

RPTR BLAZEJEWSKI

EDTR CRYSTAL

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

INTERVIEW OF: [REDACTED]

Friday, March 13, 2015

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held in Room HVC-205,
Capitol Visitor Center, commencing at 10:00 a.m.

Appearances:

For the SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI:

DANA CHIPMAN, CHIEF INVESTIGATIVE COUNSEL

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For the U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE:

AUSTIN EVERS, SENIOR ADVISOR

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

Could you please state your name for the record?

Ms. [REDACTED]. [REDACTED].

Ms. Clarke. And, again, the committee appreciates you coming here today. My name is Sheria Clarke. I'm with the committee's majority staff. And we'll just take a moment to go around the room. I think you may have met everyone, but we'll just have everyone put their name on the record. We'll start with my colleague to the right.

Ms. Jackson. Sharon Jackson with the majority staff.

Mr. Desai. Ronak Desai with the minority staff.

Ms. Sawyer. Heather Sawyer with the minority staff.

Mr. Kenny. Peter Kenny with the minority.

Mr. Davis. Carlton Davis. I work for Mr. Gowdy.

Mr. Chipman. I'm Dana Chipman with the majority staff.

Mr. Grider. Mark Grider, majority staff.

Ms. Betz. Kim Betz, majority staff.

Mr. Evers. Austin Evers, State Department.

Ms. Clarke. Thank you.

Before we begin the questions I'd like to go over some of the ground rules and explain how the interview will proceed. The way the questions proceed is that a member from the majority will ask questions for up to an hour, then the minority will have an opportunity to ask questions for an equal period of time as they choose. We will firmly adhere to the 1-hour time limit for each side, so at the end of the first hour of questioning we will take a break if you would like, and then the minority, if they choose, will begin their questions.

Questions may only be asked by a member of the committee or a designated staff member, and we will rotate back and forth until we are out of questions, and the interview will end at that time.

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

Members and staff of the committee, however, are not permitted to raise objections when the other side is asking questions, and this has not been an issue we've encountered in the past, but I just wanted you to be aware of the process.

This session is to begin in an unclassified setting. If there are any questions that I ask you or that someone else asks you that you believe calls for a classified answer we can return to that in a classified setting.

You're welcome to confer with counsel at any time throughout the

interview. If something needs to be clarified, just make that known to us, we can rephrase the question. If it's a compound question and you would like for us to break it down we're happy to do that for you. And if you need to discuss anything with your counsel we will go off the record and you can have an opportunity to do that.

Whenever you would like to take a break we're happy to take a break when it's convenient for you. Like I said before, we usually go in about an hour round. If you want to take a break before then we're happy to do that. If you need anything, a glass of water, tea, coffee during your questioning, just let us know and we will get those for you. We want to make this as comfortable for you as possible.

As you can see, there is an official reporter, and she's taking down everything that you and I say and that anyone in the room says. We ask that you give verbal responses to questions, yes and no, as opposed to nodding your head or shaking your head. I'll ask the reporter to feel free to jump in if she notices that there are not verbal responses.

The other thing that we'll make sure we try to do is not talk over each other, so I'll finish asking a question and allow you to finish answering a question before I pose the next question and the minority staff will do the same.

We want you to answer our questions in the most complete and truthful manner possible, so we'll take our time and repeat or clarify those questions if necessary. If you have any questions or if you do not understand any of our questions, again, please let us know, we'll

be happy to clarify or repeat them for you.

If you don't know the answer to a question or do not remember it's best not to guess. Just give us your best recollection, and if there are things you don't know or can't remember just say so, and please inform us of who, to the best of your knowledge, may be able to answer those questions.

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

Ms. [REDACTED] I do.

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

Ms. [REDACTED]. I do.

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

Ms. [REDACTED]. I do.

Ms. Clarke. Is there anything, any reason that you are unable to provide truthful answers today?

Ms. [REDACTED]. No.

Ms. Clarke. Great.

That's the end of my preamble. Is there anything that the minority would like to add?

Mr. Kenny. I think we would just like to take the opportunity to thank the witness for appearing here today. That's all.

Ms. Clarke. The clock now reads 10:06, and we'll start with the

first hour of questions.

EXAMINATION

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q Ms. [REDACTED], can you tell us just a little bit about your background, when you started with the State Department?

A I started with the State Department 12 years ago this week, and I've been posted -- I've been mostly overseas during the last 12 years.

Q Okay. Can you just give us an idea of the various assignments that you've had?

A Certainly, certainly. I began in Beirut, Lebanon, and then I went to East Jerusalem. From there I went to Sudan, then to France, then to Pakistan, and then to Libya.

Q Okay. And what roles did you serve in those various assignments?

A I was a cultural attache in Jerusalem; consular in Beirut; political in Sudan; PAO, public affairs officer, in France; principal officer in Benghazi; and also PAO in Lahore, Pakistan.

Q For the record, what does PAO stand for?

A Public affairs officer.

Q Okay. So you mentioned that you served as the principal officer in Benghazi. Tell us about how you became the principal officer. Were you recruited or did you volunteer for that position?

A I was asked to go.

Q Okay. And who asked you to go?

A Chris Stevens.

Q Okay. About how far in advance were you asked to go to Benghazi? How long before you actually arrived there?

A I think it was about maybe 6 weeks or so.

Q Okay. Do you know why you in particular were asked to go?

A I think because Chris thought I was qualified.

Q Okay. What were some of the qualifications that you had?

A Well, he and I had worked together quite a bit over the past several years, so we had a good working relationship. I speak Arabic. I had worked in the Middle East quite a bit.

Q Okay. Other than him asking you to go, did you all have any discussions about Benghazi, the security situation there or the expectations for what your role would be there?

A We certainly talked about what I should be doing out there as the principal officer, which is to conduct diplomacy in a very important part of the country, in a post-revolutionary, very transitional period. As a principal officer I would make contacts, be a resource for people who wanted to talk about American policy, and to also do assessments of the economic situation, for example oil.

Q You mentioned that one of your roles as principal officer was to make contacts.

A Uh-huh.

Q Did you also -- prior to going there, were there individuals that you were told to contact?

A We all had -- there were one or two principal officers prior

to me, I believe. We had a contact list, as it were, just phone numbers and emails, who does what.

Q Okay. And do you recall who the principal officer was prior to you?

A Yes, I do. It was [REDACTED]. I'm not going to say his last name because I can't remember it.

Q Does [REDACTED] sound familiar?

A [REDACTED] sounds familiar.

Q All right. And when did you arrive in Benghazi, and how long were you there?

A I arrived in early March, and I left in mid-June.

Q Did you have any overlap with Mr. [REDACTED]?

A We did not have physical overlap. I did, however, speak to him on the phone numerous times, and we had a lot of email exchanges.

Q Was that just regarding what he was doing in Benghazi and what he thought you might want to undertake?

A That's right.

Q Did you have any type of official changeover document?

A No, and there normally is not one in an embassy.

Q Okay. How do principal officers usually inform the incoming principal officer? Is it just through email and phone conversations?

A It's always sort of a -- it's not an official, formal process. It never is.

Q Okay. Prior to going to Benghazi had you received FACT

training?

A I had.

Q Was that required to go to Benghazi or had you received it previously?

A I had had it two or three times previously.

Q Can you describe what is the purpose of the FACT training?

A Well, it's defensive driving, countersurveillance, gun familiarity.

Q Okay. Now, as the principal officer are you given a gun or is that just for your familiarity in instances where you --

A It's just for familiarity.

Q Okay. When you arrived in Benghazi were there other foreign service officers present?

A There were other official Americans but not foreign service.

Q Okay. And who were those Americans?

A There was a communications management person and then there were diplomatic security.

Q Is that the same as an IMO management?

A Yes.

Q Can you describe just briefly what their role is?

A To make sure that the communications, i.e., Internet, computers, things like that, are working, to do procurement for whatever we might need on the compound, whether that be food or electricity or construction, kind of general services basically.

Q Are they involved in procuring contracts for guard services?

A Yes, they can be.

Q And that just depends on --

A I mean, it depends on the situation.

Q So you mentioned that there was DS personnel there as well. Do you recall how many were present when you arrived?

A Three, I believe.

Q And did that number change while you were there?

A It did change.

Q Did it increase or decrease?

A It decreased at times and increased at times.

Q What was the most that you had there while you were there?

A The most that I had would be three DS and then augmented by three or four from the SST in Tripoli.

Q Okay. And then what was the least number that you had?

A One.

Q Were you aware of other U.S. security personnel present in Benghazi during your time?

A What do you mean by security personnel?

Q Well, were you aware of other U.S. presence in Benghazi?

A Certainly.

Q What about other Western countries or entities?

A Yeah, absolutely.

Q What were some of the countries that were there during your

time?

A Just Western or in general?

Q Western.

A France, Britain, Norway, Sweden, Italy -- well, the U.N. There may have been a few more, but that's what I recall the most. Turkey.

Q And as principal officer, would one of your roles also have been to have contact with those Western entities and develop relationships with them?

A Yes.

Q And did you develop relationships with them?

A Yes.

Q So we mentioned the FACT training. Do you know if this was a requirement to go to Benghazi?

A I don't know. I don't know if it was. I don't think I was required to take it because I had already taken it. I don't know if it was a requirement for others.

Q So if you've taken it before, do you have to take the training? If it's a requirement at a post that you're going and you've already taken it, does that training, in essence, expire where if you haven't taken it in a certain number of years?

A Yes, I think it's in 5 years.

Q Okay. And do you know whether it was a requirement -- became a requirement any time while you were there that you had to take FACT training?

A Me as principal officer or others?

Q You as principal officer or others that arrived.

A Well, I had already had it, and most diplomatic security have had it. There was a time when you wouldn't stay in country more than 30 days had you not had high-threat training.

Q Now, did you take FACT training previously because you served in other high-threat posts?

A That's right.

Q So just generally what was your understanding of the security situation in Benghazi before you arrived?

A My understanding of the security situation? I hadn't been to Benghazi before, so I didn't really know.

Q Well, as far as your discussions with Mr. [REDACTED] or with Ambassador Stevens, what kind of pictures did they lay out for you?

A I knew that we were going to a fortified compound and that I would be living there with the other U.S. personnel, as well as a small contingent of 17th February Brigade. And that's pretty much what I knew.

Q Okay. Once you arrived, what about actual security incidents and the number of incidents that were happening, were you aware of those prior to coming to Benghazi?

A Which ones?

Q Any type of security incident, whether it was directed at Western entities or just incidents in general in Benghazi.

A Before I came?

Q Yes.

A No, I was not.

Q Okay. What about once you arrived there, did you become aware of security incidents?

A I think you have to define what you mean by security incidents.

Q Well, examples of stops at security checkpoints that were unexpected or --

A Well, it was a constantly changing, evolving situation, kind of unpredictable, so I'm not sure. I mean, I think you would have to ask me about specific security incidents.

Q Okay, we'll get into those a little more later on.

A Okay.

Q You mentioned as the principal officer you would gather information about economic and political happenings in Benghazi. What was your understanding of the U.S. interests in Benghazi?

A Well, one of the principal things that we were looking at, at that time, in the political realm was the idea that the east was going to try to form perhaps a federalist union, and U.S. policy interest was that Libya remain a united country. Libya is a major oil-producing country, I think as we all know, so to get an assessment of how functioning that oil economy was and how we might be able to help so that they would have, you know, sustainable, basically self-sustaining funds.

Q Did you know why there was an interest in the east to form

a federal union?

A They felt disenfranchised.

Q From?

A From Tripolitania, which is the west.

Q Do you know the basis for that disenfranchisement?

A It's historic. It goes back to the Italian occupation.

Q And you said there was a U.S. interest -- well, that Libya is an oil country.

A Uh-huh.

Q Is the oil centered in a particular area of Libya?

A Most of the oil reserves are in the east, and there are some in the south.

Q As the principal officer did you visit areas outside Benghazi as well as make contacts within Benghazi?

A I did.

Q What are some of the areas that you visited?

A I went to Tobruk, I went to Derna, I went to Misrata, and I went to -- there are quite a few, Ajdabiya, mostly towns along the Mediterranean coast.

Q And are these all further east of Benghazi?

A Let's see, Ajdabiya is a little bit south, and the rest are further east.

Q Okay. What prompted you to go to these areas?

A It's part of any principal officer's or any reporting officer's job, and that was my area of responsibility.

Q Okay. So when you undertook your movements to, whether inside -- let's discuss your movements inside Benghazi. What was the security profile like for you as the principal officer?

A I would go with a -- in a fully armored vehicle with a driver and generally an RSO.

Q Now, was the driver locally employed staff?

A That's right.

Q Was that always the case or did that develop during your time there?

A The drivers were always local.

Q Okay. Were there instances where the DS agents would serve as drivers?

A Yes, there was, there were.

Q Okay. You mentioned before that at one point there was only one DS agent.

A Uh-huh.

Q In those instances, did you conduct movements?

A We did.

Q And how were those movements structured?

A [REDACTED] would come along. And I can't recall exactly specific movements, but I was always with -- [REDACTED] was mostly with me.

Q Okay. And so who would remain at the compound?

A The communicators and the local guard force.

Q Okay. Is the local guard force the Blue Mountain Group?

A That's right.

Q Now, at some point -- you said that you arrived in early March. When you arrived at that time was the Blue Mountain Group the local guard force at that time?

A Yes.

Q And had they recently taken over that position?

A I'm not sure.

Q Okay. When you arrived in Benghazi, can you describe the compound and the villas that were in the compound?

A Sure. There was the residential villa and there was the -- what we called -- it was an old villa that was used as office space, and there was a villa that was guest rooms and a cafeteria.

Q And did you understand that recently before your arrival that there had been an additional villa that was a part of the compound?

A Yes, yes.

Q And that that villa had been essentially returned and was no longer being used?

A That's right.

Q So once -- when you arrived, all of the U.S. interests in that villa had completed and everything had been moved out and had been turned over?

A As far as I know.

Q Okay. You weren't involved in that process?

A No, I was not.

Q Were you involved in the process of requesting upgrades for the villa, either villa, the two villas that you described?

A I was certainly aware of them when the RSOs would make that recommendation for upgrades.

Q Okay. What were some of those recommendations?

A We requested concertina wire on the perimeter walls and to increase the height of the perimeter walls. We also requested resources for sandbags and Jersey barriers.

Q And did you all receive those resources?

A We did.

Q Were there any resources that were requested that were delayed and had not arrived prior to you departing?

A No. I think we wanted more cars, just to have a bigger fleet of cars, and those were having import problems into Libya, which is typical.

Q Was there ever a discussion about possibly erecting a fence within the compound?

A Yes, there was.

Q Did that actually happen?

A Partially.

Q Okay.

A It was partially constructed.

Q Why wasn't it completed?

A I believe we did not have the money at that time to finish it.

Q Okay. Now, were the concertina wires introduced in lieu of that construction or both of those items were requested?

A Both of those items were requested.

Q Are you aware of the physical security requirements that a post needs to meet?

A You mean OBO requirements?

Q Yes.

A I know they exist. I don't know what they are.

Q Did you have an understanding of whether or not the villas in the Benghazi compound met those requirements?

A Again, I don't know what the requirements are.

Q Okay. Did you ever have a discussion with the RSO about the requirements and whether he felt that they met those requirements?

A Not about OBO standards, no, I don't remember that.

Q Let's back up for just a moment. Can you kind of describe the structure of the U.S. personnel. As the principal officer are you a superior to the RSO? Or how does that relationship work?

A As the principal officer you are overall responsible for the mission. RSOs report to Diplomatic Security. We have different kind of reporting chains of command. But essentially, I was their -- I don't want to say superior, but I was higher in rank.

Q Okay. When it came to security issues, did you have the authority to veto their decisions about them?

A No, I did not.

Q Okay. And what was your relationship with Tripoli? Can you describe that relationship?

A You mean reporting-wise?

Q Yes.

A I reported -- my supervisors would be the DCM, which is the deputy chief of mission, and then the Ambassador.

Q Okay. Who was the DCM during your time there?

A [REDACTED].

Q Thank you for pronouncing her name.

Did you interact at all with the Tripoli RSO?

A [REDACTED], [REDACTED], yes. He came out to Benghazi once or twice when I was there, but mostly the relationship with him was conducted by our RSOs.

Q Okay. And do you know what prompted his trips to Benghazi?

A He came just out of, you know, just to come see what the compound looked like and just to do a security assessment. That was his responsibility too. He was the overall country RSO.

Q Okay. During his visits did you ever share any concerns with him about the security?

A I didn't really have concerns. We talked about the constant request for reaching the cap of recommended diplomatic security agents. But generally in questions of security I defer to the experts.

Q So you mentioned [REDACTED] name. Is that [REDACTED]?

A That's right.

Q Was he the agent that was there, he was the only agent on the ground for a period of time?

A Yes.

Q Do you recall about when that was?

A Actually, I'm sorry, I don't. I don't recall exactly when.

Q Okay. Does the end of March, beginning of April --

A Yeah, that sounds reasonable.

Q Do you recall about how long he was there?

A I don't, I'm sorry.

Q Okay. And do you recall how long you were down to one agent?

A Okay, I see what you mean. Did you ask me before how long
[REDACTED] was there in total?

Q Well, I meant -- what I wanted to ask was how long he was
there as the --

A As the sole? I don't remember. It was a period of several
days at least, but further than that I just don't know.

Q Okay. What were some of the issues with or causes for not
being able to get the numbers of DS agents?

A We would put in the requests, and so I think it was a question
of resources or availability.

Q Do you recall, was there ever an issue with the Libyan
Government issuing visas?

A Absolutely.

Q Can you describe that?

A The Libyan Embassy here in Washington, D.C., was not fully
staffed, as you would imagine for a new embassy, brand new personnel.
They had pretty poor computer equipment, so there was often a delay
in getting approvals, and then the issuance of requested diplomatic

visas.

Q And did that impact the number -- impact the arrival of DS agents?

A Yes, it did.

Q You also mentioned at some point that some SST team members came down from Tripoli.

A Uh-huh.

Q Do you recall about how long they were in Benghazi?

A They were there for about 3 weeks.

Q Okay. I know you mentioned the number. Can you remind me again how many?

A It was three or four.

Q Great. I know it's a long time ago --

A I know.

Q -- but do you happen to remember how many DS agents you had at the time as well?

A Two, I think, but I'm not sure.

Q Okay. And what prompted the SST members to come to Benghazi?

A Well, we had -- we were low on RSOs, and they were in Tripoli and they were available, so I asked that they come out, as well as to come do some training with our local guard force.

Q Were there any events that happened in Benghazi that prompted your request to bring them, to bring the SST members to Benghazi?

A I don't know. I don't remember what prompted me asking them to come other than they were available.

Q Okay. At any point during your time there do you recall whether or not there were actually five DS agents in Benghazi?

A No.

Q And were you aware that that was the staffing number that had been set for Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q Let's talk a little bit about the local guard force. We've mentioned them before. When you arrived in place was the Blue Mountain Group. Were you aware of any issues that arose with any of the individuals that worked as the local guard force?

A While I was there or before?

Q Before or while you were there.

A Before, no, I wasn't. I didn't know very much about them before I arrived other than that's who the contract was with.

Q Okay.

A There were some disciplinary actions, as one would expect, during my time there, but that was handled by the RSO.

Q Okay. You said, "as one would expect." Why would one expect this?

A It's a large group. I mean, there's always, you know, something.

Q Okay. What type of disciplinary actions were taken?

A They were suspended.

Q Okay. Were they suspended indefinitely or --

A Oh, I'm sorry. They were let go, they were let go.

Q Oh, I see. Do you recall what caused them to be let go?

A One of them had graffiti outside on the compound walls, and so he was let go for defacing our property. And I don't remember what the other one was. He's the one I remember most clearly.

Q Now, you mentioned that you spoke Arabic. Is that correct?

A That's right.

Q Did the RSO speak Arabic?

A No.

Q Did you ever have to serve as interpreter for the RSO?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Was that pretty commonplace or --

A No, because our guards and QRF, the 17th February, spoke English to some extent, but it was just when they felt like they needed to express themselves in Arabic to make a more full, because they felt more comfortable, that I would help.

Q Okay. Can you describe any instances where you served as the interpreter for the RSO?

A Yes. There was one instance when one of the guards had information that he thought was pertinent to security. I don't remember exactly what it was. So he wanted to tell it to the RSO, but he needed to tell it in Arabic.

Q Okay. And you said you don't recall what the information was. Do you recall if in response to the information provided the RSO

or you took any action?

A Yes. Yes, they did. They followed up on the individual that he named to see what was his status or who he was. I don't think we had very much follow-up in determining whether this information was correct or not.

Q Okay. Do you recall -- so you said -- you followed up on the individual that he named. Was that individual also a member of the local guard force?

A I don't remember, I'm sorry.

Q Were you aware if the local guard force had been vetted?

A I don't know what the vetting procedures would have been. I know that they were -- the local guard -- I'm sorry, I'm making my own confusion between QRF and the local guard force. We contracted that out, so the vetting would have taken place through RSO and the contractor.

Q So you were involved in contracting the vetting out or is that just the standard procedure of how it would happen?

A Contracting the vetting?

Q Yes.

A So the RSOs ran the names of all these guys through the security checks. So the contractor was not responsible for doing that.

Q Oh, I'm sorry, I misunderstood you. I thought you said that we contracted that out, referring to the vetting.

A We contracted out the actual gathering of the candidates.

Q Okay. And so the RSO would perform the vetting?

A That's right.

Q And were you aware that the RSO actually performed vetting of the local guard force while you were there?

A They did on a few occasions, yes, when we had new ones that were coming.

Q Okay. You just mentioned the QRF. Can you explain who they were.

A Uh-huh. They were members of the 17th of February militia who was -- which was assigned to us as -- I can't even remember why they were assigned to us. It was before I got there.

Q Okay. What role did they serve?

A They served as -- they would monitor sort of the perimeter. They stayed on compound. There were four of them. They were extra help.

Q And by stayed on compound, you mean lived on the compound?

A Four of them lived in a house on the compound. When I say lived, I mean they had their own homes, but when they were with us they would stay on the compound.

Q Did they participate in movements off the compound?

A Yes, they did.

Q And was that the case during your entire time in Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q Were these members of the QRF, were they also vetted?

A That I -- if so, I don't know the process.

Q Okay. Did the individuals who were assigned to the QRF

change during your time in Benghazi?

A A few, maybe one or two sort of were replaced or kind of changed, switched in or out.

Q Do you know why the individuals that were assigned left?

A Well, I think one just wanted to go home and -- no. But, I mean, it wasn't anything nefarious.

Q Were you aware of any issues with the QRF, any issues with the individuals that served in the QRF, such as failing to report on time or anything?

A I think a couple of times they were not prompt, as prompt as the RSO may have liked.

Q Any other issues that come to mind?

A No. It's making me smile when I think about these guys.

Q Do you care to share why you're smiling?

A They were, you know, they were fun guys to have around. And they were sort of like the -- they really appreciated the training that the RSOs gave them.

Q So we touched on this briefly earlier about security incidents. I'm just going to go list a few. There are some that I might show you some documents regarding to refresh your recollection.

So you arrived in early March, closer to the beginning of March, correct?

A That's right.

Q In the middle of March, around the 13th, do you recall there being some journalists that were detained, including one American

citizen?

A I do remember that, yes.

Q Okay. And what do you recall about that?

A I remember being notified because the person was American, and I don't remember how the information came to me. I don't remember who gave me a call.

Q Okay. Why were you notified?

A Because I was American.

Q Okay. And as the principal officer in Benghazi did that relate to your role as the principal officer?

A We didn't have a consulate per se, so we didn't have the facilities to provide American citizens services, which is what a consulate would do. I think they just called me because I was an American.

Q Okay. What was your understanding of the status of the mission in Benghazi? You said it wasn't a consulate.

A No.

Q What status was it?

A We would call it like a diplomatic presence, a special diplomatic facility.

Q What was your understanding of how long that diplomatic presence would be in Benghazi?

A It was -- when I arrived we had a -- the contract to basically lease the villas where we were was through the end of 2012 and with the option of renewing that.

Q Did you have any understanding or idea of whether or not it would actually be renewed at the end of 2012?

A It was dependent on finances and whether we wanted to remain in that location or collocate.

Q [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]?

A [REDACTED].

Q Okay. So did that discussion come up during your time there?

A No, I think that discussion came up prior.

Q Okay. Was that discussion ever revisited during your time there?

A No, no, we didn't -- I knew that there were discussions in Tripoli about possibly doing that, but it didn't occur when I was there.

Q Did you know why it didn't occur?

A Actually I don't.

Q What did you think about the possibility of collocating?

A I had not -- I didn't really think too much about it. I mean, they had better food, so it would have been nice for me. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mr. Evers. And I would just caution, if you need to provide answers in a classified setting, we do have the facilities to do that.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q Another security incident. Do you recall around, again,

the middle of March that there were some ARSO or DS agents that were stopped at a security checkpoint?

A Yes.

Q What do you recall about that?

A They were going to do an advance for an outing that I was going to undertake, and so they were, as they would do, sort of, you know, scouting the routes and determining the best way to go. They were stopped by one -- a militia, I don't know which one, and asked to come back with them to that militia's headquarters.

Q Do you recall how that was resolved?

A It resolved itself. I mean, I know I made some calls to the head of the -- the head of, you know, a security service I thought might be able to provide assistance, and I think they were there for a couple of hours and eventually told, you know, thank you, we're sorry, please go.

Q What was the explanation for why they were stopped?

A That they didn't have permits or the correct documentation or identification on the car.

Q To your knowledge, had anything like that happened before?

A No.

Q Were you aware of that happening to any of the other Western countries there?

A It did.

Q Was this prior to or after this particular incident?

A I don't remember exactly specific incidents, I just know

I talked with counterparts, and it happened to them as well.

Q Okay. I'm going to show you an exhibit. I'm going to mark it as Exhibit 1.

[████████ Exhibit No. 1
Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q Feel free to take your time reading through that.

A Okay.

Q Thank you. So for the record, this is an email chain. It's marked as unclassified, dated March 15, 2012. And it begins with an email from you to [REDACTED] and to [REDACTED], and it's referring to a developing situation. And you mention two individuals were out on a site advance near the airport. Is this the same event that we were just discussing?

A Yes, it is.

Q I want to direct your attention to the second paragraph in your email. It's at the very bottom.

A Right here?

Q Yes. And it says, "[REDACTED] is on his way there, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]." Do you know who [REDACTED] is?

A I do.

Q Okay. And what was his role with the mission? Did he have a role with the mission in Benghazi?

Mr. Evers. Sheria, if you don't mind, I've done a little legwork on this issue, and while I think we can, as long as Ms. [REDACTED] is comfortable that we can discuss it in an unclassified setting in response to your actual questions, we can do so. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Ms. Jackson. Okay.

Mr. Evers. Thank you very much.

Ms. [REDACTED]. He was, I would say, a political advisor.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q Okay. And in this particular email it says, quote, "[REDACTED] is on his way there." It seems to be referring to where the individuals who were detained were. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Do you recall what his role was in helping to resolve this particular situation, if any?

A I'm sure he was able to speak in Arabic with the militia, which would have been useful since the RSOs didn't really understand.

Q Okay. You mentioned that he was -- you said a political advisor?

A He was a part-time employee. He provided a lot of functions to the mission in Benghazi. So political advisor is the closest I can come.

Q Okay. Can you describe some of the functions that he provided?

A He was able to introduce me to people. He knew the city. He could make recommendations on what might be -- who might be useful to get to know. Or he could facilitate contacts. He could -- in any embassy overseas you have local staff that you rely on heavily for local knowledge, and so that's what he provided.

Q Okay. And did someone provide his name to you prior to coming to Benghazi?

A He was already affiliated with the mission when I got there.

Q Okay. Do you know how long he had been affiliated with the mission?

A I know he was with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] predecessor, [REDACTED]. Prior to that I don't know.

Q Okay. I'm going to run through some more incidents, some of which I have emails to refresh your memory if you don't recall. Some aren't necessarily related to the actual mission compound itself but happened in Benghazi.

A Okay. All right.

Q Do you recall in the middle of March there was a large crowd demonstrating that was attacked by armed individuals?

A I think I would need more specifics on that.

Q Okay. A large crowd had gathered, demonstrating. There was some unrest about I think the issue that you mentioned earlier, about feeling disenfranchised from Tripoli. At some point during that demonstration a number of men entered the crowd, and they had weapons on them and began attacking individuals. Do you recall any incidents like that?

A I don't. I'm not going to say that didn't happen, but I don't know which one you're referring to.

Q This would have happened in early March, so within about 2 weeks of your arrival.

A Would it be at the police headquarters?

Q I think it was close to the police headquarters.

A Okay. Yes, I do remember this.

Q Okay. And what do you recall about that?

A I recall that there was a group of -- what I was told, I wasn't there -- a group gathering outside of a facility where some old Qadhafi cars and trucks were stored, and they were trying to get access to it.

Q Okay.

A That's what I was told.

Q And did that impact any -- were there any changes that were undertaken by the RSO or yourself in response to that event?

A Not that I remember.

Q Do you recall another instance, possibly around 2 or 3 days later, where gunmen entered a U.K. school and attempted to steal some of the vehicles stored there?

A Yes, I recall that.

Q What do you recall about that?

A Exactly what you just said, that gunmen entered the school and tried to steal cars and stuff.

Q Okay. Do you recall -- in these instances, how would you normally become aware of these types of incidents?

A Let's see. Generally, I don't think there was any -- there wasn't really one way in terms of the school. It's because I knew the school, the people who ran the school, so they let me know what was

going on.

In terms of the police, there was really no one way. I mean, we all had phone calls and email and things like that, so messages could get -- word got around pretty fast.

Q Okay. Do you recall an incident, this probably would have been about your third week in Benghazi, where a local militia attempted to enter the compound?

A Local militia?

Q Or, like, the local police force tried to enter the compound. There was an alert that there had been a fire on the compound, and so they tried to enter the compound, and it set off -- the duck-and-cover alarm was set off.

A I vaguely recall that.

Q Okay. What do you recall about that?

A That they in response to a fire were attempting to -- or perceived fire, I don't think there actually was a fire -- attempted to come on to the compound. I hadn't thought about that in so long.

Q Do you recall whether there was actually a fire?

A I don't think that there was, no.

Q Okay. Do you recall if that was related to any of the local guard force members?

A I don't remember.

Q What about on April 6, do you recall there being an IED thrown over the wall?

A I do.

Q What do you recall about that?

A I recall that there was I think what we determined later to be gelatina or a fish bomb tossed over the wall, and it caused some minor damage to the trees and the foliage on the compound.

Q Is gelatina common or was it common in Libya?

A Yes.

Q Were you familiar with the type of explosion that it could generate?

A I did not, not personally.

Q I'm going to show you what I'm going to mark as Exhibit 2.

[████████ Exhibit No. 2

Was marked for identification.]

Ms. Clarke. I apologize. Some of the originals that we had, some of the printing wasn't the best. Feel free to read through the document and take your time. I will note that what I want to discuss is the beginning of the page with the email that you sent.

Ms. ████████. Okay. This is a little bit hard to read.

Okay, yes.

Mr. Evers. At least my copy seems to have two documents stapled together. This states document number --

Ms. Clarke. Oh, you are correct. That's fine. I think they are all related to the visa issue.

Mr. Evers. Do you want to mark them as separate exhibits for clarity?

Ms. Clarke. Actually, I'm just interested in the first one, so

we can remove the second one.

Ms. Jackson. Why don't we make Exhibit 2 the first three pages.

Mr. Evers. So Exhibit 2 will be doc ID C05390357, and it is three pages, and we're going to exclude three pages of another document.

Ms. Jackson. We can just tear them off

Ms. Clarke. Yes. Thank you.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q So Exhibit 2, again doc ID C05390357, it is an email chain which you are on, and it's discussing visa advisories. And I just want to focus on the top front page of the email that you sent. Do you recall this email?

A Yes.

Q Okay. We mentioned earlier the discussion about the issue that the Libyan Government's inability to issue visas was having on the ability to actually have DS agents come. In this email, on the first sentence of the first paragraph, you say, "Our IED incident from last night only underscores the seriousness of these delays." Are you referring to the incident that we just discussed, about the gelatina?

A Yes.

Q Now, do you recall, what happened with that incident? Were there any suspects that were detained? Describe to me what happened.

A Yes, there were two suspects. Two suspects were detained at our request.

Q Okay. Who were those individuals, if you recall, or did they have a relation to the compound?

A At least one of them was this guard who had graffitied the word "love," I think it was, on the outside of the consulate -- or the compound.

Q Okay. Do you recall who the other individual was?

A I don't. I'm not entirely sure. I believe he was also from the local guard force.

Q The individual who had graffitied the compound, he was let go. Is that correct?

A Eventually he was.

Q Do you recall if at this point in time, during the IED incident, if he was still employed?

A Oh, I see what you mean. No, I think he had been let go -- he had been let go prior to this.

Q Okay. And once they were detained, what happened to those individuals?

A I am not sure. I know that they were detained for a number of days. I wasn't involved in any questioning or I didn't go see them in jail.

Q Okay. After seeing this email and highlighting that, as you state, quote, "this only underscores the seriousness of these delays," was there any change as far as the ability to get the DS agents in country? Did this help prompt along, help in Washington or help facilitate in visas?

A I don't think it did.

Q Do you recall if that issue with the Libyan Government

issuing visas was resolved during your time there?

A I don't think there was. I mean, it was better at some times, and it was faster at some times and slower at others, really just depending on who was staffing the Embassy here in Washington.

Q Okay. Were there any other factors that impacted how quickly or slowly the visas were issued?

A I mean, I can only say that they had inferior computer equipment and this was a new process for them. So --

Q Do you recall on April 10 an IED attack on a U.N. envoy?

A Yes.

Q And what do you recall about that?

A I recall that the U.N. envoy's convoy was coming on the coastal road, and it was attacked by I'm not sure what, but something was launched at it, and there was some damage to the car, but nobody was hurt.

Q Okay. Do you recall if this was a different type of IED than what had a few days prior been launched?

A I don't think it was ever determined exactly what it was.

Q Were there any changes implemented or prompted because of this attack?

A We would always have a weekly security meeting with the other foreign presences there, and I don't think that we made any changes based on either their telling of what happened or any recommendations. I mean, we already had the most secure profile of anybody.

Q Okay. Now, you said, just to break your answer down a little bit, you said we would always have weekly security meetings with other foreign presences. Who was the "we"?

A Oh, I mean the Americans, the Turks, the Brits, basically the representatives of some Western, some Arab nations just to share information.

Q Did you participate in those meetings?

A I did.

Q And what was the purpose of those meetings?

A It's like you would do at any embassy or consulate. You get together with your peers and you talk about what you're seeing and what each other is doing, you know, share ideas.

Q Did you have any -- did you exchange any intelligence reports during those meetings?

A Oh, no. No.

Q Did you exchange reports with the Western entities or the other entities there at any other time?

A You mean, like, classified reports?

Q Or just intel reports, not necessarily classified.

A We never shared any reporting, no.

Q Once you conducted these meetings, did you provide any reports to your chain of command regarding those meetings?

A Yeah, we would -- I would write up an email saying that we met today, the U.K. hosted, we talked about the upcoming events.

Q Who would you usually provide those emails to?

A I would email them to Tripoli. I can't remember exactly who I'd email them to, Tripoli and the desk, which is the Maghreb desk here at the State Department.

Q Okay. And just to step back a little bit, we didn't discuss, what was some of the communication equipment that you or capabilities that you had in Benghazi?

A In terms of disseminating information?

Q Yes.

A Well, I had a laptop and cell phone. We had the ability to process classified information, but not to print it.

Q Okay.

A And we had access to OpenNet. Internet access was spotty. It was because the satellite that went rotating, sometimes the sun would block the satellite. It was always a big part of every afternoon, we would just stop getting email.

Ms. Jackson. Naptime.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Pretty much. That's when I would go do some CrossFit.

RPTR MCKENZIE

EDTR ROSEN

[11:02 a.m.]

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q In response -- or around the time -- following up to the -- let me start over.

Following the IED attack on the U.N. envoy, we talked a little bit earlier about Tripoli sending SST members down. Do you recall if that was related to this incident?

A To the U.N. convoy?

Q Uh-huh.

A I don't recall if it was directly related to that, but it was around the same time, however.

Q Okay. And do you recall an incident -- there were three incidents that occurred around the same time, maybe within a 24-hour period. There was an attempted jail break, a bombing of the north courthouse, and then contractors for the global offshore projects were abducted briefly. Do you recall those instances?

A I do. I do.

Q Okay. What do you recall about the attempted jail break?

A The attempted jail break was -- there were a couple of different explanations given for it. Either they were former Qadhafi supporters who were in jail and got out or somebody was, you know, basically sprung by their family or something like that. So it wasn't -- it wasn't of particular political concern.

Q All right.

A That's what I remember. And I don't remember there being any follow-up to it. Excuse me.

Q When you say it wasn't of any particular political concern, were the other incidents of political concern?

A No. But I just mention that because I said they possibly were Qadhafi loyalists.

Q Okay. What about the bombing of the north courthouse. Do you recall that incident?

A I do.

Q Okay. And what do you recall about that?

A There was a bomb possibly in a suitcase that was laid, I guess, at the foot of one of the walls of the north courthouse that detonated, and I think took down part of the walls of the north courthouse.

Q How did you become aware of that, if you recall?

A It may have been one of my U.N. colleagues who called us. I mean, again, we all had good communication with each other, so we would know -- be able to share information.

Q Do you recall another incident, it happened in late May, around the 28th, where the International Committee for the Red Cross was attacked?

A I do.

Q What do you recall about that incident?

A That they were -- there was -- I don't know what, if it was

ever determined, what it was, but they were hit with something. I believe it was in the early morning. And no one was injured, but the building I think had some damage to it.

Q And do you recall if it was determined who conducted the attack?

A No, not while I was there.

Q Okay. I see that I'm getting close to the end of my hour. So we can go off the record; and if you'd like, we can take a break.

A That's fine. Thank you.

EXAMINATION

BY MR. KENNY:

Q We can go back on the record. The time is 11:17.

Ms. [REDACTED], I just want to take the opportunity to reintroduce myself. My name is Peter Kenny. I'm a minority counsel with Ranking Member Cummings. I'm joined here today by my colleagues. This is Heather Sawyer, who is the chief counsel for the minority staff, as well as Ronak Desai, seated beside me. Just on behalf of the committee's minority staff, we want to thank you, again, for your appearance here today and for your service to our country.

A Thank you.

Q We understand that appearing before Congress can seem to be a very daunting experience. So we just want to assure you that we will work with you to make this process as simple and straightforward as possible. We also want to take a moment to acknowledge that we understand that you and your colleagues lost friends and fellow

patriots on the night of the attacks. So, again, we just want to thank you for your service and for being here again.

A Thank you.

Q We talked a little bit in the last hour about some of your previous postings, other posts where you had been assigned, where you had worked. You walked us through several of the countries where you have been posted. Maybe you could help explain for us, were any of those considered hardship posts at the time that you were assigned to them?

A Yes. Lebanon was. Sudan was. Pakistan most definitely was. And Jerusalem, to a lesser extent.

Q Okay. And what was your understanding of what that meant, for a post to be a hardship?

A It's basically a calculus, a hardship post. It comes down to, there is a pay differential based on security assessments and access to, you know, western goods, things that you might want. So it's a category that is made by the management. But a hardship post is -- it's just designated as a hardship post.

Q Okay. Spring of 2012, was there a particular geographic bureau to which you were assigned? Were you assigned to a functional bureau?

A I was assigned, at that point, to CSO, Conflict and Stabilization Operations.

Q Okay. And what is CSO?

A A CSO is a part of the Department that's meant to -- for

the lack of a better word -- deploy officers to areas of potential conflict. You know, African elections, for example, or -- they were active in a lot of places.

Q Okay. So did that mission fit within what U.S. foreign policy was towards Libya around the time of --

A Well, I was assigned to them, but I had been asked on a more personal capacity to go to Benghazi. So they released me to do that.

Q Okay. So we discussed in the last hour a little bit about Ambassador Stevens. The Ambassador had personally requested you or -- so you felt like you were being recruited for this position; is that fair?

A I don't know if I would say "recruited." I mean, he asked me if I would go. And of course I said yes.

Q Did they explain what the mission was at that time or what they wanted you to perform? Or did he explain that?

A To act as a principal officer and to kind of conduct diplomacy for, and advance U.S. security interests in eastern Libya. It's kind of writ large. It's a broad task.

Q And at that time, did he explain to you what the importance of eastern Libya was in relation to broader dynamics in Libya?

A He did. I mean, he was very knowledgeable.

Q Okay. And do you recall what he shared with you about the importance of Benghazi and eastern Libya?

A He had been there during the time when the rebels coalesced in Benghazi and it became sort of their headquarters. So that's, from

his standpoint, what was the incident in which it became, you know, important to be there.

Q Okay. Were you aware of whether the Ambassador had strong views on maintaining or keeping a U.S. presence in Benghazi? Was that something he shared with you at that time?

A He wanted to keep it, because he thought it was important.

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

And we talked in the last hour a little bit about some of the special skills and your experiences that you brought to the table. You mentioned your Arabic training, your Middle East experience. Did you feel that you had the right mix of skills and experience for this particular engagement, this assignment?

A I did, yes.

Q Okay. At the time, was your understanding that Benghazi was a major population center?

A Yeah. I knew it was the -- yes. I think I knew it was a pretty big city for Tripoli -- pardon, for Libya.

Q Okay. Do you recall whether it was also a major commercial center?

A It had been. The potential for it to become one again was something that we were trying to, you know, to investigate.

Q Okay. And what was your understanding of the role that Benghazi played specifically during the revolution which predates your assignment, of course. But do you have an understanding of what role --

A Right. Well, it's a symbolic role because it was sort of where it began.

Q And did that role change at all after the fall of Qadhafi? What was the role of Benghazi post-Qadhafi?

A It remained the headquarters for the transitional government until they moved to Tripoli. But, again, as the major city of a very large province, it had its own significance.

Q Okay. Thank you. That's helpful.

In the course of our discussion today, I'm going to be using a handful of documents.

A Sure.

Q I'm sorry.

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q Just to follow up, you talked a little bit about the importance of Benghazi vis-à-vis Libya and what was happening in Libya. What was your sense of the importance of the U.S. Government being present in Benghazi?

A I thought it was very important to have, you know, U.S. representation, presence in a very critical part of a very important country in the region. So I thought it was important.

Q And was your sense of the importance both that it was important for Libya and the people of Libya and for the U.S. Government, kind of for both? Or was it just for one or --

A Absolutely. I was overwhelmed by how much gratitude people expressed to me for being an American and being there. It was

quite unlike any other Arab country I had been in before, actually.

Q And I think we will get to some of the other places you visited. But was that your sense both when you were in Benghazi and when you also had the opportunity to get outside Benghazi?

A It was, yes.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Just real briefly to follow up on that point, did you have any personal experiences with -- do you recall seeing any signs or symbols of how the residents of Benghazi felt towards the U.S. during the time that you were there?

A Signs or symbols? Or what do you mean?

Q Just, do you have any personal knowledge firsthand? You said that you'd never experienced that much gratitude when you were there. I just wonder if you have any personal examples of that?

A Well, not long after I arrived, it was the first anniversary of the NATO intervention, and there were celebrations. And you had the American flag and the Libyan -- new Libyan flag, Italy, U.K., France, all together hanging. I have never seen that before. It was demonstrable, it was visible that, you know, foreign interest in new Libya was very important.

Q And where were those flags hanging?

A They were hanging down in Martyrs' Square.

Q Okay. And that's located in the central part of the city?

A It's on the coast.

Q On the coast, so the north side. Okay.

And what I would like to do now is we will use a few documents to help guide our discussion. I know in the course of the last hour we were walking you through some incidents. Our intent here is really to just kind of refresh your recollection and also from a time perspective, just focus on a couple key points and key decision events.

This first document is, I believe, Exhibit 3.

Mr. Evers. That's right.

[██████████ Exhibit No. 3

Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q So just to describe this document, this is a Benghazi situation report. It appears to be sent from, at the very top, ██████████ ██████████ to ██████████ and ██████████, dated May 23, 2012. The document number is C 05389029.

Within this document, there appears to be a Benghazi situation report that's dated the same date, May 23, 2012, and it's sent from you to, it looks like a large group of people as well as some internal State Department distribution lists. I would just like to begin by asking, what are these Benghazi situation reports, and why are they important?

A I did this maybe two or three times a week. I would just say what I had been working on, what I was noticing. It's typical reporting. It's a reporting cable, essentially.

Q Okay. The first bullet here listed says, "Federalists feeling cornered?" It appears to describe a meeting that the PO -- I

assume that's --

A Me.

Q -- you had with a member of the Federalist movement and some militia activity around Benghazi. I know that you had mentioned or touched upon Federalism and the Federalist movement in the last hour. Again, I would just like to understand what the role of Benghazi or eastern Libya was and maybe why following or tracking Federalism would have been important.

A So Benghazi and the east, Cyrenaica has historically been cut off from the resources of the center, both during the Italian occupation as well as during the Qadhafi era. That's access to education, to finances, to political representation.

So in this new Libya, there was a group of individuals from the east who felt that perhaps they could sort of assert their access or their right to share power, share resources. And so that was the Federalist movement. They wanted to put Libya into three -- back into three basic Federal provinces versus one whole country.

Q And did you view that as an important issue to monitor and report on?

A I did.

Q Okay. Did you view it as important to the upcoming national elections that were taking place in Libya?

A Very much so.

Q Okay. Why is that?

A Because the Federalists had the opportunity -- or could and

threatened on occasion to try to disrupt the elections if there wasn't a certain representation in the -- basically the councils that were being elected that was reserved for the east. And if they were to boycott, threaten, or disrupt elections, that was obviously not in U.S. interests and no one's interests.

Q And that would have been harmful to the democratic process?

A Yes.

Q This second paragraph in the top bullet here refers to the discussion that you had with this contact, and it appears that this person uses the word or used the word "marginalization of the east" on the third line. Do you see that?

A Mm-hmm.

Q Was that a concern that you heard from many contacts in eastern Libya, this concern that they were being marginalized from what was occurring in Tripoli in the west?

A Yes, from very many.

Q Okay. And how seriously was that concern taken by those people or --

A Well, they wanted to be able to participate again fully in the management of the country, as they had felt that they had not been able to for a very long time. So -- rightly so, as most of the oil resources are in the east. And they just wanted the previous centralization of the government to be more equitable and to have representation in the east as well as the south.

Q Okay. And following up on -- and you had mentioned this

also in the last hour about oil production in eastern Libya. But the last bullet here, which reads AGOCO oil production back at prerevolution levels. Just first, what is AGOCO?

A AGOCO is the national oil company.

Q Okay. And was that the largest or is that the largest oil company in Libya?

A It was. I don't know if it is still.

Q Okay. And was that company located in Benghazi --

A It was.

Q -- at the time? Okay. And was it also important to follow and report on progress or status updates regarding oil production in the east?

A It was. That was of great interest to people here in Washington.

Q Okay. I would also like to just point out that the third bullet in this document refers to the ICRC attack that occurred on May 22. I know that was discussed in the previous round. Just to let you know, we will return to that. But I would like to move on.

We talked in the last hour about some of the other foreign missions, specifically the western missions that were operated in Benghazi at the time that you were there. And you discussed that there were always weekly security meetings that would take place between them. You mentioned at that time -- and I had written this down, so please correct me if I have recorded this incorrectly -- but that you thought the U.S. had the most secure profile of anyone out of the group

with whom you met. Could you just maybe explain or elaborate what you meant by that?

A We used armored cars exclusively, which is not the case with the other missions. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I was always accompanied, or an American principal officer, those before me too were always accompanying me in fully armored vehicles.

Q Okay. And in the course of the weekly security meetings that you had, did you ever hear any concerns from some of these other nations about their specific security posture? For instance, [REDACTED]

A No. I mean, I think at one point later on [REDACTED]

Q Okay. And some of those countries that we discussed earlier, what was your understanding of why they were engaged in Benghazi?

A The Italian consulate was there, and it was an actual consulate, because of the historic association with the country. The French and the British, like us, were there because they had been there during the revolution and maintained their interest and presence there. The Egyptians, because obviously it's just next door. And, you know, you have got a number of the Arab countries because they are, you know, vested, and Libya is part of the Arab League.

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

I would like to shift gears a little bit and return to a discussion we had in the last hour, specifically on diplomatic security staffing and staffing at the compound. We understand, based on some of your statements, that the levels of security staffing fluctuated during the time that you were there. And again, it sounded like the numbers were between three and one DS agent; is that correct, strictly for the DS side?

A That's right.

Q Okay. Could you just help us understand what the impact of those lower staffing numbers were? Did it restrict your ability to move?

A It did restrict my ability to move because we -- with only one, it was very hard to, you know, be out in the city as well as, you know, do the things that are necessary to safeguard the compound itself.

Q Okay. Did you have those same concerns about your ability to move off compound when you had the three DS agents as well?

A It was easier, certainly. I mean, it was easier on everybody because it wasn't such a hard workload.

Q Okay. There was a reference in the last hour to a recommendation that DS resource security staffing with five DS agents in Benghazi. Do you know why it was a challenge for Diplomatic Security, the Bureau, to reach that five-agent --

A I was told that it was this visa issue that we had discussed that was delayed as well as availability of agents and resources.

Q Okay. And when you say "availability," can you maybe elaborate on what you mean by that or whatever?

A Unassigned DS agents or DS agents at other posts who could be released or released for periods of time.

Q Okay. And how did you learn about these challenges? Was it just through your involvement in the process, discussions with DS agents on the compound?

A I had known about it before, before I went, and then certainly with discussions with them, with the agents on the compound.

Q Okay. Were you aware that this was a longstanding challenge that was facing the special mission in Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Were you aware at all of whether there had been any sort of decision within the Bureau of Diplomatic Security to at Main State cap the number of DS agents on the compound at three instead of five?

A I'm not aware of that.

Q Okay. So you don't recall any discussions on the compound maybe between or among the DS agents about a cap of three?

A No. To my understanding, would always wanted five.

[█████████ Exhibit No. 4

Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Okay. Just to continue our discussion here, I will mark this as Exhibit 4. This is an email dated March 25, 2012. It's from

you to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] with the subject, "Re: Draft request for DS TDY and FTE support." I will give you a moment to read the document. The Bates number for this is C05579088.

A Okay. Yes.

Q Okay. So let's start at the bottom of this page here. And this is an earlier email in the same thread. It's dated March 22, 2012. Here, [REDACTED] writes to you and [REDACTED]. And he stated the following, "As discussed, please find a draft request to DS HQ for our TDY support along with our concurrence on their proposal for six FTE for the RSO office." And he attaches what appears to be a draft cable focusing on Tripoli security resources. In that draft cable, there appears to be a section entitled "DS agent support in Benghazi." Do you see that?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Do you recall this email exchange?

A I do.

Q Do you recall this draft request that RSO [REDACTED] had prepared?

A Yes.

Q Okay. So responding to [REDACTED] -- this is a few days later; so this is on March 25, 2012 -- [REDACTED] responded to this draft cable. And she states the following, "I think the Benghazi section may need a little more clarification. For example, once we get the LES drivers onboard, will we need five DS agents? If not, it would be good to flag that figure (5) as a temporary need that will

decrease once the LES drivers are onboard."

A Uh-huh.

Q What was your understanding of what Deputy Chief of Mission [REDACTED] was referring to when she mentioned the LES driver program in Benghazi?

A Because the RSOs were having to do -- when we were low-resource, they were having to do chauffeur duties; that is part of what they had been doing. Were we to get trained local drivers onboard, they would not have to do that so much.

Q Okay. And do you know who initiated the program to transition the DS agents off of the chauffeur duties?

A I don't remember who initiated it, no.

Q Okay. Did you have a sense of why that was being done?

A I do. That if you are driving the vehicle, you are not able to sort of pay attention to kind of what's around you and you are distracted.

Q Okay. Do you know if the program was also meant to avoid using the DS agents as drivers to free them up so that they could perform protective security details?

A That's correct.

Q Okay. Had you heard whether anyone -- whether at post, whether back at Main State -- had expressed frustration that the DS agents were being used as drivers?

A Yes, I believe so.

Q What do you recall of that?

A Exactly that, that there was frustration that they were being used as drivers.

Q And what was your understanding of where that frustration was coming from?

A That, I don't know. I don't know. It could have been personal. I just don't know.

Q Okay. I would like to just ask, were you supportive of this effort to hire the local drivers and shift the DS agents over to focus more on pure security-related tasks?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And can you just explain why?

A Because the DS agents, with their specialized training, are better equipped to do things that we needed done, such as, you know, perimeter security, protecting principal officers, getting to know their counterparts within Benghazi. And that would be made easier by having the driving duties taken over by somebody else.

Q Okay. Did you think that by bringing the LES drivers onboard that Benghazi might not require the five DS agents?

A I don't remember that. But, I mean, I'm reading this email. It seems like I thought that -- or I agreed with the RSOs that if we could get those, we may need to revisit the need for five.

Q Okay. Thanks. That is helpful. We will just move up the chain here. So this is a subsequent email written by you on the same date, March 25, 2012, where you stated the following, and I will focus on the first point at the top. "Before I send in some suggested edits,

would it be possible to get RSO's take on the following: Benghazi's request for five DS agents. There was a commitment made some time ago in which DS agreed to support five TDY agents in Benghazi. This has never happened. The status quo has been three. Is it safe/reasonable to assume that three will remain the number that we can expect? That's fine if that's the case. I just need to know for planning purposes."

And again, just further to our discussion, it sounds like during your time, three agents was the steady state and you weren't able to achieve the five DS agents; is that --

A Right. We did not get to five.

Q Okay. I'm just trying to understand your question here. So it sounds like you are trying to get a sense of whether, despite this request for five DS agents that RSO [REDACTED] was preparing, that there might still be an expectation of only three agents being delivered; is that right?

A It was that we hadn't had five. And at that time, I was not in any position to expect that we would have five.

Q Okay. And is that just because --

A Because we hadn't up until that point.

Q You hadn't up until that point. Okay.

Again, you state that that's fine. If that's the case, I just need to know for planning purposes. Can you just explain for us the planning that would have been involved if the DS staffing had changed?

A Well, we would have to rethink some of the -- if we remained small, we didn't have additional drivers, we would have to rethink

movements that we can undertake. It would also affect any type of TDY support, such as members of other parts of the mission, say Tripoli, wanting to come out and, you know, to do their own work in Libya, such as USAID. We wouldn't be able to fully accommodate them.

Q Okay. In the bullet below, you state, "The cable notes that personnel who have taken FACT/SNOE do not need DS escorts with them. It is the case with Benghazi as well. For example, I have taken FACT three times. Am I exempt from needing a DS agent to travel with me, provided we have local drivers onboard? If, as principal officer, I do need a DS escort, can we suppose that other TD wires who had FACT do not need one unless traveling after dark." So just to unpack this, FACT is the Foreign Affairs Counterterrorism Training; is that right?

A Yes.

Q And what is SNOE, S-N-O-E?

A SNOE is a longer 3-week training. I don't remember what it stands for.

Q Okay. And again, we discussed this before. Here you mentioned that you had taken FACT three times. Was that something you were required to do?

A Before going to a hardship post, yes, you were required to take FACT.

Q Okay. Is that because it expires after a certain amount of time?

A It expires I believe after 5 years. I took it three times. So obviously I took it in between -- maybe less, fewer than 5-year

periods.

Q Okay. Was your understanding from the draft cable that RSO [REDACTED] had sent that Tripoli did not require DS agents to accompany FACT-trained employees or personnel in Tripoli?

A Yes.

Q Okay. So in asking your question here, you are just seeking clarification of whether that policy also applied to Benghazi; is that right?

A That's correct.

Q Okay. Did you support the policy that RSO [REDACTED] articulated that applied to Tripoli?

A I did. I did.

Q Okay. Can you explain why?

A It would increase our ability to accommodate TDY or to get people from other agencies who might want to come to Benghazi. And if we were to only have up to three RSOs, it would make work for them a bit easier.

Q Okay. And was your understanding that in Tripoli, they, in fact, implemented that policy, that they allowed U.S. personnel to travel -- if had they received FACT training without a DS escort?

A That's correct.

Q Was that policy ever actually applied to Benghazi?

A It was not.

Q Can you explain why not?

A Let me try to remember, actually. Well, since it was

determined that, as principal officer, I would need a DS escort, even though I had already had FACT training. And so we didn't have the opportunity, I think, to test out, you know, the system that was in place in Tripoli. We didn't have -- there weren't people that were coming for TDY.

Actually, that's not true. I take that back. I think one person did come from Tripoli and was taken to meetings without the DS escort.

Q Okay. So did you have any discussions about whether this policy would apply with the diplomatic security staff? Do you recall?

A Did I discuss it with the diplomatic --

Q Yes.

A I'm sure I did.

Q Did they raise any concerns about it to you?

A Well, the concern that they raised was that it shouldn't apply to me. That I would require a DS escort.

Q That you would require a DS escort?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And how was that ultimately resolved? Did you defer to their judgment on the matter?

A I did.

Q Okay.

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q Can I just interject with a quick question?

We sometimes hear about a little bit of tension between the security side who wants to make sure that people are safe at all times

and mitigate risks, and the folks on the ground trying to push out the mission.

How did you feel that relationship worked in the time you were in Benghazi? You said you certainly deferred to the recommendations of the security team. Did you feel that it was a positive relationship?

A Oh, I had a very positive relationship with all of the guys who -- and one woman -- who worked as RSOs. Did I want to do more? That's yes. But that's just me. I mean, I can only speak for myself.

Q And kind of understanding that Benghazi was a hardship post, what is the value of you being able to get out and push that boundary as best you can in a secure way?

A Well, I think the hardship part is irrelevant. It was important to be there and to make as many contacts, to do the kind of reporting we do anywhere however we could. So it being hardship or not was irrelevant to the mission. It was only relevant to the security profile.

Q So in terms of, though, that personal contact that you are allowed to get, if you get off-compound, what is the value of that kind of personal contact?

A There are a number of things. It's going to somebody at their place of business or at their home. It's respectful. It's also, you need context. You need to see what you are talking about. I could have and did -- if the RSO said "let's not go out right now" -- have people come to see me in my office. But it's just a more sterile experience. So there's that. There's also not -- some people aren't

comfortable coming to an American presence. They are afraid they might be followed. It happens all over.

Q So in terms of achieving the mission, it was certainly helpful and important to be in Benghazi. Would it have been more difficult to conduct those same kinds of contacts and do that kind of work from Tripoli?

A Absolutely.

Q And then if we weren't in either Tripoli or Benghazi, if we were not in Libya at all, how would that have impacted the mission, the policy mission that we were conducting in Libya?

A We wouldn't have been able to do anything. I mean, everyone can see that right now. We have no presence.

Ms. Sawyer. Okay.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Just real quickly to close out on this document, Exhibit 4. So you had asked for the RSO's take on this. Did you ever hear back from the RSO on these points?

A I believe so. But I would need to see the email.

Q That's fine.

[█████████ Exhibit No. 5

Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Well, we can go ahead and we will mark this as Exhibit 5. This is an email dated March 25, 2012 from you to ██████████ and ██████████. It has the subject, "Re: Draft request for DS TDY

and FTE support." The document number is C05579091.

A Uh-huh.

Q I will give you a moment to review this document.

A Okay.

Q And this email appears to be part of the same thread, although a separate chain. You write, "All, I inserted one sentence in the Benghazi section, noting that we should require less DS TDY support once the permanent ARSO and LES driver positions are staffed here."

Do you recall this email?

A I do.

Q Do you recall the cable that [REDACTED] had been preparing, that that was, in fact, submitted to Main State?

A I don't. And I'm just reading this, and I don't see that I actually did insert that language in here.

Q Perhaps we can -- we will help you here.

A All right. Thanks.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 6

Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q We will mark this as Exhibit 6. So this is the cable 12 Tripoli 130 dated March 28, 2012 from Embassy Tripoli with the subject, "Request for DS TDY and FTE support."

Ms. Sawyer. I have fallen down in my task.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Does this appear to be the cable that --

A Yes.

Q -- [REDACTED] was preparing and that he, in fact, submitted?

A Yes. Yes. Yes.

Q So I will refer you to the Benghazi section of this memo which is the middle of the second page. I would like to read three sentences there in the middle of the paragraph that begin, "Embassy Tripoli is in the process of recruiting for LES drivers and an RSO. LES SPSS which will support operations in Benghazi. Post also plans to deploy a TDY RSO from Tripoli once expanded permanent staffing is established and stabilized. Once these positions are filled, post anticipates requiring fewer TDY DS agents to support Benghazi."

The last sentence here which doesn't appear in either Exhibit 4 or 5, the draft, is that the sentence that you said that you inserted?

A I don't know, but that would seem so.

Q Okay.

A He may have edited a little bit, but I'm not sure.

Q So, again, just to revisit this. So your view was that once certain locally-filled staff positions were filled, that the number of TDY DS agents in Benghazi could be reduced from the requested number of five to some lower number; is that right?

A That's right.

Q Do you recall if there was a formal response cable sent by D.C. to this cable?

A I don't recall.

Q Okay. So I will help you with that as well.

[█████████ Exhibit No. 7

Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q And this will be Exhibit 7. This is an email dated April 21, 2012. It's from you to ██████████, ██████████, and others. It has the subject, "Re: Tripoli request for DS TDY and FTE support." This email appears to contain the cable of 12 State 38939, which is dated April 19, 2012. And just for the record, this cable is marked SBU.

A Okay.

Q Do you recall this email?

A Looking at it, I remember this.

Q Okay. Do you recall the underlying cable here that was sent, it appears, from D.C. to the embassy in Tripoli?

A I do.

Q I would like to refer you to the bottom of the second page. The cable appears to have a signature, a draft, and a clearance line. Do you see that?

A Uh-huh.

Q Okay. The signature line for this cable says, "Clinton." Does that mean that Secretary Clinton personally authorized this cable?

A No.

Q Okay. What does that mean?

A It's an automatic -- the Secretary of State's name always appears on cables that are going from Washington to the post.

Q Okay. So every cable that leaves Main State and goes overseas or to overseas posts would bear this stamp; is that correct?

A This or whatever, whoever the Secretary of State at the time was.

Q Okay. Do you have any reason to believe that Secretary Clinton did personally review this specific cable?

A I actually -- I don't know.

Q The other lines here appear to show who drafted and cleared this cable. There are some acronyms that are used here. So could you just maybe help explain for us who you believe, based on those markings, drafted and cleared this cable?

A Where are these?

Q So at the very bottom there, where it says drafted by, cleared by, approved by.

A DS IP NEA. Diplomatic security. IP, I don't know. NEA is Near Eastern Affairs.

Q Okay. That's under the "drafted by" line. And who is marked under "cleared by"?

A It says it's cleared by Department of State Charlene R DS/IP/OPO. I'm not sure what that is.

Q Okay. So you don't know who Charlene is here?

A I do know who Charlene is. I don't know what the DS/IP/OPO stands for.

Q Okay. Sure. And who is Charlene?

A Charlene was the deputy assistant secretary in diplomatic security.

Q Okay. And do you recall her last name?

A Lamb.

Q Okay. So Charlene Lamb, deputy assistant secretary. So she cleared this cable?

A She would have cleared this cable.

Q Okay. I would just like to move up the page here. Item number three, the cable states, "DS will continue to provide DS agent support in Benghazi. DS/IP recommends the post continues its efforts to hire LES drivers for Benghazi to enable the DS TDYers to solely perform their protective security function. DS IP also recommends a joint reassessment of the number of DS agents requested for Benghazi to include input from RSO Tripoli, TDY RSO Benghazi, and DS/IP in an effort to develop a way forward."

So just to connect these documents in our discussion, is the reference here to hiring local drivers, is that part of the same discussion that you, the deputy chief of mission, and RSO [REDACTED] had around the March 28 request cable?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And here again, the cable specifically mentions that drivers should be used so that agents could, "solely perform their protective security function." And again, your understanding was so they could free up DS agents so they could focus on other duties. And

that's something you supported; is that right?

A Yes. That's correct.

Q Okay.

Go to the top of the first page now. This is an April 21 email where you appear to comment on the cable. And you stated, "Looks like no new movement on the full complement of five TDY DS personnel for Benghazi, but rather a reassessment to bring numbers lower. We have a second driver candidate coming on this week. We have already hired one."

So, again, this is part of that same conversation, the same discussion of hiring local drivers to free up DS security agents so that they could focus on other tasks; is that right?

A Yes.

Q Okay. How was the issue of the drivers ultimately resolved? Or was the post able to hire any local drivers, to your knowledge?

A Yes. We hired one. Actually, we hired two towards the very end of my time there. I don't think -- and I think one left quite early. He just wasn't a very good driver.

Q Okay. And during this time, did Tripoli also provide drivers for you as well?

A I don't remember.

Q Okay. You mentioned it was towards the end of your tenure. So this is -- we are in late April here. So it sounds like it took around a month or so to hire local drivers; is that --

A Something like that.

Q Okay. Were there challenges with hiring locals to fill those driving positions?

A Yes. It was difficult to find qualified drivers.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 8
Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Okay. We will continue to press on here. This is Exhibit 8. Again, I will just briefly describe it.

It this an email that is dated May 11, 2012, from you to [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED] with the subject, "Re: RSO TDY." The document number is C05409934. It is marked SBU.

A Okay.

Q So an earlier email in the thread here, at the bottom of the first page, is also dated May 11, 2012. Here [REDACTED] [REDACTED] writes to [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and cc's you and states the following "[REDACTED], I know you are doing your best to get bodies for Benghazi and I understand and appreciate the difficulties. I have looped [REDACTED] in on the cc line so she is aware of the challenges."

And then the middle of the second page -- this is farther in the email -- it continues, "Bottom line, post could run with one senior minimum FS three with RSO experience and one junior agent, but this would be a strain on all, even with the hiring of two drivers. Three is the ideal number of agents because of the program's workload and

no days off for 45 to 60 days. I am not going to discuss turnover. I will save that for another email."

Just first and real briefly, who is [REDACTED]?

A [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]. She was one of the RSOs in Benghazi.

Q Okay. And the recommendation here for three DS agents, was that part of the reassessment the DS IP had requested in that April response cable?

A There was never an official reassessment. This is [REDACTED] -- [REDACTED] working with the idea we would try to emulate working with Tripoli.

Q Okay. And when you say "emulate Tripoli," what do you mean?

A In terms of with the FACT, if you had the FACT, could you be without an RSO escort? I guess that is pretty much the only way in which they meant "emulate Tripoli."

Q So in terms of security procedures, Benghazi was actually more rigorous with that specific point more so than Tripoli?

A It was.

Q Okay. And did you discuss this email at all or this recommendation with Ms. [REDACTED] before you she sent this email?

A I don't remember that.

Q Okay. Did you agree with her assessment at the time that you could run, that the post could run with two DS agents, but that three would be ideal?

A Because we had run with two DS agents, I knew it could be

done, but three would be ideal.

Q Okay. Great. I would like to fast forward now. So in the course of the last hour, we walked through some of the security incidents that occurred while you were in Benghazi. And I believe we were working our way towards the June time period, which it seemed that there are quite a few incidents that occurred then.

I would like to talk specifically -- first, do you recall around June 11 there being an attack on the British Ambassador's convoy?

A Yes.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 9

Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q So I would like to discuss maybe from that point going forward. In order to do so, I would like to help guide our discussion, we will introduce and mark Exhibit 9. So this is an email dated June 12 from Ambassador Stevens to [REDACTED] and others with the subject, "Re: Following up on U.K. convoy attack." I will just note for the record, you appear on an earlier email on this thread, but not on the subsequent emails. So I will just give you a moment to read.

I would like to begin from the bottom and move up. At the bottom of this email, you write -- and this is on June 11 2012. You emailed [REDACTED] and others and you stated the following, "Benghazi convened an informal EAC," and you name some of the participants there and you continue, "We have suspended movements today/this evening and will also remain on compound tomorrow, Tuesday

June 12. Tomorrow afternoon, we will assess the movements currently planned for Wednesday, June 13."

Just real briefly, for the record, who is [REDACTED]?"

A [REDACTED] was the Maghreb desk director.

Q Okay. And here, you say that post had convened an informal EAC. What is that?

A An EAC is an emergency action committee in which you sit down and sort of discuss the current operating environment.

Q Okay. In this EAC, do you recall specifically what was discussed, what incidents were discussed?

A I don't recall exactly which, but it seems to be right after the attack on the U.K. convoy.

Q Okay. And just what is the general purpose of an EAC? It's to review a security incident and --

A They are held on a regular basis at all missions and then called on -- if there is something that you would like to discuss or assess after a particular incident. So it is the way that you come up with recommendations and then you generally present those recommendations.

Q Okay. And do you recall this particular EAC?

A I do.

Q Moving up the email chain here. And this is, again, June 11, 2012. [REDACTED] forwarded your email to Ambassador Stevens and wrote the following, "Chris, I am getting quite concerned about the security situation for our folks in Benghazi. Maybe we should talk

on the phone tomorrow at your convenience, just informally touch base. We are at a possible natural break in the action coming up, with [REDACTED] leaving. We can bring [REDACTED] and a few others into the conversation at the next stage, but I would like your sense of things first."

At the top of the page -- this is June 12, 2012 -- Ambassador Stevens responded to [REDACTED] and wrote the following "We share your concern. [REDACTED] and I have been discussing recommending a pause in Bgzi PO staffing to further assess the security situation there. As you note below, there is a natural pause coming up in the 2-week gap between [REDACTED] June 14 departure and [REDACTED] anticipated arrival at the end of the month. One idea would be to use this time to allow our RSO team in Benghazi perhaps reduce the number to continue to assess the threat environment and consider ways to mitigate. Those are initial thoughts."

Again, I will note that you are not included on these email threads, but [REDACTED] talks about possibly bringing in a [REDACTED] here into the conversation. And from the context, that appears to be you. Were you eventually brought in into this discussion on whether to reduce the principal officer position temporarily at the Special Mission Compound?

A Yes.

Q Can you describe those conversations?

A I had this conversation with Chris a couple of times, whether we should continue to have a principal officer role in Benghazi, understanding that my successor would be coming in 2 weeks' time. He

suggested that we use this 2 weeks' time to -- without a principal officer, for RSO, that's not having duties to protect me. To have time to take a more -- a deeper, I guess, assessment of the security environment.

RPTR HUMISTON

EDTR WILTSIE

[12:09 p.m.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Okay. And in the course of your conversations with the Ambassador, did he ask for your opinion or recommendation on whether that PO position should be staffed during that 2-week period?

A He did.

Q Okay. And what was your recommendation?

A My recommendation was that we do as this -- as what was suggested here: If there was a need for a PO to -- or a PO-esque person to come out for some reason, that somebody from Tripoli could do that.

Q Okay. And so, when the Ambassador responds here at the top and he says, "We share your concern," is it your understanding that the "we" there would also include you as well?

A That I'm not sure. I don't know exactly when we had our conversation.

Q Okay. Did you ever take part in the reassessment that occurred later?

A Which --

Q Following the 2-week period.

A No, I did not.

Q Okay. And why -- why not?

A I was back in Washington.

Q Okay. So you departed post around this time. Is that

right? He refers to a June 14 --

A June 14.

Q -- departure date.

Was your departure date -- was that in any way related to the security incidents that happened there or had that been planned in advance?

A No. That had been planned in advance.

Q Okay. And so you don't know or didn't participate in any discussions about whether the PO position should be occupied or filled after that 2-week period. Is that --

A I -- I was.

Q Okay.

A [REDACTED] was coming for, I believe, 2 months and there was -- so -- and that was decided, that he should do so. And, after that, it was -- we didn't have anybody else in line after that, and I wasn't involved in the staffing selections.

Q Was the RSO involved in that discussion about whether the PO position should be -- should be filled?

A I don't remember.

Q Okay. Do you recall who participated in those discussions?

A I just recall talking with Chris about this.

Q Okay. And what was -- did you have a recommendation or an opinion on whether [REDACTED] -- I believe [REDACTED] --

A [REDACTED].

Q -- should come and fill that PO position?

A I thought that he should.

Q Okay. And why -- can you explain why.

A Because I was convinced of the importance of the -- having the principal officer to do the diplomatic work in Benghazi.

Q Okay. Do you recall being briefed at all on the security situation after that 2-week -- or during that 2-week reassessment period?

A I don't recall.

Q Okay. To your knowledge, did the Ambassador ever advocate not continuing to fill the principal officer position?

A Not to me.

Q Okay. Did he ever advocate closing the special mission?

A No. He did not advocate that.

Q Okay. And you say that because you know he didn't?

A He did not advocate that to me.

Q Okay.

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q And you indicated just a moment ago and had talked a little bit before about the value of the presence in Benghazi, and it sounds like you continued that conversation with the Ambassador on this occasion.

What was -- what was -- what view did he express about the value of having a principal officer present in Benghazi?

A Well, he wanted -- he thought it was important to have a reporting and diplomatic presence in Benghazi. The elections were

upcoming -- the national elections -- and that would be something that the east would be heavily involved with. And so we should be, at that point at least, thinking about that. That was the next thing on the horizon.

Q And that would have been in -- upcoming in July?

A That's correct.

Q And were there any specific examples that you can talk about at least in this setting -- I don't want you to have to go into anything beyond that -- where he had kind of valued the input you had been able to give being on the ground in Benghazi?

A How he had valued the input?

Q Yeah. How it had helped him in terms of his overall view of what was going on in the eastern part of Libya.

A He took my opinion. So that might have informed his --

Q As to the value of --

A Yes.

Q -- continuing? Great. Okay.

Mr. Kenny. Okay. I think that's all for now. So we'll conclude our hour. Go off the record.

[Recess.]

Ms. Clarke. Okay. We're back on the record. And it is 4 minutes after 1:00?

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q So thank you, Ms. [REDACTED], again for your time. I just wanted to start with some follow-up questions from the last hour.

I want to start with Exhibit 3, if you still have that with you. We discussed Exhibit 3 previously in the last hour, and I just wanted to talk to you about who you were sending these reports to.

A Okay.

Q So I'd noticed on the "To" line it's SES-O, SWO-Cables, and NEA-MAG-DL.

Can you explain what those groups represent.

A NEA-MAG-DL is the overall distribution list for the Maghreb desk. SES is "senior executive staff." I don't remember what SWO is. But because I didn't have -- these -- it's -- this does -- it's one of the addresses from which cables could be put out.

Q Okay. And then did you typically send cables to each of these groups?

A Yes.

Q During the previous hour of questioning -- or near the beginning of your interview, you mentioned that one of the reasons why Benghazi and eastern Libya was important was because of oil production.

A Uh-huh. Yes.

Q In this Exhibit 3, you also on the second page included information about oil production.

Who -- who was interested in the -- Benghazi's oil production?

A The desk was, as well as Commerce -- Department of Commerce.

Q Okay. Were there any other individuals or any other agencies interested in oil production?

A EB, which is part of -- which is the Economic Bureau of the

State Department. And there were any number, actually, but those come specifically to mind.

Q Okay. Did you report to any individuals about the oil production?

A No. I just sent -- and this particular cable was sent to a very large collective.

Q In any other cables did you report to any individuals?

A What do you mean by "individuals"? Like just one person?

Q Yes.

A I mean, yeah, I did send emails to one -- sometimes to one person or to another person.

Q Okay. Do you --

Ms. Jackson. Actually, let me ask a follow-up.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Was there anybody on the National Security staff that you communicated with regarding events in Libya and in specifically Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q And who was that?

A Ben Fishman.

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

A I am not sure, but probably once a week at least.

Q And was that by telephone or email?

A By telephone and by email.

Q And approximately how often would you email him?

A That I don't remember.

Q Okay. And what type of information would you send to him?

A The same information that I would send to the State Department. Sometimes -- go ahead.

Q No. No. Go ahead and elaborate.

A Sometimes he would ask me a question, and I would, you know, give him an answer, or ask me to look into something, which was fairly typical.

Q And so would you send him the information that you would send to the senior executive staff at the State Department?

A The senior executive staff would get cables.

Q And cables only?

A This particular collective was for cables. Yeah.

Q Okay. Were there other occasions when you would communicate directly with -- to the senior executive staff?

A No.

Q Okay. And when you weren't sending then to a cable -- you weren't intending it to be a cable, who would you generally communicate with back at Main State?

A With the -- with the Maghreb desk.

Q Okay. During your tenure at -- in Benghazi, did Ben Fishman ever visit?

A No.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. I think that's all the follow-up I have on

that.

Ms. Clarke. Okay.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q I think during our questioning the previous hour we discussed that there was an -- a timeframe when you dropped down to one agent. Correct?

A Yes.

Q And do you recall about when that time -- that occurred?

A I don't remember the exact time, but I think you mentioned late March in our previous conversation. And that sounds about right.

Q Okay. Does March 28 sound -- ring a bell?

A No.

Q But late March does sound about the same -- around the same time?

A Around the same time for what?

Q Around the time that the number of DS agents were reduced to one.

A I'm not sure, but it could be.

Q Okay. All right. So I wanted to take a look again at Exhibit 6.

A Okay. Yes.

Q So Exhibit 6 was discussed during the last hour. And this is a cable regarding requests for DS TDY and FTE support.

And if we could look at the second page and the paragraph that is marked "DS Agent Support in Benghazi," would you read for me that

very first sentence.

A "Post requests continued support for 5 TDY DS agents in Benghazi on 45-60 day rotations."

Q Was it your understanding that posts continued to want at least five agents during your time in Benghazi?

A We did want five agents.

Q And were -- and were five agents ever supplied?

A No. Not at one time.

Q We talked -- discussed earlier that, at some times, there were up to three DS agents and that -- and that there never -- there was never more than three DS agents. Is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q And so we were looking at some other exhibits during the last hour. And we'll take a look at Exhibit 4.

A Yes.

Q Okay. And just to focus on the first page of the email that you sent regarding some of the edits, in the first bullet point, the second sentence says, "The status quo has been 3. Is it safe/reasonable to assume that 3 will remain the number we can expect?"

What did you mean by that? Were you requesting that three become the number of DS agents or were you basing this off of your experience?

A This was based off of my experience.

Q Were you satisfied with that number?

A We had continually requested five.

Q And so that -- so, because you continually requested five,

that indicated that you were not satisfied with three?

A I wanted the full complement for RSOs -- for RSOs advice.

Q Okay.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q And then, going back, if I can, to Exhibit 6, the cable that's dated March 28 -- so would have been, I think, 3 days after the Exhibit 4 email of March 25 -- on page 2, again under the paragraph that says "DS Agent Support in Benghazi," the request was for a minimum of five agents at all times?

A I don't see that here.

Q The very first sentence.

A "Post requests" -- oh, that -- well, yes, "continued support for 5."

Q Okay. And then as I -- and I want your assessment --

A Sure.

Q -- of this paragraph.

But my reading of this paragraph was that there was a request for even more than five agents in the run-up to the elections and that Tripoli was going to send one and then and only then would you go back down to the five.

Am I reading that correctly or am I reading that incorrectly?

A Let me -- let me just take a look at this.

Q Sure. Just take your time and read that paragraph.

A Okay.

Q Okay. Having read the paragraph --

A Yes.

Q -- how -- can you give us what you believe this paragraph is asking for.

A It's asking for continued support for five. And it states that we would anticipate that, in the run-up to the elections, in which we would -- were expecting a lot of visitors to come observe, that we would need more.

Q Okay. But five was going -- was what post was requesting as the steady state?

A That's correct.

Q Okay. I also notice in that first sentence that it says that they wanted five TDY DS agents on 45- to 60-day rotations. Do you see that?

A Yes.

Q It's our understanding that DS agents were on 30- to 45-day rotations.

Was this a request for an increased duration of the rotation?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And why was that important?

A I thought that it was important because it's good to have continuity and continued presence --

Q Okay.

A -- I would say, I felt for myself as well.

Q Would it also help alleviate some of the visa issues that you were experiencing?

A It probably would.

Q Okay. Would it help in the supervision of the local guard force and the QRF forces?

A To -- increasing to five or having five?

Q The longer duration, the actual --

A Longer duration.

Q Well, let me ask both.

Both the number and the duration, did that have any impact on the supervision of the local guard force or the QRF?

A That I don't know.

Q Okay. What other benefits would there be from longer durations, if there were?

A It's best to be able to have as much time in country as possible so that you understand things.

Q Okay. So would it help with the overall security?

A It would help have a more nuanced understanding of it.

Q Okay. Would it -- would having the full complement of five DS agents have improved your ability and subsequent political officers to have greater movements within and around Benghazi?

A It would have.

Q Okay. So to the extent that reporting about Benghazi was important, having more agents would have enabled you to do your job better or at least more efficiently and --

A I would have had -- I wouldn't say better. I think I did a pretty good job. But -- but it would have -- more DAs would have

enabled more movements.

Ms. Jackson. Those are all the follow-up questions I have.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q I think in the first hour we discussed -- we may have mentioned that you were aware of other Americans in Benghazi. Is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q And could you tell us who -- who -- who were you aware of or who were those Americans?

Mr. Evers. If you can answer it in an unclassified setting, please do so.

Ms. [REDACTED]. I can answer part of that in unclass and part of that in classified.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q Okay.

A There were American teachers at the American school -- not the American school -- sorry -- the International School. There was an American who was running a large wheat farm, any number of dual Libyan-American citizens.

American journalists were -- passed through from time to time. American election observers would come through from time to time. And there were American -- Americans at the U.N., I think -- actually, I'm not sure of that.

Q And how were you -- did you become aware of these individuals?

A I knew about the Americans at the International School because I went to visit it. And I knew about the journalists because they would call me when they came through to get sort of a readout.

The American fellow who ran the farm was a longstanding contact of the -- of the mission. So many of these were people that previous principal officers had also known.

Q One other area that we talked about and I wanted to flesh out a little more was we talked about that you were aware that there are -- that there are certain OBO standards that applied to -- to embassies or to consulates --

A Uh-huh.

Q -- but that you hadn't discussed those standards.

Did you discuss -- what, if anything, did you discuss regarding the overall security of the compound with the DS agent or the RSO?

A I listened to them when they wanted to talk about it. I didn't raise, per se, concerns of my own. Again, I deferred to the RSO on what they deemed to be appropriate or what we should do.

Q And do you recall what some of those concerns were?

A Well, we asked for concertina wire and a higher perimeter wall, which we received. I don't recall any more specific concerns that they expressed to me. There may have been. I just don't recall.

Q Okay. You also mentioned that [REDACTED], who was the RSO in Tripoli, and so kind of over the overall R -- he was the overall RSO for Libya. Is that correct? --

A That's right.

Q -- that he came to Benghazi on two occasions.

Did he -- did he have any recommendations or did he ever discuss with you any recommendations that he had regarding the security in Benghazi?

A He recommended the -- the raising of the heights of the perimeter walls and the additional sandbags. And that's -- those for sure he recommended.

Q Okay. And did he have --

Ms. Jackson. Go ahead.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q Did he have any recommendations or did he note any deficiencies with the local guard force?

A Did he know of deficiencies?

Q Did he note. Did he express --

A Oh. Note.

Q -- to you any concerns or deficiencies that he noted regarding the local guard force?

A Not that I remember.

Q What about the QRF or the Feb 17th individuals that were assigned to the compound?

A Nothing specific. No. Not that I remember.

Q When we were discussing the local guard force earlier -- or the security assets that were on compound earlier, you mentioned that they appreciated training.

And I just wanted to clarify. Who were you referring to when you

say they appreciated the training of the RSO?

A The RSOs would do training drills with the QRF, who were resident on compound, which they appreciated and was fun.

And the RSO also ran drills with the local guard force in terms of what to do when a duck-and-cover sounded or how to screen a car when a car would come through the gates.

Q What prompted the RSO to run the drills with the QRF and the local guard force?

A We had ample time on our hands, and they wanted to make sure that they were as trained up as possible.

Q Did they -- did the RSO ever discuss with you noticing any deficiencies in the -- their performance that would encourage him to conduct these drills?

A Sometimes the guard force would come late. And so the RSO would, you know, reprimand tardiness. So nothing else of particular I can remember that being a declared deficiency about -- about the force -- the contracted force.

Q Okay.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q If I can ask a follow-up to that.

You've been at several overseas posts in high-threat areas.

A Yes.

Q What was your assessment as to the quality of both the local guard force and the QRF in Benghazi compared to other places you've been that have been high-threat posts?

A Well, in Darfur, I had zero security. So that was already an improvement. And, in Pakistan, we had a -- I did not participate in the hiring of -- these are -- sorry. In Pakistan, the constabulary assigned them to us. So they chose who they wanted.

In terms of -- in terms of -- you know, in terms of enthusiasm and, you know, desire to perform the job, I was -- I would say I was -- I was satisfied with what I had in Benghazi.

Q Okay. And back to [REDACTED] and the -- during his visits to Benghazi, did he express to you whether he was satisfied with their overall competence or whether -- you know, did he make any recommendations of additional training or anything like that?

A He did make recommendations for training that could be done in Tripoli, where they had more available resources to conduct it.

Q And what type of training would that be?

A Just the training that they gave to their own -- their own local guard force.

Q Was that the QRF or the local guard force or both?

A The QRF in Tripoli [REDACTED].

Q Okay.

A So it was local guards.

Q Okay. And, if you know, how did you get February 17th as your QRF?

A They were assigned to us before I came. So I don't --

Q Okay.

A -- I really don't know the procedure by which they were

selected.

Q Is it your understanding they were given to you by the transitional government in --

A As part of the government, they would have been -- I wouldn't say given to us, but they were part of the transitional government.

Q Okay.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q In the last hour, you were discussing the security profile and you made the comment -- and correct me if I'm quoting you wrong -- but you were discussing whether countries had concerns about hardening, [REDACTED].

What did you mean by that expression?

A [REDACTED] It's just not really in their -- overseas, in other countries as well, it's just not their -- it's not how they -- it's not how they conduct their own security.

Q And you came to that assessment through your experience -- other experiences at other posts?

A Yes.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q One other area that was touched upon in the last hour was that -- was the movement to locally employed drivers.

A Yes.

Q And I believe you said that you had hired two.

One did not last long because he couldn't really drive?

A Yes.

Q To be a locally employed driver for U.S. diplomatic personnel, is it enough just to have a driver's license or is there any type of specialized training such as counter-tactics and things like that that the drivers must have in order to be sufficient in State Department's mind?

A No. Driver's license and passing a background check.

Q Okay. Then, once hired, do they undergo any type of specialized training before they are allowed to drive U.S. government personnel?

A The RSOs would drive with -- the one that lasted with us, drive with him to just gauge his driving skills, give him pointers on -- on, you know, the Americans, we don't like to speed, we actually pay attention to the stop signs. So it was honestly things like that.

Q So that they don't have shrieking Americans in the backseat?

A Yes. I'm not a shrieker, but somebody else may have been.

Q Are you a clutcher of the handrails and the --

A No.

Q -- sides of the car?

A I'm not always so uncomfortable.

Q Okay. But the RSO would have to approve the person and their driving skills before they would be allowed to transport U.S. government personnel?

A Yes, they would.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q So when we concluded our last hour, we were just walking through some of the security incidents that occurred during your time in Benghazi. So I wanted to return to that.

A Sure.

Q I think the last one that we discussed was the May 28 attack on the -- in the National Red Cross facility.

A Uh-huh. Yes.

Q The next one I wanted to discuss is on June -- the June 6 IED compound -- IED blast at the compound. Do you recall that?

A I do.

Q Or at the special mission facility.

Can you detail what you recall.

A I was awakened at around 3:00 or so by a duck-and-cover that had been activated by the local guard force, who had seen suspicious activity.

And so I did follow the protocols for that, which was to make sure I had my radio, put me Kevlar on, and secure the living quarters of the villa, and then wait for instructions from RSO as to what to do.

Q Okay. And --

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q When you say they saw suspicious activity, did they -- did you learn what that was after the fact?

A Yes. I'm sorry. They saw an individual, they thought, who was placing some kind of a suspicious package at the -- near the -- near

the gate.

Q And so the local guard force was trained that, if they saw anything suspicious in or around the compound, that they immediately hit the duck-and-cover?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q And can you tell us, how did that situation resolve? What -- was there damage that was caused by the blast?

A Yes, there was.

Q And what was that damage?

A There was a hole that was a hole in the perimeter wall.

Q And what -- can you describe about how -- the size of that hole.

A I would say about 6 feet by 4 feet.

Q Okay. So a pretty large hole.

And any other damages caused to the facility?

A There was some charring of some of the trees out in front of the compound. But to the physical compound, that was the only damage.

Q What did -- what, if any, actions were taken by you or the RSO in response to that event?

A I waited for the RS -- do you mean what did I do during the course of the night?

Q No. Once the situation had resolved itself as far as being

secured, I don't know if you would have done it the next day or that evening, but did you make any changes to movements or did you request any additional security?

A We certainly cancelled movements that day. We got a contractor to come in as quickly as possible to start to fix the wall. Let me just think for a minute.

I had called the local security -- Libyan security folks when it happened to alert them that something had happened, and RSO went through their channels with Diplomatic Security alert, letting them know what had happened and what we were doing.

In the morning, the contractor came and began to repair the wall, and members of the -- the security -- local security services also stopped by to -- to see what had happened.

Q Is the local security services -- is that the same as the Supreme Security Council?

A That's correct.

Q Do you recall asking -- or the RSO asking for night patrols by the Supreme Security Council?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And were those patrols in place when this event happened or did this event prompt those patrols?

A I had requested those prior to this.

Q Do you recall what prompted you to request those?

A I don't. I'm sorry.

Q Okay. Do you recall how -- how -- the timeframe in advance

of the -- how long in advance before this event happened that you requested those?

A I believe about a week.

Q Okay. And were they granted?

A I did see additional patrols. Yes. So they adhered to my request.

Q Do you recall a June 8 rally in downtown Benghazi that may have been termed as an Islamist rally where different members of Islamist militia members rallied and there was a show of arms and banners and flags were flown?

A Yes. I remember that.

Q What do you recall about that?

A I recall that it was -- took place in downtown. I certainly didn't go down to visit it myself. And it was -- lasted for about a day. I -- that's -- I didn't -- I didn't see it.

Q Okay.

A I just knew it was taking place.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Did you have any advanced notice that there was going to be a rally that day?

A I did not.

Q And do you recall approximately how many individuals participated in the rally?

A I believe I reported that there were maybe up to 100 trucks. And so I'm not sure how many people were on top of each of those trucks

or in those trucks.

Q And can you describe the trucks.

A Well, I didn't see them. But they were --

Q Right.

A -- they were told to me to be pickup trucks, I mean, pickups.

Q Were they armed in any way?

A They were.

Q Okay. And what were they armed with?

A That I -- that I don't remember. I don't.

Q Was there a name in Libya that these trucks were called?

A If there was and I forgot, I'm really embarrassed.

Q Does the word "technical" --

A Technicals. Thank you. That does make sense.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q Okay. I'm going to show you what has been marked as Exhibit 10.

[████████ Exhibit No. 10

was marked for identification.]

A Okay.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q So this is a document -- it's an email, a "Benghazi Situation Report," June 8, 2012, Document Number 05391489, and you are not -- it does not appear that you were emailed on this or that you sent this sit report.

Had you seen this before?

A I wrote this.

Q Okay. And can you explain -- you wrote this.

Did you send this to -- do you recall if you sent that to the individual, [REDACTED]?

A I don't recall him. I mean, I did send it. And this may be him forwarding it to somebody else.

Q Okay. And is this discuss -- regarding the event that we were just discussing?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Who would you have sent this to?

A I would have sent this to the normal collective that we've seen on some of the previous things that I had sent, the Maghreb desk, the Tripoli -- there was a -- what I had -- the email address was probably very similar to the -- one of these other exhibits that had that.

Q Would you have sent it to the State Department senior executives?

A This did not go out as a cable. So no.

Q Okay. But then -- so on the one where we saw the cable, there was a long list of people --

A Yes.

Q -- on the cc --

A Yeah.

Q -- or generally referring to those people?

A Exactly.

Q Okay.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q Now -- so you said that you wrote this. I wanted to look at the third paragraph. And in there the second sentence begins with "Comment," and it says, "There was very little advance notice of the rally, and post contacts from across the spectrum expressed shock and outrage that such a large demonstration could take place without the government's knowledge. This is the first such demonstration of Islamist groups in Benghazi since the revolution, if ever."

Did you write this comment?

A I did.

Q And can you explain more what -- what you were trying to convey in this comment.

A Let me just read it again.

I was conveying the uniqueness of this incident, that it had not happened before.

Q And you said that "post -- post contacts from across the spectrum expressed shock and outrage" about this demonstration.

Do you recall what prompted -- what you were referring to?

A Just -- can you ask -- I'm not quite sure I understood that.

Q It seems to indicate that the contacts that you had with other individuals -- or the post contacts were shocked and outraged that this would happen and the government didn't know about it.

Do you -- do you recall having that discussion with anyone?

A I do.

Q Okay. And can you elaborate on that.

A There was -- a number of the contacts that I had were shocked and outraged that there was little advance notice of this. It was unexpected, and the government was not aware.

Q Did they expect that the government would be aware of incidences such as this?

A I don't know.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q In that same sentence, it says "post contacts from across the spectrum."

Who does that entail?

A Oh. That would be federalists. That would be secularists. Basically, the range of contacts -- teachers, politicals, et cetera -- that I had contact with.

Q But, generally, Libyans?

A Libyans.

Q Okay.

A Yes.

Q Would it include the other western countries that had a presence in there or are you referring to the Libyan contacts?

A Here I'm referring to the Libyans.

Q Okay.

A Yes.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q Was it surprising to you to have such -- in the first paragraph, you call this an "unprecedented show of force."

Was that surprising to you, to have this show of force by Islamist militia members?

A It was.

Q And why was that surprising?

A I had never seen it before.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Did you have any concerns about Islamist extremists being in the area?

A We knew that there were.

Q Okay. In and around Benghazi?

A In and around Derna.

Q And approximately how far is that from Benghazi?

A That's -- it's about a 4 -- 4-1/2-half-hour drive.

Q Let me ask one final question regarding Exhibit 10.

A Sure.

Q This represents your thinking and beliefs exactly at the time and, so, would be the best recollection of what happened back then?

A Yeah. This is -- this is exact -- this would be an accurate reflection of what I thought at the time.

Q Okay.

A Yes.

Q All right. Thank you.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q So I think in the last hour we touched on the -- that there was an attack on the U.K. envoy.

A Yes.

Q Can you --

A The U.N. or the U.K.?

Q The U.K. Ambassador.

A Yes.

Q In June. It was around the middle of June.

A Yes. That's correct.

Q Can you elaborate what you recall about that?

A I recall I was not there, that his car or convoy -- I -- one or two cars were hit by -- by something, whether an IED or a grenade -- unsure -- and that there was damage to the car, a couple of his guards or drivers had injuries, and -- but that he was -- that he was fine.

Q Do you recall whether the perpetrators of that attack were ever determined?

A No.

Q Okay. What about the -- was it ever determined who -- who -- the IED blast on June 6, was there ever any perpetrators that were identified for that blast on the compound?

A No. There was an investigation opened at my request. Well, I mean, I -- I didn't need to request it. And -- but, by the time that I had left a few weeks later, nobody had been taken into

custody.

Q Okay.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Were there suspects identified?

A We had a video, and there was a man who was seen in the video laying an object down. And so he was the main suspect.

Q But he was not identifiable by any of the local guard force or the QRF or the DS agents?

A Not that I remember.

Q Okay. The same with the attackers of the British Ambassador. Were there ever suspects identified or did any group ever claim responsibility?

A No suspects were identified. I don't remember if a group claimed responsibility.

Q Okay.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q Other than the security incidents that we've discussed, do you recall any other incidents that occurred during your time in Benghazi?

A What kind of incidents?

Q Similar incidents, whether it's on the -- attacks at the compound or whether there were other western entities that may have experienced some type of violence towards them.

A Let me think. You know, I think we've talked about all of the ones that I can remember --

Q Okay.

A -- or that took -- that I remember taking place while I was there.

Q Okay. Do you recall, did Benghazi have tripwires? And are you familiar with what a tripwire is?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And did Benghazi have those?

A We did.

Q Okay. Do you recall whether there was any -- in any of the incidents that we've discussed, did any of those trigger -- or cross a tripwire?

A I don't remember what the exact tripwires were, and they changed from time to time. So I -- I couldn't say.

Q Were the tripwires in a written document?

A They normally are. Yes.

Q Okay. Do you recall if there is one for Benghazi?

A There was one in Tripoli that included Benghazi.

Q Okay. Do you know what prompted the tripwires to -- to change from time to time?

A That's normal procedure in any post overseas. You assess if you have a lesser threat. Higher threats, you change your tripwires to -- to reflect that.

Q Okay. Would you have been a part of those discussions to change tripwires?

A Yes.

Q When you had discussions about the tripwires, was that one that was a discussion with just individuals in Benghazi or did that include individuals in Tripoli?

A When we discussed Benghazi tripwires, we discussed it first in Benghazi and then conveyed our recommendations to Tripoli.

Q I'm going to show you -- I'm going to mark Exhibit 11. I think that's where we are.

[█████████ Exhibit No. 11
Was marked for identification.]

A Okay.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q And this is a -- this is an email. It's an unclassified email -- sensitive, but unclassified. The doc number is 05391161. And it's from ██████████.

I think his name has come up before. But can you just remind me who he is.

A Sure. He was the DS liaison in Washington.

Q And then it's to ██████████ and ██████████.

A Yeah. ██████████ and ██████████.

Q Okay. And who are those individuals?

A RSOs.

Q Okay. That were in Benghazi at the time?

A ██████████ was in Benghazi. I don't think I was there with ██████████.

Q Okay.

A [REDACTED] was in Tripoli. That's why.

Q Gotcha. Okay.

And the date of this email is June 11. You were still in Benghazi at that time?

A That's correct. Yes.

Q And the email -- the "Subject" is "DS/IP recommends your request a combined EAC."

Is the EAC an emergency action committee?

A Yes.

Q And how was that structured? Who was involved in the EAC?

A That depends on post to post. But, generally, in our case, it would be the principal officer, the RSO. But we were such a small post, it was everybody, basically. And -- and then we could talk about more in a classified setting.

Q Okay. And do you recall -- you were not on this email.

A No.

Q But do you recall convening an EAC in response to this email?

A I recognize these tripwires. I do not recall holding one. No. I don't recall holding one.

Q Okay. Do you recall ever holding an emergency -- an EAC regarding whether or not any of the events that we just walked through -- the security incidents -- triggered or tripped any of the tripwires?

A We had a few EAC conversations or meetings when I was there, and we certainly discussed tripwires and -- and other -- you know, the

security assessment, essentially. But we did not make a recommendation that we depart.

Q Okay. And do you recall why you did not make that recommendation?

A We did not think that we had met the threshold of -- of departure.

Q Did you make any recommendations for additional security in response?

A Without the notes of the EAC, I can't remember. I'm sorry.

Q So are each of the EACs captured in some type of document?

A Generally, an email at least.

Q Okay. And who's responsible -- generally responsible for drafting that email?

A We -- I'll take the first stab or -- and then have RSO make their contributions, and then they will send it through their email.

Q Okay. And do you know who it's usually sent to?

A The Embassy would get it, the -- the desk -- the Maghreb desk would get it, and the DS, different collectives, would get it.

Q Do you recall consulting -- after having these EACs that you talked about, do you recall consulting other embassies regarding their plans?

A We talked with the U.K. often about -- about their own security posture and what they were doing.

Q Okay. Did you ever specifically request additional Diplomatic Security, TDY personnel, as a result of any of the EACs that

you convened?

A We didn't request them, I think, as a result of the EACs. We requested to have the threshold of five.

Q Okay. You mentioned that you consulted often with the Brits about what they were going to do.

And at some point during your tenure, did the Brits ask to store vehicles and other supplies at the compound?

A Yes.

Q And did you -- can you tell -- tell us more about that.

A They were vacating their space and not replacing my counterpart there for resource issues. So they anticipated coming to Benghazi. As they wouldn't have a physical space anymore, they still wanted to have access to their -- their vehicles.

And so, as a -- you know, the U.K. and the U.S. have a very special relationship. And so we, making sure it was legal, agreed to have their vehicles on our compound.

Q And why -- why were they -- why did the Brits decide not to continue your counterpart's position?

A [REDACTED] had -- [REDACTED] had left. He was my counterpart. They brought in a -- a Brit, but not a -- he was basically a locally employed staff -- to serve in his place. And it was too expensive for them to maintain the villa that they had.

Q Do you know any details about what made it too expensive to maintain the villa?

A I don't. I mean, the local economy charged exorbitant

prices for these villas because they knew that they could. And [REDACTED] replacement, being a locally employed, had his own apartment. So they didn't really need it any longer.

Q What --

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Did the attack on the Ambassador's convoy play any role -- any part in their decision to leave Benghazi?

A [REDACTED] had already -- [REDACTED] had already left, and [REDACTED] was already there. So -- so, no, I don't think so.

Q And [REDACTED] was the one that was attacked?

A No. That would be the Ambassador. [REDACTED] was my counterpart --

Q Okay.

A -- that departed.

Q Okay. All right. Could you go over that --

A Sure.

Q -- one more time.

A Sure. Okay.

Q They had both a principal officer and an Ambassador?

A The Ambassador was resident in Tripoli and the principal officer in Benghazi.

Q Okay.

A He -- my counterpart, their version of Foreign Service, he had departed and was -- his replacement was locally hired.

Q So it was the Ambassador visiting from Tripoli who was

attacked --

A Exactly.

Q -- not your counterpart in Benghazi?

A Exactly.

Q Okay. Now I do understand. Thank you.

Was it well known that the Ambassador was visiting Libya when that attack occurred?

A The British Ambassador?

Q Yes.

A Well, he was resident in Libya.

Ms. Clarke. Benghazi.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q I'm sorry. When -- I'm sorry. I said that wrong.

Was the U.K. Ambassador's visit to Benghazi known publicly?

A No. Not -- they had -- there hadn't been any official -- how do you say -- any official --

Q Announcement?

A -- announcement that he was coming. No. I knew he was coming because my counterparts wanted us to meet.

Q And when he was in Benghazi, had he had any public meetings, if you recall?

A He had had meetings. I don't remember if they were public.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q Do you recall whether the vehicles were still stored at the compound during this timeframe when -- during the -- around June 11,

when the U.K. Ambassador was attacked?

A Yes. They were on our compound.

Q And during his visit to Benghazi, did they retrieve some of --

A Yes.

Q -- those vehicles to use them?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And was that common knowledge, that -- that the U.K. stored vehicles at the compound?

A The only knowledge would have been between our two Ambassadors in Tripoli who had signed sort of the -- the agreement to do so. So, no, we never notified anyone in any way.

Q What was the evacuation plan for Benghazi during your time there?

A There were two proposed routes. One would be by land to Egypt, and another would be by air to Tripoli.

Q And can you tell us, were there circumstances that would have prevented one route being used versus the other?

A I think it would just depend on the time. It would be faster to drive to Egypt if -- it would be faster to drive to Egypt than to drive to Tripoli. It would be easier to fly to Tripoli than to fly into Egypt.

Q And when you -- when you say fly by air to Tripoli was one of the evac plans, what -- was there a dedicated plane or what type of resources did you have?

A There was commercial air on the ground, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Q And do you know, had you -- or were you aware of anyone that discussed your proposed evac plan to Egypt with the Ambassador to Egypt or with the Embassy in Egypt?

A They knew that they were a point of haven for us. I don't know how much discussion actually had gone into. Something like this is not normally very formal.

Q Okay. Did you participate in or were you asked to prepare any security -- security environment or threat assessments of Benghazi and surrounding areas?

A I did not do those. No. I was not asked to do those.

Q Did you ever request that those be prepared?

A Do you mean like a formal assessment or --

Q Formal or informal.

A No. I don't think that I did.

Q I think we touched on this earlier, that you traveled to Derna at some point.

A I did.

Q And what was the purpose of that trip?

A I was making a contact with different local councils in the -- in the drive-up to the -- to the -- to the municipal as well as national elections.

So that's what -- I met with -- I met with the local council members and other political figures from -- the governor, I think, as

well while I was there.

Q Were the municipal elections all held on the same day? So, like, if you had elections in Derna, were they going to be held the same day in --

A No. It would be different.

Q Okay. You mentioned earlier that it was known that there were Islamic extremists or militias in Derna.

A Uh-huh.

Q Did that -- did you become aware of that factor in your trip or was that something that you knew of before?

A I already knew.

Q Okay. And during your trip, was that something that you explored?

A Did I go visit them?

Q Or that -- did you gather more information about those militia groups?

A No. I did not.

Q Okay. Had that been reported back to D.C., the fact that there were known militia groups in Derna?

A Yes. Yes.

Ms. Jackson. Were there others who explored the issue of the extent and nature of Islamic extremists in Derna during your trip?

Ms. [REDACTED]. Yes.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q So we went through a list of incidents, and it appeared that

the incidents -- well, first, let me ask you this: Were you aware of security incidents that occurred during the time that your predecessors were there, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]?

A We had many conversations. I don't remember a particular security incident that they -- that they shared with me.

Q So did you get a sense that, during your tenure in Benghazi, that security incidents were happening more -- happening more often than occurred during their time?

A Since I don't know exactly what happened there, it does seem that there were more security incidences in the spring.

Q And then the types of security incidents that happened during your tenure, did you -- it seemed that the -- that they began to intensify or started with a gelatina blast and ended with an attack on the British Ambassador's convoy.

A Uh-huh.

RPTR BLAZEJEWSKI

EDTR CRYSTAL

[2:21 p.m.]

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q Do you agree with that assessment?

A I think that the security situation certainly deteriorated during that time. I couldn't say which one was more sort of important or, you know, harmful than another. There was an increase in security incidents.

Q Did you have any assessment about what was prompting the increase in security incidents?

A You mean did I have any knowledge about who might be acting?

Q That or -- who might be acting or what was the impetus for the increase -- or the deteriorating security environment?

A No. I mean, that was really -- that was actually a part of my job, was to be in eastern Libya to report in a very uncertain environment -- I mean, the entire country was -- and to try to make these determinations as to who had interests in what area and who had interests in other areas. So I didn't have any hard facts. What I was trying to do was just to learn.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Did you see any change in the ability of the local government or the transitional government's ability to rein in these attacks and/or respond to these attacks?

A All of the attacks were investigated to some degree or another by the local securities. As far as how they were litigated or what the outcomes were, that I don't know.

Q Did you see any change in the nature, strength, or capability of those resources? I mean, did the local police department get better? Did they get worse? Was it stagnant or stable during your time? Do you have any assessment of that?

A I didn't deal with the police very much at all. So more with the Supreme Security Council, which became more cohesive during the time that I was there. But certainly the situation was uncertain and there was wide recognition of that and we were trying to work with them to advance their own capacities as well as -- I mean, a stable Libya is good for everybody.

Q Did the RSOs or other DS agents who were assigned in Benghazi, would they have separate meetings to work with the local police?

A Yes.

Q Supreme Security Council too?

A They had meetings with them on occasion without me, yes.

Q Okay. And the same with the various militias, including Feb 17?

A Yes.

Q And that was part of their role and responsibility of being in country?

A Yes.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. Can we go off the record for just a few minutes?

[Recess.]

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q So just a few more follow-up questions. We talked about your knowledge of Americans who were in Libya. Were you aware of any contractors, State Department contractors in Libya?

A State Department contractors in Libya or in the east?

Q In Libya or in the east.

A NGOs were contracted by MEPI or USAID to be implementing partners, yeah.

Ms. Jackson. And approximately how many and what were they doing?

Ms. [REDACTED]. I don't know the actual numbers, but they would be doing things like prepping for elections, increasing civil society participation in the election process, advocating for more participation by women in the political process. Democracy -- mostly democracy related.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q Following your tenure, were you ever asked to gather documents related to the attack that occurred on the Special Mission Compound in Benghazi?

A Documents, my own emails or --

Q Your own emails. As a State Department employee, were you requested by anyone at State to gather documents?

A Yeah, there was a concerted effort to gather documents when they were requested at the State Department, and so I provided those documents or I provided what I had.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Was that in response to the Accountability Review Board being implemented, congressional requests, both, one or the other?

A Both.

Q Do you recall getting two separate requests?

A No. I got one request.

Q Okay. And do you know approximately when that was?

A It was in that fall, the fall of 2012, but I don't remember exactly what the date was.

Q And can you describe for us the steps you took to try and identify relevant documents?

A I went through my old emails and whatever I had on disk, and I just gave everything.

Q Okay. How did you search your old emails? Did you --

A Well, all my emails up to a certain time were only in Benghazi, so I just sent the whole stack of what I had when I was -- basically from early March to the day I left.

Q So for that timeframe you just collected everything and shipped them off?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what about documents? How did you search for relevant documents outside of emails?

A Oh, outside of emails. I didn't have access really to other documents. We didn't print classified material in Benghazi, so I didn't have any of that. It was basically just emails.

Q So any document that you would have created while you were in Benghazi would have been attached to an email in some way? Or how did you keep documents that you created in Benghazi?

A I see what you mean. I did mostly everything on email. It just was so much easier that way. I wrote my reports directly on email and sent them. So I didn't really create of my own documents that I would save on the server, for example.

Q I was thinking like a tripwires document or an evacuation plan or visitor policy?

A Those I didn't have on my shared drive since I didn't create them. My own personal was pretty much always either phone or email.

Q Okay.

BY MS. CLARKE:

Q Were you aware of any programs to collect MANPADS during your time in Benghazi?

A I can't talk about that here.

Q Okay. So those are all of our questions. Are there any answers that you would like to elaborate further on?

A I think Ajdabiya was the right one versus Beyda, thank you. And no.

Q Okay. And then any area that you thought we would have asked about but hadn't and that you would like to share?

A No. I could expect that you would ask me about the security incidents.

Ms. Clarke. Well, that's all of the questions we have. We can go off the record.

Mr. Kenny. Let's take a couple-minute break.

[Recess.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Ms. [REDACTED], just to provide a bit of an overview, it may feel like we're going to jump around a bit here, so I'm going to ask a few follow-up questions from some of the topics that were discussed or raised during the last hour. May shift around. Do our best to let you know when we do that so it'll be easier for you to follow as well.

I'd like to begin first by referring back to [REDACTED] Exhibit 6. So this is the cable "12 Tripoli 130." I'd just like to clear up what appears to be some confusion on the intent or the meaning of some of the words or the usage of words here.

So in the last hour -- well, we can go ahead and just read this. And actually I think we will try to unpack a little bit. So the paragraph entitled "DS Agent Support in Benghazi" reads, quote, "Post requests continued support for 5 TDY DS agents in Benghazi on 45-60 day rotations. This number is required to ensure that we have an appropriate USDH presence to protect our COMSEC; support the two long-term USDH TDY'ers; and support an increasing number of program/assistance TDY's from both Tripoli and Washington. The number of TDY'ers in Benghazi is expected to increase in the run-up to the

June elections," close quote.

So in the last hour there seemed to be some confusion over this last sentence --

A Okay.

Q -- which refers to the number of TDYers increasing.

A Uh-huh.

Q I would just like to, again, ask for your clarification here to the extent you understand or your impression of this, but the sentence before this sentence refers to program/assistance TDYs. Can I ask, in your view, was that related to DS? Were those DS TDY assets or were those programming?

A Let me look.

Q Sure.

A Programming.

Q Okay. So when you say programming, does that refer to something different from diplomatic security?

A Yes, this would refer to people who might want to come monitor the elections or to watch the procedure.

Q Okay. And in the runup to the elections, were you expecting other TDYers, programming TDYers to come to Benghazi?

A There were a number of requests to do so.

Q Okay. And so then the following sentence, which says the number of TDYers is expected to increase, is it your understanding that that meant that the number of programming TDYers was going to increase or that the DS would increase in excess of the five DS agents originally

requested? Or if you think it's unclear --

A Say it again.

Q Sure. Just based on your understanding that the request for programming TDYers to come to Benghazi in the runup to the elections, I would just like to ask for your understanding of this sentence that reads, "The number of TDY'ers in Benghazi is expected to increase in the run-up to the June election," and ask you whether the TDYers in that sentence, in your view, refers to diplomatic security TDY or if it refers to programming and the assistance TDYers?

A Program and assistance TDY.

Q Okay. So not diplomatic security?

A No.

Q Okay. So is there anything in this paragraph that would suggest that the post is requesting more than five DS agents?

A No.

Q Okay. Thank you. I think that's a helpful clarification.

I would like to move on. So in the last hour we had a discussion about the June 6 IED attack against the Special Mission Compound. You provided for us your recollection of those events, and that was very helpful. You also talked a little bit about what you did in the aftermath of that attack. Do you recall at the time how the LGF responded, how the local guard force responded?

A The local guard force responded by sounding the duck and cover.

Q Okay. And that was before --

A Oh, I'm sorry, I was thinking about -- June 6. I was mistaken, I was thinking of the previous incident. LGF on June 6. No, no, I'm sorry. I'm tired. Yes, they sounded the duck and cover.

Q Okay. So they did that immediately preceding the explosion. Is that your recollection?

A That's right.

Q Okay. I would like to also talk about the QRF, the 17th February Martyrs Brigade. How did they respond?

A There were the four with us on compound that evening, and they were with RSO during the RSO's kind of, what do you call it, examining what was going on. I didn't see their interactions together because I was still in my locked environment.

Q Okay. About how long were you in your locked environment or your safe haven?

A I think about 30 minutes.

Q Thirty minutes, okay.

A Uh-huh.

Q When you emerged from that, was there an increased security presence on the compound or around the compound?

A Well, [REDACTED], and it had attracted a number -- it had attracted a lot of attention. So I don't know what kind of security was there, but there were more men.

Q Okay. Is it your understanding that the QRF on compound were able to summon assistance from their brigade off compound?

A That's what I was told.

Q Okay. But you don't have personal knowledge of that?

A No, this is what I was told.

Q Okay, thank you, that's helpful.

Was there also an information management officer on the compound at this time?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Did he have any role in responding in the aftermath, so maybe not immediately after, but in perhaps the hours and days afterwards, to the best of your recollection?

A Right. I think he -- it was [REDACTED] -- I think he ensured that our communications weren't tampered -- not tampered with -- weren't affected. And he was the one who would contract out for -- who would do the contracting to get the wall repaired and to do whatever other contracting responsibilities there were to fix the damage.

Q Okay. So he was responsible for interacting with the contractors to repair the wall?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Did you have a sense of how quickly the contractor was able to respond?

A They came that morning, the same day.

Q They came the same day, okay. Were they able to perform work in short order?

A Yes, I believe it was finished by the following day.

Q Okay. And when you say finished --

A The wall was restored.

Q Okay. So the wall was completely repaired within -- you said by the end of the second day, so within 48 hours?

A Yes. Yes.

Q Okay. Do you recall at this time or around this time post receiving any outside assistance from American security, physical security specialists?

A [REDACTED].

Q Okay. Do you recall if anybody was dispatched from other posts in the region, perhaps security engineers, people who would --

A There were at times while I was there, but I don't recall if they came after this particular incident.

Q Okay. Was your sense that post was receiving sufficient support from Main State or from some of the regional posts in terms of repairing the wall, for instance, or any other --

A Yes, absolutely. We had, I think at least from Cairo, some specialists or technicians come for lighting and infrastructure. It may have been after this, it may have been before. I don't remember. I just remember having them on the compound with us.

Q Okay. Do you recall if they were able to perform or complete their tasks, whether it was the lighting or --

A They did.

Q Okay. So moving forward, this is the June 6 time period, we'll move just about 12, 14 hours ahead of time. I would like to mark, this will be Exhibit 12.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 12

Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q I'll just describe. This is an email dated June 7, 2012, from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED]. You appear on the CC line of this email, and the document is marked unclassified. It's C05394738. And just at the outset, it's a fairly lengthy exchange, and it touches on several issues. So just for the purposes of our discussion, I'm going to focus just on the first page.

A Okay.

Q But you're free to read the entire thing.

A Okay.

Q Okay. So, again, the email is dated June 7. It appears to be in the morning. So this appears to be shortly after the June 6 attack on the Special Mission Compound. The email is from [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. Again, your understanding is he was the RSO that was assigned to Benghazi. Is that right?

A At that time, yes.

Q Okay. And, again, [REDACTED]?

A RSO in Tripoli.

Q Okay. So I would like to read just a portion here of this email. It starts at the top, quote, "[REDACTED]", Thanks again for all the support from up at the mother ship. Sounds like a lot of stuff is being sorted out already, but wanted to make sure we touched base officially via email to clarify from our earlier call. With regards to Blue Mountain: The logistics on the ground are that we do use unarmed Libyan

Nationals contracted through Blue Mountain. They have been a huge support. The previous RSO's and team have done an excellent job of training them up, and in fact it was their training and response that helped us tremendously in the recent IED attack," close quote.

We discussed a little bit before your assessment of the LGF more broadly speaking. With respect to how they responded to the June 6 attack, did you agree with RSO [REDACTED] assessment of Blue Libya at this point in time?

A Blue Mountain?

Q I'm sorry, of Blue Mountain.

A Yes.

Q Okay. Were you able to observe -- he refers here, the team had done an excellent job of training them up. Were you able to observe during your time on the compound that the RSOs, the security staff at that time were, in fact, training the LGF?

A Yes.

Q Okay. So we'll scroll just down to the middle of the page under the heading "TNC," and I'll read from this portion. It reads, quote, "We do have TNC assets on compound who have been extremely loyal and very supportive, both in terms of QRF and the local area contacts and area fam. Those are under a separate bucket and do not/not fall under Blue Mountain," close quote.

I would just like to ask, here it refers to TNC assets. Is it your understanding that's the same as the 17 February Martyrs Brigade?

A Yes, Transitional National Council assets.

Q Okay. And the TNC at this time, they were the governing authority in Libya. Is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q Okay. Could you explain a little bit about that relationship just real briefly for us so we understand why 17 February Martyrs Brigade was also referred to as the TNC assets?

A This was a very complicated political situation going on at the time. I'll try to keep this as brief as I can. There was an attempt to have the different militias fall under government control in order to better manage them and ensure that -- basically to better manage them and to pay salaries. So 17th February was -- their militia was under the umbrella of the Transitional National Council.

Q Okay. Were they a particularly large militia in town at that time?

A They were one of the larger ones.

Q Okay. Do you recall if there were many alternatives from a security standpoint to working with 17 February Martyrs Brigade? Were there many other loyal and very supportive militias in town, to use the language from here?

A I don't know about -- there were other militias in town. I don't know about their suitability for being with us.

Q Okay, that's fair. Again, [REDACTED] appears to be providing an assessment here that they were extremely loyal and very supportive. Did you agree with that assessment?

A I did.

Q Okay. Can you explain why?

A Well, ██████ took particular care for my safety and knowledge of Libya. They were extremely engaged and trying to show us sort of what they thought a future Libya might look like, they themselves being invested in this as young men. I mean, there are probably many, many examples. I didn't have any reason to distrust them in any way.

Q And the name you just used, was he a member of the --

A ██████, yes.

Q And you said he took a particular interest in your security. Could you elaborate on that?

A I think he had a little crush.

Q So he provided some extra security?

[Nonverbal response.]

Q Okay.

I think we can move on to the next topic. For this we'll return to Exhibit 10. Again, just moving forward chronologically, this is the June 8 Benghazi situation report referring to a rally that occurred in Benghazi. Just like to focus on the third paragraph. It was quoted before. There's a sentence here that reads, quote, "Many onlookers, however, denounced the rally and its message," close quote.

Can you help us understand or unpack for us what this meant and why?

A So many onlookers at the -- and this is -- again, I wasn't at this rally, but there were -- we had reliable intelligence from

people that we knew who were at the rally that there was anger expressed by many of the onlookers that the Islamists could rally in such a large number within the city of Benghazi.

Q Okay. And was it your sense that the residents of Benghazi sympathized with the cause or the message of those militias who rallied?

A No, in this case it would be those who were not sympathetic to whatever message this Islamist group may be trying to spread or convey.

Q Okay. In the last hour we discussed some of the security discussions that would take place on the compound, including the Emergency Action Committee meetings that would take place. Was this one of the incidents that would have been discussed, either formally or informally, on the compound?

A It may have been.

Q Okay. Do you recall if it was?

A I don't recall in particular.

Q Okay. All right. And I'm sorry, I'm actually going to take -- step a day back here. I promised you I'd move chronologically. But I'd like to return to a little bit of the discussion we had in the last hour about the attack on -- or, I'm sorry, we are moving forward -- to the Ambassador's convoy. And so this occurred on June 11. You had mentioned that at some point in 2012 that they had closed -- did they have a consulate in Benghazi in 2012?

A No, they had, like, a diplomatic mission.

Q Okay. So they had some form of a special mission, not a

full-fledged consulate in Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And that was also staffed by a principal officer?

A It was.

Q Okay. And you stated that they had closed that office before this attack occurred. Is that right?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And the reason that you gave for the British closing the compound was resources. Can you just expand on that a little bit?

A Their villa, like ours, was very expensive to lease and to maintain. When their foreign service equivalence left to go back to London, they replaced him with a British who was resident in Libya. So he didn't require to have a secure facility in which to live, so he had an apartment in town. So they were in the process of, you know, ending police on this villa.

Q Okay. And the day after the attack on the compound the British Ambassador left, is that your understanding, left Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q During this time did the U.S. provide any security assistance, did the compound dispatch any security assets to assist the British?

A Yes, we did.

Q Okay. Can you elaborate on what assistance was provided?

A Sure. We had at that time members of the SST from Tripoli with us, and when we heard about or were told that this attack had taken

place I immediately -- I said, I'm staying back, but you guys go out and see if they need anything. I called my counterpart to see, do you need anything from us? And he said their cars are damaged, can you send out some cars? And they had two injured guards. So I also asked them for -- we had people with some emergency medical training -- to go and to assist.

Q Okay. And to your knowledge, did they render that assistance, were they able to assist the British?

A Yes. We actually got a very kind thank you note from the British Ambassador.

Q Okay. So they appreciated the support?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Did the assistance also include any services for them, perhaps helping them to leave Benghazi the following day, the convoy?

A Yes, that's true. We actually did escort their convoy to the airport.

Q Okay. So at that point in time what was the status of the British Mission in Benghazi?

A It was existent. It was staffed by, like I said, a locally employed British national. They still had the villa. The lease hadn't terminated just yet. So they were there.

Q Okay. Were they in the process of terminating the villa?

A They were.

Q Okay. Before the attack they were?

A That's right.

Q Okay. So when we read reports that say that the British closed their mission after the attacks -- and I apologize, I don't have a document in front of me at the moment -- but is that a fair characterization, to say that they closed the mission after or did they just cease operations with their one locally employed staff?

A He was there while I was there. I don't remember if he left for some reason before I left. This would be [REDACTED]. So closing -- I wouldn't say closing their mission. I could be mistaken.

Q Okay. Were you aware of whether the British had any plans to return to Benghazi?

A We kept their cars and other. I don't think we ended up taking their ammunition, but we kept their cars for when they would come back so that they would have cars.

Q Okay. Had that been discussed, that they would come back or they might come back?

A Yes, it had. It was so they would have resources when they -- they were not going to maybe have a continuing full-fledged presence there with a U.K. diplomat, but when the diplomat would come into Benghazi they would have resources.

Q Do you recall if those conversations about the British returning continued even after the attack on the convoy?

A I left not long after, so I don't know.

Q Okay. So I would like at this point to shift topics. There

was a discussion in the last hour about tripwires, the phrase tripwires were used. I would like to continue that discussion and begin just first by asking you, you know, what does that term mean to you? What is a tripwire?

A A tripwire is -- it's an event or sort of an ethos, an environment that causes you to evaluate your safety or your presence in a particular area, and there generally are several. These tripwires that would say crossing these leads us to a bit of concern, crossing these indicates that we should consider this, this, and they generally go down to evacuation.

Q So there's different gradations of tripwires?

A Yes.

Q Okay. That's helpful. So just taking a look at Exhibit 11, this is the email from [REDACTED], just like to note at the outset here your name doesn't appear on this email, but this appears to be a set of tripwires or draft tripwires related to authorized departure.

A Uh-huh.

Q So authorized departure, would that have been one of those different levels that you just mentioned?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what does authorized departure mean?

A Authorized departure means that -- in this case it wouldn't pertain because we did not have any family members, but the family members would be allowed to return from a post at government expense, as would a direct hire.

Q Okay. And would that be for the direct -- so just to understand, so an authorized departure means eligible family members would return home?

A Could.

Q Could return home. Okay. So they weren't required to return home?

A Not -- well, again, we didn't have this here in Benghazi, but in other posts it's been optional.

Q Why was that the case in Benghazi, that eligible family members weren't allowed, just to your understanding?

A I don't know what family members would have done there.

Q Okay, that's fair. So on an authorized departure family members could go home if they so elected?

A Uh-huh.

Q And you mentioned U.S. direct hires. Was it also an option for them if they could go home?

A It would be an option, yes.

Q Okay. So they were not required to go home on authorized departure?

A No.

Q Okay. Is there a different level?

A There's authorized departure, and then there is mandatory departure.

Q Okay. So just to be clear, this email refers to authorized departure. Is that right?

A Yes.

Q Okay. So in the course of the last round you were asked about the Accountability Review Board process and whether or not you participated in that. I would just like to ask you a series of questions both about the process as well as the substance of that investigation.

First, just for the record, were you interviewed by the ARB?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Do you recall about when that occurred?

A Within the first week or two of its being -- of its establishment.

Q Okay. And at the time that you met with the ARB with whom did you appear? Was it the full board?

A I think it was only Ambassador Pickering who wasn't there.

Q Okay. So four members --

A Four members.

Q -- four members of the board. And their staffs as well?

A Yes.

Q Okay. At that time were you provided the opportunity to provide information that you deemed to be pertinent to the investigation?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Did you, in fact, provide all information that you thought was pertinent?

A Yes.

Q Were you ever asked or ordered not to provide information to the ARB?

A No.

Q Were you ever asked or ordered to conceal or destroy information from the ARB?

A No.

Q Okay. Have you had the opportunity to review the final report, the public report that was issued?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Are you generally familiar with their findings and the recommendations?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Do you feel that the report captured relevant information that you provided to the Board?

A It's a rather large report and a bit diffuse, so I couldn't say which was my particular contribution. It's kind of a composite, I guess. But I felt that my contributions were considered and represented.

Q Do you recall seeing any information in there that you thought was inaccurate?

A No. I mean, my main recommendation to the Board, which I said over and over, was don't let something like this mean that we don't operate anymore.

Q Okay. Can you just elaborate on that for us?

A Meaning I thought that our mission of diplomacy shouldn't

be diminished by something like this and that we shouldn't sort of retreat. That was my main recommendation.

Q Okay.

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q So if I could, I just wanted to ask you on a couple of broad topics, because we did touch pretty heavily on a couple of key things that I think the committee is interested in. One of those things that we've talked about just recently was the issue of tripwires.

And I'm going to, if this is okay with you guys, I want to just hand her a copy of the ARB report without having to put it into the record so that we don't clunk it up, but I'm happy to give you guys -- I'm happy to enter it as an exhibit, but I think we can stipulate this is the unclassified ARB report.

Mr. Evers. Is it the full report?

Ms. Jackson. Or select pages?

Ms. Sawyer. It looks like the whole report.

Ms. Jackson. Let's just mark it. I think anything that we show the witness ought to be marked.

Mr. Kenny. So this will be Exhibit 13.

[████████ Exhibit No. 13

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q I'm not going to ask you to review it while we're sitting here. I wanted to just allow you to read the portions that I wanted to ask you about, which are very selective throughout.

But on page 9 of the report, and you'll see it's actually marked, I think paragraph 9 it mentions tripwires, and it says, quote, "Tripwires are too often treated only as indicators of threat rather than an essential trigger mechanism for serious risk management decisions and actions. The Department should revise its guidance to posts and require key offices to perform in-depth status checks of post tripwires."

Do you agree with that finding and recommendation? The finding is the first sentence, that sometimes they are not considered to be an essential trigger mechanism.

A I would agree.

Q And have you had any experience in the time since the ARB report came out to have a sense of whether or not there has been revised guidance? I have to apologize because I don't remember if you've now been at a post since.

A I went back to Libya, but the report had not been issued by then, and I haven't been at an overseas post posted since then, so I don't know.

Q I'm just going to have you skip ahead pretty far to page 31. And down at the bottom there was a discussion and some back and forth, both while we were talking with you and then while the majority was, about the staffing levels, the recommendation or the authorization for five, the difficulties and challenges in meeting five, and what your experience around that had been.

And there is a paragraph there at the bottom that starts, quote,

"As it became clear that DS would not provide a steady complement of five TDY DS agents to Benghazi, expectations on the ground were lowered by the daunting task of gaining approvals and the reality of an ever-shifting DS personnel platform."

And I want you to actually read kind of that entire paragraph. There's three more lines. I just want a sense of whether you feel that accurately reflected your experience.

A Expectations were lowered would reflect my experience. Resignation on the part of post did not reflect my experience.

Q Okay. And what was your experience if you weren't -- that you continued to advocate for and work, like, what was your experience if it wasn't that you felt it was one of resignation? How do you think it could be more accurately stated?

A Well, we didn't stop requesting that we have a full complement of diplomatic security on the compound.

Q And it also sounds like you didn't stop performing your mission at post.

A No, I did not.

Q There were two recommendations related to those findings, in particular about security and staffing, that I just wanted to ask you about, and those are on page 10. There's a paragraph 12, and it says, "The Board strongly endorses the Department's request for increased DS personnel for high- and critical-threat posts and for additional Mobile Security Deployment teams, as well as an increase in DS domestic staffing in support of such action."

So certainly I hope you don't feel that your continued advocacy fell on deaf ears, because it does sound like from this recommendation that, first of all, even before the ARB was convened, that the Department had requested this.

Would you agree that that was a necessary and good step forward?

A Yes.

Q And then the next paragraph goes to another issue that we talked about some, which was the turnover and the difficulty in staffing people for institutional knowledge purposes. And the first sentence there says, "The Department should assign key policy, program, and security personnel at high risk, high threat posts for a minimum of one year."

Do you agree with that recommendation? Do you think that would have helped?

A I do.

Q And then the suggestion for less critical is that the TDY length should be no less than 120 days. Do you think that's a positive step forward?

A It's a positive recommendation.

Q And if these recommendations were implemented, would that have helped with some of the frustrations, at least, that you experienced in terms of your staffing?

A The longer you're on the ground, the better. One of my RSOs was there for 2 months, [REDACTED]. But, I mean, it's hard for me to sort of look back and say how would things have happened different, right?

But I did make these recommendations that we be more consistent in the times that we have people assigned to different locations.

Q I appreciate it.

So this report came out in December of 2012, some 2 months after the attacks?

A Then it came out more quickly than I remember.

Q Yes, I think it was issued, and Congress had it before the start of the new year.

A Okay.

Q We've since had, since that time even, I think, and my memory may not serve me, I think we are the eighth congressional investigation following even the issuance of this report. Do you feel there are areas that would be fruitful in a forward-looking way for us to be looking at to be able to make recommendations? Is there something that was missing from what this report revealed?

A In terms of how the State Department should maintain its posture going forward or --

Q Yes.

A I do not remember everything that's in here, but I don't have, off the top of my head, any recommendations on areas that we should explore further.

Q And something you said I think was very strongly echoed in the ARB report about what you said you reiterated to the ARB over and over, which was it was your hope and desire that the Department not abandon its need and the desire to do diplomacy because of this event.

A Uh-huh.

Q Can you speak a little more to why that was so important to you?

A I've worked in a number of high-threat posts and environments, almost exclusively actually, for better or for worse, and I'm convinced that the presence of American reporting capabilities and the access to Americans is of utmost importance. I mean, all the times that I've been told, even in Libya, "We are so glad you're here," I couldn't count them all. And as we left Benghazi after the attacks, and I went back to Tripoli in the summertime, it was a sense, I was told over and over again, "Why are you abandoning us?"

So it's pretty powerful to have an American presence, diplomatic presence in countries in transition as well as countries that are stable.

Ms. Sawyer. Thank you.

BY MR. DESAI:

Q Ms. [REDACTED], I would like to now ask you a series of questions about some public allegations that have been made in connection with the attacks.

A Okay.

Q We understand that the Select Committee is investigating these public allegations, so we have to ask every witness the same set. Just to be clear, though, I don't want there be to any implication that by asking these questions either I or my colleagues or the Democratic Members of the committee believe these allegations have any merit.

Some of these questions will cover topics that we've covered in the past few hours, some will not. Either way, I'm going to respectfully ask for your indulgence and patience as I go through them. And the way I'll proceed is I will describe the allegation to you. I will then ask whether or not you have any information or evidence to support the allegation, and if you don't, we'll just move on to the next one until we're done.

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

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

A No.

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

A I don't.

Q It has been alleged that Secretary Clinton personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security to Libya. The Washington Post Fact Checker evaluated this claim and gave it four Pinocchios, its highest award for false claims.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security resources to Libya?

A No.

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

A No.

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

Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risk posed by Colonel Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for military operations in Libya in spring 2011?

A No.

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

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

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that U.S. facilities in Benghazi

were being used to facilitate weapon transfers from Libya to Syria or to any other foreign country?

A No.

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

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

A No.

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

A No.

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

that were provided to the ARB?

A No.

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

A No.

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

A No.

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

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

A No.

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

A No.

Q It has been alleged that Ambassador Susan Rice made an

intentional misrepresentation when she spoke on the Sunday talk shows about the Benghazi attacks.

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

A No.

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

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

A No.

Q It has been alleged that a team of four military personnel at Embassy Tripoli on the night of the attacks who were considering flying on the second plane to Benghazi were ordered by their superiors to stand down, meaning to cease all operations. Military officials have stated that those four individuals were instead ordered to remain in place in Tripoli, to provide security and medical assistance in their current location.

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

Do you have any evidence to contradict the conclusion of the House

Armed Services Committee that there was no stand-down order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi?

A No.

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

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

A No.

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

A No.

Mr. Desai. That's it.

Mr. Kenny. Thank you. We'll go off the record.

[Whereupon, at 3:07 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

Certificate of Deponent/Interviewee

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

Witness Name

Date

Errata Sheet

Select Committee on Benghazi

The witness did not respond to multiple contacts from the State Department requesting corrections to the accompanying transcript.