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

INTERVIEW OF: [REDACTED]

Thursday, February 26, 2015

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held in HVC-302,
Capitol Visitor Center, commencing at 2:20 p.m.

Present: Representatives Gowdy, Roby, Westmoreland, and
Cummings.

1 Appearances:

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5 For the SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI:

6 DANA CHIPMAN, CHIEF INVESTIGATIVE COUNSEL

7 SHARON JACKSON, DEPUTY CHIEF COUNSEL

8 MAC TOLAR, SENIOR COUNSEL

9 CARLTON DAVIS, INVESTIGATOR

10 SARA BERRINEAU, INVESTIGATOR

11 SHERIA CLARKE, COUNSEL

12 SUSANNE SACHSMAN GROOMS,

13 MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR/GENERAL COUNSEL

14 PETER KENNY, MINORITY SENIOR COUNSEL

15

16 For the U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE:

17 AUSTIN EVERS, SENIOR ADVISOR

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1 Ms. Jackson. All right, we'll go back on the record.
2 Again, it is Sharon Jackson. It is 2:20 in the afternoon.
3 We are continuing the interview of Agent ██████████.

4 And, Agent, welcome back.

5 Mr. ██████████ Thank you.

6 Ms. Jackson. And we have moved into a room, a
7 classified setting now. And so what I suggest that we do is,
8 we know we have this room for the next hour-and-a-half,
9 2 hours. And so I'm going to take about 45 minutes to ask
10 you questions that we discussed earlier that you said might
11 evoke a classified answer, then I'll turn it over to the
12 minority staff for 45 minutes and then we will assess where
13 we are, whether we're done, or whether we need to move into
14 another unclassified setting.

15 And is that fine with the minority?

16 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Yes.

17 Ms. Jackson. Okay.

18 Mr. Evers. Sharon, did you want to do the clarification
19 here or do you wanted to wait?

20 Ms. Jackson. You know what, we'll start with that.

21 Mr. Evers. Okay.

22 EXAMINATION

23 BY MS. JACKSON:

24 Q Agent ██████████ I was informed that there was an
25 answer that you gave before that you would like to clarify.

1 We can go ahead and do that now. I will ask it again at the
2 very end of the session, as you sit here today, is there any
3 answer that you'd like to elaborate on or clarify, so you'll
4 have yet another opportunity to do so. But go ahead and
5 direct our attention to what you would like to clarify and
6 then how you'd like to expand upon that.

7 A Thank you, ma'am. There was a discussion about the
8 use of Gmail that we went over. One of the things I wanted
9 to clarify is, while in fact we did rely on Gmail for some of
10 our communications, anything that we felt was sensitive was
11 put either on OpenNet or on the classified system. We took
12 great pains to make sure that, you know, we didn't put
13 anything on the Internet that we wouldn't want the general
14 public to know. If it was something like that, it either
15 went on OpenNet or onto the classified system.

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

17 Right before we broke, you were having a discussion
18 about then Ambassador Stevens' request for consideration of
19 extending the MSD in Tripoli. Okay. All right. And I
20 believe that you said that the MSD went in Tripoli in about
21 August of '11. Is that correct?

22 A Yes, ma'am.

23 Q Okay. Before the Embassy was reopened in September
24 of 2011?

25 A Correct. Yes, ma'am.

1 Q Okay. And then the Exhibit 2 that you were shown,
2 let me hand it back to you, talks about the MSD is getting
3 ready to leave. In particular, the second part of that is
4 from John C. Stevens to you. In the second paragraph of his
5 email, he writes, quote, "My understanding is that we are
6 scheduled to reduce to one MSD team on July 12, with the
7 second team staying until August. The second team has been
8 doing the LGF training." End of quote.

9 Do you see that paragraph?

10 A Yes, ma'am.

11 Q Okay. I believe that you had said that initially
12 three MSD teams went into Tripoli?

13 A Yes, ma'am.

14 Q Okay.

15 A We had two that came in, in the first iteration. I
16 want to say about 2 weeks later, another team, a third team
17 came in.

18 Q And that third team was essentially dedicated to
19 training?

20 A It was anticipation of training that would be
21 needed to help the RSO build additional security for the
22 Embassy.

23 Q How long did it take for their training function to
24 kick in, if you will, and if you can remember?

25 A I want to say it might have been in late fall,

1 early winter, somewhere around there, we started to identify
2 personnel that were suitable to actually get training.

3 Q And, again, this was just for Tripoli?

4 A Yes, ma'am.

5 Q Okay. None of these trained locally employed
6 people were -- they weren't training in Benghazi or for
7 Benghazi security. If you recall.

8 A I would have to refer to some kind of note. There
9 was some discussion of some of the LES staff from Benghazi
10 coming down, but I can't say for sure. But the general --
11 the focus really, the preponderance of it was on Tripoli.

12 Q So at the time that this email was written in June
13 of 2012 regarding Ambassador Stevens' request that MSD be
14 extended, MSD had been there for almost a year, or at least
15 10 months. Is that correct?

16 A Yes, ma'am.

17 Q That was longer than originally anticipated?

18 A We recognized that things change and that we have
19 to remain some flexibility. But generally it was thought
20 that we would be there from 60 to 120 days.

21 Q Okay. And what changed that required you to be --
22 required MSD to be there longer?

23 A I can't think of anything specific that was a
24 driver that said that we had to stay longer. I think the
25 general, you know, getting personnel identified and

1 high-threat trained agents and so forth takes a bit of time.

2 Q So it just took longer than you had anticipated to
3 replace with high-threat agents?

4 A What I had anticipated, yes.

5 Q Okay. And were you in Tripoli?

6 A Yes, ma'am.

7 Q And when were you in Tripoli?

8 A From, I believe it was, late August through
9 September, and I think I left maybe early October.

10 Q In 2011?

11 A In 2011, yes, ma'am.

12 Q So when the first group went in to assess the
13 security situation to make -- to assist in the determination
14 as to whether Embassy Tripoli was going to reopen?

15 A There was a small four-man team that went ahead of
16 me. Right behind them, 2 days after them, I believe it was,
17 myself and two MSD teams entered. They received us at the
18 airport. My advance team received us at the airport, and
19 then we started setting up security for the rest of the
20 Embassy staff to be phased in into Tripoli.

21 Q So then you would have done a 60-day rotation in
22 Tripoli?

23 A I think mine was more around 30 this time. So --

24 Q Did you ever go back to Tripoli after that?

25 A I did not.

1 Q Okay. So other MSD teams you went back to managing
2 the whole detachment?

3 A Right.

4 Q Okay. At the time, if you know, that you were
5 pulling out the MSD teams in the summer of 2012, what if any
6 understanding did you have about your teams being replaced
7 with high-threat trained agents in Tripoli? Was that
8 happening? Or were you aware if there was any concern over
9 the number of agents they were getting in Tripoli?

10 A Well, first, ma'am, I'd like to let you know, in
11 July I moved from MSD to [REDACTED] to be the deputy RSO in

12 [REDACTED]

13 Q Okay.

14 A So, you know, during that period of time, I don't
15 have as much visibility on the sequencing of personnel, but
16 my recollection was is that we were going to replace MSD
17 teams with high-threat trained agents.

18 Q Okay. Did you ever learn as to whether that
19 actually happened, whether you learned formally or, you know,
20 informally through the MSD grapevine, the RSO grapevine, if
21 you will?

22 A I can't say with complete specificity, but my sense
23 of it was is, yes, they were being replaced by high-threat
24 trained agents.

25 Q Did you ever hear about any concerns that they

1 didn't have enough Diplomatic Security agents in Tripoli?

2 A I saw an email from [REDACTED], I believe, the
3 RSO that was sent to IP, DS/IP, where I think he had made
4 those assertions, yeah.

5 Q Did you hear anything similar about Benghazi as to
6 whether they had a sufficient number of Diplomatic Security
7 agents in Benghazi, and, again, focusing on the summer of
8 2012?

9 A Ma'am, to be quite honest, I was focused on
10 Tripoli.

11 Q Okay.

12 BY MR. DAVIS:

13 Q During your time as head of MSD were there other
14 TDYs that you undertook?

15 A When I was --

16 Q When you were head of MSD?

17 A When I was the head of MSD, it was Benghazi and
18 Tripoli were the two TDYs that I took.

19 Q So your trips to Haiti and your trip to Burundi was
20 in a different role?

21 A Yes, it was throughout the course of my career.

22 Q How long were you head of MSD for in total?

23 A I believe I got there April 5 and left sometime in
24 July, so it was about 2 years and maybe a month or two.

25 Q So in the 24, 25 months as the head of the MSD team

1 in DS, you only made two TDY trips, one to Tripoli, one to
2 Benghazi. Is that correct?

3 A Yes.

4 BY MS. JACKSON:

5 Q It is our understanding that there was never an MSD
6 team assigned to Benghazi. Is that correct?

7 A Yes, ma'am.

8 Q Okay. Do you know why that was?

9 A When that mission came up for the Special Envoy,
10 that mission was given to our Dignitary Protection division
11 or office. And what happened was at some point they needed
12 some additional capability, so MSD provided two agents to
13 supplement that Dignitary Protection detail.

14 Q At the time that Benghazi was extended, and I'm
15 specifically focusing on late 2011 into early 2012, when the
16 Benghazi mission was going to last through 2012, was it your
17 understanding that it had switched from Dignitary Protection
18 to DS/IP?

19 Mr. Evers. If you know.

20 Mr. [REDACTED] I don't know that for a fact. I don't
21 know when that, you know, took place.

22 BY MS. JACKSON:

23 Q Let me ask it in a slightly different way. Was
24 there any policy or understanding that would prevent an MSD
25 unit from being assigned to something that wasn't an embassy,

1 a consulate, or official post?

2 A I'm sorry, ma'am, could you --

3 Q Was there any internal policy or directives that
4 discouraged MSD from going to locations that were not an
5 official embassy, an official post, or an official consulate?

6 A No, ma'am.

7 Q Okay. You talked before we broke for lunch
8 regarding the process that would result in MSD being deployed
9 somewhere and that the post would make a request to DS/IP and
10 then a tasking would go to MSD to fulfill that request. Am I
11 correct in that, the general understanding of how that
12 worked?

13 A Yes, ma'am.

14 Q Okay. Do you know would the post be required to
15 make that request formally through a cable to DS?

16 A Generally, yes, ma'am.

17 Q Okay. So the Embassy or the consulate would issue
18 a formal cable requesting MSD assets?

19 A Yes, ma'am.

20 Q Okay. Were those decisions generally discussed
21 behind the scenes before those cables went out?

22 A I would say that that would be likely.

23 Q Sort of like what Ambassador Stevens did in June
24 of '12, where I believe you described it as he was trying to
25 see the realm of possibilities out there?

1 A Yes.

2 Q Okay. And if --

3 A If I can further elaborate?

4 Q Yes, please elaborate.

5 A In that particular case he's contacting somebody
6 that we had not only a professional, but we also had a
7 personal relationship. Generally speaking, that type of
8 request would be from post to IP.

9 Q Okay.

10 A But because he knew me, and I think what he was
11 doing was trying, again, to get a sense of is there a realm
12 of possibility or is there something that he could point to,
13 to further his request.

14 Q You also in your response to Ambassador Stevens
15 talked about the two emerging requirements that MSD had that
16 was going to prevent you from fulfilling his request to you.
17 Could you please explain what those two emerging requirements
18 were?

19 A As I recall, at that time the two requirements [REDACTED]

20 [REDACTED]
21 [REDACTED] is my
22 recollection of what those two emerging missions were.

23 Q Okay. Where else was MSD at the time around the
24 world?

25 A I believe at that time we were in Yemen and

1 Tripoli, and there may have been some other posts that we
2 went to during that period of time. What I can say is over
3 the Arab spring the posts that we did provide assets to was
4 Yemen, Cairo, I believe Tunis, of course, Libya, and we had
5 some other issues down in Mexico at that time that we had to
6 go down and help train some of our personnel to protect
7 themselves. And we also around that time I believe we had an
8 issue in Cote d'Ivoire.

9 Q During the little over 2 years that you were head
10 of MSD, do you recall any instance where there was a formal
11 request through a cable that was denied?

12 A Again, ma'am, I have got to be careful on that,
13 because I may not have known. If posts went to IP, and as IP
14 managed it, if it were denied, they wouldn't call me and say,
15 this mission has been denied. I don't know if that helps or
16 makes sense. But --

17 Q Okay.

18 A So I can't say with certainty.

19 Q Okay.

20 A I do know -- I do know, especially during that
21 period of time, ma'am, the Bureau was doing everything it
22 could to keep pace with the emerging threats and incidences
23 that our folks faced, you know, throughout the Middle East,
24 and at the same time there's things popping up like in
25 Mexico, you know, that needs to be addressed. And they

1 utilized MSD. We essentially utilized MSD to the fullest
2 extent that we could reasonably use them to try to help these
3 posts that were just being faced with all sorts of unrest and
4 things of that nature.

5 Q Sort of along the same lines, was there ever a time
6 when MSD was tasked by IP to go someplace where you as head
7 of MSD said, I don't have enough people, we can't do that, or
8 at least it has to be delayed for a while.

9 A Well, what I can say is, one of the primary
10 missions of MSD is to conduct training. All of those during
11 the Arab spring, you know, unless it was like in Mexico where
12 there was an operational incident at post that required that
13 we get down there and train folks up to protect themselves,
14 all of those training missions were pretty much put on hold
15 during that period of time. So that's kind of the issue.

16 As far as out and out saying I don't have enough people,
17 I can't recall one. But I will tell you is that we stretched
18 as much as we could to help these posts in crisis. Because
19 the reality of it is, is those RSOs, they're our brothers,
20 they're our friends, they're guys that we serve with. And so
21 all of the Bureau takes that responsibility to back them up
22 seriously and to do whatever we can to support them,
23 especially in a time of crisis.

24 Q Okay. Agent [REDACTED] I want to take a step back to
25 when you first went into Benghazi in early May of 2011, when

1 you went in to replace [REDACTED] as the agent in charge.
2 You told us earlier that the DART mission was canceled, that
3 that component of it was canceled. Do you know why it was
4 canceled?

5 A I believe at the time the area that they were going
6 into, there was still active fighting going on between
7 Qadhafi's forces and the rebel forces, and the decision was
8 made is that it was just too unstable to take them and put
9 them into that particular location.

10 Q Okay. Now, I believe you said there was the
11 possibility of one DART person that was there to be on ground
12 to assess the situation, or at least to be the eyes and ears.
13 Do I recall that correctly?

14 A In Benghazi?

15 Q Yes.

16 A To my recollection, there were occasions where a
17 DART, someone from DART with USAID was with us in Benghazi.

18 Q Okay. Did they ever have, while you were there,
19 did they ever have a presence that lasted for weeks on end?

20 A There were constraints on the number of people that
21 could go into Benghazi. There was a ceiling. And so what
22 would be done is people would come in for a period of days,
23 do what they needed to do, and then rotate out, and basically
24 do a contact relief where the next person comes in, takes
25 care of their program. But that was all contingent upon this

1 ceiling.

2 Q Okay. That's sort of a "tag, you're it" type
3 thing?

4 A Well, what it was designed to do is to make sure
5 that we didn't go over our ceiling.

6 Q Do you know who within the State Department imposed
7 that ceiling?

8 A I don't know specifically who had the overall
9 authority to impose that.

10 Mr. Westmoreland. Sharon? What was the ceiling?

11 Mr. [REDACTED] Sir, I believe it was in the low 20s. I
12 had 13.

13 Mr. Westmoreland. Is that just the Embassy, or does
14 that include OGA?

15 Mr. [REDACTED] No, sir, this was just our State
16 Department component under the Special Envoy.

17 Mr. Westmoreland. You did say that the member that was
18 part of the DART team actually worked for USAID?

19 Mr. [REDACTED] Yes, sir, they come from USAID.

20 Mr. Westmoreland. So did they furnish people on the
21 DART team?

22 Mr. [REDACTED] Yes, sir, my understanding is, is that
23 they're USAID employees that work in the section called
24 Disaster Assistance. So they're USAID employees.
25

1 BY MS. JACKSON:

2 Q We talked earlier today about any specialized
3 weapons or specialized equipment that you and others took in
4 when you went into Benghazi, and we reserved your answer for
5 this setting. And so could you elaborate on any specialized
6 weapons or personal protective equipment that you or others
7 had when you first went into Benghazi?

8 A Yes, ma'am. I can't recall all of it, but what we
9 did have were M4 rifles. We had pistols. I believe we may
10 have had a light machine gun. It's been a while, so it's
11 hard for me to recall. And of course we had tactical radios.
12 Those tactical radios were used to speak to AFRICOM. And
13 then of course, you know, we had our own body armor and
14 equipment like the personal locaters that I was referring to
15 and some of that kind of emerging technology to help us
16 through the mission.

17 Q Is that the usual amount of stuff that MSD would
18 take into any high-threat post or was any part of that extra
19 for Benghazi?

20 A We're talking about Benghazi?

21 Q Well, you just described equipment that you had in
22 Benghazi.

23 A Yes, ma'am.

24 Q Okay. Would that -- is the light machine gun, the
25 M4s and the like, all the items that you just described, is

1 that something [REDACTED]
2 [REDACTED] that you were given for Benghazi that
3 was over and above what you would normally have?

4 A Okay. Just for clarity, ma'am, what we provided in
5 Benghazi MSD was me as an agent in charge and two
6 individuals, one that had a little extra medical training and
7 an individual that was very comfortable dealing with the
8 tactical radios. So I just want to make sure that there is a
9 distinction there that that mission, while supplemented by
10 people from the Office of Mobile Security Deployments, it was
11 a DP mission.

12 But to answer your question, the weapon, the special
13 equipment [REDACTED]

14 [REDACTED]

15 Q Okay.

16 BY MR. DAVIS:

17 Q What about the equipment, the other equipment that
18 the DP team brought into Benghazi, were you privy to the
19 equipment that they had?

20 A Yes.

21 Q [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
22 [REDACTED]

23 A In what context?

24 Q The type of the equipment, the amount of weapons
25 that was brought, [REDACTED]

1 [REDACTED]

2 A [REDACTED]

3 BY MS. JACKSON:

4 Q We also talked earlier about other U.S. Government
5 personnel that were present in Benghazi, and we reserved some
6 of your answers for this setting.

7 Other than the State Department personnel that you have
8 described for us, the 13 that were there, what other U.S.
9 Government agencies were present in Benghazi, to your
10 knowledge?

11 A [REDACTED]

12 Q Okay. No Department of Defense officials?

13 A I have no direct knowledge of Department of
14 Defense.

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

16 [REDACTED]

17 A Yes.

18 Q Okay. And where were they located?

19 A They were located at a facility [REDACTED]

20 [REDACTED]

21 Q And during the entire time that you were there were
22 they at that one facility?

23 A I believe so.

24 Q Okay. And were you aware of their activities
25 there? What was their purpose in being there?

1 A To be quite honest with you, ma'am, I don't know
2 exactly what their activities were. [REDACTED]

3 [REDACTED]
4 [REDACTED]
5 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
6 [REDACTED] So those types of things,
7 from my perspective as the agent in charge, those things were
8 coordinated and we were collaborative on those kind of
9 security-related issues as opposed to --

10 Q And was that cooperation set up before you got
11 there? Did you inherit it from --

12 A I did.

13 Q -- from [REDACTED]?

14 A Yes, I did.

15 Q Okay. To your knowledge, was that set up before
16 the Envoy's mission went into Benghazi?

17 A I have no knowledge, ma'am.

18 Q Okay. I believe you described just generally
19 earlier that the Envoy would have meetings [REDACTED]

20 [REDACTED] Is that correct?

21 A Yes, ma'am.

22 Q Would you be present for those meetings?

23 A I would.

24 Q Okay. What was discussed at those meetings?

25 A Oh, I'm sorry, ma'am, I misspoke. I wouldn't sit

1 in on those meetings unless it had to do with something that
2 was threat related or impacted our security operations
3 directly. The Envoy would go in and meet with his, you know,
4 personnel, and they would have their discussions. I, as the
5 agent in charge, wouldn't sit in there and listen to --

6 Q Of the meetings that you did attend when they were
7 threat related, what were those meetings about?

8 A Just what would happen is, on one occasion I can
9 remember is that the Envoy and I went [REDACTED]

10 [REDACTED]
11 [REDACTED]
12 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
13 if that makes sense. [REDACTED]
14 [REDACTED]

15 Q And what were the threats that were facing you [REDACTED]
16 [REDACTED] at that time?

17 A At that time, one of the bigger concerns was, is
18 where the battle lines were shifting to, to the south and
19 east of us -- or to the south and west of us -- because there
20 were Qadhafi forces clashing with rebels and those lines
21 tended to shift. And it was important for us to recognize
22 what the status was in order for us to make informed
23 decisions as to our security posture or any adjustments that
24 we had to make.

25 Q Okay. And were there any other threats that were

1 shared with you regarding your, meaning the State
2 Department's, security while you were in Benghazi?

3 A One of the things that everybody was attuned to and
4 wanted to track as closely as we can was Al Qaeda threats at
5 that time, Al Qaeda and their possible operations in Libya.
6 And so we would constantly, you know, talk about are there
7 any threats at that time relevant to Al Qaeda.

8 Q And were there?

9 A The way I understood it is, is that at the time no,
10 that the bigger threat at that time was Qadhafi forces maybe
11 doing a breakthrough of the lines down there. But everyone
12 recognized that there is always the potential that, given the
13 fact that the TNC was a nascent organization and didn't have
14 complete control over the situation there, that Al Qaeda
15 could use that uncertainty to come and set up operations,
16 whether it was in search of weapons or to stay and to work
17 other issues.

18 Q Okay. We talked earlier about the June 1 incident
19 where the car bomb occurred at the Tibesti --

20 Mr. Westmoreland. [REDACTED]

21 [REDACTED]

22 Ms. Jackson. Sure, yes.

23 Mr. Westmoreland. I believe it was in June of '11 that
24 there was a memo sent [REDACTED]

25 [REDACTED] Did they ever make you knowledgeable

1 about something like that, that they may have seen from your
2 headquarters, or from their headquarters? Did they ever
3 share that?

4 Mr. [REDACTED] That we, the Special Envoy mission, was on
5 our own, or that they were on their own?

6 Mr. Westmoreland. That they were on their own.

7 Mr. [REDACTED] No, sir.

8 Mr. Westmoreland. They never shared that?

9 Mr. [REDACTED] No, sir. In relation to --

10 Mr. Westmoreland. I don't have a copy of it. Did
11 [REDACTED] the gist of
12 which indicated you're on your own concerning security in the
13 timeframe of 2011?

14 Mr. [REDACTED] No, sir.

15 Mr. Westmoreland. I had to get a lawyer to write it for
16 me. I'm not an attorney. Okay.

17 BY MS. JACKSON:

18 Q The June 1 car bomb explosion in front of the
19 Tibesti Hotel, I believe you stated earlier that the initial
20 thought was that Qadhafi loyalists had set off the car bomb.
21 Is that correct?

22 A After the fact, I did meet with members of the
23 Transitional National Council, and that was their assertion,
24 that they believed that it could be Qadhafi loyalists that
25 still had a presence in Benghazi.

1 Q Okay. Did you receive any other type of
2 [REDACTED] Feb 17
3 Brigade or any other source in or around Benghazi that
4 someone else or some other group was responsible for it or it
5 was playing with dynamite?

6 A To answer your question directly, no, ma'am, I
7 didn't get anything else that would either confirm or deny
8 that it may have been Qadhafi loyalists. But you indicated
9 something that, you know, somebody playing with dynamite
10 would be a possibility. I'm not discounting it in that it
11 wasn't unusual for people to put dynamite into cars, and it
12 could have been an incident where it was an accident or
13 something that there was dynamite in this car and it
14 exploded. But the thinking at the time was is that it was
15 most likely Qadhafi's loyalists.

16 Q To your knowledge, were any individuals arrested or
17 taken into custody as suspects or perpetrators of the
18 incident?

19 A Post-blast, in my meetings with a representative
20 from the TNC, he indicated that one person was arrested. But
21 I have no proof of that. I have nothing to corroborate that,
22 just that they had arrested somebody. And we never found out
23 was that person tried and convicted or we just never knew.

24 Q Okay. Approximately 10 days later, on or about
25 June 10, while you were there, a credible threat came in that

1 caused you to leave the Tibesti Hotel [REDACTED]

2 [REDACTED] Is that correct?

3 A Yes, ma'am.

4 Q Okay. Tell us about that.

5 A Well, we were approached [REDACTED]
6 and he let myself and the Envoy know that he had this threat,
7 that he considered it, you know, credible, and that
8 collectively, you know, we agreed that it would be better,
9 rather than stay in the hotel, to take everybody and move
10 [REDACTED], given the fact that --

11 Q Was it directed at U.S. personnel, or at the hotel,
12 or both?

13 A I believe it was at the hotel, directly against the
14 hotel, specifically. To be quite honest, I would like to see
15 the document again to refresh my memory, but that was my
16 sense of it. And given the things that we talked about,
17 ma'am, about the physical security and the access control,
18 the Envoy [REDACTED] and myself believed that it would be
19 better to just go ahead and move in with them until the
20 threat could be further evaluated and additional decisions
21 could be made.

22 Q Did you ever go back to the Tibesti Hotel?

23 A No, ma'am.

24 Q Okay. What was the [REDACTED]
25 that made it so much superior to the hotel? What did they

1 have that the hotel did not have?

2 A Well, first and foremost, ma'am, [REDACTED]

3 [REDACTED] That way we could share resources, if you
4 understand what I'm saying, they had their resources, we had
5 our resources, so collectively we were more robust.

6 What it also had was access control. The Tibesti Hotel,
7 to be quite honest with you, we never knew who was going in
8 there day in, day out. And so by mere virtue [REDACTED]
9 [REDACTED], we always knew who was
10 coming in and out of that particular compound.

11 Q Was it a villa?

12 A Yes.

13 Q A walled compound?

14 A It was a walled compound. Yes, ma'am.

15 Q Do you know approximately how large it was, like
16 the size of a football field, smaller than a baseball field?

17 A I would say it was probably the size of a soccer
18 field, if that would help. Some of the other things that
19 that brought to us was hardened buildings. In other words,
20 there was a lot of stray rounds flying around. Some of it
21 was celebratory, some of it was ill-disciplined personnel
22 pulling the trigger. And at the hotel, you had a lot of that
23 going on, whereas [REDACTED], we also were in
24 buildings that were hardened. In other words, they probably
25 would sustain rounds dropping from the sky, or depending on

1 the trajectory, the mason area that was involved in those
2 particular villas, to use that word, provided an added layer
3 of protection for our personnel.

4 Q So from the time that you moved there on or about
5 June 10, did you stay there, did you personally stay there
6 through the rest of your tour?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Okay. Do you know whether the group stayed, the
9 State Department officials stayed after you departed?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Okay. And what was the timeframe that they were
12 there [REDACTED]?

13 A I can't say for sure, ma'am, but it was several
14 days, a couple days.

15 Q After you left?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Okay. And then where were they going?

18 A We had identified a villa, or a walled compound to
19 use your term, that we would be allowed to set up our
20 operations in. The added strain on the infrastructure [REDACTED]
21 [REDACTED] was significant in terms of electricity load, in terms
22 of, you know, just facilities and things of that nature. So
23 not too far away from there we identified a place that we
24 could lease and set up operations.

25 Q Okay. Was departure ever considered when this

1 credible threat came in, in June, or after the car bomb on
2 the 1st?

3 A It was considered, but I think the assessment was
4 is that we needed a better understanding of what the threat
5 was, and to mitigate anything that we needed to do during
6 that period of time, [REDACTED]

7 Q Okay.

8 A So that period of time allowed us to further assess
9 whether we should stay or go.

10 Q Okay. Were there any other threats or security
11 incidents that occurred while you were there?

12 A To be honest, ma'am, directed against us, nothing
13 that I remember, you know, like have a focus on. Then again,
14 I'm talking about directed against the Envoy or the personnel
15 supporting that mission.

16 Q Anything come to mind regarding any other Western
17 officials there, the U.K., the Italians, the French?

18 A I don't recall, no, ma'am.

19 Q Okay. I'm going to switch gears on you. We talked
20 just a little while ago about there was some sort of ceiling
21 set on the number of State officials that could be in
22 Benghazi at any given time, and I asked you if you know who
23 had set that ceiling and you did not know that answer. Do
24 you know what office or bureau or directorate would be the
25 decision maker?

1 A I think it would have been -- it would have been in
2 collaboration with DS and the NEA Bureau.

3 Q The two of them together?

4 A Right.

5 Q Okay. And who do both of those Bureaus report to,
6 which undersecretary?

7 A The NEA under secretary for political and DS would
8 be management.

9 Q I see it is 3 o'clock. I have a few other areas to
10 go in, but I believe those would be all unclassified
11 questions, so I'm going to stop and turn it over to our
12 colleagues on the minority to ask questions.

13 Mr. Kenny. Go off the record.

14 [Recess.]

15 EXAMINATION

16 BY MR. KENNY:

17 Q Go back on the record. It is 3:08. And we're
18 still in the classified session here. We appreciate your
19 patience today, sir. Just ask some followup questions,
20 picking up where we left off in the last hour. I will try to
21 do my best to kind of move in a chronological fashion to help
22 and organize in order our discussion. But I would like to
23 return to the June 1 explosion that occurred outside of the
24 Tibesti Hotel, and maybe begin there and ask in followup
25 whether you and the Special Envoy had any specific

1 discussions about your security posture at the hotel
2 following that incident.

3 A Yes, we did. At that time, there was some
4 discussion of enhancing our security posture at the hotel,
5 and then there was also a thought that we would be able to
6 find a more suitable place to operate out of. And so at that
7 time we did discuss the fact that, you know, the fact that we
8 had that incident at the hotel, that points us more towards
9 finding another location that doesn't have the same
10 constraints and vulnerabilities that the hotel had.

11 Q Okay. And so just to be clear, so the discussion
12 immediately turned to what the response should be, and it
13 sounds like there were two options under consideration. One,
14 that you would bolster the physical security at the hotel,
15 the other, that you'd seek some sort of alternate or
16 alternative compound elsewhere in the city?

17 A That's fair.

18 Q Okay. And were both of those tracks pursued
19 simultaneously, you know, considering whether to do the
20 upgrades versus seeking out and signing a contract?

21 A They were both options that were being explored.

22 Q Okay. Do you recall if any upgrades were actually
23 made to the hotel?

24 A I don't think there was anything substantive that
25 was made.

1 Q Did you participate in any site security reviews of
2 the hotel to identify specific places where you could harden
3 their defenses?

4 A Yes.

5 Q And did you generate a list of options then for the
6 hotel to consider, for the State Department to consider?

7 A Well, those were separate options to be considered.
8 As far as conducting a survey, a survey of the hotel was
9 done. It was sent back with some recommendations on what
10 could be done if the decision was made that we remain in the
11 hotel.

12 Q Okay. And did you prepare that proposal?

13 A I did it in collaboration with [REDACTED]. He's
14 the physical security specialist who was out in Benghazi.

15 Q Okay. And was he there before this bombing
16 occurred?

17 A Was he there before?

18 Q Or was he sent somehow in response to the --

19 A No, he was there before.

20 Q He was there before. Okay. And what was the
21 purpose of his presence?

22 A To provide expertise on physical security measures
23 that could be employed to better our position at the hotel.

24 Q Did you get any sense of a potential response from
25 the Department? Did you ever hear back on that proposal when

1 it went back?

2 A The proposal went back and if I recall correctly it
3 was under consideration by the Department relative to if we
4 stay in the hotel.

5 Q Sure. Did the Department seem receptive to the
6 proposal? Did they seem supportive of at least if a decision
7 were made to pursue that angle?

8 A There were things that the Department thought were
9 viable, if we enacted certain measures at the hotel that they
10 considered viable.

11 Q Do you recall if any money was made available for
12 physical security upgrades to the hotel?

13 A I don't know that I received -- that anybody
14 received an actual allotment of funds. But I have no doubt
15 that the funding would be made available.

16 Q So we have talked about the physical security
17 upgrades. We'll talk about consideration of other potential
18 sites to which to relocate. Before we get to that, I would
19 just like to ask, there has been some discussion of tripwires
20 today, and I was wondering if we could just maybe start with
21 you explaining to us what your understanding of what a
22 tripwire is and how it's intended to be used?

23 A Yeah, tripwires are a means to make an assessment
24 as to what incidences -- to anticipate incidences and what
25 the effect would be on the mission, and any actions that

1 would be prudent to take if that tripwire were realized.

2 Q Okay. And just generically speaking, if a tripwire
3 were to be crossed, does that automatically mean that all
4 mission personnel cease operations and withdraw from a
5 country?

6 A It depends on how you approach that particular
7 problem. You know, it could, if that is the case, or it
8 could just simply trigger another review of the assumptions
9 and an assessment of our posture relative to that particular
10 event.

11 Q And in this instance when this explosion occurred
12 at the hotel, the June 1 explosion, was there discussion
13 about whether that event crossed any tripwires?

14 A I have to put it in context a little bit. First of
15 all, the damage that was done to the hotel was minimal, I
16 guess is the word I would use. We had no casualties or no
17 loss of life in that particular event. So all of that has to
18 be taken into account when you consider whether to invoke
19 some kind of major change in our security posture. All those
20 things have to be taken into account as well as the incident
21 itself.

22 Q Were you aware if other foreign missions or media
23 who were present at the hotel, did they make a decision to
24 withdraw from Libya on account of the June 1 incident?

25 A No. To my knowledge, I'm not aware of any

1 personnel shutting down their operations as a result of that
2 particular incident.

3 Q Okay. To your recollection, did you consult
4 written tripwires about this event or was this more just
5 based on your experience on events, conditions that might
6 cause a reassessment?

7 A To be quite honest with you, given that so many
8 years have passed, I would need to see what the tripwires
9 were established.

10 Q Sure.

11 A And then I could tell you.

12 Q Do you recall if there were tripwires in place?

13 A I believe there were tripwires. Some of the ones I
14 remember was, as I spoke to earlier, should Qadhafi forces
15 break through the lines and move on Benghazi, incidents like
16 that, I recall were tripwires either discussed or actually
17 written down.

18 Q Okay. So we talked about some of the security
19 responses. We'll come back to looking at other sites. But
20 based on your assessment that there was minimal damage done
21 and wanting to reassess the security environment, can you
22 help us understand why a decision wasn't made to evacuate
23 immediately then, at that moment?

24 A To where?

25 Q And what I mean evacuate, I mean withdraw from

1 Libya, cease all operations.

2 A I'm sorry, sir, why a decision to evacuate
3 completely was not made?

4 Q Yes.

5 A It was our assessment that that incident did not
6 call for the actual closing of our mission in Benghazi.

7 Q And when you say our assessment, would that include
8 the Special Envoy?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Special Envoy Stevens?

11 A Yes.

12 Q Okay. And would that include you, yourself, your
13 security team, your senior security?

14 A Yeah, yeah.

15 Q Okay. Who else might be included in that
16 discussion?

17 A It was really pretty much the Special Envoy and
18 myself who ultimately had the, I would say, the
19 responsibility for making that decision.

20 Q Okay. Did then Envoy Chris Stevens, did he share
21 with you his feelings whether he had a desire to remain in
22 Benghazi during this period?

23 A I think as we discussed the event, he was of the
24 mind that that particular incident was not taking us to a
25 point where we needed to shut down the whole mission. Now,

1 what I do know is, is that he was in direct contact with the
2 Department, providing them updates as to what was transpiring
3 in Benghazi at that time.

4 Q Okay. Just as a general question, were you ever
5 specifically told by the Department that the Special Envoy
6 was to remain in Benghazi regardless of how bad the security
7 conditions got there?

8 A No.

9 Q Okay. Just taking a step back here, can you, given
10 your experience and given the unique perspective you had on
11 the ground, can you just give us a sense of your
12 understanding of the environment in Benghazi at that time?
13 Was there a great deal of optimism? Was it a tenuous place?
14 Can you just help us understand what Benghazi was like in
15 early or mid-2011?

16 A It was an environment that we were operating in
17 where the fact that we were Americans alone gave us -- was
18 recognized as the populous was very supportive of the U.S.'
19 role in the no-fly zone. That being said, things were
20 chaotic. So there was celebratory gunfire that took place
21 quite often. There were pro-TNC rallies, a large number of
22 rallies that took place almost on a daily basis. There were
23 checkpoints set up in the city manned by militia members that
24 needed to be negotiated.

25 But there was a certain cache of good will that existed

1 in the early days of Benghazi that we were able to capitalize
2 on to move throughout the city to accomplish the missions
3 that we had to do.

4 Q Okay. Do you have any specific examples of that?

5 A Well, it would not be unusual clearing a checkpoint
6 is, when they saw who we were, even though we tried to keep
7 our profile as low as possible, we got a lot of the thumbs
8 up. When they would have rallies there were a lot of
9 American flags waving in the crowds. And generally speaking,
10 when they realized that you were an American, they would come
11 up and thank you for assisting them in their struggle.

12 One of the things that, to put it in context, despite
13 all the chaos and friction that surrounded us, one good
14 example of what happened to us is, is that we had a national
15 that wanted to have -- there was a holiday in Libya during
16 that time. They wanted to have a dinner for us. The only
17 place that we could have that dinner was in the hotel.

18 And so his wife made this dinner for us, homemade
19 dinner, brought it to the hotel, and she wanted to say a few
20 words before we started dinner. And at that time she got up,
21 she was this very articulate English-speaking wife and
22 mother, I believe, and she wanted to welcome us to this
23 dinner. And at that time, as she got up to speak, you could
24 tell that she was very touched as tears were welling in her
25 eyes. In a very halting voice she was trying to express to

1 us her thanks because she was saying how scared she was
2 before the no-fly zone went up and that she knew that it was
3 America that was the reason that they had been able to
4 survive the push of Qadhafi on Benghazi.

5 I won't deny that it was a touching moment, and it does
6 make you proud to be an American sometimes when you are put
7 in a situation like that and you realize the importance of
8 what you're doing. And that was not uncommon, that people
9 would come up to us during that period of time and thank us
10 for everything that we have done for Libya.

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

12 I'd like to talk before we shift into discussion of the
13 alternative sites and talk a little bit about evacuation
14 planning. You mentioned, I believe at the beginning of our
15 session today, that you had worked in special plans and
16 evacuation?

17 A Uh-huh.

18 Q Is that right?

19 A At one point, yes.

20 Q Okay. And I would just like to ask, there has been
21 some discussion today about whether a decision was made to
22 evacuate and to pull out. Had that decision been made, was
23 there a plan in place that you were aware of, that you
24 recall?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Okay. Was it one plan? Was it many plans
2 depending on maybe different circumstances?

3 A It was one plan.

4 Q Okay.

5 A To my knowledge.

6 Q And what was your understanding of what that plan
7 was?

8 A That there were assets that were put on standby to
9 help us should we have to make an in extremis evacuation.
10 But I do want to -- I have to raise one point too. When we
11 talked about evacuation during that period of time, one of
12 the things that we had available to us was an airplane that I
13 think, you know, was chalked in Malta. That would be the
14 most likely course of action that we would have taken to
15 evacuate from post.

16 As a backup to that, there was U.S. military assets that
17 were identified to come and assist us should we need them.
18 We had all the grid coordinates, the LZs, and all the
19 coordination was done between us and AFRICOM to effect an
20 evacuation if we had to. And, again, I want to emphasize
21 that that would have been a military-assisted evacuation.

22 Q So you felt there was some support there for you if
23 you needed it at that time?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Okay. I would like to actually maybe, if we could,

1 unpack some of that. So you're referring to there was a
2 plane in Malta. Was that a State Department asset?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Okay. And so if you had needed that in an in
5 extremis-type circumstance how would you have gone about
6 requesting it?

7 A Through what we call M, Management.

8 Q Okay. And what was your understanding of the
9 response time for that asset?

10 A Well, you know, it would have been within hours.

11 Q Okay. And then it sounds like you were also
12 describing that there was some U.S. military assistance was
13 provided?

14 A There was a plan to, if needed, evacuate with the
15 assistance of the U.S. military.

16 Q Okay. And just to clarify, because I think a
17 moment ago you said there was only one plan, but it sounds
18 like there may have been a State Department plan, using State
19 Department assets, but also an in extremis response using
20 U.S. military assets. Is that right?

21 A Yes, I think so.

22 Q Okay. At this time did you have armored vehicles
23 in Benghazi?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Okay. Was there any discussion about whether those

1 could be used to aid or assist in an evacuation, maybe using
2 -- perhaps using an overland route out of the country?

3 A There might have been some discussion out of that,
4 regarding that, but I can tell you, I would be very hesitant
5 to try to pull that off.

6 Q Okay. And why is that?

7 A It's an extremely long drive to the Egyptian
8 border. And, you know, there is a lot of friction that
9 surrounds trying to make that kind of move. Was it an
10 option? Yeah, it was an option. But it was probably one of
11 the least preferred options that we would have had.

12 Q Focusing on the military plan specifically, you
13 mentioned that there had been some helicopter landing zones
14 at least that had been scoped out. Were those identified
15 before you arrived in Benghazi?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Okay. Do you know who prepared those?
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

1 Mr. [REDACTED] I don't know specifically who prepared
2 them?

3 BY MR. KENNY:

4 Q But when you arrived in early May of 2011, those
5 sites had already been identified and had been coordinated
6 with AFRICOM. Is that right?

7 A That's correct.

8 Q Okay. Were you aware of which specific military
9 force would have evacuated you at that point in time? Do you
10 recall?

11 A My recollection was is that the TRAP platoon from
12 the MEU may have had the primary mission to come get us.

13 Q Okay. And do you recall -- and, again, I am asking
14 you for specifics on events long ago -- but do you recall
15 about how long the response time would have been?

16 A I guess that would be contingent upon where they
17 were at that particular time. I want to say at that time,
18 early in my time there, I want to say 2-1/2 hours, 3 hours.
19 I can't remember precisely.

20 Q Okay. And during this point in time, this is
21 during the NATO-led Operation Unified Protector. Is that
22 right?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Enforcing the no-fly zone?

25 A Okay. Yes.

1 Q Okay. When there were significant air and naval
2 assets that were available in that region. Is that your
3 understanding as well?

4 A I'm not sure when the no-fly zone got lifted, and I
5 would have to review.

6 Q Okay. Would posts ordinarily have at their
7 disposal the types of assets, these types of military assets
8 that we are describing here? Would they be in such close
9 proximity and have those type of resources? Is that
10 something that you have encountered elsewhere in the ordinary
11 course, maybe outside of the Iraq and Afghanistan context.

12 A I think I understand the question, but it is not
13 usual. But, again, when managing any kind of situation there
14 is things that the Department does, and not just for
15 Benghazi, but that the Department does to try to better our
16 position should we need to evacuate citizens and employees.

17 Q And just based on your experience with emergency
18 evacuation plans, is it your understanding that there is a
19 lot of planning that goes into developing and prepositioning
20 of assets? Is that typical for emergency planning? Does it
21 require a lot of effort and planning to go into developing
22 these emergency plans?

23 A Yes. Post spends a lot of time and effort to make
24 sure that the plans are viable and are exercised.

25 Q Okay. I would like to return briefly, there was a

1 discussion about [REDACTED]
2 [REDACTED] in Benghazi. Do you recall that discussion
3 that we were having last hour?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Okay. You were describing some of the security
6 advantages, I think, of have [REDACTED]
7 [REDACTED] at that facility. Were you aware, was that
8 facility SECCA compliant? To your knowledge.

9 A [REDACTED] I don't know.

10 Q What was your assessment of the security there,
11 aside from what we were discussing earlier? Were there any
12 disadvantages to residing in this compound from a security
13 standpoint?

14 Mr. Evers. Do you mean [REDACTED]

15 Mr. Kenny. Yes.

16 Mr. Evers. Okay. Thank you.

17 Mr. [REDACTED] Was there any disadvantages?

18 BY MR. KENNY:

19 Q To clarify, I don't mean is there a disadvantage to
20 [REDACTED] I mean, was there a disadvantage based on that
21 specific facility from a security standpoint?

22 A No.

23 Q Okay.

24 A If I could say no relative to the hotel?

25 Q Okay. Why not stay at that facility then?

1 A The infrastructure was such that it couldn't
2 sustain the added load of our mission [REDACTED]

3 Q Okay. During this time period, was there a lot of
4 discussion about alternative sites to which the Special Envoy
5 might be relocated?

6 A The special Envoy and I and [REDACTED], the
7 physical security specialist, visited several locations to
8 see if they were suitable for us to move into to sustain our
9 operations.

10 Q Okay. And were there a lot of ready-made,
11 off-the-shelf type facilities that were secure?

12 A No. They were rare. All of the things, all of the
13 facilities that we looked at would require enhancements.

14 Q Okay. Do you recall about how many properties were
15 under consideration at that time?

16 A I could say that we probably visited at least seven
17 or eight, and I think that's on the low end.

18 Q Okay. So it at least sounds like there was some
19 deliberation then about which facility, and you were seeking
20 out different properties and weighing and evaluating them.
21 Is that fair?

22 A That's fair.

23 Q Okay. During the time that you were there, was
24 there any other facility expert that was dispatched by the
25 Department to come to Benghazi to assist in this process?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And who was that?

3 A There was a facilities maintenance -- I take that
4 back. I'm not sure that at the time I was there that anyone
5 else was dispatched. It was the physical security
6 specialist, the Envoy, myself.

7 Q Okay. Does the name [REDACTED] sound familiar?

8 A [REDACTED] was the physical security specialist,
9 yeah. I know, it gets confusing. Because everyone needed a
10 break at some point, they would, you know -- once [REDACTED]
11 [REDACTED] got done with his tour of duty, for that period of
12 time they sent [REDACTED] in.

13 Q Okay.

14 A He's a physical security specialist.

15 Q Okay. And he assisted with review and evaluation
16 of the various proposed sites?

17 A I think the proposed site that was sent back was
18 considered by the Department relative to the other seven or
19 eight sites that we went to. A decision was made to go with
20 that particular plat. Then where [REDACTED] came in is, is that
21 he was deployed to oversee the enhancements to that
22 particular perimeter and to the facility itself from a
23 security perspective.

24 Q Okay. But would he have participated at the outset
25 in laying out what upgrades would be necessary for a

1 particular property?

2 A The individual beforehand, [REDACTED], did that
3 role.

4 Q During the period that you were in Benghazi -- my
5 understanding is it was a limited time here -- but were you
6 aware of whether the Department made available or provided
7 any funding specifically for physical security upgrades at
8 any of these proposed compounds?

9 A What I do know is, is that, again, while I am not
10 sure that I received a specific what we call AOA, what I do
11 know is, is that whatever the funding that needed to be
12 available to do those enhancements would be provided.

13 Q Okay.

14 A And I had no doubt that they would do that.

15 Q Did the Department, did the Bureau, seem fairly
16 well engaged in this process of trying to find a new
17 property?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Were they generally responsive to any needs that
20 you had in this process?

21 A I think all the needs were recognized, both between
22 the Department and those of us on the ground, to find the
23 most suitable facility we could in order to sustain our
24 operations. Because each facility that we looked at had some
25 good points about it and some bad points. Ultimately what

1 was decided on was the best of all the facilities that we
2 looked at.

3 Q There was a brief discussion in the last hour about
4 a ceiling or a cap on the number of personnel that could be
5 in country. Are you aware of whether that ceiling, was that
6 tied to the security conditions? Was it tied to the
7 evacuation capability? Do you know generally what the
8 purpose of that cap was?

9 A It was tied to the evacuation capability.

10 Q Okay. And so was it your sense then that that was
11 a prudent measure to have in place, not to exceed the number
12 of people, given what your evacuation capability is?

13 A Yes.

14 Q So it is part of your risk-mitigation strategy?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Are you familiar at all with reverse tripwires? Do
17 you recall?

18 A My understanding of reverse tripwires are those
19 tripwires that are reached that would allow us to resume
20 operations or expand operations or things of that nature. So
21 essentially conditions are getting better, that's a reverse
22 tripwire within that, that decisions are made.

23 Q Do you recall preparing any for Benghazi
24 specifically?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Were they used at all during the time you were
2 there, in the sense was there consideration of whether a
3 reverse tripwire had been crossed or any discussion about
4 those?

5 A I would need to see. In order for me to honestly
6 give you an answer, I would need to see what was written.

7 Q Okay. But would these reverse tripwires, would
8 that tie into the discussion about the cap on the number of
9 personnel in the country as well, that if you crossed the
10 reverse tripwire then you could perhaps consider lifting the
11 cap on the number of people in country?

12 A That would be one of the considerations or one of
13 the results of reaching reverse tripwires that would be
14 considered.

15 Q Okay. And also just to help clarify because it was
16 helpful when you were describing the conditions in Benghazi,
17 but at this time in May, June 2011, was Benghazi considered a
18 frontline in the war against Qadhafi?

19 A No.

20 Q So when we talked about the DART teams, the USAID
21 teams that would have deployed to other parts, I think
22 Agedabia was one of the sites under consideration, were those
23 a little closer to what would be considered the front lines?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Okay. And because of the risks in operating in

1 those types of environments, is that why those types of teams
2 would have required an MSD escort in going to those --

3 A In my recollection, that was the first mission that
4 was set up for Libya. It never took place, but that was the
5 first one. So the MSD assets that we had available were
6 assigned to that particular mission. That, and it is a
7 little more difficult to operate in that environment.

8 Q Do you recall, was it a State Department decision
9 that that mission would never take place? Was it something
10 that because these personnel are operating and have an MSD?
11 Were you involved in any discussions about whether that
12 mission would go forward?

13 A I wasn't personally, no.

14 Q Okay. Would the DS Bureau have been involved?

15 A The DS would have been involved in that, so would
16 IP.

17 Q Do you know whether they made the recommendation
18 for them not to proceed?

19 A That I don't know. Again, our role in MSD, we're a
20 support function. If the decision was made to go and do
21 this, we would have gone. We don't have the -- now, they'll
22 listen to our reasoning and recommendations, but ultimately
23 we don't have the final authority to say go or don't go.

24 Q But do you know, was it a decision within the
25 Department that this is just too dangerous, we shouldn't send

1 people there?

2 A That's my understanding, yes.

3 Mr. Kenny. Okay. That will conclude our round. We
4 will go off the record.

5 [Recess.]

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1 Ms. Jackson. Okay, let's go back on the record. We are
2 going to follow up and do a couple of questions and follow up
3 in a classified setting. And I am going to turn it over to
4 my colleague, Carlton Davis, for the questions.

5 BY MR. DAVIS:

6 Q So briefly, during your last discussion with Sharon
7 an hour ago, you guys read Exhibit 2, which was an email from
8 you to Ambassador Stevens, Wednesday, June 6, 2012. In the
9 first paragraph, third sentence, you write, "As an office we
10 would gladly do it for both of you who have been so good to
11 us, but we have two emerging requirements similar to Tripoli
12 that requires the whole of our office essentially."

13 Do you see that?

14 A Yes.

15 Q You mentioned that the two emerging requirements,
16 you mentioned one [REDACTED] and one [REDACTED]. Is
17 that correct?

18 A As I recall.

19 Q And do you recall whether or not an MSD was in fact
20 actually deployed [REDACTED]?

21 A No, an MSD was not deployed.

22 Q And do you recall if an MSD team was, in fact,
23 actually deployed [REDACTED]?

24 A We sent what we call a survey team [REDACTED]
25 and they did a survey of the airport there.

1 Q Is a survey team, is that MSD personnel?

2 A Yes. I'm sorry. It is an MSD component.

3 Q And how many people were on the survey team?

4 A I believe there were two on that team.

5 Q But would the two people that went to the [REDACTED]
6 airport, are they part of the team of six MSD personnel that
7 normally go to posts or were they a separate entity?

8 A They were a separate entity that we called the -- I
9 believe it was tactical survey team. And they were a small
10 group of individuals. I believe there was a total of four in
11 this unit that was within MSD that had the ability to do
12 these types of surveys, and so they were utilized. They are
13 separate from the nine teams that we talked about earlier.

14 Q And so just to be clear, in your email back to
15 Ambassador Stevens, are you the one that is determining these
16 emerging requirements or are you simply passing along the
17 word that folks up the chain have told you about these
18 emerging requirements?

19 A This is based off of what I understand from up the
20 chain that may be emerging requirements.

21 Q And up the chain?

22 A Is essentially IP.

23 Q Okay. So once the team [REDACTED] and the team [REDACTED]
24 [REDACTED] fell through, did those two MSD teams get deployed
25 elsewhere?

1 A My sense of it is, is yes, they did. Now, I have
2 to clarify that this is going on in June. I'm leaving in
3 July [REDACTED], so I apologize, sir, I don't know. But
4 what my sense of it is, is that the optempo was such that
5 they were utilized as needed. I don't have the actual list
6 of what missions that we were running after that.

7 Q So the decision not to go [REDACTED], the
8 decision not to go [REDACTED], do you know if that was made
9 while you were still head of MSD or had you moved on to
10 [REDACTED] at that point?

11 A At some point the Embassy in -- well, I do know at
12 some point -- and, again, I have to be careful. My
13 understanding of when I say these emerging requirements, that
14 it was those two posts. But we did send people [REDACTED]
15 to do that survey. Whether it happened before or after this
16 email, I can't recall correctly, but the thought was is that
17 we may have to provide MSD to support [REDACTED]

18 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
19 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
20 [REDACTED]

21 Q So if the decision not to send an MSD team [REDACTED]
22 [REDACTED], and if the decision came that the MSD team was no
23 longer needed [REDACTED], if you had moved on to [REDACTED] at
24 that point, you would likely not have been aware that those
25 decisions had been made?

1 A That's correct.

2 Q So there would have been no opportunity for you to
3 go back to Ambassador Stevens and inform him that those two
4 emerging requirements were no longer needed?

5 A Could you rephrase it? That I would then --

6 Q Sure. Do you recall ever passing along Ambassador
7 Stevens' request to your successor as the head of the MSD?

8 A I don't recall.

9 Q And the person who succeeded you at the head of MSD
10 would be who?

11 A ██████████

12 Ms. Jackson. Before we go off the record, does the
13 minority have any questions on our questions in this area?

14 Mr. Kenny. Yes. I will take the opportunity now before
15 we go into unclassified.

16 BY MR. KENNY:

17 Q So I would just like to pick up where Carlton left
18 off. And again, this is a discussion of the email, the two
19 emerging requirements. You identified one ██████████, one ██████
20 ██████ Is that correct?

21 A That's what I believe at this time that I was
22 referring to, several years later.

23 Q Okay. Focusing first ██████████, was that
24 requirement, to send a complement of MSD teams, a full
25 complement of MSD agents there, or was that just for the two

1 TSS agents?

2 A The TSS agents went and did their survey and
3 brought it back. And then the potential that we would have
4 to go [REDACTED] remained. That was the emerging possibly a
5 requirement.

6 Q Okay. But that requirement would have required
7 more than those two to redeploy [REDACTED]?

8 A Agreed. If we did any kind of like operation
9 there, we would have had to, you know.

10 Q Do you recall what sort of numbers were being
11 discussed?

12 A My sense of it is, if I recall correctly, and,
13 again, it's been a very long time, I would say at least two
14 teams.

15 Q So at least two teams. So two teams times six
16 agents. We're talking 12 DS agents just [REDACTED] --

17 A For 60 days and then rotate.

18 Q And the [REDACTED] requirement, same line of
19 questioning, so did you have a sense of what the size of that
20 effort would have required?

21 A We would have gotten in whatever we could at that
22 time. We were looking at -- and, again, I don't know the
23 exact times, but there was a period of time where we wanted
24 to get to the RSO [REDACTED] to provide her help, but there
25 were certain constraints that precluded MSD from getting in

1 there in order to help her.

2 Q Can you help maybe compare the threat environments?

3 ██████████ was that a dangerous post at that time?

4 A Absolutely.

5 Q Okay. And was your sense that the post required
6 additional resources to bolster their security?

7 A Yeah, yes.

8 Q Okay. And to clarify, you were asked who sets the
9 -- where the requirements come from, and when you used the
10 phrase up the chain, you referred to DS/IP. Could you
11 clarify, is your office subordinate to DS/IP?

12 A No. I'm sorry. DS/IP and the T Directorate,
13 Training Directorate, are equals. So you have IP and you
14 have T. Underneath T, you have MSD, so we are one level
15 down. But generally speaking, IP would go over to T and say
16 we have a requirement for MSD to do this particular mission.

17 Mr. Kenny. Okay. That's all.

18 Ms. Jackson. Okay. All right. We'll go off the
19 record.

20 [Whereupon, at 4:00 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

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Certificate of Deponent/Interviewee

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I have read the foregoing ____ pages, which contain the correct transcript of the answers made by me to the questions therein recorded.

Witness Name

Date

Errata Sheet

Select Committee on Benghazi

The witness reviewed the accompanying transcript, certified its accuracy, and declined to provide corrections to the transcript.