answer or any question I pose to you will only elicit an answer at the secret level. However, if you believe that your answer will go to a higher level, if you could indicate to us. We are cleared -- I believe all of us have been cleared up to the TS level for this session.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Yes.

Ms. Jackson. So we can go higher than that. Obviously, if it's SCI on top of that --

Mr. Feltman. I don't have SCI clearance any longer.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. Did you at the time?

Mr. Feltman. Yes.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. So I just have about four areas that I would like to ask you about, but first I would like to ask a follow-up from the last round of questions.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Sharon, I just wanted to interject. To the extent that -- and I understand that we're not going into SCI, but one of my staffers is not cleared for SCI. So if there was something SCI, we would definitely not say it.

Mr. Feltman. I can't talk SCI. I've been read out of all the SCI programs and I cannot talk SCI.

## EXAMINATION

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q So, Ambassador Feltman, since you've been read out of SCI programs, if you're aware of information that reaches that level, just tell us that there is information at that level and nothing else, if you're allowed to say that, and then we will take it from there.

But before we get to that, in the last set of questions, you were asked a series of questions about the Secretary's involvement or concern about her personnel. During 2011 and 2012, did the Secretary ever convene or chair a meeting or direct a meeting to be held regarding the security of State Department personnel in Libya?

A I'm not aware of any.

Q Okay. Are you aware that she ever convened or chaired or directed a meeting to be held regarding the security of any State Department personnel in overseas posts in North Africa?

A Yeah, we talked about North Africa a lot with the Secretary, as I talked about many issues with her. And I knew that if I needed to talk to her about something that she was there, whether it was security or anything else. And I assumed that she was operating under the assumption that the rest of us were doing our jobs. So I don't recall any such meeting by her, but I know she would have been expecting the rest of us to have such meetings.

[Feltman Exhibit No. 8

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q I'm going to hand you what I've marked as government exhibit 8, which is an -- it bears document number State SCB 0045021. It is an email exchange at the top between Jacob Sullivan and H. dated March 29, 2011. And I see down at the bottom that you are on the original email exchange from a Phillip Gordon to Bill Burns, yourself, and Jacob Sullivan, and the subject is "Libyan."

I'll give you a moment to take a look at this email exchange.

A Okay.

Q The bottom email exchange which is to you and others says that [REDACTED] says that the plane of the Libyan mystery visitor has just landed. Said he'd keep us posted as details emerge.

And then at the top it says, [REDACTED] now says the issue of the visitor is, quote, 'more complicated than they thought,' end quote, and he prefers to send me a secure message in the morning. Will let you know."

Who was this Libyan mystery visitor?

A [REDACTED]

Q [REDACTED]?

A [REDACTED]

Q Thank you. And was he brought to the United -- well, was the plane landing in the United States?

A No.

Q Okay. Was it a European country?

A It was the United Kingdom.

Q Okay. And what was the purpose of [REDACTED] coming to have

a meeting?

A It was never clear even afterwards.

Q Okay. Who met with [REDACTED]?

A The UK officials, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Q Okay. Were any U.S. Government personnel part of that meeting?

A I do not believe so.

Q Okay. And so the information that came to the U.S. Government came from the UK officials?

A Regarding this Libyan mystery visitor to the UK, yes, I believe so.

Q Is there anything else you can tell us about this Libyan mystery visitor?

A I'm still intrigued by this to this day [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

It was -- again, I'm not quite sure whether, you know, what was going on.

Ms. Betz. [REDACTED]

Mr. Feltman. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q We touched earlier on any anti-Western sentiment in the eastern part of Libya and you had made a reference that that might be better discussed in a classified setting. So could we have you

elaborate on your awareness of anti-Western sentiment in eastern Libya during 2011 and 2012, during your time with the State Department.

A The city of Derna in eastern Libya was off limits to Americans at the time because of the Islamist extremist flavor of that particular city. And eastern Libya was also under Qadhafi -- I'm not saying sponsored by Qadhafi but just during the Qadhafi era -- eastern Libya had been the source of many of the foreign fighters who had flown to Iraq via Damascus, and so that's what I was referring to.

Q Okay. And when you say it was off limits, you mean that the U.S. Government refused to allow its personnel to go there, or was it the Libyan Government such as it was, refused to allow U.S. Government people to travel there?

A Perhaps I used the term too glibly. But in general, as, you know, Chris Stevens and his team would go around eastern Libya outside of Benghazi, an area that they tended to avoid was Derna, as they evaluated the security conditions to permit moves, because Derna was known to be harboring basically Al Qaeda sympathizers.

Q And did the number of part time in and around that area that were harboring anti-Western sympathies, did that population grow? Did it become more robust throughout 2011 and 2012?

A I don't think any of us -- when I was working for the U.S. Government and when I had access to information that was available to U.S. Government officials, which, again, ended in May 2012, I don't think any of us would have been able to characterize how deep, how widespread was anti-Americanism. Because there was a great outpouring

of appreciation to the United States in Benghazi, for example, but obviously that didn't reflect all of Benghazi. And how you calculate what the percentages are, I don't know.

I remember going, for example, on that Susan Rice visit that we referred to earlier in November 2011, Susan Rice was in many ways the symbol for Libyans of U.S. support for their struggle. Susan Rice had voted in favor of Resolution 1973 in March of 2011. That resolution is what authorized the protection of civilians and led to the NATO air strikes, contributed to the overthrow of Qadhafi.

And at the time of that vote, there were those jumbotrons set up in downtown Benghazi, and the Libyans watched the vote at the security council. And there was apparently -- of course, I wasn't there. I was in Washington or perhaps traveling elsewhere. But apparently when Susan Rice raised her right hand to vote, and that was captured on those jumbotrons in Benghazi, that everybody in these crowds and the squares of downtown Benghazi just erupted into applause and cheers, because at that point they figured that the United States, meaning the world, was on the side of the struggle.

So when I went to Benghazi with Susan -- accompanied Susan Rice in November 2011, the crowds of people cheering her in the streets were overwhelming. It was the type of crowds that gave you, you know, goose pimples on your neck to see this. And everybody, whenever they would see her, the motorcade would pass, would raise their right arm mimicking what they had seen her in terms of voting for the resolution.

So you knew that there was pro-American sentiment in Benghazi from

these sorts of outpourings of appreciation of the United States. But you also knew that that wasn't the whole story, that the elements in Derna were not only in Derna. But how you balanced what the percentages were, none of us had a really good handle on that.

Q Was there intelligence reporting that came to you in your role as the assistant secretary for NEA regarding extremist elements, Islamic extremists in the eastern part of Libya or elsewhere in Libya?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And from that sources would you get intelligence products?

A From the sources that are represented around this room with the symbols here on the wall.

Q Okay. So from all members of the United States Government intelligence community?

A Well, I mean, you know, the State Department assistant secretaries of State did not tend to get things from the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency on Benghazi but, you know, INR would produce reports, the agency would produce reports, DIA would produce reports.

Q And did you read those reports?

A Yes. I was briefed every morning at 7:00 a.m. by an analyst who came in from the agency with reading for me and the ability to help me understand what I was reading. And this was -- if I was in Washington, this was an essential meeting that I attended every day.

Q Okay. And did you also receive DIA reports?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And did you have separate briefings on the DIA reports or would you --

A No.

Q -- receive those in written form?

A No. I received those in written form. But let me say that the agency briefers that were provided to me did not only look at agency products. They looked across the board. They were essentially a classified clipping service for me, and they helped me understand what it was I was seeing.

You know, they could identify trends because they were watching a situation over a course of months and could help me, again, identify what was important about the information I was reading.

Q Okay. And did you notice a trend during 2011 and through the end of your tenure with the State Department in the end of May 2012 that the radical Islamic extremists were increasing especially in eastern Libya?

A What I recall is a growing awareness that there was a secular Islamist split in Libya. It had been papered over during the overthrow of Qadhafi because the secularists and the Islamists had joined forces to try to overthrow Qadhafi, but that after the overthrow of Qadhafi that this secular Islamist split was growing and was putting at risk the accomplishments of the overthrow of Qadhafi. That was absolutely clear.

In terms of growing -- to answer your question specifically, the

answer is no, but there were other trends that I did notice.

Q And was the Islamist threat principally centered in eastern Libya?

A No. There were areas in western Libya as well. And, again, this was -- what was clear to me from the reports I was reading was that this was a threat to the unity of Libya and to the institutions that were set up by the transitional authorities. That was what was becoming clear was the split between the secular and the Islamists.

Q Did you also view it as a threat to U.S. Government personnel on the ground?

A It's something that we always talked about, clearly, particularly given the fact that we knew that there had been foreign terrorists fighters that had flown into Iraq from Libya and that some of those had come back.

Q Were you aware of any U.S. Government personnel in Derna, whether State Department or any other agency?

A It's something I can't talk about. You can talk to others about.

Q Okay. And who would -- through what agency would we talk to?

Mr. Snyder. One second.

Mr. Feltman. I cannot talk about this. When I left, when I retired from the U.S. Government --

Mr. Snyder. I understand.

Ms. Betz. That's all. That's fine.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Okay. All right. We touched on earlier in the day and said we would come back to it [REDACTED] Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And were they there prior to Chris Stevens going in?

A I believe so. I think it was more or less the same time. They may have preceded Chris by a little bit. It was more or less the same time, but I think they did meet him.

Q Were you aware of what their objective or purpose was for being in Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what was that?

A I can't talk about it.

Q Was there any discussion [REDACTED] when the [REDACTED], was there any discussion [REDACTED]?

A Yes. And I even met with the person that was then heading [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] So yes, there were such discussions and I really can't go farther than that.

Q Okay. Were you aware that there was a State Department-run program regarding MANPADs?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what was that program?

A The program was to try to find a way to control, limit the proliferation, limit the export of MANPADs through a variety of means, through encouraging local discipline or regarding, encouraging ways to buy back. It was looking at what's a very real threat to civil aviation not only in Libya but beyond.

Q Did the State Department run more than one MANPADs program?

A I'm just aware of the general policy guidelines that were just -- was to secure and destroy. The policy of the government at that time was that we needed to find ways to secure and destroy MANPADs before they fell into the hands of others or were used against civil aviation. And given the fact that it was a PM-led program, I wasn't aware of all the details of it.

~~Q And were you aware of any other U.S. Government agency engaged in a MANPADs program?~~

A I can't talk any more about it.

Q Okay. The directive for the State Department to engage in a MANPADs eradication program, was that something that the Secretary ordered, or is it something that the National Security Council, national security staff, or White House ordered?

A I mean, it came out of these general policy discussions that were initiated by the State Department, that included the interagency, that were coordinated by the National Security Council. We had certain interests in Libya. As I said in the unclassified section, our interests weren't unlimited. This is not a question of Egypt where we have enormous number of interests. Our interests in Libya were

fairly limited, but one of them was counterproliferation, which included as a subset of that the control and destruction of MANPADs.

Q Okay. But when you say "we," are you talking about the State Department or the U.S. Government at large?

A The U.S. Government at large. The State Department would do policy papers that would be presented to the NSC and discussed in interagency processes. I am sorry that I'm not able to draw a greater distinction here. It seemed at the time to be entirely commonsense that the U.S. Government would want to prohibit, prevent MANPADs from falling into other's hands. And I don't remember who came up with that bright idea to begin with.

Ms. Jackson. Those are all the questions I have.

Ms. Betz. Again, thank you. I mean, we're just trying to put all the pieces together and just trying to understand.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. No, we don't have any follow-up.

Ms. Jackson. Before we then conclude, I usually ask one follow-up question.

Mr. Feltman. Sure.

Ms. Jackson. And, again, we appreciate your being here today. We appreciate the candid way in which you've responded to our questions.

As you sit here and reflect upon the day, is there any question or answer that you previously gave that you would like to expand on or elaborate on or clarify in any way before we let you go to go catch a plane, train, or automobile?

Mr. Feltman. You know, this is one of those things where probably

for the next week I'll be thinking of what I said and thinking of what I might have said more articulately. I think it's natural. But in terms of -- I tried to answer your questions candidly, perhaps more fulsomely than the State Department counsel would have wished in some cases.

You know, as you all know, I was very close to Chris, both officially and personally. And I hope that we can all draw real lessons from this to prevent others from meeting similar fates as Chris and three of his colleagues in Benghazi. But having served in the Middle East for many years of my professional career, I know that it's impossible ever to eliminate all the dangers we face, and I think it's important that the United States be in these sorts of places to pursue U.S. interests despite the risks.

And I'm proud that I was part of that cadre of people who were willing to do that. So yes, I want everybody to draw lessons from what happened in Benghazi, but I also want people to recognize that there is no perfect security in today's world for U.S. diplomatic work overseas.

Ms. Jackson. All right. Thank you, sir.

Ms. Betz. Thank you.

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

[Whereupon, at 2:49 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

*Errata Sheet*

**Select Committee on Benghazi**

The witness declined to review the accompanying transcript.

---