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UNCLASSIFIED

[REDACTED]

EXECUTIVE SESSION
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
GOVERNMENT REFORM,
Joint with
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
WASHINGTON, D.C.
INTERVIEW OF: [REDACTED]

Friday, February 28, 2014

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held at Room 2155,
Rayburn House Office Building, commencing at 10:35 a.m.

[REDACTED]

Participant Key

AR = Armed Services Committee Republican staffer

AD = Armed Services Committee Democratic staffer

OR = Oversight and Government Reform Committee Republican staffer

OD = Oversight and Government Reform Committee Democratic staffer

OR2 [REDACTED]. Can we go on the record, please?

This is a transcribed interview of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Welcome, and thank you for coming today.

Those in the room have already introduced themselves, and the record of our proceedings will show who was in attendance.

OR2
However, for the record, I am [REDACTED], a professional staff member with the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

As you may know, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and the Committee on Armed Services are among the committees in the U.S. House of Representatives that are investigating many aspects of the attacks on U.S. facilities in Benghazi, Libya, in September of 2012.

Topics being considered include how the U.S. Government was prepared in advance of these attacks, how it responded once the attacks started, and what changes have been instituted as a result of lessons learned.

I am joined today by colleagues representing the chairman and ranking minority members of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and the Committee on Armed Services. In order to simplify our proceedings, I am making these introductory remarks and will start the questioning, but please understand that this interview is an equal and joint effort of both committees.

We will proceed in the following way: I and a representative of the other committee's chairman will ask questions for the first

[REDACTED]

hour. Then representatives of the ranking minority members will have an hour to pose questions. We will alternate this way until our questions are completed. We will recess for a short lunch and take other breaks, but please let us know when we're switching questioners if you need some additional time for any reason at all.

During our questioning, we will aim to have only one questioner at a time. An exception to this may occur if an additional staff member requires a follow-up or a clarification. In such an instance, it's usually most efficient to do that as we proceed rather than at the end.

Because, obviously, the transcriptionist cannot record gestures, we ask that you answer orally. If you forget to do this, the transcriptionist may remind you to do so. The transcriptionist may also ask you to spell certain names or unusual phrases that you might use in your answers.

We hope to proceed methodically and generally chronologically. Some of our questions might appear to be basic, but this is done to help us clearly establish facts and to clearly understand the situation in Libya. We ask that you give complete and fulsome replies to questions based on your best recollections.

Please provide unclassified information to the greatest extent possible. If it is necessary to provide classified information in response to questions, everyone in this room is cleared to Top Secret level, and, therefore, you should not

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

hesitate to provide relevant information or details up to that classification level.

Furthermore, if a question is unclear or you are uncertain in your response, please let us know. If you do not know or remember the answer to a question or do not remember, simply say so.

You should also understand that although this interview is not under oath, by law you are required to answer questions from Congress truthfully, including questions posed by staff members in interviews such as this.

Do you understand these circumstances?

[REDACTED] I understand.

OR2 [REDACTED]. Thank you.

Is there any reason you are unable to provide your own truthful answers to today's questions?

[REDACTED] No.

OR2 [REDACTED]. Finally, I would note that you are accompanied by an attorney from the Department of Defense. I'd ask the DOD counsel to please state his name for the record.

Mr. Richards. Edward Richards.

OR2 [REDACTED]. With these preliminary remarks concluded, do you have any introductory comments you'd like to make?

Mr. Richards. Yes. Thank you.

Since the tragedy of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent military operations, DOD has redacted all names of its personnel O6 or GS-15 and below under exemption (b)(6) of the Freedom of

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Information Act. As such, we respectfully request both committee not publicly release the names of DOD interviewees who are O6 and below. This includes the former defense attache interviewed last month. This, of course, does not apply to general officers, flag officers and civilians who are Senior Executive Service or Presidential appointees. We appreciate the committee's cooperation on this point.

Also, before beginning, I want to reiterate that this is a classified interview, and the transcript will be classified in its entirety until an expedited security review can be performed by the Department once requested by the committees. This follows a template established with the House Armed Services Committee with regard to the classified briefings provided to the HASC by the Department last year. I also reference the letter from the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs dated December 20, 2013, laying out this requirement. It's also the expectation of the Department that future interviews be conducted at the Top Secret level.

That's all.

OR2 [REDACTED]. Thank you, counsel.

And, [REDACTED] thank you. We very much appreciate your uniformed service and for agreeing to be here today.

[REDACTED] Thank you.

OR2 [REDACTED]. Thank you.

My clock now reads 12:05 p.m. I will start the first --

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

sorry, 11:05 p.m. I will now start the first hour of questions from the committee chairman.

EXAMINATION

OR2 BY [REDACTED]

Q Okay. So, [REDACTED] could you please start by telling us what your current rank and assignment is, please?

A I'm a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army.

Q Thanks.

And if you could please briefly walk us through your educational and professional background?

A I attended -- I got a bachelor's degree from the University of Denver. I got my master's degree from the Naval post-graduate school.

Q Great.

And when did you first arrive in Libya?

A I was assigned to Libya February 2012, and then, due to visa issues with the Libyans, I arrived in March of 2012.

Q And had you ever been to Libya before?

A No, I had not.

Q And what was your mission in Libya initially when you were assigned there? I guess we start with that.

A I was supposed to -- I was assigned as the officer picked by AFRICOM to open the Office of Security Cooperation. It was going to be the first Office of Security Cooperation in Libya to work at the embassy.

[REDACTED]

Q Okay. And how did you come to be assigned to that mission?

A I am a Middle East foreign area officer. I have a background in Arabic. I was assigned to U.S. Army Africa. I also have a background in security cooperation, processes, procedures. So I volunteered and was selected to then take the assignment.

Q Great.

And when you were initially assigned to Libya, what was your reporting chain for that assignment with the OSC?

A My reporting chain was essentially -- first report chain was my supervisor was General Cooper, the J5 at AFRICOM. And then, of course, AFRICOM was my primary command. I was still assigned, however, to U.S. Army Africa for administrative roles only.

Q Okay. And during that -- during your time in Libya, was there any time when you were ever reporting through a chief of mission chain of command, or were you reporting through the COCOM chain of command the entire time you were there?

A I reported to the COCOM chain of command, but I always informed the chief of mission. That was just understood that was my responsibility.

Q Great. Thanks.

And just to be clear -- address -- did you have any other DOD reporting chain other than AFRICOM during that time in Libya?

A No.

[REDACTED]

Q Okay. Thanks.

So maybe you could just describe what your role was in OSC, what your level of interaction was on a daily basis with DOD personnel in Libya. For example, what was your level of interaction with them, for example, the DAT, the OSC office?

A First of all, the Office of Security Cooperation was essentially an office of one. It was myself. It didn't have a lot of depth, a whole lot of personnel. So my function primarily was the training and equipping of working with foreign forces, in particular working with the Libyan Armed Forces. So if it came to training or equipment that they wanted to purchase or acquire, that would be what I would facilitate.

Although [REDACTED] and I were of the same rank, [REDACTED] was the defense attache senior defense official, so I recognized him as my person that I -- my conduit of working with DOD issues. I always kept him informed of everything I was doing. And that also meant, because we were such a small group of people, that I worked -- you know, that we coordinated a lot of our activities together because of limited resources.

Q Okay. And you've addressed this somewhat. I know you said you did a lot of your interaction with the embassy chain of command through [REDACTED] the DAT. Maybe just unpack a little bit your level of interaction with the State Department personnel assigned to Libya.

A Equally, because we were both heads of section, I would

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

always brief the Ambassador about my activities, my plans, what AFRICOM kind of objectives were about training and equipping with the Libyan Armed Forces, again, coordinated through the DAT, but always briefed direct to the Ambassador. And also I worked with the embassy staff. All my activity was very transparent with the embassy staff.

Q Sure.

And just to be clear, I believe when the time you arrived in March 2012, it was Ambassador Cretz; was he still the Ambassador?

A He was the Ambassador, but I didn't speak with him much because he was on his way out. So at that time I was pretty much setting up administratively. I mean, I had just arrived; I didn't have an office, computers, desks. Making all those arrangements. So I did not engage with Ambassador Cretz that much.

Q What about the DCM? Did you engage with the DCM at all?

A The DCM at the time was --

Q Joan Polaschik?

A Joan -- I dealt with Joan because of manning issues. Obviously, my intent was to grow the Office of Security Cooperation to larger than one.

Q Sure.

A So it was primarily manning and finding the space, finding the additional space needed to support it.

Q Okay. And the RSO? Any interaction with the RSO on a

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

regular basis?

A Well, RSO, because of the security situation, any movements that I took off the compound was always coordinated through the RSO. Again, it was a very small embassy, small office. So also personal engagement, you know, polite and professional.

Q What was your level of interaction with [REDACTED]

A Essentially pretty limited. I did sometimes deal with [REDACTED], again, mostly keeping them informed of what equipment and training that the Libyans were looking for so that, again, being transparent about all my activity.

Q Sure.

How often on regular basis did you visit the [REDACTED]

A Oh, at least once a week.

Q And any time during your time in Libya, did you ever visit Benghazi?

A No, I did not.

Q Okay. During the time you were stationed in Libya, were you aware that there was, in fact, an annex in Benghazi?

A I was not aware of that.

Q You were not aware.

When did you become aware of that facility?

A I became aware of that on the night of September 11th.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Okay. And this may be obvious, forgive me, but how did you become aware of it specifically? And we're going to get to the night of the attack and do a whole discussion about that.

A When we were working on the evacuation, trying to get the folks out of Benghazi, that's when I was informed that there were additional personnel there that I needed to account for to try to find -- as we were trying to search for an aircraft.

Q That's helpful. Thank you.

And to your knowledge, was AFRICOM aware of the Annex in Benghazi?

A I'm not aware if they were or not.

Q Okay. Thanks.

So now I just want to shift and talk a little bit about the security of the U.S. presence in Libya, both in Benghazi and in Tripoli, prior to the attack. So I'm going to ask a series of questions about that.

Firstly, what was your understanding of the -- if any, of the future of the temporary mission facility in Benghazi, meaning State Department post in Benghazi?

A You know, I didn't talk much about what the future of the Benghazi was. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Tripoli because that's where the Office of Security Cooperation was going to grow. The only thing I asked for was just an understanding of what was out in Benghazi in case I had to do any additional activity like receiving of equipment or training out in

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Benghazi area. So I was not aware of -- other than that the facility was being enhanced -- any future plans for the facility.

Q So that tells us your personal -- I mean, were you aware of any discussions taking place perhaps on the country team about extending the presence of Benghazi or --

A No, I'm not aware of that.

Q Okay. And, to your knowledge, did you have any -- based upon your knowledge of the facility in Benghazi -- the temporary mission facility, did you have any concerns about the safety or security of that facility or its personnel?

A I did not.

Q And were you aware of any concerns that others may have had about the safety or security of that facility?

A Well, we had EACs that we managed. I sat in those EACs. We talked about security at both facilities at all times. So I was kind of generally aware that there was always a -- that the issue of security was always being addressed.

Q Anything specific you can tell us about that, what the concerns were at the time? Maybe starting -- when was the first EAC, roughly, you think you would have participated in?

A It was definitely summer, maybe June, 2012. But most of it was dealing with security, like the contracted security that was being provided to the facility, whether to extend or not. That's all I was aware of.

Mr. Richards. Can you say what EAC stands for?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Emergency Action Committee.

ARI BY [REDACTED]:

Q And, excuse me. You mean the contract forces provided in Tripoli or Benghazi?

A In Benghazi. The Libyan security that was being provided to Benghazi.

ORA BY [REDACTED]:

Q What was your understanding of any evacuation plan for the U.S. facility in Benghazi?

A At the time, again, I was primarily focused on setting up the Office of Security Cooperation. I got an initial brief from the RSO, but I was not into any in-depth planning on the evacuation, or planning of an evacuation.

Q One other question about the pre-attack security. You said you were focused on Tripoli primarily. Did you have any concerns about the safety or security of the embassy in Tripoli?

A I did not. There were often -- I would drive -- always -- you know, we followed all procedures set by the RSO: two persons per vehicle, one person carrying a weapon. We applied by all the rules that were done by the RSO.

Q Okay. Great.

And just want to shift and talk a little bit more about the DOD programs and personnel now involved with Libya pre-attack. Could you share with us what your understanding of the role and the mission of the SST when you arrived in Libya?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A The SST I understood to have the primary role of protecting the Ambassador. It was not -- it was not, as I understood it, to provide any kind of additional security beyond the role of the Ambassador.

Q Okay.

A Fell under the RSO.

Q And so setting aside the provision of security, were SST personnel, to your knowledge, engaged in any other activities at the time of your arrival or subsequent to your arrival?

A They were not engaged in any other activities, but there was discussion about the 1208 program and the SST eventually shifting from the role of security to the training and equipping of Libyan Special Forces.

Q Okay.

A But that was much further down the road.

Q To be clear, the planned 1208 program for Libya, when you arrived, had that been formally approved by the Secretary of Defense, to your knowledge?

A No. When I arrived, it had not been approved. That was in the works when I arrived.

Q And was it approved prior to the attack, to your knowledge, on September 11th? Had it been approved at that point, or was it still in process?

A I believe it was still in process. But I was primarily focused on the approval from the Libyans, the Libyans giving them

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

the privileges, ^{AND} immunities, TNIs. That's kind of where my focus was at. [REDACTED] (Pond's)

Q Okay. You mentioned the 1208. Maybe it's a good time to talk about security force assistance programs. And maybe could you tell us what security force assistance programs were either -- maybe we could break it into two categories. What programs were operative during your time, and then what programs were being contemplated during your time?

A Well, there weren't any programs being operative. Again, we just opened up the Security Cooperation. So there were a lot of plans or a lot of proposals that were being put on the table, but, of course, those had yet to be vetted just through the AFRICOM staff. The first and foremost, obviously, was the 1208, was training the Libyan Special Forces. I know that had been coordinated with the Libyan Armed Forces, but there were still the issue that were being worked government to government about primarily privileges and immunities, making sure that everything was set in motion, that there was protection for the teams that were going to do the training. But that had not been approved until after September 11th, if I recall. We --

Q The 1208 program?

A The 1208 program.

Q Thanks.

A We had additional programs. We had 1206 programs that were going to be training, looking at training logistics, training

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

medical capabilities, but those were, again, more in draft form at the AFRICOM staff being developed.

And then there was a 1207 effort where we talked about building up two Libyan infantry companies as kind of a start point in helping build up their basic core security forces.

Q Okay.

A Those were the program being contemplated.

Q Well, let me ask you this: What about any programs under -- funded under the Global Security Contingency Fund?

A That was the 1207. That was the -- initially the two infantry companies.

Q Right. Okay.

And again, just for the record, could you just explain briefly how that program, 1207, would be different from a 1208 program?

A Was primarily funding and also the intent of the program. 1207 was a much more broad-based approach. The intent was kind of to focus on overall security in a particular case, kind of border security, border -- anything that can deal with kind of more localized threats.

The 1208 program was obviously focused more towards a special forces, targeting type of capability. You know, more antiterrorism capability.

Q Okay. With respect to -- not sure how we refer to it -- the putative 1208, or the 1208 program that was being

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

contemplated, during your time in Libya, were you aware of any arrangement whereby the SST or members of the SST had engaged in a 1208-related training of Libyan security forces prior to the official approval of the 1208 program?

A There was just assessments that were done by the teams while they were there. One was trying to get a feel for what are the indigenous forces that they would be working with. There was no -- there was no official training being conducted, but they were trying to get a sense of where are these guys coming from, who are they going to be training with, and to understand the overall command structure we were dealing with.

Q Thanks.

Could you just briefly walk us through what an assessment might look like to a layman? You explain how that works?

ARI BY [REDACTED]:

Q Excuse me. And the assessment was conducted by the SST?

A It was conducted by the SST, primarily SST leadership. As assessment was kind of meeting with the forces, first meeting with the special -- the LSOF, Libyan Special Operations Forces leadership; meeting with the -- the one who was director of the program, which is [REDACTED] kind of getting a feel, are they committed to the program, can they provide enough people for the program, what are the quality of people that are coming?

The Libyans did present about 150 personnel from which the

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

team was able to kind of assess are these people capable, willing to be learned and trained to be part of the special force.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]

Q And did these assessments involve any physical training or weapons training?

A I did not -- I'm not -- not any weapons training. Physical training was done by the Libyans themselves. The Libyans were trying to kind of weed out their personnel, who can handle the training and who can't. But it was more just kind of capability, understanding if they were able to absorb the information in the training. Sure.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]

Q Let me ask this question: So had the attacks not occurred and the 1208 program had been established as -- was being contemplated before the attacks --

A Correct.

Q -- would that have fallen under your responsibilities?

A What would have fallen in my responsibility was the 1208 primarily run by SOCAFRICA. But when it comes to equipping and the follow-on training, and particularly the professional military education of the some of the officers for specialty skill sets, that would have fallen under my purview, particularly for end-use monitoring of any specialized equipment they were to receive. So when the 1208 training, when the equipment arrived, that would be managed by my office. When the 1208 team would

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

leave, the maintaining of how that equipment -- making sure it's being used properly, that, again, would have been managed by my office.

Q So would it be fair to characterize it as saying that you would be -- you would have been prospectively knowledgeable about the 1208 program as it came about, but not directly involved?

A Correct. I mean, because, again, that equipment and training fall under me, I kept -- I worked with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] made sure that I was kept informed primarily of the equipment. That was my primary concern.

ARI [REDACTED] Sure.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]

Q Actually, one last question on this assessment issue. How many members of SST -- my understanding -- was it 16 members still at the time that this was going on?

A I believe at the time it was 16 members, but I'm not sure how many of those 16 were dedicated to doing part of the assessment and the rest that were dedicated to protecting the Ambassador.

Q Do you happen to know whether it was a particular -- certain number, certain number of the personnel that would do it, or was it kind of rotated through the SST?

A I'm not aware.

Q Okay. That's fine. Thanks.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Continuing to talk about SST, your understanding of why the SST mission was not extended past 3 August of 2012?

A I sat in some of those meetings. I -- all I was aware of that the SST was -- was not extended by the State Department. It was never clear to me why that decision was made, but it was -- again, I was not part of that chain for that decision.

Q Okay. To your knowledge, was DOD willing to extend that mission?

A My understanding was -- I sat in the meeting in VTC. General Ham was willing to extend that mission.

Q When was that VTC, roughly; do you recall?

A That would have to have been August, August of 2012.

Q Okay. Now, on July 9th, Embassy Tripoli sent a cable to Washington in which it requested additional security personnel to possibly include SST. The document basically describes SST as one option among several options for providing those security personnel. Were you aware of that request?

A I was not.

Q Okay. And in the lead-up to the 3 August completion of the SST mission, what were the discussions you were aware of between the embassy and the State Department about the future of DOD personnel in Libya?

A What I was aware of, again, because I was dealing with Security Cooperation, it was clear that the SST mission was not going to be extended. There was some desire by the SOCAFRICA for

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

the 16 personnel to remain in place, but they would not be doing a security mission. One option I offered during that time was, well, we can roll them into a security cooperation mission, which is, again, engaging with local forces for some kind of what we call mil-to-mil engagement, military-to-military engagement.

That was determined that that was not the ideal use of the 16 individuals. So, again, there was no reason to keep the 16 there if they -- at the time there was no reason for Security Cooperation to keep them there if they were not going to be doing security cooperation from my office, not from -- that's another perspective.

Q Could just explain -- you said the decision -- your recommendation was not accepted for a reason. What was that reason or the reasoning?

A It just -- again, what personnel are brought there, security -- security cooperation, mil-to-mil activities is usually done through components. You find a specialized capability in order to do that kind of military-to-military engagement. At the time I didn't have anything specific to give them of what that military-to-military engagement could be, and so, therefore, unless I had a proper justification, it didn't make sense to make --

Q Just to be clear, you said perhaps the programs had not been approved yet.

A I had not been able to conceive of the programs yet

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

because, again, I had just told they weren't getting extended. You're talking, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] good idea. Maybe I could find something, but I had nothing at the time on the table to propose because I was not prepared that that was going to happen.

Q Okay. We understand -- I think you may have alluded to it -- we understand that the Ambassador, this is Ambassador Stevens now, correct?

A Correct.

Q That Ambassador Stevens had some concerns about the loss of diplomatic privileges and immunities for the SST personnel, which would occur as of 4 August when their mission ended --

A Right.

Q -- and the team reverted to COCOM authority, or combatant commander authority. Were you aware of those concerns?

A I was aware of those concerns.

Q Could you please explain those?

A Well, I know the Ambassador after the incident -- and I don't have specific date -- after the incident of the attempted carjacking on the SST team that went out to [REDACTED] to do the -- you know, as part of had their general engagement. When I say "general engagement," they go out and they just meet with the team leadership -- LSOF leadership, because that's what you need to do is daily engage with the Libyans. It's just proper, appropriate,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

cultural necessity.

ARI BY [REDACTED]:

Q That's not an assessment, that's just a --

A No. Yes, that's not -- again -- part of the understanding of working with Libyans is if you engage every day, it's like dealing with anybody else, you develop the trust and respect that you need in order to eventually begin to work with them. That's just a, again, common cultural understanding locally.

After the carjacking, that's when I remember the Ambassador did talk about that it even proved even more that privileges and immunities would be absolutely necessary in order to protect the team, which, again, understand is -- had they not had protections and something did bad happen, you would not want the team in a Libyan prison.

OR1 BY [REDACTED]:

Q To clarify, is this around August 6?

A I just remember it was August; I don't remember the specific date.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]:

Q And did that 6 August -- well, we know it's 6 August.

A Okay.

Q Help you out there.

So how did the 6 August incident affect the activities of the former SST personnel on a day-to-day basis?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A It was a temporary pause. You know, a couple -- took a couple days to assess. State Department worked with the local forces. RSO worked with local law enforcement. I know the DAT worked with the local military just kind of making sure, one, were there any repercussions to the activity, was there any concern to the activity. So it was a temporary pause, but they began doing what they do normally a couple days after.

Q Okay. And during that brief period, the former SST personnel, where actually were they physically? I mean, were they on compound at the embassy?

A They were on compound. Again, they were still focused on if they had anything that they needed to do to support the Ambassador, they needed to do that, but primarily again with limited amount of movement to not draw attention.

Q And when did -- our understanding is that the former SST personnel, the team, had been 16. It drew down at some point, perhaps around this time. Could you just walk us through when that was and --

A I know it was about mid-August, I can't give you a specific date, after the determination was made that the 1208 program still had not been approved, SST mission was included. And so there was a general agreement -- a general agreement between the Ambassador and AFRICOM to reduce the personnel to about four personnel, and that that was -- so it's about mid-August that that decision had been made.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q And the motivation for that was it related to the P and I issue?

A Primarily related to the P and I issue. Also, the Ambassador was -- you have 16 guys there who are away from their families, and the Ambassador was under the understanding of, well, let them go home to their families. When it gets approved, bring them back. He wasn't adamant to get them out to or to have them stay. He just wanted to give them a chance to be back with their families and then come back when the mission was approved.

Q Okay.

A The concern was genuine.

Q I'm going to shift gears now.

AR1 BY [REDACTED]

Q I have just a couple questions, if I might.

Again, excuse me. I just want to get some clarification on things you've mentioned.

So your responsibilities involved -- you had no formal role in providing or assessing the security of the embassy, the Annex, the temporary mission facilities, so forth.

A Correct.

Q And, similarly, your interactions with the defense attache, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who ran the SST; and then his replacement, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who ran the reduced SST, again, informal, no direct reporting line or relationship.

[REDACTED]

A Correct. And, again, small embassy, three lieutenant colonels, it was a professional relationship.

Q Sure. I'm not questioning. I just want to make sure that I understand --

A But no official reporting chain.

Q And when the team was reduced to four, there were two other individuals, enlisted individuals, in Tripoli. Similarly, you did not have any direct reporting relationship with them?

A Correct. Again, professional. Not --

Q Understand.

And when you mentioned your interactions with the RSO, as I understood you to say, your interactions were to ensure that he or his folks could properly protect you as you moved about town.

A They didn't provide me protection. I had to provide my own out of necessity. But, again, I did nothing without the RSO's knowledge of where I was going, what I was doing, in case there needed to be an emergency response that he needed to come to my assistance.

Q Understood.

Again, your discussions with him were not about large embassy security --

A Correct.

Q -- but rather specific to your personal security; you were going to a personal -- particular place, you wanted to make sure that he and his folks knew where you were going --

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Yes, sir.

Q -- in case they --

A Exactly.

Q And you said you visited the [REDACTED] about one time a week, you said?

A Yes.

Q Did you have any particular reason in those visits to form any particular assessment or impressions of the security that that facility provided?

A No, sir.

Q And you said the Office of Security Cooperation was an office of one. Was there not a staff sergeant?

A The staff sergeant didn't arrive until about a week prior to September 11. So she was very late. She did not see any -- I mean, literally 1 week prior and then September 11 happened. So she did not even have a chance to kind of integrate into Office of Security Cooperation.

Q But she was at that time a part of your office?

A Correct.

Q What was an office of two then?

A Office of two.

Q It doubled in size.

A Hundred percent.

ARI [REDACTED] Thank you.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q I think we'll shift gears again, if we could. We've got a little over 30 minutes left in our hour. But I just wanted to move to the night of the attack, talk about that, try to do it chronologically, most logical way to do that. Prefacing that, did you have any discussions with either military or State Department personnel about the security situation or security planning for the facilities in Libya in the days leading up to September 11th?

A No.

Q Okay. Were you aware of any specific precautions or security plans that were implemented in light of the anniversary of September 11, 2001?

A No.

Q On the day of the attacks, were you aware of any specific or general threats to the U.S. interests in the region?

A We were aware -- I mean, we were aware of general threats, but nothing specific.

Q Just elaborate briefly on --

A Well, the security environment in Libya, you had numerous militias, you always had actors of concern. So we were always aware of general threats.

Q Okay.

A But there was nothing specific towards the embassy, towards myself, or towards anybody that I was aware of.

Q In the region, what was going on in the region?

A I was pretty much focused on Libya at the time.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Okay. Very good.

Just -- you may have addressed this, but just to be clear, were you aware of the potential for unrest in Cairo prior to the protests that took place in Egypt on September 11th?

A No, I was not aware of that.

Q Okay. And prior to the protests in Cairo, were you aware of the controversial YouTube video that contributed to the unrest?

A No, I was not aware of that.

Q Okay. If you could just maybe walk us through the night of the attack. And it might be help to start with when you learned about that there was an attack in Benghazi.

A I would like to just kind of caveat this. My timeline might be a little rough. It's been a year and a half, and there was a lot of activity going on that night. So I will do the best I can.

Q Understood.

A I got a call from [REDACTED] [REDACTED] probably around 9 -- between 9:45 and 10:00, that I remember. Said, hey, [REDACTED] the -- supposedly, the Annex -- I'm sorry, the consulate is being attacked. The Ambassador called, said "We're under attack," and that was the end of the phone call.

He asked me to come in and just kind of gave me a brief update of what's going on. What was going on was we didn't have a whole lot of information. We were lacking quite a bit of

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

information. So I talked to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and I said, well, let's call -- let's call the AFRICOM JOC, just give him a heads-up about the potential that we may need an aircraft.

[REDACTED] then said, "Roger, yeah, go ahead. Do that. Execute."

I called up AFRICOM. They said they -- you know, we were aware of the attack. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had already kind of given them a heads-up -- not attack, sorry, that there was an issue at the consulate. Gave them a heads-up about it.

I said, "Is there a possibility or can you put on standby that we will need an aircraft?" The JOC at that time said, "We will start working it, but we will need an official request from the DAT."

I went back to [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. He called back the JOC, said, "[REDACTED] will work all the issues on my behalf from here on out between me and the JOC" -- between him and the JOC at AFRICOM.

ARI BY [REDACTED]

Q Excuse me just a second. You said that they -- you were aware that there was an attack, and then you corrected yourself, and you said "an issue." You weren't clear there was an attack?

A No. At the time I wasn't clear there was an attack. During that time we weren't sure what we had. We were aware of protests during that night. A lot of us thought -- didn't know what was going on, could be a protest. We were not aware of an

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

attack, nor did we assume there was an attack right off the bat. I think, again, I'm talking revisionist, I'm looking back, but at the time we were not aware there was an attack. We knew that the embassy was being -- we weren't sure if the embassy was being looted, if it was being--

Q Embassy?

A The consulate. I'm sorry, the consulate in Benghazi was be looted, what was happening out there. All we knew was that the Ambassador mentioned that the consulate was under attack. We weren't sure by what. And the term "attack" has a pretty broad meaning. It could be, you know, vandals are attacking. So we did not have a definition of what this was at the time.

Q And excuse me again. And the aircraft that you were seeking was for personal evacuations?

A Yes. That was my primary focus at the time was -- and I was right now seeking to get something on stand-by, because, again, I don't know what I have on the ground. I am -- have been a military planner for many years. I'm quite well aware it takes time to get an aircraft ready. So what I thought back to JOC was to start looking for an available aircraft, for an available crew, if possible, to begin an evacuation if necessary.

After [REDACTED] had made the call about passing off the working -- working with the JOC about keeping them informed, the Joint Operations Center on AFRICOM, I called again about an hour later saying, "What is" -- "what's the likelihood of us getting an

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

aircraft?" They still said, "We're working it. We're working it. We're trying to see what's available."

At this time, then I also ran up to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] office there on the compound, who was at the time talking back with SOCAF, and they, too, had also begun asking for what aircraft that SOCAF might have available in the area.

I talked -- about 11 o'clock, again, I talked to [REDACTED]. He said, "Let's give the Libyans a call, see what they have available." So I called out to the Libyan air operations center out in Benghazi, talked to [REDACTED] [REDACTED], who we have a good relationship with, told him what was going on. He said, "Completely understand. You have carte blanche, whatever you need to do to land an aircraft, to fly an aircraft, do what you need to do."

So the Libyans, to their credit, kind of gave me an open door to bring in whatever we needed, whatever that was. We were still working on that.

I asked him -- at about 12 o'clock I called back to the Joint Operations Center, asked again, what's the status of an aircraft? Do they have anything? They're saying that they're not aware of anything yet, they are still working it, maybe 3 to 4 hours.

I then went to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] said, "Hey, we're still looking for an aircraft. I don't know what's available."

We then decided to reach out to the Libyan -- Libyan Armed Forces again and ask them what they had available, if they had a

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

C-130 that they could get prepped and out there Benghazi in case we had to do the evacuation, to evacuate the people from Benghazi to Tripoli.

[REDACTED] again stressed, "I will see what's available." And I know the Libyans had begun trying to look for an aircraft that they could fly. At the time I was not aware that they had no night-flight capability, so I was not -- I wasn't sure what they were capable of providing.

So the way we looked at it was we were at three -- three requests going. We had one through SOCAF, trying to find an aircraft; one through the JOC at AFRICOM looking for an aircraft; and the Libyans looking for an aircraft, again, primarily focused on getting the folks out, because, again, we didn't know what we had on the ground. We did know that the intent was to get them from the consulate to the airport as soon as possible, get them to Tripoli, and then secure them in Tripoli.

At about 2 o'clock in the morning, I called the JOC again. At that time we were aware that we had some wounded, but we weren't sure what the wounds were, how many were wounded. I had gotten a call from the chief of station saying, "Get me" -- "We need a get an aircraft, we need to get an aircraft." I told him I was working it, trying to find what was available.

I called back to the JOC, and they told me that I needed to provide a nine line -- what's called a nine line emergency evacuation report.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I proceeded then to try to run around. I talked to the RSO. I talked to -- called out to the [REDACTED] saying, do we know the status of the wounds? I need to get the emergency -- I needed to get the nine line report back as soon as possible back to AFRICOM. But the problem was we just had no information. Nobody had enough information for me to call back.

[REDACTED]

ARI BY [REDACTED]

Q Excuse me. So the [REDACTED] called you to reiterate the request.

A To reiterate the request that we need an aircraft as soon as possible.

Q And then you reached directly to --

A AFRICOM.

Q Sorry, but then I thought you said you also called for the nine line to the Benghazi annex.

A No, no. I called the nine line -- I called back to [REDACTED], because I know he had --

Q Got it --

A -- [REDACTED] to say, Do you have information on what the wounds are, how many wounds, you know, what we had? The problem was nobody had much information for me. So I called back up to the JOC, saying, I don't know what we have, but what we do know is we need an aircraft as soon as possible.

Q And you, obviously, knew that [REDACTED] was in contact with those in Benghazi --

A Correct.

Q Because he was reporting back to you things that he was receiving directly.

Q Correct. The one thing I didn't want to get involved

[REDACTED]

in the chain would be a third caller out there at the time. Again, we have done this numerous times, but keep communications out there minimal. They are busy. But let me pull the information from the right people who the two primary guys who are collecting or getting the information as best they can, which was the R50 and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

They didn't have much information for me. I called back up to the JOC, at which time I was told by AFRICOM, Okay, well, it is important to get the information. They need that information in order to configure what kind of medical capabilities they can put on the aircraft in order to evacuate them out. I said, Right now, we can get them out. We have got a 19 Delta here. We have got the hospital here in Tripoli. I think our focus was just to get them out.

I called again at about 3 a.m. I was calling pretty regularly. At 3 a.m., I was told again, as to an aircraft, I was told there were no aircraft available. It may take 6 to 11 hours to get an aircraft. That is too long. We need to get them out. And they, at that time, they said, Well, we are not sure we can send the aircraft in once we get it because they weren't clear of the security on the ground, which, again, to me, was understandable. You don't want to send -- you already know that you don't have a clear situation, what we had, who was there, and you don't want to send an aircraft right in the middle of it that

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

could also get endangered. We also knew that there was a MANPAD threat. So we talked through some options.

That was one option, was to bring it to Tripoli; we could put a team on the aircraft, fly it out to Benghazi to help secure the aircraft. We were going just through kind of options, but even then, the time was running out. This was about 4 a.m. by this time, where at this point, I realized I wasn't going to get an aircraft fast enough. We had seen things had already deteriorated where it was. So I just went to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and said, We are not going to get an aircraft by morning.

At that point, he informed me that he already worked with [REDACTED] and I believe this piece may be classified.

Mr. Richards. Yes. I believe it is speaking in terms of [REDACTED] it may be appropriate, but if you can keep it under top secret.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] He was working with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] that they already had went and chartered an aircraft to get them out. So option number four, charter an aircraft, they had already gone out, and that was what we were going to use as the extraction element for getting the people back.

ORA BY [REDACTED]

Q To be clear, sir, you had mentioned that chief of station called you at some point, I think you said 2 a.m. We are not going to quibble as to time. He called and asked for an aircraft. Was it your understanding that that was prior to them

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

chartering the aircraft, is that correct?

A Well, I wasn't aware they already started working the charter actually for the aircraft. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I just continued to pursue whatever aircraft we needed to get those folks out of there. Because I don't think we all knew that the charter aircraft would eventually be the one, the aircraft we would get in order to pull those folks out. The intent was to get something larger that could carry some people back to Tripoli. That was again my primary focus, was just get them out of the situation, focus on the wounded, and then work from there.

Q I think you have alluded to this about keeping clear chains of communication with Benghazi, but just to be clear for the record, and were you in contact with any personnel on the ground in Benghazi during this episode?

A No. And I did that through, again, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] trying to minimize coms, and they were busy.

ARI BY [REDACTED]:

Q [REDACTED]

A [REDACTED] had told me that they had already chartered an aircraft and they had gone out to assist.

Q But you had found that out after they had departed?

A After they had departed, correct. At the time [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

was, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was on the phone constantly with the Libyan armed forces asking what are they doing to help the situation; are they sending forces out? He was trying to get security out there as soon as possible from the Libyan side in order to protect the facility, and he was kind of meeting dead ends.

At the time, he didn't tell me, only because, again, I was working the AFRICOM piece. He was busy with his. When he told me -- but that wouldn't have stopped me from trying to pursue another aircraft anyway, because again, I didn't know what was chartered. I don't know what his intent was. I don't know if it was flying back. My goal was again to find an aircraft to extract them.

OR2 [REDACTED] I think you said at some point you were told it would be 6 to 11 hours for an aircraft, and your reaction to that was it was too long. I mean, can you just --

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Well, that was -- my reaction internally was, we don't have 6 to 11 hours to wait for an aircraft to show up. Again, the person I am dealing with, I am dealing with a different person each time on the other end of the phone, so I don't know -- you know, half the time I am not sure who I am talking to, how good their information is. I just knew that, by 4 o'clock, waiting 6 to 11 hours for an aircraft wasn't going to be sufficient. Those folks needed to get out of there sooner rather than later.

AA1 [REDACTED] Did they tell you what the origins of the 6 hours --

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] No, I don't know what kind of conversations was occurring between AFRICOM and EUCOM. Again, having been a military planner, I know there is a lot of -- there is a lot of phone calls being made on their part and a lot of options being reviewed on their part, but I was not part of those discussions.

OR2 [REDACTED] Moving forward now, if we could, at what time -- to the best of your recollection, at what time exactly did U.S. Embassy personnel begin to evacuate from the embassy in Tripoli [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I think the decision was made about 4 a.m., and that is why it transitioned. When it was clear that the aircraft was not going to arrive on time, other options were being pursued. I was told at about 4 a.m. that they wanted to start evacuating the embassy from Tripoli, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. That is when [REDACTED] said, Hey, I need you to take the lead on getting the vehicles lined up, getting the people organized to come up with the convoy plan to get all the folks out of there, and so that is kind of when I transitioned my function.

I was still calling AFRICOM at the time, but right now, it is focused on letting them know we are moving positions with this many people. And they were also asking me -- AFRICOM was asking me about numbers of embassy personnel because we were going through the list of who was going to be evacuated and who was

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

going to stay.

AA1 [REDACTED]. Yet again, the need for a plane had been
obviated [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] No, no, no, no. I had continued
to pursue the plane, [REDACTED]
because I didn't know how many people needed to be pulled out of
Benghazi. It wasn't probably until when I -- about 7 or 8 a.m., I
just remember early morning, that when we went down to the airport
to meet the chartered aircraft, that is when I focused on getting
the vehicle -- getting it routed and getting the personnel back to
the embassy compound and getting them to the hospital in Tripoli.
But at this point, I know that the OPSCO had started shifting
where he was now managing -- the aircraft had been identified and
now the OPSCO was trying to coordinate any movements into the
country.

ORA2 BY [REDACTED]

Q And you mentioned when the decision you thought was
made, to the best of your recollection, exactly when did the
evacuation start after that decision?

A The evacuation, it was 4, 5, 6 a.m. It was right
before that. The reason I remember is we wanted to do it before
daylight so we didn't draw attention to how many vehicles we were
moving, that we couldn't -- that there wouldn't be any reporting
from local or national reporting our movements, number of

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

personnel, does not cause concern or also spark too much focus on us.

Q Very good. Thank you. And so let's move forward again if we could. First of all, where were you in all of this? Were you involved in escorting personnel from the embassy [REDACTED] What was your role then once you started movement?

A Essentially, I was responsible for getting people to and from [REDACTED] or from the embassy [REDACTED] At this time also, I am talking to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] about the return of the wounded coming in on the charter. So they asked me to go down to the airfield, meet them at the airfield, and then get them back to the hospital to track them. Also we found out that one of them had a unique blood type so we found an embassy staff personnel who had a similar blood type, so I ran back to the embassy, picked her up in order to get her out to the hospital where she then gave blood in order to assist the wounded.

Q Very good. And when you were involved in helping the movement of -- facilitate movement of personnel from the embassy [REDACTED] then was there a point in time where you basically [REDACTED] You guys drove, I take it?

A Yes, we drove. We drove an up-armored Suburban back and forth. It is a very short distance, so we were able to do it all in two convoys.

Chairman Issa. We will stay on the clock but take a short

[REDACTED]

break.

[Recess.]

OR2 BY [REDACTED]:

Q Back on the record, please.

So I want to ask you about what you saw when you arrived [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I am going to ask you a series of questions. I just want to preface by saying what we don't want for you to do is for you to talk about internal security arrangements [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], okay, but I want to ask you some questions about outside, for example. So when you arrived [REDACTED] did you encounter any friendly Libyan forces [REDACTED]

A Not that I -- the only thing I saw was the Libyan guards that were initially at the gate. They already knew that we were coming so they had the gate ready to open once we arrived. Other than that, there was some additional Libyan -- that is right, there was some additional Libyan forces present. I remember there were some gun trucks. Gun trucks are basically Toyota pickups with Chinese air defense weapons bolted on the back. They did provide additional security outside our embassy, and they did provide additional security [REDACTED], but they looked -- they were, you know, they were there in a kind of informal posture. So I don't think they were aware of the attack that was going on. They were just there as a presence force.

Q So, just to be clear, to your understanding these were

[REDACTED]

personnel in addition to the normal personnel?

A In addition to the kind of normal personnel, that is correct.

Q How many roughly of these personnel, additional personnel, would you say there were?

A Geez, again, it was night. I know there was at least four or five additional gun trucks out at the embassy, but I cannot remember how many additional ones were outside [REDACTED]

Q How many personnel, roughly?

A I don't know. I don't know. Many in their trucks, many outside their trucks. I don't have a good estimate.

Q And were there armed U.S. Government personnel available as well as that location?

[REDACTED]

Q Yes.

A Yes. The standard force that is provided [REDACTED]

Q Understood. You mentioned the cruiser weapons on the trucks. Were there any other armored vehicles of any kind?

A No, it was limited to the gun trucks. That is the primary weapon that they mostly have available. The rest of their equipment is in pretty poor condition, so your most reliable ones are the gun trucks.

Q Thank you. And then, based on your best recollection, exactly what time did the embassy personnel complete the

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

evacuation [REDACTED]

A Approximately about 6 a.m., toward daybreak.

Q Okay. Thank you. And then you alluded to it, but when the evacuation of the embassy personnel [REDACTED] was complete, what was your mission then and what did you do?

A At that time, again, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] stated that one was primarily to escort the wounded, get them back to the hospital and start facilitating any kind of those movements for the people that were coming back from Benghazi, getting them back [REDACTED] or to the hospital, whichever the requirement was.

[REDACTED] was also working I know with the embassy personnel about starting to list the names of who was going to be evacuated, who was going to stay. I was not part of those discussions. I primarily focused again on staying out at the hospital and being -- or at the airport and being on call when needed at that location.

Q Is it fair to say you were facilitating that sort of movement?

A That is correct.

Q Or you weren't integrated into the defense [REDACTED]

A No, I was not part of the defense [REDACTED] The only thing we were given -- we were all given -- if you are military personnel, you were all given a weapon for, one, general protection and for any additional security that would be needed,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

but I was not part of the integrated plan.

ARI BY [REDACTED]

Q Am I correct in understanding that standard procedure in the event of certain emergencies was to move the embassy personnel [REDACTED] that that was a scenario that had been contemplated?

A I was not aware if that was the standard procedure or if that was a decision was made. I just know when the decision was made, my mission was to make sure it happened.

Q And is it your professional military judgment that the security [REDACTED] was indeed better than had you remained at the Tripoli embassy location?

A I think it was just prudent. You consolidate your security. You know, we were -- there wasn't a lot of security personnel at the --

Q I am sorry?

A There wasn't a lot of security personnel, so it just seemed prudent that you combined your resources and in order to not spread yourself thin, that you consolidate one location. So, again, I didn't question the issue of moving.

Q Would you say that consolidated security [REDACTED] was generally better than where you had left?

A Yes.

Q And could you characterize it? I mean, was it marginally better? Was it substantially better?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Well, I can't characterize it, because again, I was primarily out in the Tripoli area, so what specific activities took place, I don't know. All I know is I didn't arrive [REDACTED] until probably 4 or 5 hours after the first wave of folks from Benghazi came back. So I kept on the move. I was not able to assess that.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]

Q Now, we can maybe just talk briefly about, it is our understanding that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had a team of personnel, that there was some discussion about them joining a flight, a response flight to Benghazi. It might be helpful just to -- you alluded to it earlier, but I just want to clarify, what was your operational relationship to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

A Other than just a professional relationship, he was part of the 1208 team, again dealing primarily if the equipment was coming in or if there was additional training outside of Libya that was going to occur, that we would coordinate that activity. But there was no kind of reporting chain between us.

Q And his team was a four man element, including himself?

A A four man element.

Q And were you part of that four man element?

A Negative. I was assigned to the embassy under chief of mission authority.

Q Understood. I just wanted to clarify that. And to the best of your recollection, were you privy to the discussions among [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

personnel [REDACTED], U.S. personnel, about the decision to send [REDACTED] and his team to Benghazi?

A No, I was not.

Q And is that because you were moving around, as you alluded to earlier?

A That is correct.

Q Okay. Thanks. And do you recall what time AFRICOM was informed of that intention of [REDACTED] and his team to go to Benghazi?

A I am not aware what time that was.

Q Do you have any insight into the conversation that took place between [REDACTED] and the chain of command in AFRICOM, at the time?

A No. [REDACTED] had kind of told me that no, he was told to stand down and to assist in the security, and that is pretty much what he left it at.

Mr. Richards. I just want to clarify. Was it stay in place or stand down?

[REDACTED] No, I'm sorry, stay in place. Not stand down. Thank you.

ARI BY [REDACTED]

Q Again, a couple of clarifying questions. I just want to make sure I understand. So, on September 10th, let's say, I think I am counting 10 uniformed U.S. military personnel in Tripoli, and I want to make sure that I understand that. There is

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

you and your staff sergeant.

A Correct.

Q There is the four that [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] -- [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and three others of the former site security team. That is four.

A Correct.

Q [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q But they were in Tripoli.

A They were in Tripoli, correct.

Q The DAT.

A Correct.

Q And then the DAT had a warrant officer?

A An OPSCO, an operations coordinator officer, yes.

Q So that is 10. I just want to make sure I understand the full menu of uniformed individuals.

A Those were the individuals I knew, correct.

Q I am not leaving anybody out that you know of?

A Not that I know of.

Q And we know from some other reports, including an unclassified report that the Senate committee issued recently that talked about various intelligence reports which were issued in the months and weeks preceding the attack, did you have any reason to peruse or become familiar with the IC reporting on the situation in Libya or the Middle East?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A I sat in the EACs again, and I sat on the weekly meetings [REDACTED]. There was nothing in the information that indicated anything specific to us, or to me, when I sat there among those meetings.

Q I understand that. But there were broader reporting, and I don't know how often or even at all, it was necessary to evaluate or see broad reporting about the situation in Libya.

A Again, we talked once a week, so I did see the broad reporting. But that is exactly what it was, very broad.

Q And I understood you to say that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] asked you to take over kind of a phone conversation with the chain of command in order to free him to do some other things.

A Correct.

Q And I think you said that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was talking separately --

A Through his chain of command.

Q Through his chain of command. Am I correct in assuming that [REDACTED] was speaking separately through their chain of command?

A I do not know. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] at the main embassy. I can assume that, but I do not know that specifically.

Q But you weren't talking to [REDACTED].

A I was not talking to [REDACTED].

Q And how were your communications being conducted? What

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

physical means were you using?

A Primarily by unclassified cell phones because we had very limited coms capabilities at the time.

Q And there was some classified coms capability, agent correct?

A [REDACTED] had the VTC, classified VTC capability, so when I needed to run to classified, I ran up to his office and then talked through the VTC.

Q But otherwise you used commercial cell phones.

A A commercial cell phone, correct, sir.

Q And is it your understanding that at that at some point, pursuant to protocol, classified equipment was destroyed?

A That is correct.

Q And where in the scheme of things was that? Was that early on? Midstream? Do you have any recollection at what point the destruction order came out?

A I don't. It was midstream. I know it was late at night, but, again, I don't remember a specific time. But I remember pulling out the burn barrels and everything that needed to be done to destroy it.

Q On the communications aspect only, not maybe the classified documents, but on the communications angle only, did that destruction inhibit your communications at all because now you are using only unclassified coms?

A No, it did not limit me at all.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Okay. We also know that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was able to redirect a drone which was overflying Derna over to Benghazi. Did you have any knowledge of the feed that was being sent from --

A I knew the ISR was being flown over and that that feed was being sent to AFRICOM, but other than that, I was not aware of anything else.

Q But I mean, you had no visibility into the reporting from that drone?

A No. Correct.

Q And in your conversations, you mentioned searching for an aircraft for the purposes of evacuation.

A Correct.

Q Did you ever have discussions about the possibility of ground troops of some sort arriving in Tripoli?

A No, we did not discuss that.

Q How about an AC-130?

A Well, we didn't talk specific platforms. You are asking for a capability. Do you want a strike capability or do you want an evac, you know, a lift capability. We were focused on the lift capability. I know there was some discussion about having a strike capability, whatever that might be, whether -- again, I don't get into the specific platforms, whether it is an F-15 or a C-130J gunship.

No, we didn't talk about those, but we also recognized up front we were primarily focused on evacuation, because if we

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

didn't have a good picture on the ground, we weren't sure what a kinetic capability would be used for since we didn't have enough eyes forward to kind of determine what a target would be.

Q So bear with me for just a second. So, in the strike capability, you had brief conversations about that, an extended conversation, a cursory conversation?

A A brief conversation.

Q And the upshot of those brief conversations was that such strike capability was not possible? Applicable?

A At the time, we didn't think it was applicable, and the other piece was, you know, I worked as a battle captain for Odyssey Dawn. I knew where the battle aircraft were located. I also kind of had -- you know, I understand that they are probably coming out of Aviano at best. And just by doing the simple math in my head, knowing by the time they even got there, those aircraft would not be able to return. We still wouldn't know whether there were strikes. There was still no fuelers that were in the area. That I knew. So what I thought was focus on the evacuation capability because it was unlikely that a strike capability would be available.

Q And in the strike capability aspect, speaking to that now, did you convey that to the others that you were working with within the TOC?

A [REDACTED] and I had briefly talked about it saying what would be the pros and cons to it. Again, since we

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

weren't sure what we had on the ground, we weren't sure that it could cause greater problems; it could cause the local indigenous forces to turn. You know, we had gone through all those options in our head. We figured, at the time, the best option was just to focus, get the evacuation assets as best we could.

Q And did you have any indication for you personally to convey those impressions of the strike options to the deputy chief of mission?

A I do not know. If that occurred, that occurred between [REDACTED] and the chief of mission. All I focused on again was I told him -- he asked about fast movers.

Q Who is "he"?

A I am sorry, Greg Hicks, the DCM. At the time, we said not sure that could arrive any faster than the evacuation aircraft. We are working all options. And I know that the planners back at AFRICOM were also looking at all options. But that capability was kind of understood not to be readily available any faster than an evacuation capability.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]

Q So just to clarify, you mentioned deliberations about the perceived factors to take into consideration for pulling strike aircraft. You said "we were discussing." Can you just define who you meant by --

A I am sorry. It is myself, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] He and I were discussing, again, what would be the impact, pros, cons,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

concerns, what is available. We were doing this on a local level, again understanding that AFRICOM is having that same discussion back there. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] wanted to understand all the options, in case we had to advise or make any kind of advice or recommendation.

Q So I understand that conversation was taking place between you and [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

A Correct.

Q Was that conversation one that was generated amongst the two of you, or was it sort of sparked off, if you will, by some indication from AFRICOM?

A That was some indication from AFRICOM. But, again, we are all military planners in similar training, so we were taking all options automatically. We know AFRICOM was thinking them. We think them as well. Again, that is kind of chalkboard type of planning: What is available? What is out there? What are we capable of doing?

ARI [REDACTED] I see. Thank you.

OR2 [REDACTED] I think we are about done with our hour, so we can go off the record.

[Recess.]

EXAMINATION

001 BY [REDACTED]:

Q We can go back on the record. The time is now 12:45. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] on behalf of the minority staff of the [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



Oversight and Government Reform Committee, I would just like to thank you again for taking the time to speak for us and for your service. I will take a moment to reintroduce myself. My name is [REDACTED]. I am counsel with the minority. I am joined here by [REDACTED] ^{OD2} and [REDACTED] ^{OD3}, as well as our colleagues on the Armed Services Committee, [REDACTED] ^{AD1}

OD1

I would like to first just note that we appreciate your responses during the last hour. We found that the information you provided to be very informative. And the for the purposes of this hour I think we would like to revisit I think a few of those topics really just to complete the record and to clarify some of the responses that you gave. So our intent really is just for the completeness of the record and not necessarily to annoy you by asking some of the same questions.

I would like to begin our conversation with the site security team, the SST team. We have discussed how that mission evolved throughout 2012 during the last hour. I would like to focus on the time following the end of the mission on August 3rd and 4th.

Maybe you can help clarify for us, after the mission ended, when did the personnel associated with the SST element, when did they depart Libya?

A I don't remember specifically. It was a couple weeks after, but it wasn't too long after the end of the mission.

Q Okay. And after the end of their mission, what was



[REDACTED]

their role?

A Well, at the end of the mission, the hope was at the time that the 1208 or the PSIs would be approved so the 1208 could begin. It was clear that that was not going to happen any time soon. So since it was clear that they were not going to be actively engaged in the 1208 until those PIs happened, it was the decision that they return to their families and once the P&Is got approved, they would return.

Q I believe in the last hour, you mentioned that that was a joint decision then, to draw down that team. Even though the mission had ended, the decision to remove the 12 members, was that a joint decision?

A A joint decision between AFRICOM and the embassy?

Q Yes.

A I don't know how much of a joint decision that was.

Q Okay. But the conversations leading up to the end the mission, was there a close communication between AFRICOM and the chief of mission?

A Yes, there was. There was consensus to the decision. I don't know how much more detail than that.

Q Thank you. That is very helpful. I would like to turn to the night of the attacks. Fast forward. You had mentioned during the last hour that prior to the attack, prior to the events unfolding in Benghazi, that you were aware of protests occurring elsewhere in the Middle East.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Correct.

Q Could you just maybe elaborate on that and help us understand what your understanding was of the events unfolding across the region and how you became aware of those events?

A We were just simply watching the news. We were aware of what was going on. We were aware of, you know, the film. But at the time, we were kind of focused on -- I was kind of focused on -- I had ongoing activities with the security cooperation. So I didn't get too involved in the understanding of what was going on regionally. At that time, again, I was focused on my engagement I had with the Libyan armed forces. So, again, it was broadly understand that based on what we were seeing in news reports and what we were generally talking about in the embassy was that this was going on, but I wasn't privy to any other conversations beyond that.

Q So these events were unfolding throughout the day?

A That is correct.

Q And other embassy personnel or your military colleagues were also aware of the protests?

A Correct.

Q Can I just ask, were you watching television in the compound?

A Yes.

Q Is that how you first became aware of it?

A We were all watching the televisions in our -- we all

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

had a home we were assigned to, so we were watching television.

Q Can I just ask who else you were watching or receiving these reports with?

A I don't remember at the time.

Q And just to be clear, did you subsequently discuss the events unfolding with anybody else at post?

A I don't remember.

Q Okay. After learning of the events, the incident at the Benghazi special mission compound, you were discussing during the last hour your communications with the JOC at AFRICOM.

A Yes.

Q Just for the record, can you tell us what the JOC is?

A The Joint Operations Center. It is, again, where all -- any and all activities are kind of coordinated through that is outside of the AFRICOM headquarters. That is the organization you call in order to start feeding information throughout the command.

Q Okay. And during the last hour, you discussed kind of the iterations of communications you had with the AFRICOM JOC. Were you also in touch with the SOCAFRICA JOC?

A No, that was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who was primarily in touch with them. I had sat in on some discussions with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] on that, but again, it was mostly a discussion of what aircraft they had available. So, again, we were kind of coordinating activity on what aircraft or who was pursuing what type of

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

capability.

Q Sure. And you mentioned before that you had placed several calls to the AFRICOM JOC. How would you characterize the frequency of the communications? Was this an open line of communication? Were the communications more staggered?

A It was more staggered. Again, there wasn't a lot of personnel there, so while I am working on stuff within the embassy, I am calling at least every hour or every other hour, because, again, I need to give them some time to start working the issue and then I follow up.

Q So, during this time, were you aware of what information the JOC was receiving from other sources?

A No.

Q Okay. Was the line of communication, would you characterize it as mostly one way in the sense of you were feeding information to the JOC, or were they also then providing information to you of their situational awareness?

A Mostly one way. I was providing them the information.

Q Okay. Were they giving you any information to help inform your situational awareness?

A Not at this time.

Q Were you limited in any way in the information that you could provide or receive?

A No. Again, when it is a crisis situation, regardless of the method of communication, I provided all the information by

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

whatever immediate source available.

Q Okay. And what was that source?

A Unclassified. Hand cell phone.

Q Okay. And did you find the communications to be reliable that night?

A In Libya? No. We had constant where the phones kept dropping, particularly as it got later on in the evening. But I felt they were sufficient enough that I was at least getting the primary information back to the AFRICOM JOC.

Q And you felt, even though you were discussing potential response over an open line, that you still were able to provide the information that you thought was necessary and important?

A Correct.

Q To the JOC. Can you just walk us through how you were relaying the information you were -- any of the information you may have been receiving from the AFRICOM JOC or any of the updates they may have provided you?

A Well, they weren't giving me any updates direct again over an unclassified line. They weren't feeding me the information. The only information I was really hitting them up for was, again, how soon we could get an available aircraft, and they were just feeding me information that they were either working it or that the timeline they hoped to get it in was pretty the only information they were feeding me.

DD2

BY [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q What about the other direction? Can you describe sort of how information was fed to you to then go to the JOC?

A We were all on the same compound. We were all very close together, so, you know, I was probably within 10 feet of [REDACTED] or 10 feet of the DCM at almost any given time. So as soon as I would hear something or say something, see something then I would try to convey what I could to the JOC. But again, we didn't have a lot of information. We were all, you know, [REDACTED] was working very hard trying to get information from the Libyans. So was the DCM, so was Mr.

[REDACTED] Everybody was trying to get information. There just wasn't a lot we were getting back. That was part of the problem.

Q What were you able to convey initially?

A That we knew that the consulate was being attacked by something or someone. That we needed to get them out as soon as possible. We knew that the consulate had been lit on fire and that, at that point, again -- but we didn't have any indications of wounded. We didn't have any indications where the ambassador was. We didn't have any indications who was still around. We had very little information because the folks there that were on the ground were split, so they didn't have any visibility on where everybody was at the time. So, again, we were working off very little information.

ODI

BY [REDACTED]

Q Okay. I think you touched on it, but could you maybe

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

just elaborate on your understanding of the other personnel's role during --

A Which personnel?

Q You mentioned you were in a place -- well, first, I will ask it this way. Where were you and the DCM and the DAT physically located when you were running coms?

A We were right outside the building where the RSO operations center was located. So, physically, we are all within, again, between 10 and 50 feet at any given time.

Q Is that the Tactical Operations Center?

A Tactical Operations Center.

Q The folks who were in the Tactical Operations Center, what were their roles during this process?

A Well, again, since everybody was consolidated in here trying to get information. You had the RSO trying to get information from their folks, the RSOs that were out in Benghazi. Of course, you had just kind of the staff personnel who were all just on standby. We had one administrator who was simply trying to, you know, take notes. But, again, there were so many phone conversations going on that she couldn't consolidate any notes.

[REDACTED] was working the phones with the Libyans. Pretty much the primary busy people were [REDACTED] working with the Libyans, so was the DCM, Mr. Greg Hicks, and Mr. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] was contacting his contacts out of Benghazi, while Greg Hicks was contacting government leadership

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

there in Tripoli.

But most folks outside of that small circle, you know, the security circle and the leadership, didn't have much of a role. The consular didn't have much a role. The computer folks were just making sure things were still operational. But everybody was also at the time in the back of their mind at the time thinking, what do we have to take if we have to get out of here?

Q And you had mentioned during the last hour your background as a military planner. Can you just describe a little bit more about your background, your experience in planning?

A I have been a military planner. I have done -- right before that I had done Odyssey Dawn as part of the battle captain, so I understand kind of how -- where the air operations center is. I have done planning with targeting. I have been a military intelligence planner. So everything from planning during the buildup to Iraq, how we were going to feed in intel, how we were going pipe in intel, what kind of access we had available. Everything to being a plant security operations planner at U.S. Army Africa. Again, how do we train forces, what assets are used to train forces, what resources and funding can we use.

So I have got pretty extensive both military intelligence and as well as tactical in the sense that I was on tanks for 4 years. I have also done planning on the tactical forward capabilities, mostly in ground warfare. Not too much beyond that.

Q Thank you. That is very helpful. So is it safe to say

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

then that you were drawing upon your specialized training and experience then when you began making phone calls trying to work, get AFRICOM to work moving aircraft into --

A Correct.

Q Libya.

A I had a general understanding of what assets were available to AFRICOM. Again, a general understanding. So we took those into consideration, knowing that if we were asked for something that we were prepared, myself or [REDACTED] [REDACTED] were prepared to give advice as best we could.

Q What informed that general understanding?

A I had been part of Odyssey Dawn in the beginning, so I was very familiar with what air bases were in the area. I was familiar with what type of systems were there during that time and what had left shortly after the beginning of Odyssey Dawn. I also knew what kind of assets NATO had in the area. Again, in general, a broad understanding of what is out there in case some of the military planners started discussing what our options are, we can better state back what we think we needed.

Q Okay. And the diplomatic personnel at post, did they have the same kind of awareness of what AFRICOM assets were?

A No, I don't believe so. Again, they would ask myself or [REDACTED] [REDACTED] for that sort of information.

Q Can you describe for us what the nine line evac report is?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A That is just a standard medical evacuation report that we use for every kind of medical evacuation. You know, name, type of wound, whether it is walking wounded, whether it is critical. It is a very standard report amongst all the services.

Q And, again, just to kind of return to the timeline, to the best of your recollection when did you begin making preparations for potential evacuation?

A Well, immediately. I mean, that was again -- the assumption was we understood the attack first, and we thought whatever we have got to do, let's start planning that we need to pull them out. So that was an immediate thing. That is why we called back initially requesting, can you have an aircraft available if we have to pull them out?

Q So you didn't wait until you received or were made aware of an order to evacuate any personnel?

A No. No. We immediately started thinking about evacuation and the potential.

Q Okay. And you mentioned that in the course of that planning and making those preparations, that you reached out to your contacts in the Benghazi Air Force?

A Correct.

Q To foam the runway, so to speak, into Benghazi?

A Right. That, one, that we may need -- that we were probably going to request access to their airfield, that we were going to need to request access to their airspace, and then also,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

about an hour after the initial call, requesting one of their air assets as a potential option for evacuation.

[REDACTED]

[1 p.m.]

001

BY

Q And again, just can you describe or characterize their response?

A It was very positive. They basically gave us carte blanche, whatever we needed to do in order to do it, that they would support it. They just needed to know what it would be and when it would arrive so that they could properly prepare for what would be coming.

Q And how soon did they communicate that information to you?

A Immediately upon my phone call to them.

Q I think during the last hour, you also touched on there being a MANPAD threat. Can you just maybe describe generally for us the threats that -- any surface-to-air threats in Libya?

A Well, I mean, we know about the MANPAD. The State Department had been working with the Libyan -- the Libyan Armed Forces on MANPAD collection. I mean, that's obviously a topic in terms of the government. We were quite well aware that there is a MANPAD threat there. Again, just being on notice, prudent planning is understanding that there may be a threat there, we have to take that into consideration for anything that we do in the area. At the time I didn't have specifics, I just --

[REDACTED]

specifics like what MANPADs were out there, who had them, and if they were even near the Benghazi airport, so we had to take it seriously that it could potentially be a threat.

Q Okay. Is it safe to say that the AFRICOM chain of command was also aware of that same threat?

A I would say that's a safe bet, yes. Any time you fly an aircraft into an area that may be considered hostile, you always will consider a MANPAD threat.

Q When you mentioned during the last hour specific strike capabilities, I believe you referred to an aircraft, referring to the Aviano base. Did that name come to mind because that name was presented to you as an option?

A No, it's just because I was familiar with what's at Aviano. I was familiar with what bases had aircraft during Odyssey Dawn. The only one I remembered was Aviano had airframes, but, again, that was just me thinking through what are all our options, and was Aviano a likely source of a platform that our AFRICOM could provide.

Q Okay. And did you have any direct conversations with the diplomatic staff about using strike aircraft?

A No. What we talked about, again, was -- me and [REDACTED] talked about -- we talked about what assets were out there, and, if we were going to get requested by AFRICOM what did we advise, we thought through all our options internally, if there was strike aircraft would be recommended, would we prefer where we

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

can just get people evacuated out, just kind of an airframe to lift people out. We were talking internally about our options, but I don't believe I talked at all specifically about specific airframes to the embassy staff.

Q Okay. After the events -- as the events were unfolding, did you personally have any concerns about the safety and security of embassy staff in Tripoli?

A At the time I didn't have the time to worry about that. My first reaction was get them consolidated, get them evacuated, and then I had, of course, the wounded that were getting ready to fly in in the morning. I let the RSO worry about that security piece. I just needed to focus on mine.

Q During the last hour you described the role that you played when the order was made to consolidate [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Can you describe some of the challenges that you faced in executing?

A One was just kind of getting a grasp of where everybody is at, trying to get them all lined up in the same vehicles, trying to figure out if we had enough vehicles for enough people we wanted to move, because we had more people than we did vehicles to move all the personnel. Started prioritizing our movements as well as simply -- it wasn't a difficult move, but it was also a move that we didn't want to highlight. We didn't want to draw attention to ourselves by having a large convoy run across and draw the attention of the Libyans. So it was just simply kind of

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

coming up with a low-visibility way of getting everybody out as soon as possible with the number of vehicles we had.

Q Okay. Can you describe for us whether or not -- or tell us whether or not the four-man team led by [REDACTED] [REDACTED] played a role in the consolidation?

A At that time I don't remember [REDACTED] [REDACTED] playing a role in that consolidation. He consolidated with us. They had their own vehicles, so they were able to move on their own. They were not part of -- again, I was focused on embassy personnel. The military personnel could handle themselves.

Q Okay. We would just like to revisit a question that was asked to you during the last hour, and the hope here is just to get this in your own words. But you had characterized an order you thought that was given to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and I just wanted to hear from you about how do you characterize the order that they received on whether or not to move?

A Certainly the way I understood it was when initially the call [REDACTED] to go out and assist in Benghazi, that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] -- when I talked to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] that he had also notified AFRICOM of his desire to participate in that -- or, I'm sorry, not AFRICOM, SOCAF at the time. SOCAF made the determination that they wanted them to stay in place because there was such limited security at the current embassy, and we weren't sure, nobody was sure, what the ground looked like forward, and that his best view at that time was help to resecure the embassy.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

So when I talked to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] about it, that was pretty much the way it was portrayed to me.

Mr. Richards. And when you say "embassy," you mean both the Tripoli Embassy and the [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Just general security of embassy personnel, [REDACTED]

Mr. Richards. Okay.

ODI BY [REDACTED]:

Q Following the events of September 11 and 12, how long did you remain in Tripoli?

A For another 3 weeks -- or, no, another month.

Q During that month period do you remember or recall any improvements that were made to security?

A Well, we already had the Marines come in to provide additional security at the embassy. Immediately upon their arrival, weapons, concertina wire, sensors, everything was placed around -- lots of enhancements were done with what they came in with to provide additional security.

Q And how quickly was that done?

A Within 24 hours. The Marines have -- are pretty quick at being able to --

ADI BY [REDACTED]:

Q Okay. So I would like to ask you about when you went to receive the aircraft from Benghazi with the wounded on it, okay? You said that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] sent you to the airport --

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and I, we went to college together and were commissioned together -- sent you to the airport, and you said you took a 19 Delta with you?

A Correct.

Q What is a 19 Delta?

A A 19 Delta is a Special Forces E-medical. Special capabilities to do more enhanced trauma, first aid. So he was able to accompany them and also assist with the Libyan doctors in helping both the wounded men.

Q Okay. So let's peel that back a little bit. When you launched to the airfield, what was your understanding of the severity of the casualties?

A If I remember right, one had a severe neck wound; the other one had a leg wound. Both were -- both individuals were bleeding severely, and that they needed quickly to get transport to the hospital.

Q And did you arrive at the airfield before the airplane got there?

A Almost simultaneously.

Q Almost simultaneous?

A It was almost simultaneous. They were pulling in as I was pulling in.

Q And were there Libyan medical personnel greeting them at the time?

A There was a Libyan ambulance that was already there,

[REDACTED]

and they had a doctor on board the ambulance to also provide immediate assistance.

Q Okay. So describe that sort of the transfer from the airplane to the ambulance, and particularly tell me about the actions the 19 Delta took.

A Well, I can't remember what specifically the 19 Delta took because I was starting to -- I was looking at what kind of route we needed to take, if there was any security issues along the route that I needed to take into consideration. 19 Delta --

Q The route from the airfield to the hospital?

A From the airfield to the hospital.

Q Okay.

A The ambulance -- when the plane pulled up, we had complete access to the airport, so the ambulance was able to pull up right to the base of the aircraft, so the wounded were able to literally walk down and enter the aircraft.

Q They were ambulatory?

A One was ambulatory. The second one, I believe, was not.

They immediately went into the ambulance. I believe at that time the 19 Delta also joined them, and then immediately we moved out to the hospital, and it was a relatively quick move.

Q And once you got to the hospital, you just -- you allowed the Libyan medical officials to --

A The 19 Delta kind of took over. He worked with the

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Libyan medical officials. That's when I got notice that, again, one of the wounded had a rare blood type, so we started scrambling to find out who had a similar blood type, and we did find somebody at the embassy.

Q So would you characterize the 19 Delta's role as integral to the care?

A Oh, absolutely.

ADI [REDACTED] Okay, thank you. I think that's it for me.

ODI [REDACTED] Thank you. I think we're all done, we'll go off the record.

[Recess.]

ARI [REDACTED] Okay. So we'll go back on the record.

Mr. Richards. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] would just like to clarify the role of [REDACTED] and the role of [REDACTED] in the evacuation of the Tripoli Embassy to the [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Yeah, he didn't have any direct role as it related to embassy personnel, which was the piece I was working, but him and the team did do route reconnaissance, route security prior to our moving [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] So he did play a role in the general sense, but not specifically with the movement of embassy personnel.

ARI [REDACTED] Fine. Thank you.

ARI [REDACTED]:

Q I think both sides here are going to, as our colleagues

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

did, just try to play out some things that are still unclear in our minds, so just bear with us. We're going to go back and forth a bit so we have some of this clear.

I want to talk now for just 1 second about the Benghazi group moving to the Benghazi Annex. I know that's going back a bit from our discussions. How did you learn that that movement was taking place?

A I learned of that movement through [REDACTED] but I didn't have any of the details, so I can't talk articulately about what exactly happened. I just know that they, too, consolidated their position. Again, I was just trying to figure out when they were going to move to the airport so I could alert the air operations center that they were going to be at the airport, and hopefully by then we had an aircraft.

Q And I think you said earlier that that's when you learned then that the Benghazi Annex, in fact, existed?

A Correct.

Q And did you express any surprise of that or say, what is this facility, or, who are these people?

A No, I didn't question. Again, being a military intelligence officer, I know things are out there. So, no, I was not surprised by it.

Q Sure. And then in the normal reporting relationships that you had and the phone calls and so forth you were making, presumably you reported that fact up to a higher authority, or no?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A No. Again, I was focused on number of people, again, how many people are going to be at the airport and how many people do we need to transport, but I was not -- other than that, no, I was not conveying that there is an alternate facility there in Benghazi.

Q Okay. So it was provided you for information for you to undertake some other activities?

A Exactly.

Q And maybe, we don't know, but maybe [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is the one that conveyed that to a higher authority?

A May or may not, I am not sure.

Q You just don't know. Fine. Thank you.

ORR

BY [REDACTED]

Q Only, [REDACTED] if we could now go back from Benghazi to Tripoli, and I just want to ask a point of clarification about what you said about [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and his intention and desire to at some point transit to Benghazi. So to be clear, when the first flight, [REDACTED] left on the chartered jet, the U.S. civilian personnel were still at Embassy Tripoli; is that correct?

A Correct.

Q Okay. And so -- and then you mentioned, you alluded to a discussion that you had, may have had, with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] about his men's -- the importance of them helping to secure the embassy in Tripoli?

A Correct.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Okay. When that first flight left?

A [Nonverbal response.]

Q Okay. Then moving forward a little bit, when the second flight, the Libyan C-130 flight, left, were the Americans from the embassy all now at [REDACTED]

A Correct.

Q Okay.

A I believe so. Let me take that back. I believe so. I'm not exactly sure what time that aircraft took off, but by then we -- I believe they took off at dawn, and at that time we had repositioned.

Q And I take it you're somewhat -- you're a little unsure about it because I think you alluded when we were talking a couple hours ago that this time you were -- at the time that the Americans were now at [REDACTED] and the second response flight was being contemplated, you were moving around; I mean, you were not on [REDACTED]

A Correct. At that time I was getting focused on receiving the folks that were already coming back from the chartered aircraft.

Q And so is it fair to say that at that point, at the point where now [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is alleged to have considered joining the second response flight, is it fair to say that your knowledge of his -- how that all transpired is somewhat limited? Is that fair to say?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Correct. So I am not aware of any desire by him to hit a second rotation. I was not aware of that.

Q Okay. And is it fair to say -- are you clear or unclear about whether he and his men were integrated [REDACTED]

A Well, all I know is I had the Special Forces medic. So whether they were getting integrated or not, again, I'm not aware to what extent they were integrated. I know that his medic at that time was with me helping with the wounded.

OR2 [REDACTED] Okay. That's helpful. Thank you so much.

AR1 BY [REDACTED]

Q When did you learn the first flight left?

A Probably a couple hours after, 2 a.m. or so.

Q After it had left?

A After it had left.

Q Okay. And somewhere in that timeline we know, because [REDACTED] [REDACTED] told us in another setting, that he had a conversation with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Do you have any knowledge of that conversation?

A I don't.

Q Pardon me?

A I do not.

Q You do not.

And to the extent that you have an understanding of what [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was instructed to do by whoever gave him those [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

instructions, how is it that you have that knowledge?

A [REDACTED] told me that he was told to stand -- to stay at the facility, at the embassy facility.

Q I understand.

And then when you went to the airport to receive the wounded, and you took his 19 Delta with you, because the 19 Delta was from his team, correct?

A Correct.

Q Was it just the two of you that went to the airport?

A No, I had some State Department personnel. I also had a Libyan driver; one State Department person I cannot remember who I threw in the back, I needed an extra body; and one of my Libyan drivers.

Q And did [REDACTED] and the two others then join you there?

A No. I do know that of [REDACTED] team, of the four, one had a broken foot, so he wasn't getting on anything too fast, too quick. All I know is [REDACTED] and the one other individual, I'm not sure what they were doing at that time, and the medic was with me. They may have been assisting in other efforts. That's speculation on my part.

Q Okay. And do you have any recollection that [REDACTED] had asked to go to the airport either instead of you or with you?

A I don't recall that.

[REDACTED]

OR2

BY [REDACTED]

Q Shifting gears once again, with respect to Ambassador Stevens' planned visit to Benghazi, when did you learn that Ambassador Stevens planned to travel to Benghazi?

A It was a couple days prior to him departing.

Q And were you comfortable with the decision of him making that trip?

A Well, that wasn't my call, to be comfortable or not. I ran with him in the morning, so I had a good chance to kind of talk with him generally about my job, and that's when I was made aware that he was going to Benghazi.

Q Okay. Were you aware of any concerns within the embassy or from other U.S. Government personnel about Ambassador Stevens' plans to travel to Benghazi?

A They did not verbalize it if they had it to me.

Q Okay. And lastly, did you have any discussion with your chain of command about the Ambassador's plans to travel to Benghazi?

A Negative.

Q I think this is the last time we'll shift. Post attack. Were you ever debriefed by your chain of command or by other U.S. military personnel about what took place on the night of the attack?

A Negative.

Q To your knowledge did the U.S. military conduct a

[REDACTED]

formal after-action review of what took place in Benghazi?

A I believe AFRICOM did. I did not see the results of that AAR.

Q Do you have any idea of when?

A I do not.

OR2 [REDACTED] Okay.

ARI BY [REDACTED]:

Q Did you file any kind of written report that assessed your activities that day or --

A Negative. I was not asked for one.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]:

Q If I could, you said you were not aware of the timing of it, but you heard there may have been one. How did you become aware of that, that there had been an AAR sometime?

A It's standard military practice that you always conduct an AAR after any kind of significant event, so I just know that from general knowledge. But I didn't -- I don't know if and when that report would have been produced, but it's an automatic thing. When something critical like that happens, there is always going to be an automatic review.

Q Sure.

And lastly from our side, were you interviewed by the ARB?

A Negative.

OR2 [REDACTED] Okay.

ARI BY [REDACTED]:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Do you know if your records or emails or anything of that sort were collected and conveyed to the ARB? Do you have any knowledge of that?

A Not that I'm aware of.

CR1

BY [REDACTED]

Q I'm going to jump around a bit, just a couple follow-ups. We were talking about the SST members doing assessments with the Libyan Special Forces.

A Uh-huh.

Q Do you recall when that began?

A I do not.

Q Okay. Did it begin after you arrived?

A It began after I arrived, correct.

Q Fairly shortly after you arrived?

A Early summer, maybe June timeframe. They were primarily focused on the SST mission, but the understanding that transition was going to happen, so there was some early engagement. An assessment is a prog term. An assessment can simply be meeting with folks and understanding who you're dealing with, assessing if this is a credible organization.

Q And do you know if it was a daily thing or --

A At that time I'm not sure if it was daily or weekly.

Q Did it become more frequent or --

A It became more frequent over time, at least daily.

Q At least daily?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A But, again, under cultural understanding, people that you're about to start dealing, training with in Libya, to develop that trust you want to meet at least once a day, if anything maybe even to say hello.

Q Understood.

The night of the attack when you were dealing with the aircraft support, interacting with AFRICOM, was there ever any indication or discussion of plans to reach out to regional allies in Europe or Africa for air support?

A I'm not aware if AFRICOM had those discussions.

Q Okay. And then one more. Did you, in your responsibilities, did you ever inter -- email or correspond electronically with State Department personnel in the course of your duties?

A Oh, dally. Yes, of course.

Q Was there a specific focus of the communication?

A Primarily, again, all training and equipping of foreign forces has to have State Department approval, so before I did anything, particularly if they were interested in buying a particular weapons system, immediately I would let the State Department know, you know, Libyans want to purchase item A; is this something we think the State Department would want to support.

Q Was there ever any discussion with the State Department about the SST?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A I sat in on some of those meetings, but my responsibilities did not correlate to me emailing them about SST duties.

ORI [REDACTED] Okay.

ARI BY [REDACTED]

Q So now we're kind of at a category of lessons learned. The Armed Services Committee, among other things, is especially interested in ensuring that individuals in your situation got the proper communications abilities. Were there deficiencies, in your mind, identified in this episode in equipment or processes that inhibited in an emergency situation for you to properly communicate fully and appropriately?

A Are you asking me after the fact?

Q Do you believe after the fact, looking back, that you were inadequately equipped or prepared to communicate as you thought necessary?

A I think we -- I thought during the time we felt we had sufficient communications, because, again, we were a very small post with a very low profile. After the incident it was clear that we recognized quickly that we needed more redundant communications. As soon as the first aircraft landed, it gave me additional coms capabilities so I could contact back to AFRICOM. So initially we realized there were shortcomings.

Q When you say "redundant," you mean there just weren't enough phones to go around, or you mean it wasn't --

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Different types of phones. You know, again, the Libyan phone system started cutting out on us quite a bit. That's when I, at that time, requested a SAT phone, which then they flew down on the next aircraft so that I would never drop communications again. So, again, it was just having redundant types of communication with different systems.

Q And was the absence of assurability to communicate in a classified sense inhibiting in any way?

A No, not to me. The big key here is, again, since my job was Office of Security Cooperation --

Q I'm sorry, I mean in connection with the attack, not in the course of your duties.

A No, I did not feel that that hindered me at all. Since I'm Office of Security Cooperation, since my primary function is not really to have redundant communications, again, I work in the open, I work in the clear, I work with Libyan forces, so it's not traditional that I would have backup systems. That would usually reside in the DAO office, and they do have extra SAT phones, and they have extra capabilities that I do not have. But that doesn't mean that they weren't there, just I didn't have them.

Q Okay. So you were talking personally about what was available to you personally, not necessarily at the post?

A Correct.

Q I see. That's very helpful.

And similarly, in hindsight, did you experience any kind of

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

confused lines of authority or cross-talking that needed to be --

A -- I did not. I felt the lines of authority were pretty clear for us.

Q And that each of the various groups there were hopefully talking to their senior commands, and that you were appropriately deconflicting it at your level?

A I felt comfortable with it.

ARI [REDACTED] Thank you.

OC2 [REDACTED] I think that for now concludes the majority portion of the questions. Go off the record, please.

[Recess.]

ADI [REDACTED] Let's go back on the record, please.

Mr. Richards. I would just like to make one point of clarification regarding after-action reports. We've provided the House Armed Services Committee all after-action reports related to this, and General Dempsey has given a classified briefing regarding those reports, so. They are in possession of the House Armed Services Committee, and I acknowledge there is no AFRICOM-specific AAR, though there are other service-specific and Special Forces-specific AARs that are with the Congress currently.

Thank you.

ADI BY [REDACTED]

Q While we're on the AAR portion, we're talking about formal AARs, but there's also an informal AAR process. Did you have occasion to discuss with either [REDACTED] or your ODC

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

chain of command sort of lessons learned and sort of the impressions as you went over, as you thought about what happened over the next couple weeks?

A Over than with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and myself talking informally about what we would have done different, no other chain of command asked for formal or informal AAR from me.

Q Okay. Going to the 1208 program, this is nit-picking, but who owned 1208; was it [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

A It was [REDACTED] 1208 primarily belonged to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and SOCAF.

Q Okay. And, you know, we're supersensitized to the lexicon, the terminology stand-down, so let's approach it from a different way. Was it your understanding that SOCAF had given [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] a specified task or mission or implied task to do anything revolving around Embassy Tripoli, or was there a lack of any guidance whatsoever?

A No, the way I understood it from [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was he was told to stay in place to assist with the security of the embassy compound.

Q So he had a mission statement, essentially a mission statement or a task?

A This is from [REDACTED] [REDACTED] the way I understood it. So I don't know specifically what SOCAF told him. That's the way I understood it from [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Q It was clearly not just go back to your quarters and --

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A It was not go back to your quarters and hang out.

ADI [REDACTED] Thank you very much. That's all I've got.
Have you got something?

ADI BY [REDACTED]

Q The question was his communication was with SOCAF, not
AFRICOM directly?

A Correct, with SOCAF.

Q And you were talking to AFRICOM?

A Correct.

ADI [REDACTED] Thanks, that's all I've got.

Anything else?

Off the record. Thanks.

OR2 [REDACTED] I just wanted to say on behalf of
Chairman Issa how much he appreciates you coming. I know you came
all the way from Stuttgart, and we just really appreciate your
cooperation, your forthrightness and your service. Thank you so
much.

[REDACTED] Thank you. Appreciate it all.

OR2 [REDACTED] Off the record.

[Whereupon, at 1:35 p.m., the interview concluded.]

[REDACTED]



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

