

[REDACTED]

RPTS BLAZEJEWSKI

DCMN HERZFELD

UNCLASSIFIED

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND  
GOVERNMENT REFORM,  
joint with the  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTERVIEW OF: [REDACTED]

Friday, January 31, 2014

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held at Room 2203, Rayburn

[REDACTED]

## Participant Key

AR = Armed Services Committee Republican staffer

AD = Armed Services Committee Democratic staffer

OR = Oversight and Government Reform Committee Republican staffer

OD = Oversight and Government Reform Committee Democratic staffer

[REDACTED]

ORI [REDACTED] This is a transcribed interview of [REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] welcome, and thank you, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] for coming  
today.

Those in the room have already introduced themselves, and the record of our proceedings will show who is in attendance. However, for the record, I am ORI [REDACTED] professional staff member with the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

As you may know, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and the Committee on Armed Services are among the committees in the U.S. House of Representatives that are investigating many aspects of the attacks on U.S. facilities in Benghazi, Libya, in September of 2012. The topics being considered include how the U.S. Government was prepared in advance of these attacks, how it responded once the attacks started, and what changes have been instituted as a result of lessons learned.

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

We will proceed in the following way: I and representatives of the other committee's chairman will ask questions for the first hour. Then representatives of the ranking minority members will have an hour to pose questions. We will alternate in this way until our questions are completed.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

We will recess for a short lunch and take other breaks as needed, but please let us know when we are switching questioners if you need additional time for any reason. You're also welcome to freely consult with counsel at any point during the proceeding.

[REDACTED] Okay.

ORI [REDACTED] We want to make this as easy and comfortable as possible. During our questioning we will aim to have only one questioner at a time. An exception to this may occur if an additional staff member of the staff asking the questions requires follow-up or clarification. In such an instance, it is usually most efficient to do that as we proceed rather than at the end. Because obviously the transcriptionist cannot record gestures, we ask that you answer orally. Do you understand this?

[REDACTED] Yes.

ORI [REDACTED] If you forget to do this, the transcriptionist may remind you to do so. The transcriptionist may also ask you to spell certain terms or unusual phrases you might use in your answers.

[REDACTED] Sure.

ORI [REDACTED] We hope to proceed methodically and generally chronologically. Some of our questions might appear basic, but this is done to help us clearly establish facts and to clearly understand the situation in Libya. We ask that you give complete and fulsome replies to questions based on your best recollections. Please provide unclassified information to the greatest extent possible. If it is necessary to provide classified information in response to questions, everyone in this room is cleared to Top Secret level, and therefore you

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

should not hesitate to provide relevant information or details to that classification level.

Mr. Hudson. Just a question on that. This is classified. Okay. Bill Hudson, for the record. This is a classified interview, and so, granted, we will do unclassified, but the advantage of this is if the interviewee divulges classified information, we have the ability to look at it and see what is classified and not in a later portion marking, but right now it is a classified interview.

OP2 [REDACTED] The room is swept appropriately.

Mr. Hudson. All right. Great. Thanks.

OR1 [REDACTED] Furthermore, if a question is unclear, or if you are uncertain in your response, please let us know. If you do not know or remember the answer to a question or do not remember, simply say so.

You should also understand that although this interview is not under oath, by law you are required to answer questions from Congress truthfully, including questions posed by staffers in an interview such as this. Do you understand these circumstances?

[REDACTED] Yes, I do.

OR1 [REDACTED] Is there any reason you are unable to provide your own truthful answers to today's questions?

[REDACTED] No.

OR1 [REDACTED] Finally, I note that you are accompanied by an attorney from the Department of Defense. I ask the DOD counsel to please state your name for the record.

Mr. Hudson. Bill Hudson from the DOD Office of the General

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Counsel.

OR1 [REDACTED] With these preliminary remarks concluded, do you have any introductory comments you wish to make?

[REDACTED] I do not.

OR1 [REDACTED] Thank you. We very much appreciate your uniformed service, your patience, and your appearance today.

The clock now reads 10:10, and I will start the first hour of questioning from the committee chairman.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## EXAMINATION

ORZ BY [REDACTED]

Q Just to get us started, could you just please give us your current rank and assignment?

A Sure. I'm a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army, and I'm currently assigned to the Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, as a student.

Q Thank you very much.

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

A Sure. So I was commissioned in 1991, ROTC commission out of Georgetown University. I was commissioned as an infantry officer. I served as an infantry officer for about 5 years before going to assessment selection for Special Forces, at which point I became a Special Forces officer, served as a Special Forces officer from approximately 1997 to 2003 time frame.

In 2003, I did a career change, became a foreign area officer specializing in the Middle East and North Africa. As part of that training, I included Arabic language training at DLI as well as graduate school, which I attended at SAIS, in international studies. And then subsequent to that assignment I've been serving predominantly overseas in embassies. Libya was my fourth embassy.

Q And when did you first arrive in Libya?

A I arrived in Libya June 11, 2011. Did I get the year right?

ORZ [REDACTED] Was it '12 maybe?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mr. Hudson. 2012.

[REDACTED] '12 to '13.

BY [REDACTED] 021

Q And what was your assignment in Libya?

A I was the defense attache to Libya.

Q And how did you come to be assigned to that role?

A It's a nominative process, so I had previously served as the Army attache in Morocco, and then after my time there, my human resources said, here's positions; you've been nominated to be the -- at the time, the defense attache to replace [REDACTED] [REDACTED], who was the previous attache. So it's a pretty standard HR process, nomination process. I became the defense attache.

Q Approximately how long before your arrival did you receive the assignment?

A This probably would have been about 3 months prior it was confirmed, so this is March-April 2012.

Q And at that point in time, were you starting to be briefed on programs or activities that were ongoing in Libya, or how did you sort of get up to speed prior to starting your position?

A A good question. At the time I was gainfully employed as the Army attache in Morocco. Subsequent to -- I left Morocco the first of May. I came back to Washington, D.C., and that was my real spin-up time. I focused on two things: One, getting the family set up in Washington while I was deployed to Libya, and the other one was a series of briefings and consultations with a variety of interagency actors just

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

to kind of exactly do that, get up to speed as much as possible in 30 days on a country as complicated and challenging as Libya at the time.

Q And at that point what was your understanding of the DOD programs and personnel that were in country at the time?

A So I knew who my shop was going to be. Basically the attache office was small. It was -- I was going to replace [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. There was one officer who was there at the time TDY as a Security Cooperation officer, an operations coordinator. That was about it, that's the core.

And then I understood in terms of DOD engagements very much a -- there was some initiatives that we were working on, but really at that point there was nothing concrete we had done.

So if you look at the Security Cooperation side of the house, after the revolution and just prior, the United States had put forth a good amount of assistance. Obviously with the operation itself, you had air support, but kind of after that we were really trying to find what the nature of the military-to-military engagement was going to be, and a lot depended on the circumstances on the ground. The Presidential drawdown equipment, for example, was a big piece. I forget the exact number, but millions of dollars worth of equipment to kind of help the Libyan military stand up and help the government in turn with security.

Q Do you recall what specific programs were under discussion at the time of your arrival or --

A There may be some programs.

Q For example, the SST were in country at the time.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Okay. I think I better understand. Yes, I recognize there was an SST element there, which was under -- providing the RSO, supplementing the RSO, and had been and had been a series of extensions to that mandate, for lack of a better term. So there was that piece of it. But, frankly, I was less focused on that and more kind of the developing military-to-military engagement piece, because the SST really was part of the RSO side of the house.

[REDACTED] ORZ

Q So with respect to that, the security force assistance that was being envisioned, it might be helpful to just maybe walk us through what kind of programs were being envisioned. For example, you know, 1206, 1207, 1208-type programs.

A Yeah. So you have a whole menu of Security Cooperation initiatives. You have ship visits, you have mil-to-mil engagements, how do we assess. And at that point prior to my arrival, for instance, senior members of the Libyan military had gone to AFRICOM to really kind of chart out the way ahead. Simultaneously and in conjunction with that, there was the initiation. This goes by different titles. And essentially the 1208 program, which is a train and equip, I'm not an expert on the program, but essentially designed to partner with the host nation element, in this case the military, and that was very much at the assess phase, as I could tell when I arrived in the June time frame.

In terms of programs, that was essentially it. So Ambassador Cretz at one point had concurred, and so we were at the very beginning stages of a 1208 program.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Now, to your knowledge, had 1208, this particular 1208 program that Ambassador Cretz had concurred with, had that been sort of officially approved through DOD channels, or was this something that was more worked out on the level of Ambassador Cretz and General Ham as the combatant commander?

A Yeah, trying to recollect back, I can't speak with any authority on the details.

Q We recognize this may have been before you came in, but we're trying to engage an awareness of time.

A Yeah, and I'll try and help kind of, to the best that my memory serves me, recollect how it went. At that point Ambassador Cretz had recognized the need for it and concurred with the engagement. There was a memorandum to that effect, and that really was the opening to do this initial assessment before any significant training. There was just so much we didn't know, what was the Libyan military, okay? Prior to the revolution, the regime protection force, all of whom were either dead or out of country, and so we were kind of left with this remnant, and there was a lot of questions about what their capabilities were. See, there was a slow, methodical, hey, let's figure out what we have before we decide whether this is going to work.

Q So who on the U.S. side at the embassy was involved in that sort of assessment process?

A [REDACTED] So when I arrived, there was one individual who was leading and doing the initial assessment and selection of people who may be trainable and doing all the necessary

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

vetting, and then shortly after my arrival, two additional individuals came who took the lead on it and then basically continued the assessment.

Q [REDACTED]

A [REDACTED]

So periodically you would have an SST member, like a medic, for instance, go out and help with the assessment, [REDACTED]

ARI [REDACTED]

Excuse me, there were two or three? You said one then

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Yeah, there was one.

ARI [REDACTED]

Then it became two, not two additional.

[REDACTED] So the one TDYs out, and then he was replaced by two, as this thing was growing a little bit.

BY [REDACTED] ORI

Q So were the -- to your knowledge, were any of the SST members sort of contributing to the assessment phase or not during your -- at the time of your arrival?

A No. A fair amount of the assessment had already happened. At the time of my arrival, no, it was predominately [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] SST, because their mandate went, I think, until August 3rd or 4th, they were there in that SST capacity.

BY [REDACTED] ORZ

Q So to your knowledge, you're not aware of any SST members being involved in the assessment prior to your arrival? I mean,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

obviously you weren't there, but you hadn't been briefed on whether that had happened or not?

A No, it was always clear to me that it was a separate effort from the SST. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] hey, can you come out; we may do some shooting, we would like to have an 18 Delta on the range. Not my area of expertise, but that was kind of my read.

ORZ [REDACTED] Okay.

BY [REDACTED] OR1

Q So after your arrival, how did the sort of focus of the SST personnel or their mission evolve over time? Were they all devoted solely to security for the time that you were there, or did some of them help out with other areas?

A Yeah. No, they were entirely dedicated to SST security mission, for which they were there. Now, what you had towards the end of July and then the August 4th time frame is there was some debate about whether that SST mission would be extended or not, because I think at this point there was a second or third iteration. I think what the initial deployment was for 120 days, then subsequent requested 90-day intervals. But, no, they were there predominantly supporting the RSO however you wanted. I know they played a role in PSD or personnel protective detail-type missions with the Ambassador and really were there to support and assist the RSO, first [REDACTED] when I arrived, and then [REDACTED]

Q So to your understanding, all 16 members of the SST were doing

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

that type of work during the period that you were there, prior to August 4th?

A Right. They were completely enmeshed. They fell under the RSO. Whatever movements they had planned, they were -- they would do the ADVON, they would do the security.

Q Leading up to that August 4th timeline or that deadline, I believe in early July the embassy submitted cable requesting additional security assets, which I believe was a July 9 cable. SST was included among the options to fill their additional security needs. Do you recall the discussions at the embassy about the continued presence of the SST sort of leading up to that cable, so late June?

A Yeah, I can provide some context related to that. I didn't realize it was July 9th. That was the cable back to State Main as everyone recognized that the next extension date was coming up.

Q Right.

A Yeah, there was certainly a conversation about what the future of the SST would be and whether the Department of State would request further extension of the SST team or that mission. I was -- I sat in on a VTC, and this must have -- this is after the July 9th date, so if you don't want me to talk about it, I won't.

Q No, please.

A But there was a VTC between General Ham and Ambassador Stevens, I want to say it was about 17 July, somewhere in that time frame. And it dealt -- among other things, this topic of the SST extension came up, and at this point the embassy or the Department of State, I should

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

say, had made the decision not to request. But General Ham wasn't aware. It hadn't made it to him formally, but in the conversation between General Ham -- as I recollect, months and months later -- and Ambassador Stevens is General Ham, again not knowing that State Department had made the decision not to extend, said, Mr. Ambassador -- I'm paraphrasing here -- this is how I see something, this is how I think this is going to transpire. There's going to be a lot of conversation back and forth in Washington about this extension, but at the end of the day, at the 11th hour, I believe that the request is going to come down for an extension, and I'm prepared to support it. You need them. If State Department determines they want the security, we're not going to have any issues. So -- [REDACTED]

Q Do you recall if Ambassador Stevens was supportive of having the SST personnel remain in country? [REDACTED]

A Yeah, I believe he was. I think more security equals more better in some regards, so now what that conversation was like between Ambassador Stevens and State Main, I have no idea, I was not brought into the process. It wasn't like, hey, DAT, can you look at this cable we're going to send up to State Main about security? That was really the purview of, I think, the conversation with the RSO and obviously the chief of mission. [REDACTED]

Q So just to be clear, from your sort of optic, you know, the State Department decision was really done on the State Department side of the House, and then at some point you learned, I take it, that the decision had been made by State not to extend SST? [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Right.

ORZ [REDACTED] When was that roughly; do you recall?

[REDACTED] It had to have been around like the third week of July time frame.

ORZ [REDACTED] Yeah, because I think you said about 17 July that VTC, it was unclear in the field.

[REDACTED] It was a little bit of an awkward moment, right? I feel like Ambassador Stevens felt the request wasn't going to come. And Ambassador Stevens -- I mean, pardon me, General Ham had not received that. He was still kind of waiting for the decision to be made. General Ham was, this is probably going to go to 11 p.m. on the 3rd of August, and a decision will be made, and it will probably be to extend them, and that's going to be okay.

ORZ BY [REDACTED]

Q We're aware there was some sort of ongoing discussions through the end of July and into early August sort of up to the 11th hour about this, you know, what to do with this element moving forward once this August 4 deadline hits.

A Yes.

Q Do you recall any of that discussion?

A I do. And, again, not knowing exactly, I can kind of paint the context as I saw it. So first and foremost was that decision, are they going to be requested or required to stay, and the SST piece, and once it became clear that there wasn't going to be a request forthcoming, so that becomes a question, okay, what do we do with them. SOCAF had

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

the intention or the plan, this is an opportunity, we already have the 1208 program in place, so potentially the possibility exists, let's take those 16, that 18-plus, and shift them over to the 1208 mission. Mind you, it's Ramadan, so it's kind of -- it's slow, they're doing some night training, but really it's a minimal amount of assessment activities. So post-Ramadan we've got a team in place, they're already here, and they're SF guys, they're trainers, that's what they do, and that would be an opportunity to do that. [REDACTED]

What Ambassador Stevens brought to light, which was interesting and useful, was like, well, understand SOCAF and AFRICOM, however, there's some diplomatic housecleaning that we have to do here because they're here, and our agreement with the Government of Libya to protect the embassy and to be security personnel, okay? That entails potentially different privileges and immunities than if they shift. So DOD, understand what you're saying. However, let's make sure we do it the right way. [REDACTED]

So there was that kind of -- that transition period was a little bit confusing, and it just -- everyone wanted, let's take our foot off the skinny pedal, let's kind of pause, let's do this right. And also Ambassador Stevens wanted to make sure my assessment -- Ambassador Stevens wanted to make sure things were done slowly but correctly with phasing, and he also understood that we've got a whole embassy here, I've got the political section, I've got my ID section here, I've got a lot of efforts that I want a political side and elections. There was a sense Libya was making progress. They had successful elections on [REDACTED]

July 7th. They successfully -- they were about to convene, I think, their first GNC meeting in early August. So there was that aspect, too.

Q Just to clarify, you had mentioned that the Ambassador raised some issues with P&I, the privileges and immunities issue, and you had said that that was as a result of a shift. I take it you meant the shift from chief of mission authority to combatant commander authority. Is that what you were referring to, that the team itself, that the individuals who had been part of SST would shift from chief of mission to COCOM; was that the issue, or was it something else?

Q I think that was part of the issue, but really it was a mission shift as well, and concomitant with that are, okay, Title 22 to Title 10. Ambassador Stevens wanted to know more about that. But I think ultimately Ambassador Stevens, he wanted to understand the Status of Forces implications, and then he wanted to make sure that those SF guys who were there in his country had privileges and immunities. He felt the responsibility to make sure they were covered in the event of an incident.

Q To be clear, was there a Status of Forces agreement with the Government of Libya at that point that would have covered these individuals?

A No. AFRICOM was like, we can do a Status of Forces, a SOFA waiver, we would say, but that all led to that conversation, or we can maybe come up with something better, "we" being the embassy at this point, to make sure that they have Ps and Is, as we say, commensurate with A and T staff or embassy staff.

BY [REDACTED]: ORI

Q So do you recall what the outcome of those discussions was or what the status of those forces was going to be on -- of those personnel was going to be on August 4th?

A Sure. So the long and short of it, if that's even appropriate, as I go on and tell this scenario, a sizable amount of the force departed, okay? So they went back to Stuttgart.

Q Do you recall when that --

A This must have been probably the first week to middle August time frame. And the idea was like, okay, let's keep a small element there. So -- and not training, not working with the 1208 program; just keep them there in the event that we can get the P&I issues sorted out with the Libyan Government. And mind you, Ambassador Stevens had -- we had planned a visit, and we did the visit in August, end of August, 20th or 22nd time frame, to Stuttgart to meet -- to do office calls with AFRICOM, as Ambassadors do kind of pro forma. So the idea was, okay, not 100 percent comfortable where we are right now, let's let this sit a little bit, we'll start the war game and planning on how we can best get the privileges and immunities we want, and then there will be another opportunity in August to sit down with the combatant commander, General Ham, ~~Admiral~~, to make sure we're all synchronized and we're doing things smartly.

Q Just one thing for my clarification. I think on August 4th, you know, they switched to combatant command. Do you recall on that date, August 4th, if it was already in plan for a large contingent of

[REDACTED]

them to depart, or then there was an event on August 6th where two of them were stopped at a checkpoint or something to that effect?

A Yeah, I don't remember exactly. Like I don't know if at August 4th -- because, remember, even up to August 3rd, there was always the possibility that something may change. So it wasn't like a light switch was flipped and, okay, everybody pack your stuff, let's go. I mean, one, that's not how the relationship was. Everyone realized that, you know, this SST team had done a lot, had built some great relationships, we're just trying to figure out together. But there was a decision to kind of downsize the footprint, get those back, and I think that team was due to rotate out probably September-October anyway. So not sure if I'm getting at the question, but it was a little bit more ambiguous than that. It wasn't, okay, August 4th is here, we'll pack up.

BY [REDACTED] 022

Q I guess the -- maybe what John was partly driving at, our recollection, our understanding is there may have been a security incident with a couple of members, what had been SST on or about 6 August.

A Yeah.

Q Okay. Can you walk us through that?

A Yeah. From my recollection, on August 6th, what you did have, and with the authorization -- the Ambassador's knowledge and awareness, it's like, okay, I don't want to lose rapport with this unit with whom we've been training, so we can't -- let's not cut this off.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I think they would go out and do PT with them, things like that. And this was Ramadan again, so we're not -- maybe a couple hours, okay, come back. So those were the two individuals on August 6th who were going out the morning of August 6th to the training location, and that's when they were pulled over at the checkpoint, and then we had an exchange of gunfire.

Subsequent to that point -- so you're Ambassador Stevens, you're already kind of thinking, okay, I'm not 100 percent comfortable. I understand the value, we don't want to lose rapport, but after that moment it became more decisive: Okay, guys, we're not leaving the compound. You guys are going to stay here, the footprint is going to stay small, and then -- so it was almost a confirmation of the thought process that had been going on up until then.

Q So you're saying at that point after 6 August. Were the personnel who had been SST, were they essentially confined to the embassy, or what was their status?

A Yeah, they didn't leave the embassy compound.

Q Okay. And was that solely the Ambassador's call, or was the combatant commander General Ham involved in that discussion as well? I mean, what was the level of interaction between the embassy and the combatant command on that sort of decision process, post-6 August?

A Don't know exactly, but this is kind of how it worked out on the ground. You have the August 6th incident. The Ambassador is, like, hey, until we get this P&I thing sorted out, these guys aren't leaving the compound. That doesn't make sense to me. That gets relayed

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

back to SOCAF, and they're, like, it doesn't make sense to us, either. There was no acrimony, there was no, hey, you're impeding us from doing it. Okay, understood. So -- and then that was again -- became a point of conversation at the subsequent meetings in AFRICOM, okay, where are we at now, where do we want to be, how do we get there:

ARI [REDACTED] Excuse me. Because the work that the SST team is doing with the other folks was supportive, as you said, they were maybe doing PT, they weren't engaged in the 1208 work, they were only there with people who were?

[REDACTED] Yeah. And kind of to circle back, there was -- when they didn't have an SST function first and foremost, that was obviously the priority, and there was never any confusion.

ARI [REDACTED] Sure.

[REDACTED] But at times when you've got two guys trying to stand up and work with these people and assess them periodically, it requires some assistance, and it worked out.

BY [REDACTED] ORZ

Q Are you -- this is a clarifying question. Our understanding, and if you don't -- I think you said earlier you don't have 100 percent lock-down understanding of the whole 1208 process, but our understanding is that with the formal 1208 program there's a series of notifications. It goes -- my recollection is it doesn't require Secretary of State concurrence at the time. It was just chief of mission and obviously the Defense Department had to approve it. Were there any other like notifications, like, for example, congressional notification, that

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

you're aware of --

A Yeah.

Q -- for a formal 1208?

A I can't speak to the details of it. I concur with you, this is not -- so whereas in a 1207 scenario, it's dual key, I think is the term, where both Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense -- you know, Secretary -- Department of State was aware of it and had to be informed of it.

Q Yeah.

A But the chief of mission concurrence was essentially what became the Department of State kind of, okay, I understand, this is the approval, and move forward with a 1208.

Q Sure.

A But in terms of Congress, I can't speak to that, unfortunately.

Q Just to be clear, then, with respect to the sort of 1208-like functions that some members of the SST had been providing while they weren't doing SST duties, do you have any knowledge of whether those activities were notified to congressional committees that would have been normally notified under a 1208 program?

A I have no idea.

ORZ [REDACTED] Okay, thanks.

ARI [REDACTED] Excuse me, they really weren't providing 1208-like activities, or were they? They were assisting with any PT assistance and so forth?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] As far as I recollect, that was the extent of it. It was admin log support. You had a Delta -- 18 Delta SF medic, who is always a good person to have around, but this -- [REDACTED] understanding, this was not -- they weren't tasked to, they weren't cut to the 1208 mission, none of that. It was --

BY [REDACTED] ORZ

Q Is that because there was no formal 1208 mission at that point, or was there already a formal 1208 that had been run through all the tracks at that point?

A I can't speak in any detail to that. I think the reason was because they were there for SST.

Q Yeah.

A To answer that question.

ORZ [REDACTED] Okay, that's helpful.

So I think the way we decided to do this is we're going to go for an hour. I think the OGR staff was going to go for 30 minutes, the Oversight staff, and we're going to turn it over to HASC in a minute.

But I just wanted to just make one comment because I think there is probably some things that are going to -- one thing in particular is going to come up at some point today, and we think it ought to be addressed with clarity, and that issue is whether -- you're familiar with [REDACTED] and his men.

[REDACTED] Yes.

ORZ [REDACTED] There is an issue that will probably come up about his four-man team on 9/11 and whether they were actually ordered to,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

quote, "stand down."

[REDACTED] Uh-huh.

ORZ [REDACTED] And we just want to note for the record that stand down in the military would essentially be an order to cease an offensive action which had been previously ordered, and as has been shown by both the work of the Oversight Committee and the Armed Services Committee, [REDACTED] was, in fact, given direction by his superior officer to secure the embassy on 9/11. And when that mission was completed, with the embassy personnel evacuated to a more secure location in Tripoli, [REDACTED] planned to join a response flight to Benghazi to help the Americans there, but when he was informed by -- when he informed, excuse me, AFRICOM of his intentions to do so, he was told not to join that flight.

[REDACTED] Complicating the matter, the generally acceptable definition of "stand down" in our civilian society is the act of stopping something. [REDACTED] was told to stop what he intended to do; namely, to head to Benghazi. Hence, the confusion around the use of the term "stand down" that has come up in Congress, the press, and various places in the public.

[REDACTED] So in the interest of maximizing our time here today to focus on the factual issues at hand, I thought it would be helpful to address any confusion about semantics up front. Our interest lays in understanding why the U.S. military personnel would be held back from going to Benghazi.

[REDACTED] And with that I think our first 30 minutes is up, and I'll turn

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

the questioning over to our colleagues from the House Armed Services Committee.

## EXAMINATION

BY [REDACTED]

AR 1

Q [REDACTED] I just have a couple questions I wanted to drill down to make sure I understand some of the comments you've made so far.

A Sure.

Q So after this August 4th deadline and then the incident which I think you're speaking of, which is August 6th?

A Yes.

Q So sometime after that, let's say -- I don't care about the particular date, but let's just say early September, I want to understand how many uniformed personnel were in Libya? I think the number is eight, but walk me through this for a second. There's you. You have a warrant officer assistant; is that correct?

A Yes, ops coordinator.

Q Is there anyone else in the attache's office?

A There is no one else in the attache's office.

Q Uniformed, okay.

There are four SST members?

A Former SST members.

Q Good point. So four people in a reduced and transitioning organization that used to be the SST?

A Correct.

Q There were two individuals doing a 1208 mission?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Correct.

Q Are there any other people in uniform?

A There were two other people in uniform.

Q Okay.

A There was a staff sergeant who worked in the Security Cooperation, and there was a lieutenant colonel who worked Security Cooperation.

Q So that's 10.

A So that's 10.

Q Now, help me understand or establish for the record the various reporting relationships that each of those organizations had. So you were the attache, of course?

A Correct.

Q So you had -- you were under a chief of mission authority?

A [Nonverbal response.]

Q Yes?

A Yes. Sorry.

Q Fine. And did you have any other reporting relationships?

A I was there with the chief of mission.

Q Fine.

And who led the SST?

A Okay, so, yeah --

Q Sorry, the reduced group of four formerly known as the SST?

A Right, right, I understand. I think I -- so SST was a AFRICOM asset through SOCAF, Special Operation Command Africa. So that was

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

their line.

Q And that was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

A Sorry, yeah, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] plus three.

Q Plus three.

And there wasn't a reporting relationship between the two of you? I mean, you were colleagues and aware of each other's activities?

A Correct, right, but --

Q Right. And then the same about the two individuals who are in the 1208 mission?

A Correct.

Q Same thing; did not report to you, correct?

A Correct.

Q Had a different reporting relationship, correct?

A Yes.

Q And then the two individuals in the Office of Security Cooperation?

A Correct. The difference with -- they were also chief of mission authority, Security Cooperation Office. They were AFRICOM, J-5 Security Cooperation personnel. Does that clarify or muddy things?

Q Yes. No, no, that's fine. I'm only kind of trying to establish for the record who was there and to whom they reported, and, as I understand, I think, your answer, although you were the attache, Defense attache, and the senior Defense Department representative in country, you didn't necessarily control these other nine people?

A Correct. And for clarification purposes, I was the defense

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

attache and not the senior Defense official.

Q Excuse me. Good clarification, thank you. Who was the senior Defense individual?

A There was no -- senior Defense official is an official kind of term and title. I don't mean -- at that point there was none designated. And if I could maybe elaborate on that.

Q Yes.

A I would have to go back and check with both AFRICOM and DIA. The understanding was that I was going to come in, I would be the Defense attache until such time as the 06, a colonel, would come in. And when I arrived, the thought process was, hey, [REDACTED] this could happen within 90 days or so. A lot depends on the status of the embassy. That 06 was going to be a senior Defense official, Defense attache. So I wasn't designated -- this is a degree of conjecture, but I was just going to transition to the Army attache billet, you would have the 06 I think was going to be a naval officer would come in as was status quo ante before the revolution, you had the 06.

Q Sure.

A So I don't know, again, if that helps.

Q No, that's very helpful. So, again, you understood that at some point, some point soon probably, an 06 would be named and arrive in country and become that?

A Yeah, potentially.

Q Potentially.

In your preparations and in discussions with your predecessor, did

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

you -- maybe you've answered the question, but you understood that kind of that menu of folks that were there and the fact, of course, you would be the attache, there was this 06 billet that was being created that was vacant. I mean, you understood that?

A Yes.

Q Had you -- in your prior postings had you ever been in a situation where there was I won't say complexity, but that level, that number of uniformed folks with varying reporting relationships?

A Maybe not to that extent. I mean, the SST is a unique entity.

Q Sure.

A So I had never come across that. But in some ways up until recently that was a norm in an embassy. You would have a security cooperation element headed by an officer, their senior ranking officer. You would have a Defense attache office, which ultimately I think was part of the idea; the concept of the SDO is to have it all under one senior Defense official.

Q So in your work, where, again, I'm talking about before the attack, say, in the month and a half that you were there before the attack, the knowledge that you had of these various elements and what they were doing and so forth, it was -- and I don't mean this pejoratively, but it was informal. In other words, the SST was being tasked by somebody else with a specific SST mission. You had your activities, which were discrete, but you knew about what they were up to and how they were performing through informal conversations with [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

A Yeah, it was informal, but there was -- it wasn't chaotic.

[REDACTED]

Q Sure.

A It wasn't necessarily confusing, I guess. Especially the SST mission, as you understand very quickly kind of they are there for the RSO, and that's -- while SST is a unique entity, the idea of the RSO having, for instance, marines at an embassy is a known.

Q I'm just trying to understand. He didn't work for you, you didn't work for him; I mean, your activities were going along kind of simultaneously --

A Correct.

Q -- which you had awareness of, but --

A Was it your standard military line of block chart? In that regard, no, certainly not. But that being the case, I think I felt like we had a number of mature and experienced personnel in each billet to where it functions, and I would often help the Ambassador with these different entities, I kind of saw that as my role: Hey, let's make sure, one, that we're 110 percent transparent with the chief of mission on everything; and, two, that if he has any questions, he knows the right person to talk to. So I focused on that a considerable amount.

Q Sure, that's very helpful.

I think I have just one more question, but I want to go back to something I think you said earlier, and that is when the SST mission, the security -- physical security mission of the SST was either known to be going away or suspected to be going away, I think you said, if I understand you correctly, that General Ham and others were kind of eager to take advantage of the fact there were people in country, that

[REDACTED]

they were going away -- sorry, that the mission was going away, that there might be an opportunity there to, in drawing down that force, transitioning into something else; in other words, if he was being told that the State Department didn't want the SST anymore, and thus that mission was going to go away. [REDACTED]

A I think I would characterize it more as you did in the latter part, they saw it as an opportunity vice eager. No one wanted to get out in front of their headlights on this. Maybe at the individual level, you know, a guy wanted to get out there and do the training, but I think everyone realized that it was too important to do it correctly for that transition, whatever that would look at, and that was ultimately the reason why the decisions were made, let's downsize the element to two, three. It ended up being four, the SST remained, and having the others go back. They sent their equipment back. They stayed in Germany and then ultimately transitioned back to their home unit in Colorado.

Q Right. Right. That's helpful. Thank you. [REDACTED]

So one other question dawned on me. When you had the transition from your predecessor, did you and he do a debrief between each other? Did he tell you what he was -- [REDACTED]

A We did not overlap in country in June. It's an unfortunate way it happens. To mitigate that I was able in April to visit my predecessor in Libya, so there was about a week transition there. This is end of April time frame. But that was the extent of our -- and then email traffic back and forth; hey, [REDACTED], what about this, these are the types of things that come up.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Sure. And when you visited with him in April, do you have any particular recollections of, you know, your conversations? Did he provide any particular cautions about the situation in Libya or anything that sticks in your mind that he gave you as a coming-in instruction or as something -- a heads-up on?

A So he had had a number of years in Libya at that point, so he was incredible. I mean, he had done 2 or 3 years prior to the revolution, and then come back with the embassy afterwards. So there was a ton of information. I think we have all been there, right? It's almost too much information you're trying to highlight, but we covered, I felt, most of the key, hey, where are we now, and we focused predominantly, as attaches do, on kind of the state of the host nation's military. That's where I focused mine. Who are your key contacts within the military, then kind of what's the current situation.

Q Do you have any recollection if he raised anything about the physical security of either the embassy or other U.S. facilities in Libya?

A No, I don't have any recollection of talking specifically about that.

Q Did he mention at that time -- do you have any recollection if he mentioned at that time of the temporary mission facility in Benghazi?

A Yes. We visited the temporary mission facility.

Q You and he in April when you were TDY there?

A Yes, so we did some time in Tripoli and then went to Benghazi

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

as well.

Q And did he -- do you have any recollection if he mentioned to you at that time about the presence of other U.S. Government facilities in Libya?

A Yes, there was -- so let me go back. I'm not sure, so let me break down the trip in April that I went on with my predecessor.

Q Sure.

A Spent some time in Tripoli, met other attaches, key contacts, and then we transitioned to Benghazi, and in Benghazi we spent some time at the facility, the -- what do we call it, the temporary mission?

Q Special mission compound. There's two names.

A Yeah, so there and then the other U.S. Government location in Benghazi.

Q And that was an overnight trip or --

A It was an overnight in Benghazi, possibly 2 nights, I can't remember, but it was overnight. And then so we went there, and we met with contacts and visited.

Q And do you have any particular recollections either of things he said, or do you have any personal recollections of your visit to either of those facilities and the security situation that they presented or the challenges that they may or may not have presented?

A I can speak to the one facility where I stayed. I only visited the other one for maybe a couple of hours.

Q I'm sorry, which one did you stay at, the temporary mission facility? The other one?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A I stayed at the -- I think we have to go back and define which one is which. What is the name for the location where the Ambassador was when he was killed?

OR2 [REDACTED] Why don't we call it the temporary mission facility for purposes of this? Does that work for you?

[REDACTED] Okay. TMF?

OR2 [REDACTED] Sure, that works.

[REDACTED] So I stayed there, and that's where I was.

BY [REDACTED] AR1

Q Fine. But you visited the other U.S. Government facility?

OR2 [REDACTED] Do you want to call that the Annex; will that work?

[REDACTED] I'm fine with calling it that, the Benghazi Annex.

OR2 [REDACTED] Fine, fine. All right. The Annex, the TMF.

[REDACTED] The Benghazi Annex, [REDACTED]

OR2 [REDACTED] Got it.

BY [REDACTED]

Q I think my question was, did you have any particular impressions of the security of the place?

A No particular. There was clear outside and inside security, as is known at this point. The February 17th militia had responsibility on the outside, and there was also the RSO element in the compound. There was a process, there was a procedure. This wasn't a case of just driving your vehicle in. There were barricades up, you would stop, have to

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

present ID, your vehicle would be checked, and then you would be allowed in.

Q And you're speaking of the temporary mission?

A Yes, temporary. And similar, as I recollect, and I don't have any real true recollection of the other one, a similar process at the Annex in Benghazi.

Q Did you ever return to either of those facilities after you became the attache?

A I never did. If my recollection serves me correctly, I think that was the first time my predecessor had been back to Benghazi since the revolution.

ORZ [REDACTED] Are you done?

ARI [REDACTED] I think so, yeah.

ORZ [REDACTED] There's still a little bit of time, so why don't we just keep --

ARI [REDACTED] While waiting, I'll --

ORZ [REDACTED] Yeah, go ahead.

BY [REDACTED]: ARI

Q I'll just ask you a housekeeping question. Were you interviewed by the State Department administrative -- Accountability Review Board?

A I was.

Q And you were interviewed by staff of that Board or by --

A I did a VTC from Tripoli I think -- I don't know when the date was. This must have been probably November-December time frame.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I was VTC, and I believe it was with the principals. I know Ambassador Pickering was there and Admiral Mullen.

Q And just in round terms, that was a 20-minute, 2-hour?

A Twenty-minute. At that point I was convinced that they knew more about what had kind of -- in the whole, that had transpired than I had. They didn't have a lot of questions. I can't even recollect the specific ones.

Q Well, to the extent you do recollect, did they -- do you remember if they asked you these sort of questions, which are to say preamble questions, before the attack, or did they focus mostly on the date of the attack?

A I think there was principally on the night of the attack to kind of help them better understand the sequence of events and how things transpired in Tripoli as the events were unfolding.

Q And did they -- at that time or subsequently, did they ask you for any records, or emails, or anything of that nature? Did they request anything like that from you?

A No.

BY [REDACTED] ORZ

Q Let me just go back to one thing we discussed a little bit already. I just want to clarify. You had mentioned that a couple of the SST members or -- I take it while they were both SST still existed before 3 August and then after, at least for a couple days, until that unfortunate incident on August 6th, from time to time some of those SST personnel may have gone to a training facility to assist the training

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

of Libyan military; is that correct?

A It was an assessment. At that point we were trying to -- so,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

RPTS JOHNSON

DCMN CRYSTAL

[10:58 a.m.]

[REDACTED] OR 2

Q Okay. And then about that, when they did that, how were they directed to do that? In other words, did they do it on their own recognizance? Were they following an order from somebody? Who instructed them to engage in the activity?

A I don't know.

Q Okay.

A My understanding was it was essentially an informal request [REDACTED] to help out logistically to get us there, for instance, or to help us on the site.

Q You mentioned also that you traveled with Ambassador Stevens to Stuttgart to meet with General Ham and his staff?

A Yes.

Q I think sometime you said in August. August 22, is that right?

A That sounds about right. The 20th to 23rd timeframe.

Q Yeah. Sure. You don't have to be that precise. We understand that at that meeting the two men may have signed a letter outlining kind of a way forward for what had been the SST, and also with respect to the security force assistance programs that were envisioned going forward. Do you recall that --

A They didn't sign the letter there.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Okay. Where did they sign? When did that happen?

A The staff work caught up with the meeting.

Q Okay.

A So the decision was made there. And again, this was as the two were trying to figure out the road ahead.

Q Sure.

A What does this look like? Is this an MOU between the Embassy and AFRICOM? And ultimately, the decision was made. Like, I would be Ambassador Stevens, I would be happy with a letter signed by you, General Ham, that this is what we discussed and this is kind of how we should proceed.

Q Okay.

A So that was pretty much the genesis of that.

Q So was that viewed as sort of the chief of mission's concurrence that process, where the chief of mission would have to concur with the combatant commander. I am just trying to understand how procedurally --

A Yeah, I don't know how, if I would contextualize it exactly like that. I think it was essentially -- and I would have to go back and look at the verbiage of the letter.

Q Sure.

A But essentially it highlighted the need to address the privileges and immunities. And it also, I believe, said we need to touch base periodically on this. I think, you know, 6 months from now let's see where we are at and reassess.

[REDACTED]

Q Okay.

A But in terms of what did that letter constitute at some sort of chief of mission, combatant commander agreement, I am not sure.

Q Okay. And I mean, how would you describe the meetings themselves between the Ambassador and General Ham? Were they generally amicable? Was there a lot that had to be worked out at that meeting? Or like you said, had the staff work kind of caught up and things were already kind of decided at that point?

A No, so at this point General Ham and Ambassador Stevens, I don't think they met ever necessarily prior to Ambassador Stevens becoming Ambassador. They had had the VTC in July. I don't think there was any other ones prior to the visit.

But both in the VTC and in the office call with General Ham, it was amicable. This was, being literally on the side of this, these were two intellectual, both understand the weightiness of the matters at hand, a mutual respect. And it was a strong relationship.

Q Is it fair to say Ambassador Stevens was very much supportive of continuing the security force assistance-type mission moving forward? At least the concept?

A Yes, but I wouldn't -- I think he didn't want to over -- he was supportive, but not necessarily all in, right? He wanted to make sure it was done correctly.

And also I think another point to drive home I think that was important to Ambassador Stevens we need to have a balanced, whole-of-the-government approach and engagement strategy with Libya.

I don't think he necessarily wanted the military to get too far out in front, because again, as I kind of referenced earlier, there is the economic portfolio, there is public diplomacy. That is what he was doing on September 11th, was going to open the American corner. So that was very much I think part of his calculus: Let's do it right and then let's also make sure we are all giving way together.

Q I think we discussed about once the decision was made to pursue kind of a concurrence from the Libyan Government about privileges and immunities, what would that process look like?

A Yeah. The Libyan Government at that point, so they had the election July 11th, they had the new GNC. You had el-Keib was still the President for a while, but then Magariaf was elected by the Congress to be the President.

Q Right.

A This was not a highly capable or high functioning government, as you wouldn't expect. So the process there was to be determined, right? So how do you do this? And it involved, from the military and the Embassy standpoint, engagement at almost every level of entry. The political officer would engage with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I would engage with the Ministry of Defense as well as the chief of staff's office, all to try and explain to them the value and why we would pursue the P's and I's commensurate.

Q So with respect to your interactions personally with the MOD and the chief of staff, how did that go? Did you find them amenable to the idea? What was their attitude generally towards this idea of

[REDACTED]

the P and I for U.S. forces?

A So the military didn't have any issue with it. Frankly, I don't think they appreciated what it meant. So you understand that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the diplomatic parlance, words have meaning. But the military wanted the training, they wanted the training expanded, they understood the value in it. So they endorsed it and they saw the value of it. So both specifically from the chief of staff side of the house, but also from the MOD's side of the house, as I recollect.

Q Just to step back, I think you had mentioned that after 6 August and that incident at the checkpoint that the SST personnel, formerly SST personnel were essentially confined to base or to the Embassy. How did that go with them? Was there an issue of morale because of that? How did they feel about that? I mean, because I can imagine it could be kind of tough.

A They were okay with it.

Q They were?

A They understood they were part of a bigger effort here. And they were unfortunately in a situation where they are waiting -- one decision has ended, and waiting to figure out the next one.

Q Okay.

A But no major issues.

BY [REDACTED] ORI

Q Aside from the 1208, were there any sort of security force assistance or mil-to-mil engagements under discussion that you were privy to or aware of, whether it's Global Security Contingency Fund

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

program or --

A Yes. So certainly there was -- we talked a lot about the 1208. But what we were trying do was establish your standard security cooperation efforts. So, for instance, we had had a delegation from the Libyan chief of staff and MOD go to the United States to really help educate them on our foreign military sales process and the security cooperation aspect, to really -- I mean there was a lot of hand holding that had to be done. And we just -- we couldn't assume anything.

So we were doing a lot of that. We had some interaction with the OSD-sponsored DIRI, which is Defense Institute -- organization to help foreign ministries of defense become stronger and better institutions. We had some engagements with them. We had also had successfully gotten some Libyan officers accepted to I believe the Navy War College and the Air War College.

So those are kind of your standard day-to-day security cooperation efforts. Simultaneously, their ideas, or working on the Global Security Contingency Fund piece, the 1207, but those were very much in the early stages, but relevant to this because as we are talking to the Ambassador or reps from SOCAF, sir, this is a possibility for us to -- a way forward with engagement with the Libyan military. These were ideas and programmatic approaches.

And again, Ambassador Stevens was like, good, let's phase it. The capacity of the host nation military, the capacity of the host nation government to handle all this may be limited, but we will work with them, and we will train them, and we will help them all along.

[REDACTED]

Q Do you know what the focus of the GSCF was going to be, what those were going to be used for or what --

A So varying stripes at varying times. It was a bit confusing.

Q Discussion evolved over time?

A Discussion evolved a bit over time. I think that is a fair characterization. At one point, though, we recognized the serious vulnerability with border security. So we wanted to reinforce those efforts. There was a discussion of training two border security companies. And that was at least one specific idea that I think remained consistent throughout.

OR | [REDACTED] We are approaching our time, so we will go off the record.

[Recess.]

OD1 [REDACTED] Go back on the record. The time is 11:16.

EXAMINATION

BY [REDACTED] OD1

Q [REDACTED] I would like to take the opportunity again here at the outset just to thank you for appearing here today, and thank you as well for your service. Just take a moment to reintroduce myself.

AD1 My name is [REDACTED]. I am counsel with the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform minority staff. I am joined here by my colleague OD2 [REDACTED] as well as colleagues from the House Armed Services Committee. If they would like to introduce themselves as well.

AD1 [REDACTED] I am AD1 [REDACTED]. You may remember from when we were commissioned together.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
AD2

AD2 [REDACTED]

AD3 [REDACTED]

AD3

BY [REDACTED]

ODI

Q So I think we are going to take a slightly different approach than the prior hour. Again, we are just hoping to have a productive conversation with you and discussion. So I think at various times different people at the table will ask you questions.

A Okay.

Q Our intent is not to overwhelm you with different questioners or different questions. It is really just there are, I think, a lot of different perspectives at the table. And so we want to respect that, but also be respectful of you.

I would like to return just real briefly to some of the questioning in the last hour relating to your interview by the Accountability Review Board. You mentioned that you participated in a video teleconference in Tripoli and had been interviewed by at least -- you mentioned Ambassador Pickering was present in that interview. I was wondering if you could describe some of the other participants there. Were all the Board members present during that meeting?

A I am not sure if all were. I get the sense the majority were. Ambassador Pickering and Admiral Mullen.

Q Okay. So Admiral Mullen did participate as well?

A My guess is all the principals were there. I don't remember the names or positions of the other people who participated.

Q Okay. Thanks. That's helpful.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

And you had mentioned that it was, I believe, a 20-minute conversation. And I guess in the course of your conversation with the Board, with the Board members, were you provided the opportunity to share information that you considered or deemed pertinent?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And did you then provide all information that you considered to be pertinent?

A In the context of answering the questions posed? I tried to give full, pertinent, as much as I knew and could contribute to the answer, yes.

Q Okay. Thank you.

And I am going to ask you a series of questions. I apologize, some of them may appear a bit pro forma and some -- you may have been asked at least one of these. But I just want to confirm for the record, this is again just to develop as complete a record as possible, but are you appearing before us today voluntarily?

A Yes, I am.

Q Okay. And is there any reason to believe that your statements today will not be complete or truthful?

A No.

Q Okay. Have you been asked or ordered by anyone not to provide information related to the September 2012 attacks in Benghazi to Congress?

A No.

Q Have you been interviewed by any other Member of Congress

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

or a committee in connection with the September 2011 -- or 2012 attacks in Benghazi?

A Outside of the previously mentioned ARB interview?

Q Yes.

A No.

Q Okay. Have you been asked or ordered by anyone not to provide information related to the September 2012 attacks in Benghazi to the FBI or Department of Justice?

A No.

Q Okay. Have you been interviewed by the FBI in conjunction with the September 2012 attacks in Benghazi?

A No.

Q Okay. Have you been asked or ordered to sign a nondisclosure agreement related to the attacks?

A No.

Q Okay. I was hoping if we can maybe shift and return to the beginning of the last hour, where you were describing the role of the defense attache in the Embassy. We referred to that as the DAT position. And I was wondering if we could just maybe take a step back and if you could explain for us kind of a holistic view of what the DAT's responsibilities are.

A Okay. Sure. So essentially the defense attache [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Other missions are to advise and assist the Ambassador on all things military. Another

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

one is also as a representative role, so the defense attache is a representative of the Secretary of Defense, with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. And then third is to coordinate operations if and when they occur. What does that look like in a normal day at a normal Embassy? Overflight clearances.

So those are traditionally the responsibilities of an attache, defense attache office. Okay? We would like to overfly, and then you coordinate with host nation either civilian -- normally it's a combination of civilian and military officials -- to coordinate military aircraft coming in, whether it's to support a distinguished visitor visit or simply an overflight of a U.S. military aircraft en route to another location.

Q Okay. And I think there may have been some confusion in the last hour, but could you maybe just walk us through your reporting structure?

A Yes. So as defense attache there's multiple, in a way, but not necessarily in a confusing way. So as a member of the country team, as a chief of mission -- as an officer under chief of mission authority at the Embassy, I worked for the Ambassador.

OD2 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] ADI

[REDACTED]

AD 2 [REDACTED] Got it.

BY [REDACTED] ADI

Q So just for clarity, though, what was your rating chain? Who was your rater and your senior rater and what is your relationship with them?

A A little bit complicated scenario. Going in, my rating chain was DIA, so with my rater being the division chief. And then my senior rater is generally a flag officer or a civilian equivalent in DIA. And I don't remember the name of who it was going in. Ultimately, when I

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

left, I was rated by AFRICOM, which is essentially the prerogative of AFRICOM commander to determine.

Q Both your rater and your senior rater were AFRICOM?

A No, rater -- pardon me -- rater was DIA, senior rater was AFRICOM.

BY [REDACTED] OD 1

Q You had mentioned that while in country technically your authority was under chief of mission. Is that accurate? Or you operated under chief of mission authority?

A Yes.

Q Can you help us just explain then, based on what we just described, what that just meant in terms of your day-to-day duties?

A Okay. Yeah. I was as if I was any other foreign service officer assigned to the mission. What it essentially meant as well is, specifically tied to security, I fell under all the standard rules and regulations established by the regional security officer, whether it's for movement or any other -- principally it was movement or actions on the compound.

Q Okay. So you weren't responsible for your own security then? Is that accurate?

A No, I was not. So I fell, just like any other officer at the Embassy, the ultimate individual and office responsible for security was the regional security officer.

Q Okay. Generally speaking, does the DAT interact with the geographic combatant command?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Frequently.

Q Okay. And what is generally the nature of those interactions?

A The nature -- let me ask a point of clarification. Are you talking about the combatant command or the combatant commander?

Q Maybe we can tease both of those out if there is a difference in terms of --

A Yeah. As a defense attache, you are working with a lot of different entities. [REDACTED] I have the Embassy piece, consistently in communication with the Ambassador. And then at the end of the day you are in the geographic commander's country that falls under him for reporting. So there was a considerable amount of conversation specifically tied to what's the best way to move forward with security cooperation? Those kind of conversations.

Now, within the combatant command, the staff or the entity that had the primary responsibility for that was the J5 shop, the security cooperation of plans. So I would talk frequently with the desk officer within the J5 shop about Libya and where we are going to help shape the AFRICOM theater security engagement plan and to best assist.

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

A And sorry, back to the commander himself, there is not traditionally a direct link with the commander and the defense attache on the ground. The staff is used to serve as that intermediary. However, we would have direct contact when either the commander would come down on a senior leader engagement, or in the cases mentioned, the

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Ambassador goes up to visit the combatant command, or VTCs help facilitate the communications between the chief of mission and the combatant commander.

Q Great. Thank you.

You mentioned a few moments ago that you as DAT under chief of mission authority, you fall under -- the chief of mission was responsible for your security. Can I ask, as a DAT did you have any role in advising the post on security?

A I had no formal role in advising the Embassy on security.

Q Okay.

A Now, as a military officer with 20-plus years, and also having good relationships with the RSOs, and also being a consumer, frankly, of RSO assets, I need to go, for instance, [REDACTED] to the ministry of defense, and he has got to find other resources, we would talk periodically there. But ultimately the decision was his. So I think that's kind of -- I hope that clarifies a little bit of the relationship.

Q Sure. So it sounds like if you were to travel off site you would maybe informally advise with respect to your own personal security given your experience, given your background, but would you advise with respect to general security matters or --

A Traditionally, no.

Q Okay.

BY [REDACTED] ADI

Q [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A [REDACTED]

But that is something I go to the RSO about. Look, here is some specific implications this could have. But as a member of the country team, for instance when I would make a move, I wouldn't go unilaterally. I would submit the move request 24 hours out. Whatever the procedures were, I would be beholden to, and it made sense to be beholden to the RSO's guidance.

Q I see. Thank you.

A Or guidelines or rules.

BY [REDACTED] ODI

Q Just going back now to discuss your interactions, and we discussed how you would interact with the combatant command, as well as your reporting structure, can you maybe just generalize for us your interactions with the diplomatic staff at post?

A Yes. A full-fledged kind of integrated member of the country team.

Q Okay.

A So I had good personal and professional relationships with

[REDACTED]

everyone on the country team, whether it was the pol-econ shop, the public affairs department, the AID rep. And it's the case in most embassies, right? It's a team. They call it a country team for a reason. I felt we had a very strong team in Libya.

Q Okay. Good. And then as a member or participant on the country team, obviously you worked closely with the Ambassador. Is that an accurate statement?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Can you maybe just tell us, in your opinion, was Ambassador Stevens, how knowledgeable he was about Libya?

A He was very knowledgeable about Libya, to put it succinctly. I think this was his third or fourth tour, to include his time as a special envoy -- that title may not be accurate -- in Benghazi to the NTC. But even prior to that, he had served as the deputy chief of mission, possibly the pol officer at one point.

So, yeah, I don't know, but my presumption would be that he had to be one of the foremost experts on Libya in particular.

Q Okay.

A For instance, he would tell stories about having been at meetings with Qadhafi, give insight into that strange personality that was Qadhafi. And he would take time to mentor country team members. So, like, if I would come back from a meeting completely frustrated, for instance, he would say, wait, what did they say? He is like, that's old regime. He is like, I know what that is, don't worry about that, they will come around, and it's going to -- something I appreciated from

[REDACTED]

a leader and a mentor. And I felt that Ambassador Stevens did that with all the members of the country team.

Q So you, yourself, considered him to be a mentor with respect to Libyan matters or --

A Absolutely. He had just time on the ground experience and he could provide insight.

Q Did he have specific knowledge about Benghazi, to your knowledge?

A He certainly had specific knowledge about Benghazi. Again, I think prior to, but specifically during his months in working with the NTC, I believe pre- and post- -- pardon me -- post-revolution, as that transpired.

Q And for the record that NTC is?

A Sorry, this is the Libyan body which before the elections, National Transition Council. I believe that's what the acronym stands for. I may be off.

Q Okay.

A But essentially the opposition government.

Q Sure. Would you say that his -- as a member of the country team again -- were his decisions accorded deference, great deference?

A Like any chief of mission, yes, certainly, his decisions were treated with deference. There was different types of deference, right? There was deference potentially out of intimidation, but no, he was given deference because we knew where he was coming from, he had good leadership traits in my estimation, and yes, and he knew more than anyone in the

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

room about most topics.

Q Okay. Was that latter, that last statement you made about his knowledge, in particular about Libya and Benghazi, to your knowledge, was that generally shared by your military colleagues in AFRICOM and elsewhere?

A I don't think you can replicate the experience and knowledge that Ambassador Stevens had per se. So it would be difficult to do a one-to-one correlation. But what I can say is, both in AFRICOM and DIA, there have been a number of capable people, officers, civilians, who have been working Libya writ large, obviously tied to the NATO piece and our involvement in it. But it's difficult to make up for time on the ground, spending time drinking tea with Libyans, which is unfortunately something a lot of your staff just don't have the opportunity to do.

BY [REDACTED] ADI

Q Excuse me, but I don't think that was the question. I think the question was did your military colleagues share your estimation of Ambassador Stevens?

A Oh. Yeah. I apologize. Then I did misunderstand the question.

BY [REDACTED] ODI

Q That's okay.

A No, by and large, I don't know of anyone who didn't, if that -- there was no one in my --

Q To include personnel back at AFRICOM and General Ham?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Right. No, he -- I mean Ambassador Stevens had a very strong reputation everywhere I went as I was doing my office calls.

Q Okay. Were you aware at all of Ambassador Stevens' views on the U.S. presence in eastern Libya?

A I can't speak specifically to the U.S. presence, but if anyone understood the importance of eastern Libya to the totality of Libya it was Ambassador Stevens. So in my opinion, he felt it was important to have an American presence there just because of the significance not only of Benghazi, but of the east in general.

BY [REDACTED]: 002

Q What was the significance of the eastern part of the country? Why was that important? And what were his views on that?

A Yeah. So let's just take Benghazi, for instance. Benghazi is seen in the eyes of the majority of the Libyans, particularly those in the east, as much more the cultural center, the social center, the business center of Libya. So it's also, if you look -- I mean there is oil infrastructure everywhere, but predominantly in the eastern side you have significant oil there.

I think it better defines for Libyans the character of the country. And what you saw in Benghazi, which you didn't necessarily see in other cities in the country, was there was an aspect of assimilation and a cosmopolitan aspect to Benghazi where different tribal factions all came together and made Benghazi what Benghazi was.

Q Would it be fair to say that then his views would be if you were going to be successful in Libya you really also wanted to have a

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

presence or focus on the eastern part of the country?

A I feel that's a fair characterization, yes.

Q Okay.

BY [REDACTED] ODI

Q I would like to turn to a topic that we discussed at some length during the last hour, and that's the Site Security Team or the SST. And you kind of helped walk us through the development of that team over time, and I thought that that was very helpful. But I was wondering if I could maybe take a step back and ask a few higher level questions, and then also ask that you clarify some of the statements you made in the last hour.

And one of the things that I was wondering is, you had mentioned that you had served previously as an Army attache at another post. Were you familiar at all with the SST before coming into Tripoli, in the sense had you worked at a post where an SST had previously been deployed?

A No. That was a new construct to me.

Q Okay. And was it your understanding then that that was somehow some sort of extraordinary resource or was it something that was commonly provided to the State Department?

A Common worldwide?

Q Yes.

A No. This to me was a mechanism stood up driven by the circumstances of coming into post-revolutionary Libya.

Q Okay. And when you started as the DAT, I believe you said it was the June timeframe?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Yes.

Q Of 2012. Was your understanding that the SST would be resources provided indefinitely or to your understanding was it a temporary resource that was provided for the Embassy?

A Yeah, my understanding it was a temporary resource, initially provided for 120 days, was the request, and then it had subsequently been extended I think two, maybe three times in 90-day increments. I may be incorrect. So that's how I understood it. In my understanding, this was not going to be at some point transitioned to a permanent mission.

Q In terms of mission referring to providing security for --

A Mission for providing security, providing a 16-man element to augment the RSO.

Q Okay. And this structure you described where it had to be renewed every 120 days, what was your understanding of what would happen at the end of the 120-day period if there was no action taken?

Q So that initial 120 days expired. When I got there we were walking through the clock on a 90-day extension, as I understand it. And there was a lack of clarity. Again, my sense is from a DOD perspective, and certainly from an AFRICOM perspective, is that that the Department of State would ask for a subsequent, an additional extension. So that's kind of what we assumed was going to come down at some point.

Q Sure. And in the absence of that formal request, maybe you can just walk us through what would happen?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Yeah. So the authority authorities by which, if there is no extension, the authorities by which they were in Libya would expire.

Q Okay.

A At which point the logical next step would be to redeploy them back to home station.

Q Okay. So to understand a little bit better, the SST, I think you mentioned in the last hour, was under chief of COM authority? Or chief of mission authority. Is that correct?

A I don't know what the exact arrangement was. I would have to go back and check and seek clarification. I don't know if they are Title 22 or Title 10.

Q Okay.

A But what I was certain was that they were an RSO asset. However the --

Q They were detailed to the RSO.

A Yes. Okay. So if the RSO had a request that they go perform a certain mission or function, they would do that.

A Right. I think that's a good way to characterize it. And to amplify that, they couldn't go do something that they thought was beneficial without the RSO's approval. They worked for him.

Q Okay.

A Does that make sense?

Q Yeah. That's helpful.

BY [REDACTED] ADI

Q So while we are on this, you mentioned that sometimes they

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

went to help out the 1208, [REDACTED] Did they ever prioritize that activity over an SST activity?

A No, not to my knowledge. And I am certain, but you would have to check with some of my DR. So any time they did do that, it was with the full knowledge and concurrence of the R50.

Q That they had no other pressing SST duties that day probably or --

A That would be my assumption.

Q Okay.

BY [REDACTED]: ODI

Q Okay. You had mentioned in the last hour that there were several discussions, I believe, between General Ham at AFRICOM and Ambassador Stevens. And one specific episode that you recounted, you had mentioned that AFRICOM had offered to do a status of forces waiver. Could you maybe just explain what that means to us and, you know, when that happened and what the conversations were?

A Okay. To the best of my recollection, this conversation really took place after the August 4th decision not to continue the SST mission. And it was part of the staffing process in order to transition, if that was ultimately the decision that was going to be taken, the former SST personnel and to lash them into the 1208.

Part of that, in that process you have to address what is going to be the legal status of those soldiers on the ground. In the absence of a SOFA between the United States of America and the host nation country, in this case Libya, at that point there was a requirement from

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

a DOD/AFRICOM perspective, as I understand it, that the commander needs to be -- that is a decision the commander reserves unto himself. Like, okay, I, combatant commander, would waive the standard requirement to have a SOFA in place before conducting any type of training activities.

Now, that's one part of it. That's the DOD part. The other part I think, as I tried to highlight, is this is all in parallel, okay? Now, Mr. Ambassador, what are your feelings about this status? And he had his positions. He was like, I would like to -- I think we need to pursue.

Ambassador Stevens' position was, like, that is fine, he understands the combatant commander is willing to assume that risk, but I, as a chief of mission, would like to pursue the P's and I's to see if we can get these American soldiers the privileges and immunities that will in the event of an accident help them.

Q And just to clarify, so this conversation that's going on, you mentioned it was after August 3rd. Do you remember exactly when it was? Was this during the August 22nd visit to Stuttgart?

A This is a running kind of issue. This isn't a one conversation one day. So I would say it spanned the August -- the month of August, frankly, from early August when it became clear it doesn't look like Department of State is going to request DOD, okay, now what do we do with the SST.

Q Okay.

A Okay, well, one thing we have to consider is status.

Q Okay. So just to summarize to make sure that I understand, so it's the commander's decision whether or not to pursue a status of

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

forces waiver. And he engaged in conversations with Ambassador Stevens about what the mission would be for the stay-behind force. And in the course of those conversations, Ambassador Stevens had expressed concerns about the legal status, specifically the privileges and immunities that would be accorded to that stay-behind force. Is that --

A That is generally accurate.

Q Okay.

A I say generally because the status of forces waiver is kind of internal -- again, it's a procedural piece where when they go to the combatant commander, we would like to conduct the training, however, there is no status of forces agreement between us and Libya.

I bring that up just to kind of underline the fact that the combatant commander, yes, I am willing to waive SOFA requirements. However, understanding there is one person, American in charge in Libya, and that is the chief of mission, we need to make sure we are nested and synched.

Q Okay. So to your knowledge, did the status of forces waiver, was that ever issued or granted?

A I don't know.

Q Okay. So what then --

A I don't know, but in a way it was irrelevant.

Q Yeah.

A Because the decision was made we are going to pursue the P's and I's, and that's what the Ambassador wants.

Q And that was a shared decision between the Ambassador and AFRICOM?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Yeah. That was a conversation. It ultimately became the way forward.

BY [REDACTED] OD2

Q That's the August 23rd conversation?

A Again, running conversation. The table was slapped, if you will, in a way, in August 23rd, okay, let's move forward with pursuing the P's and I's.

BY [REDACTED]: AD1

Q But that's the Ambassador's decision. He just informed AFRICOM. It wasn't a shared --

A Right.

Q Let's be clear, when you asked was it a shared decision --

A Yeah, no, it was the Ambassador's decision.

BY [REDACTED] ODI

Q Whose decision was it?

A And the combatant commander, according to my recollection, said Roger, makes sense, sir.

Q Okay. So can I ask in these conversations, these continuing conversations, who first raised the issue of the privileges and immunities?

A That was the Ambassador.

Q Okay. And to your knowledge, his recommendation was then let's work this out first with host country before we take any further steps?

A Correct.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Okay.

BY [REDACTED]: ODZ

Q Is that a delicate process, trying to work that out with host country? I mean, do you just go to the host country and say, this is what we want, and therefore you are going to do this? Or is this a real sensitive area in terms of discussions or negotiations?

A It depends on the country, but traditionally it's a delicate --

Q And in the case of Libya?

A It was delicate and complicated given the infancy of the Libyan Government. And I am not State Department, but I think countries generally take very seriously to whom they grant privileges and immunities. And anything that is out of your traditional this individual is going to be the political officer at the Embassy, anything different from that, I think any country would require a tremendous amount of consideration and thought, which is what the Libyans eventually, you know, as they figured it out, did. They took their time.

BY [REDACTED]: ODI

Q Did you ever have informal conversations with other DATs in the AFRICOM AOR regarding any challenges they may have faced bringing military personnel in country?

A U.S. DATs in other countries?

Q Yes. Were you aware generally that they experienced any challenges?

A Yeah. Sorry for the pause. I am trying to think through my

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

personal experiences. And then we did reach out to, I think, the State Department folks, and I reached out to other countries where they had 1207, 1208 programs -- I believe 1208 -- just to kind of understand, okay, how is this relationship between you and AFRICOM? So, yeah, there was considerations there. And I think -- I feel like at the State Department level they did that, too, DCM reaching out to DCM. But I don't remember exactly, partly because the Ambassador was like, you know, our going-in position is I want to get these guys P's and I's.

Q I guess what I am trying to understand is if there were any resistance in Libya to bringing in the military folks, was that a concern or an issue that was shared or experienced by other countries regionally?

A Oh, I have no idea.

Q Okay. That's fine.

A I don't know of any. Specifically bringing U.S. forces into Libya? My guess would be no.

Q Okay. Just to ask real quickly, you had mentioned during the last hour, in my notes I had written down that you mentioned that Stevens wanted things done slowly and surely. Can you maybe elaborate on what you meant by that?

A Yeah. Not necessarily slowly, but I think more he wanted it done smartly. He wanted to make sure I's were dotted and T's were crossed before we moved forward. I think whatever the engagement was, he understood that it was important to engage across the board with Libya, but he wanted to do it smartly.

And so that's essentially it. Whatever it is, let's think about

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

it, recognizing that working with the libyans under ideal conditions was going to be difficult, and let's not overwhelm them, but let's also make sure we are taking a balanced approach in terms of our engagements and consistent with the policy.

Q Because the P and I's may have been a Ministry of Foreign Affairs matter, would you have had any role in the P and I discussion?

A I did have a role, a limited role, a secondary role. So, for instance, myself and then the DCM, Greg Hicks, we went to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As this request was making its way through, they requested a meeting. And I was there to help amplify what the individuals would be doing, how they would be assisting the Libyan military. So to help the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs understand why we were asking them for the privileges and immunities commensurate with A and T staff.

BY [REDACTED] ODZ

Q And I'm sorry --

A Administrative and technical staff. I believe that's a category of Embassy individual or U.S. Embassy employee.

Q And are these discussions relating to people that were being left behind, or are these discussions relating to people that might be coming back, assuming additional SST team-like individuals would be returning? Or all of the above?

A Yes, all the above. Anyone who would come in to conduct a 1208 training, assisting. And if it ended up being the individuals who were currently there, then, yes, it would apply to them.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q So the Libyans would certainly understand that we had the August 3rd date of phasing down, and then there is, I guess, additional discussions that would possibly need to take place after that, subsequent to that, about potentially bringing people back should that be a decision.

A The Libyans had no idea that August 4th was an important date. But as we explained to them, it was, that their mission has changed. And not being a career diplomat, their diplomatic status has therefore changed, the onus is on the United States. These individuals came and you granted them visas, official visas, based off this position at the Embassy. This is changing. We would like to change their status. And as we change the status, we would like to them to have the P's and I's.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

BY [REDACTED] ODI

Q So was the Libyan Government aware of the presence of only the four who stayed behind?

A I can't speak to what they were aware of. My supposition is they just considered -- they were all either still there, or whoever had not left and gone through immigrations and customs on their way out and been stamped out, that they were there.

Q I see. Okay. I would like to mark Exhibit 1.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 1  
[REDACTED] was marked for identification.]

BY [REDACTED] ODI

Q I can just quickly identify this. This is an opinion article that appeared in the Wall Street Journal on January 22nd. It is written by Gregory Hicks, who is the former deputy chief of mission for Embassy Tripoli. And I can just ask really briefly, are you familiar with this article?

A No.

Q Okay. So I can give you a moment to read it.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

RPTS COCHRAN

DCMN CRYSTAL

[11:57 a.m.]

BY [REDACTED] ODI

Q Just to let you know, I am going to ask about two very discrete portions of this which I can direct you to.

A Why don't you do that.

Q Okay. Sure. So I want to first ask you, and you are more than welcome to read the entire thing but it can almost operate as a stand-alone, this paragraph here on page 2 that begins, "Because Mr. Kennedy --"

A Okay, I read that paragraph.

Q Okay. And just for the record, I will read this out loud. The paragraph begins, quote, "Because Mr. Kennedy had refused to extend the special forces security mission, State Department protocol required Chris to decline General Ham's two offers to do so, which were made after August 6th. I have found the reporting of these so-called offers strange since my recollection of the events is that after the August 6th incident, General Ham wanted to withdraw the entire special forces team from Tripoli until they had Libyan government approval of their new mission and the diplomatic immunity necessary to perform their mission safely. However, Chris convinced General Ham to leave six members of the team in Tripoli," close quote.

So just before I ask you about this, we've discussed it a little bit -- you discussed it a little bit in the last hour, but were you aware

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

that General Ham had provided or had made two offers to Ambassador Stevens in the August timeframe or after August 3 to provide additional security resources?

A No. So the decision is made -- I will go back to what I know, which is that VTC that occurred between Ambassador Stevens and General Ham. General Ham said he thought the request was going to come down, it would probably come down to the 11th hour, but he was ready to support.

Subsequent to that, I have no recollection of General Ham or the combatant command coming back and saying, we will still offer forces. In a way, it as a decision that was made and everyone was moving forward. Nor do I recollect Ambassador Stevens going to AFRICOM and saying, hey, we would like these guys to stay. So I don't know if that clarifies things or makes things more obscure, but that was my recollection.

This other point --

Q So can I just on that, if I can just unpack that a little bit, because I think it has been reported and I think there was a finding in the recent bipartisan report from the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence that there were two offers subsequent to the lapse of the SST mission. So I am just trying to understand, if that were to be true, is it possible that you just wouldn't know about it because you maybe didn't participate in those conversations?

A It's possible. I don't know how likely it is, but it's very possible. The fact that there were two that I don't know about and having kind of bracketed it and been in country and with Ambassador Stevens, that is surprising to me that there were two. But it's possible.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Okay. And I'm sorry, you were going to make a point?

A No, this does not reflect my understanding of the conversation about the SST personnel in their post-SST role.

Q What specifically here?

A The comment made in this article stating that after August 6th General Ham wanted to withdraw the entire special forces team and that, in his words not mine, Chris convinced General Ham to leave six members of the team in Tripoli.

Q Okay.

A My understanding was Ambassador Stevens wanted to reduce the footprint as much as possible. Their mission has ended. They aren't going to be here -- they are no longer authorized because we, the State Department, didn't request them to serve in a security capacity to assist the RSO, we don't have the P's and I's required to conduct the training.

So there was no -- Ambassador Stevens wasn't fighting to keep them there. If anything, as I remember it, it was SOCAF and AFRICOM saying, okay, well, how many are you comfortable with staying, because we would like them to stay in the event P's and I's come quickly and we can transition and help the Libyan military. At that point it was, well, a small footprint to kind of maintain the relationship, let's not lose rapport, and we all recognized that if they leave, getting people back in could be a time-consuming process.

Q So just to summarize then, your recollection of the events is not the same as what's stated here?

A Correct. My recollection of events is not the same as what's

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

stated there. Once the SST mission was formally concluded, my recollection was Department of State wanted to see a minimum footprint.

Q Do you know what may have led the chief of mission or had given him the impression that AFRICOM had sought to withdraw the entire special forces team?

A No, I really don't. I think he mentions this was the day he got in country or the day after he got in country. I think that may have been an aspect of it, too.

Q Okay. The next portion I would like to ask you about just real briefly is farther up on the page and it is the paragraph that begins, "According to the National Defense Authorization Act -- "

A Yes.

Q I will read it for the record. The paragraph begins, quote, "According to the National Defense Authorization Act, the Defense Department needed Chris's concurrence to change the special forces mission, but soon after the August 1 meeting and as a complete surprise to us at the embassy, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta signed the order without Chris's concurrence," close quote.

Do you have any recollection of these events?

A No, I can't speak to the details on this. If my recollection serves me correctly, one, I don't know, I would have to go back and check the National Defense Authorization Act, I am not sure. But I think Secretary Panetta, in order to end that SST mission, there was a signature involved, and I feel that somehow it is tied to that, whether I am right or not. And I just don't know enough, unfortunately, to say, did that

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

same document have both the termination of the SST mission and potential subsequent missions? I don't know.

But what I can tell you, the impact was not necessarily severe because, again, you had the two key individuals talking, General Ham and Ambassador Stevens, and they were having a conversation, and their line of communication was open. So any issues or clarity problems would be worked out and especially were worked out in August.

**ADI** BY [REDACTED]:

Q Just one quick clarification. You mentioned there was a lieutenant colonel in the Embassy that did the security cooperation mission. We have talked a lot about the different security cooperation authorities. But what is the division of labor there? Was 1208, because it is operational more than train and equip, was that something you focused on and did he or she do the other? Or how did that work?

A So he had nothing to do with it, 1208. It was principally [REDACTED] and then it didn't fall squarely within any of my previously discussed defense attache roles. However, just like I kept fully abreast of security cooperation issues and things that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] the security cooperation officer did, I also tried to stay abreast of SST transition 1208 programs as well.

Q But he would have been the guy developing the 1206 --

A Yes.

Q -- all those concepts and communicating that back to AFRICOM, and you would have been apprised of that just by virtue of protocols?

A Yes, both back to AFRICOM and sensitizing the Ambassador and

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

getting country team input, a collective effort.

DDI [REDACTED]. I think that concludes our round. We will go off the record.

[Recess.]

ORI [REDACTED] It is 12:47. We will go back on the record.

ORI BY [REDACTED]

Q Change gears a little bit and just talk a little bit about the general security environment, what your understanding of the Benghazi facility was. So when you arrived, I understand that you went and you visited the Benghazi facility in late April before you officially came in, is that correct?

A Yes.

Q After you arrived in June, what was your understanding of the current presence in Benghazi and any future plans for Benghazi?

A And it wasn't something we initially discussed or anything as part of kind of my transition, but to my knowledge at the time there had been no change to the force protection or the security in Benghazi.

Q To your knowledge was there any discussion of changing the nature of the presence, making it a more permanent facility, or had any of that discussion begun?

A I don't know about changing the facility necessarily. I do know that, for instance, when I had gone in April it was a concern of the regional security officer, and because of the limited assets he had, even when I went up there in April with the former defense attache, it was taking the resources from the RSO, which would in turn impact on

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

the ability of the RSO to help support the mission in Tripoli and other places. It is a long way of saying that security was always taken seriously, and I think [REDACTED] as is now known through his testimonies, not that I have heard all of them, clearly was concerned about security in Benghazi, as well as Tripoli.

Q When you arrived in June or prior to June, did you have discussions with [REDACTED] about the security?

A No, I didn't have any specific questions or discussions with him about security in Benghazi.

Q Okay. You had said that you didn't provide any formal consultation on the security resources at the Embassy or the security posture at the Embassy. Did you have any sort of informal discussions with folks on the country team or otherwise about the security of U.S. facilities?

A Yes. So if you can imagine, this wasn't a standard Embassy where everyone lived in one location and worked in another. We were always kind of together. So you'd inevitably see each other probably three times a day and in the evenings. So in the course of that interaction, what are you going to talk about? You're going to talk about work and you're going to talk about the RSO and other people, you're going to probably talk about security. So at an informal level, sure.

Q Can you elaborate on those discussions at all, sort of what maybe concerns that were raised or what the subjects were?

A So no specific details, but what it always kind of came to was how do you balance the mission -- whether you are the public affairs

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

officer who wants to go out and get something done or whether you are the defense attache who wants to get something done -- with security, which is the RSO's responsibility. Hey, we want to do this in a safe way, first and foremost, and in a credible way, so everyone can do their engagements. So those were always the tone and tenor. I don't remember or recollect any specific conversations.

There would be times when you would submit a move request and the RSO would want to talk to you about, okay, can you push that meeting to the right or how important is the meeting and things like that. But I think that just speaks to the process that the RSO did have and then just the attention that they did pay to security.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]:

Q Were there any specific discussions about the physical security, the way things were laid out at the Embassy, any concerns there in general?

A Conversations or concerns?

Q Concerns, or conversations about concerns?

A No. There was always a concern. Again, I was never at the center of these conversations, but when you have country team meetings and the RSO would speak, I think we had monthly, it always ended up being more than that, frankly, EACs, Emergency Action Committee, and then we would have at least a weekly meeting [REDACTED] to talk about security writ large, and there was close attention paid.

In terms of facilities, my recollection is that the RSO had a running concern and had expressed a running concern with specifically

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

the facility in Benghazi. And then as you look at Tripoli, then you have the July debate about the SST extension. And I think the RSO felt that having the SST there was good for security and was important.

Q I think you mentioned in the first hour that you served a number of other posts. Can you compare what Embassy Tripoli was like when you were there to some of your other posts that you have been stationed at as far as security of the facility or how things were laid out?

A It was so different, and it was so different in Tripoli than it was in any of my other posts. My other posts were very mature posts -- Cairo, Egypt; Amman, Jordan; and U.S. Embassy in Morocco -- so there really was no -- I had no frame of reference in what an almost expeditionary-type post-revolution embassy and diplomatic mission looked like.

Q Any specifics how were they different? You said they were really different, it was really different. What was different about it?

A Just the physical infrastructure. Traditionally you would have, A, an embassy which was just that, it wasn't -- although when I arrived in June you did have a facility where the majority of the work was done, which was the former chief of mission residence, about 5 kilometers away from where the actual residence and the eating area where everyone lived and where I worked [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] So in a normal embassy, especially after I forget the date, but you had certain construction standards and what the

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

embassies needed to look like, specifically with force protection in mind. Every embassy I had been to previously had an MSG or marine security guard detachment. So those are some of the big differences.

But some similarities, if you will, each embassy I had previously served in had a local guard force. Sometimes that was provided by the local military, sometimes it is hired contractors. So those were general observations.

ORI BY [REDACTED]

Q Less specific to the facilities, but what was your understanding or impression of the security environment in the eastern part of Libya and Benghazi in the months leading up to the attack?

A Kind of holistically, how is the situation security-wise going in Benghazi? There was definitely a sense that Benghazi had security challenges. So, for instance, from my military attache point of view, there was a series of assassinations of Libyan military currently serving and former military officials in Benghazi. So, I mean, it literally kind of ramped up to an assassination campaign, which had started about the June timeframe, probably earlier, but I think we first started picking up on it. So there was that aspect of it.

And there was also the growing awareness that ultimately the monopoly of force didn't lie with -- certainly not with the Libyan military, but the Libyan government as well. It was always a dialogue between the government and various militias. That dialogue at times became more formal in the Libya shield construct, where the chief of staff of the Libyan military had strong relationships. But it was

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

traditionally a quid pro quo. It certainly wasn't the relationship that we would recognize in the U.S. military. Okay, Libya shield one, go do this. That is not how it transpired.

Q In your estimation, with all the dynamics at play, was the security environment getting more tenuous or degrading, if you will?

A I think that is a fair characterization. I mean, it wasn't glaringly obvious that things were going south extremely in a precipitous manner, but there was certainly a sense that there were problems in Benghazi, they definitely don't seem to be improving. And it is interesting, too, and a lot of us were watching closely post-elections. The elections have happened successfully, they were fair and transparent, what impact is this going to have?

And you went straight from elections into Ramadan, which is kind of the quiet period traditionally in a Muslim country. So there was a bit of a lull I feel during that period. So it wasn't easy by any stretch of the imagination or obvious to read these tea leaves, but there was a sense with both the Libyan government and military officials and in the international community, I think there was a series of periodic episodes in Benghazi.

AA1 BY [REDACTED]:

Q And, presumably, [REDACTED] in the course of your job, you read and familiarized yourself with the Intelligence Community's assessments of the situation in Libya at the time, is that correct?

A That's correct. They had a read book that was available which I would read periodically.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q [REDACTED]

A Potentially, yes.

Q Potentially. So 2 weeks ago the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence issued a report on Benghazi and it was portion marked for declassification and so forth, and on page 9 there they have a line which says, "The IC produced hundreds of analytic reports in the months preceding the September 11, 2012 attacks, providing strategic warning that militias and terrorists and affiliated groups had the capability and intent to strike U.S. and Western facilities and personnel in Libya." And then again in the unclassified report here they give some examples, such as the June 12, 2012, DIA report; a June 18, 2012, Joint Staff daily intelligence report; a July 2, 2012, DIA report; a July 6 CIA report; a September 7 DIA report.

I am not asking if you remember any of these particular dates or reports, but is this the sort of reporting you would have reviewed in the course of your work?

A Yeah. I can't talk specifically to any of those, but --

Q Sure.

A As the defense attache, yes, so you would stay in contact with [REDACTED], you would read the read book, you would try and keep your finger on the pulse as much as possible on security in general, and again with my lens specifically in terms of the Libyan military.

Q And do you have any sense or any recollection -- again, they

[REDACTED]

declared that the IC produced hundreds of analytic reports in the months preceding the attacks, talking about the fact that terrorists and affiliated groups had the capability and intent to strike U.S. and Western facilities and personnel in Libya. Again, in the months or weeks preceding the attack, did you sense a particular threat or threat trajectory?

A A particular threat?

Q Not a specific danger, but was the situation getting worse in Libya?

A The general sense that I have, if my memory serves me correct, was that the point you just characterized, there was definitely a general sense in the east that security was becoming -- was in greater, greater threat. It was becoming more tenuous over time.

With that being said, Tripoli, it wasn't necessarily the case. That seemed to be, okay, this is a post-revolution, the government doesn't necessarily have a monopoly on force. There are security concerns, yes. But I would draw a distinction between the concerns we had with the east and Tripoli. I'm not sure if that clarifies this.

Q That helps. And do I understand you to say that you discussed these concerns or this assessment?

A I would characterize it as we discussed these, we being the country team. Terrorist-related -- specifically terrorist related stuff, the lead for that would be -- those conversations would take place  
And then we would kind of collaboratively, okay, what's the so what, and I would contribute

[REDACTED]

to that. But, again, it would kind of be the RSO advising the Ambassador on security-related issues.

Q And in that answer, in that [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q You didn't have any discussions at the Benghazi annex -- or did you?

A No. No, I did not.

*ORI* BY [REDACTED]

Q Just a quick follow-up on that. When you discussed the terrorist threat, was there a rising concern in the terrorist threat or the threat of terrorism in the eastern part of the country?

A Yes, I think that is a fair characterization, the potential, a concern that the government didn't necessarily have control of all of its territory and what does that mean? If there is a space like that that is available, who fills those vacuums and why?

Q Now, do you recall any instances where these discussions sort of merged with any discussions about the continued presence of a U.S. diplomatic facility in Benghazi?

A I do not recollect any specific. There was discussion as to what does the future of the U.S. presence in Benghazi look like. So you have the two facilities up there. Do we continue with that? Does State Department have the resources? Do you combine a U.S. presence up there?

I know of those in only very general terms. Generally those were

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

kind of, hey, let's talk offline [REDACTED] the chief of mission and bring in OBO people or those responsible in the State Department for managing and acquiring facilities and properties.

Q Overseas Building Operations?

A Yes.

Q So moving forward in time a little bit, when did you learn that Ambassador Stevens planned to travel to Benghazi?

A I was TDY to the United States with the chief of staff of the Libyan Air Force from approximately 4 to 9 September. When I came back, that is when I found out that the Ambassador was going to Benghazi. Had it maybe been brought up previously? Maybe, but I don't remember. I remember coming back, okay, the Ambassador is going to head up to Benghazi for a few days and then he'll be back. At that point I was going to debrief him on the visit with the Libyan air chief to the United States.

Q When you learned it, did you also learn of any concerns within the Embassy country team about his travel out there or was there any discussion of concerns about his security out there?

A No, nothing related to that trip specifically. And you may be aware of this, that previously, exactly when I am not sure, I feel like it was the August timeframe, there had been discussion about the Ambassador going to Benghazi. If my memory serves me correctly, which it may not, at that time the decision was made to postpone that visit due to the security situation. And it could have been tied, frankly, to the end of Ramadan, Iftar, things like that. But this was not the

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

first time there had been a conversation previously.

But the specifics as to the security situation and all the thought process, the trip planning that went into it I wasn't privy to. And I wouldn't necessarily have been, frankly. He was going up for a nonmilitary related visit. He wanted to open up open the cultural corner. This was kind of heavy public diplomacy type of affairs.

Q Did you have any discussions with AFRICOM or DOD personnel about the Ambassador's plans to travel to Benghazi prior?

A I did not.

**ARI** BY [REDACTED]:

Q You may have answered the question because you were on TDY, while you were on TDY in the United States, were your responsibilities solely with the Libyan air element activities here in the United States?

A Yes.

Q So, for instance, while back here in the United States, you didn't have any discussions with AFRICOM or others about any preparations that might be put in place for the security posture on the 11th of September?

A No.

Q And when you returned in country from TDY, did you have any discussions about or were you privy to any discussions about security posture that may be put in place?

A No, I wasn't. And I am not aware of the RSO reaching out to AFRICOM to say, hey --

Q Sure. Again, that is not your line of work, so you would

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

not necessarily be part of that, correct?

A Correct. And maybe if he was going up to visit military units, but then I would have accompanied him, conceivably, if I was in country.

Q And how about force protection posture on 9/11? You were presumably advised of that, as everyone on post was?

A Can you clarify that?

Q Do you have any recollection of force protection posture that the post may have assumed on 9/11 because it was 9/11?

A Because it was 9/11.

Q That is the first question. Do you have any recollection of anything special happening on 9/11 because it was 9/11?

A I do not. I have the sense that, similar to Benghazi, we either limited or we did no moves, but I would have to go back and fact check myself on that. I feel like I didn't -- yes, the thing is on the 11th it was -- was it all transpiring? Yeah. No, I would have to recollect. I feel like I may have attended one United Nations-related meeting that morning, but my presumption is moves were kept to a minimum, for a couple reasons. One, it was 9/11, and also because a portion of the RSO was with the Ambassador in Benghazi.

Q Fine. I understand. Thank you.

ORI BY [REDACTED]:

Q So on the day of the attack, September 11, were you aware of any specific or general threats to U.S. interests in the region, not necessarily Libya?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A No, I was -- in the region or Libya?

Q In the region.

A Specific, no. But I think this was also the time where -- so you're Middle East, North Africa, you have already got some kind of post-revolution problems. So nothing specific, no, but there always kind of a heightened awareness.

Q A general threat environment?

A That is a good way to characterize it. A general threat environment.

Q Were you aware of any specific or general threats to U.S. interests in Libya?

A No.

Q Were you aware of the potential unrest or the potential for unrest in Cairo prior to the protest that did in fact take place there on September 11? Had you heard that there may be a situation there?

A I can't recollect. So you had the release of films. There is always that lag time, right? So they're released at one point, but when do they come to -- when do they go viral? I'm not sure. So it was pretty standard for things like this, hey, listen, these may come out, or there are more cartoons coming out of country X. If we had that, then the RSO would make sure to kind of put that out.

Q Sort of what leads me to my next question, which is whether you had been aware that there was maybe this controversial video that had been out on YouTube for a while --

A I don't know if -- I can't recollect if this is something

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

that after the fact. I feel like it was -- we had known prior to that there was a negative reaction to the movie related to the prophet. But, again, that is also in the sea of a security environment where there is potentially always something that could trigger, especially those who are just looking for anything to harm the interests of the United States or other Western countries. [REDACTED]

Q It wasn't something that you all were particularly focused on necessarily as a pending threat in Libya, if you will? [REDACTED]

A Not to my recollection, but I would also go back to the fact that the 5 days prior I had been out-of-pocket, so I wasn't privy to, didn't sit in on the RSO planning and kind of mission briefs, if you will, of how they're going to conduct the visit to Benghazi. [REDACTED]

Q At this point I think it would be helpful if you could just walk us through with the best of your recollection the night of the attacks, leading up to and throughout the night of the 11th and 12th. [REDACTED]

A Sure. So we talked a little bit about locations. So it was 9:45, 9:50 or so on September 11th. All the Embassy personnel were on the residential compound. No one was at the offices. I was personally located in the TOC, which was what we designated one of the villas as the tactical operations center. I was there catching up on email and doing some work, when I forget who it was, whether it was [REDACTED] the RSO, or [REDACTED] the pol officer, who came in and said, hey, there is a report of an attack on the facility in Benghazi. So this is the 9:45 to 9:50 timeframe. [REDACTED]

So I was there. This had come through via a phone call, I believe [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

from Alec Henderson, who was the senior RSO up in Benghazi. So I either overheard or one of those two, [REDACTED] or David, briefed me, and so I found out very quickly soon after we got notification of it.

At that point I tried to do a couple things in parallel. I reached out to the other military people at the Embassy, so [REDACTED] hey, you need to come into the TOC, we got to talk. Also my OPSCO, [REDACTED] I said hey, I need you in here. Get up, get the SIPR, the classified coms up and running. So that was the core. And I don't know if I reached out to [REDACTED] or if he was hearing it through his channels and he showed up. So everyone kind of conglomerates there.

In parallel, I reached out to the AFRICOM Joint Operations Center [REDACTED] My conversation with the Joint Operations Center, I said at this point we have an initial report of an attack on the facility in Benghazi. Because one of my responsibilities was related to the ISR efforts, I also sought from the JOC, hey, we need to get confirmation that we have an ISR asset. I believe it was over Derna. Sometimes they fly, sometimes they don't. We got confirmation from that. Okay, let's push that ISR to Benghazi as quickly as we can. And I understand [REDACTED] who also has a role in the ISR piece, may have done the same. So that was just a conversion piece.

**ARI** BY [REDACTED]:

Q So you knew the ISR was up, or you thought it might be?

A I needed to confirm.

Q You needed to confirm it was up.

A According to my schedule it should be up, up over Derna. It

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

was up. Okay, let's retask it and get it to Benghazi.

Q Excuse me, when you talked to the AFRICOM JOC, was that by secure communication or --

A At this point it's me on a cell phone.

Q On a commercial cell phone?

A Yes.

So, hey, initial report of an incident. We will follow up. We will maintain communication with you to let you know what we know. Let's look at shifting the asset that we may have over to the facilities in Benghazi, the facility in Benghazi.

[REDACTED] The initial report, not sure what the situation is, we'll follow up.

At that point [REDACTED] was there, and I asked him, hey, I want -- we call it task organization -- [REDACTED] you work the AFRICOM piece, make sure they stay informed.

[REDACTED] and come down, and we give him period sitreps and he would go up and report those back.

Simultaneously, I was reaching out to any and all Libyan contacts.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He was also a special forces officer who previously served in Benghazi. Apprised him of the situation. Sir, whatever assets you have that can get to the facility,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

the American, the TMF, to relieve the pressure on it. He was like, okay, I will look into it.

And then there was another element, a Libyan Air Force element located in Tripoli -- pardon me, in Benghazi -- with whom we had contact. And I asked them, hey, we may be coming to you for assistance for whatever you can provide aircraft-wise, otherwise, and also what information do you know about this? Can you help us figure out what is going on?

At the same time, I asked a State Department officer, hey start taking notes of this thing. Because at this point what you can imagine is you have got a small kind of living room, which is literally what it was, and you had a foyer which was the RSO office, and then you have got a lot of people converging on this at the same time. So you have the RSO and you have the political officer on the phones with their contact. Everyone is on their phones with the contacts.

And the frustration is mounting. We are trying to, one, get clarity of the situation; two, get help to the situation. And we are half inside because reception, of course, is terrible, so you have got to step outside. Simultaneously you are trying to cross level information, hey, RSO, I just talked to this military representative, this is what we might be able to do. They know about it. They are looking into it. Get back to you.

So I think for clarification point, though, it may be worth saying that predominantly those individuals that were talking directly to members at the temporary mission facility were the RSO, [REDACTED] and the pol officer, [REDACTED] who had just come back from Benghazi.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

He had been there as the senior officer. In the meanwhile, the rest of us were both working host nation contacts and in communications with the various military chain of command.

Q Excuse me, who was [REDACTED] in contact with? You said there was division of responsibility.

A Yes. Good point, so [REDACTED] came in. We did a quick huddle, this is what I am hearing, this is what he is hearing. At that point [REDACTED] and his element were in a separate villa with their COMS. So he came in. We initially kind of cross-leveled information. He goes back to his villa and he is in communication with SOCAF and pushing up the message through his channels.

So this is going on now, let's say around 2150 or so we get report of attack, maybe a little bit earlier, maybe 2145. It becomes apparent at a certain point that the Ambassador is missing and the foreign service officer responsible for communications is dead.

So at that point our conversation with AFRICOM, okay, we are going to probably -- we are going to need an aircraft here, if nothing else for Medevac purposes. And I am explaining this in a linear fashion when you can imagine -- I mean, it is hard to underdescribe the degree of kind of confusion, but at the same time everyone trying to work -- to give way together.

So in the course of this, and I presume we are going to get to it at some point, trying to track down Greg Hicks, the DCM, who had also come into the TOC, to kind of figure he would work the phone as well. He was reaching out to senior-level Libyan civilian contacts trying to

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

enlist their support to relieve pressure on the facility.

There was a comment, hey, what can the military bring to bear? What do we have aircraft-wise? And at that point we, me working with [REDACTED] we went back to AFRICOM and said, hey, listen, we need to think about all the assets we have available to help out here. We have FAST movers. We already talked about we need to start working a potential Medevac out of here because we know at least we have one KIA, we can presume there is injured, if nothing else from smoke inhalation. So that is all being worked.

So then there is a lull, right? And this lull is -- I mean, it's probably 45 minutes after the initial report. At this point I feel that we are getting information from Benghazi that, hey, we have accountability for everyone minus one. Unfortunately, that minus one is the chief of mission, is Ambassador Stevens.

At that point the relief force, the force that came from the Benghazi annex, had lashed up and linked up and they had collectively done an assessment of the situation and made the decision, okay, well, there is a lull here, let's pull back, let's all fall in on the annex and then assess the situation and proceed from there.

I think that sometimes gets lost. I have always kind of looked at this and said there was not a lot of time on the objective or time on target, at least not for those who committed the attack. So they came in, they had a sense of purpose, and I think it sometimes gets confused because you had the looters and everyone else coming in. That is not to say some didn't straggle and stay behind, but as I look at

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

this with my 20-plus years in the military I think that sometimes gets lost. As we are trying to figure out the situation and really the accountability of what is going on, they are really pulling off the objective. To do what, we don't know.

So to back up then, they have done the linkup, the element from the annex is gone, and then they are falling in, everyone is rallying together at the annex location.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]

Q Can I ask real quick, what does that suggest? You've described their tactics with respect to coming in and then pulling out. What does that suggest to you about their level of sophistication or training, if anything, the attackers?

A Yes. It is a good question. My personal assessment is they knew the location. They knew about the security posture. I feel they had something on the shelf, that if we something -- if we are given a pretext of some description, whatever that is, we can pull this off the shelf, everyone kind of fall in at the gates of the temporary mission facility, and we are going to do something and then -- so that is kind of my perspective looking at it.

They didn't have an elaborate system as we would have, okay we are going to -- support by fire opens up and then we're going to -- it was less than that. It was less than a kind of full, thought-out methodical. I think they had the outlines. I think once the opportunity presents itself, presented itself, they went with it, and I think after they had initial success --

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Is it fair to say -- you said less than our forces. But would it be fair to say more than a mob?

A I don't understand the question.

Q In other words, did you suggest that it was a -- I take it you suggested it was sort of a planned event, that they had a plan on the shelf, like you said?

A Yes. I may not be understanding.

Q That is okay. I think I understand what you are saying, yeah.

A A broad outline, a plan, hey, if you get a phone call, this is what, if we have the opportunity.

**AA1** BY [REDACTED].

Q When you say that you knew that there was a lull, that you were minus one in nonaccountability, the Americans were pulling back to the annex, how is it that you knew all that? By cell phone communications from Benghazi?

A Yes, but not to me directly. Again, so you had a couple -- and you didn't want to mess that up, right? So everyone has got the right phone numbers. The people in Benghazi know who to call when they can. Let's keep those lines open. Meanwhile, everyone else work your Roladex.

Q Okay.

A So I was hearing it not directly, but secondhand from either the RSO or the political officer or the DCM.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

RPTS BLAZEJEWSKI

DCMN HERZFELD

[1:27 p.m.]

ORI

BY [REDACTED]

Q Please continue.

A Okay. So that gets us there, and I'm sure we'll circle around because there's a lot of details I'm sure I'm leaving out.

So they've rallied, they're back at the Annex. At that point I'm also in contact with [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. He's at [REDACTED]. He's informed me at a certain point, first of all, we're looking at trying to get an aircraft to get up there. I had a conversation with the Libyan military, what air assets do you have available? They said, we'll see. This is a military with one basically functional C-130, and they're going through their approval process. And then subsequently they get a call from [REDACTED] the organization here has an aircraft that's available, and we're going to go up with elements [REDACTED] to Benghazi to assess the situation and help out. Roger. Good initiative, go, let's keep in contact. Not that he was asking my permission, but, yeah, okay, that -- well done, whoever's initiative that was, however that happened.

So we were in communications, and I feel like he would either try and call me, as a backup he would probably call [REDACTED] just to kind of make sure that information was cross-leveled.

So they push -- they get to Mitiga in Tripoli and fly to Benghazi. At this point they get to Benghazi, and I think, as you're aware,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

there's -- they get stuck at the Benghazi airport. So now we have an additional request of host nation military who has to date -- it became apparent to me early on that the Libyan military, two things. One, it had no better situational awareness of what was going on in Benghazi than we had; and, two, that they had no legitimate force that they could bring to bear, organized force.

So at this point we're calling the Libyan military, say, okay, we're no longer at the temporary mission facility. By the way, we are missing the Ambassador, and, however, we need your assistance to get a small team of Americans from the airport in Benghazi to the other U.S. facility location so we can figure out what's going on and what the next steps could and should be.

And this is kind of interesting, because we ended up hearing the same refrain often, regardless of who we were talking to.

[REDACTED] First of all, there's a degree of denial. Second of all, for a while I was getting words [REDACTED] listen, the Ambassador's okay. It's okay. We've got a hold of him. And then I would come back, Sir, have you talked to the Ambassador? Well, no, but I got confirmation from the President, you know, al-Keib has said he's okay.

To the Libyans' credit, they did have an emergency meeting of key leaders to try to figure out what was going on, but after you hear that repeatedly, and they had gotten on message at some point, say, listen, we need time. Tell the Americans, okay, we've got to figure this out. I don't think they were trying to be misleading necessarily, I don't

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

think they were trying to be disingenuous, I think it was partially a save-face issue, we've got a big challenge, let's figure out what's going on for ourselves. So that was an aspect.

I forget the time, but that evening about 2 o'clock in the morning the decision is made that we are going to evac the embassy in Tripoli. We're going to evac, and we're going to go [REDACTED] Okay. So we talked that through quickly. I was working close with the RSO at that point. He clearly had his plate full. I was like, you know what, we can help out. We, DOD, the military. I've got [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] We can plan a convoy, and we can do it securely. We'll work with your RSO officers. We also had [REDACTED] who was helping with the personnel accountability at the embassy, we'll work that piece for you.

Our recommendation, and this was a collective decision, a decision made, do we go right now? And I was like, unless you know something I don't know, probably the best bet, let's wait until daylight to make this movement, and we collectively decided, okay, we'll make the move at daylight. So we were planning that.

You're also -- and the team is stuck at the airport. People are going to pack a bag. We're consistently also reworking contacts on the Libyan side and maintaining contact with AFRICOM [REDACTED] to try and make sure everyone's got the same information, but there was a period there where we don't have any information. We have everyone minus the Ambassador accounted for at the Annex at Benghazi. Okay, the Ambassador, where is he? Is he still on the compound? And they just

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

were unable, despite multiple, in my opinion, heroic efforts to go back into these burning buildings to recover him. Has he somehow been taken before or after the team left? Not sure. Is it -- I've heard some people say, okay, now it was a hostage situation. I just don't even think we knew enough at that point to know what type of situation we had.

And then at that point some people were getting information through Libyan contacts. Well, there's a body in the hospital, there's this. So, okay, well, how do you confirm that? Do you send people? Okay, well, let's think that through. So that continues.

In the meanwhile we're working. At some point the decision is made let's push reinforcements to Libya in the form of a FAST platoon in addition to the medevac bird. So it's something simply stated, but there is a process, and the host nation has a vote in a way. The Libyan Government, despite their limited capacity, okay, we'll help you, there's still things we have to go through. So flight clearances, tail numbers, the number of personnel, types of weapons, are they coming in on a -- passports, visas? No, they wouldn't be coming in on passports and visas. They would be coming to supplement the U.S. facilities in Libya. Not sure what. Right now they will land in Tripoli, we believe.

So all those issues are being worked in parallel, and then the medevac piece, what's required to get a medevac bird. Okay, when are they coming, landing? Where are they going to park? So a lot of that was done by my operations coordinator who was working those logistics pieces.

At this point the team is able to get from -- is there a --

[REDACTED]

OR2 BY [REDACTED]:

Q Can I just ask, you said at some point the decision had been made to push reinforcements. About when was that? Do you remember, or is it pretty vague? Was it before or after the decision was made to evacuate the embassy [REDACTED]

A I don't know. I don't recollect exactly. My assumption is that somewhere -- it must have been, as we're thinking through the smart thing to do securitywise, my presumption was it would probably happen about simultaneously.

Q When were the Libyans asking for flight clearance; do you remember?

A Time of day when were they asking for flight clearance?

Q During this time period of sort of -- [REDACTED]

A So early on, I was like, hey, expect the unexpected. So this is midnight or so. We may be coming with some sort of clearance requests, and, Libya, we might need your help. First and foremost, if you have an element to help relieve pressure or take control of security in your own country, in Benghazi, but aircraft, whatever, I'm giving you a heads up, we may be coming to request it. But specific -- so the process, you need information in order to officially submit a flight clearance, you need tail numbers, you need times, you need packs and things like that. All that was squared away, I think, in the course of -- so we're -- really I think we started focusing on that after -- just prior to and as we evac'ed from the main facility to the [REDACTED]

Q Okay.

[REDACTED]

A Plus there was no Libyan on duty. There's no there there in a lot of ways with the Libyans, but you have to have a guy in the office to whom to give the paperwork.

AR1 BY [REDACTED]:

Q I just want to understand for a second. So before, now while you're still at the embassy, there were three lines of communication to AFRICOM, as I understand it. One was you, one was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and one was [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

A No.

Q No?

A There were two. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and myself and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] were kind of working the same. I made initial contact with AFRICOM because I was there, gave them the initial data dump. I said, hey, [REDACTED] can you be responsible for coms with AFRICOM, and he also took over responsibility for talking to the Libyan contacts in Benghazi.

Q And, again, while you're still at the embassy, were these coms, your coms, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] coms with AFRICOM still on the commercial cell?

A Yes.

Q And when you went [REDACTED] -- so you've left the embassy. Did your communication change any, which is to say were you on commercial cells from there, or did you have another form of communication?

A Let me take a step back and talk about another communications channel that we had open was my [REDACTED] [REDACTED] So like detail detail was pushed up that, to the extent that we had it,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

right? So a lot of this was, hey, we're under attack, or the facility in Benghazi is under attack, and then the other coms were commercial. When we depart the facility in Tripoli to go to the [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Understood. And when you got [REDACTED], through other mechanisms were you able to restore [REDACTED] communication?

A No. Not me or not embassy personnel. They had -- their coms were up, so there was a mechanism, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

ARI [REDACTED] Okay. Thank you.

ORR BY [REDACTED]:

Q If we could just step back for a second to the flight clearance issue, the discussion with the Libyans. I completely understand this was a long time ago, and it was a chaotic situation, but it's a matter of some importance to try to flesh this out as much as possible. Understand that there was maybe an initial reach-out to your Libyan contacts. There may have been an initial, I think you said, discussion, hey, we may be sending people in on an aircraft. That would be different from a sort of formal request, as I understand it.

A Yes.

Q When do you recall that the actual formal request took place?

A I don't recall when the formal request took place, although I was confident that the Libyans would approve it. That's what I was

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

shooting for. You aren't going to have any problems because this is going to come across at some point. So I forget when the initial medevac bird came, which was the first bird that came in prior to the marines coming in. I think it was later on in the evening. But a lot of that, the formality and the paperwork piece was probably worked the morning of the 12th.

Q So is it fair to say perhaps that the formal request may have happened after the evacuation from the embassy [REDACTED] later on that morning?

A Yeah. It certainly didn't happen before the evacuation from the temporary mission facility [REDACTED]

Q From the embassy, you mean, to the --

OR1 [REDACTED] Clarification.

[REDACTED] No.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]

Q I understand, I'm tracking you now.

A It's complicated, and I misunderstood.

Q No, that's fine.

A Yeah, I think that's a fair description. I would have to go back and rethink it, but I don't -- given the amount that was going on and the priorities at the time, we would have evac'ed first most likely [REDACTED], and then, okay -- because we were still working the piece of how do we get the people from Benghazi back.

Q Right.

A So let's work that piece, let's make sure we understand that.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

And then Chris -- and now at this point the Libyan bureaucracy is waking up. There's actually someone on the other end of the fax to whom you have to send this, and so those mechanisms are kind of up and --

OR2 [REDACTED] That's helpful. Thanks.

OR1 BY [REDACTED]:

Q So I think we sort of got off on a few tangents, but we were sort of at the stage maybe right before you evac'ed to the [REDACTED] where things stood. If you could maybe keep walking us forward from that point.

A Okay. So to the best that my memory serves me, we then -- the decision is made, okay, people get your bags ready, everybody fall back in here about 06, if my memory serves me correctly. We'll make that move. In the meanwhile we're working the manifest plan, we're working with RSO, we're working with the former SST element, okay, how do we secure this? How do we want to do it? What are we going to do with the luggage? So all that's getting worked out.

And then we make the move. Then we arrive [REDACTED]. At that point --

Q Do you recall approximately what time that was?

A I think it was after -- a little bit after 6 a.m., but I don't know. You could go back, when was daybreak. We were probably doing it -- you always want to do it daybreak or probably a little bit to the right of that. But for some reason I have 6 a.m. leave. Probably took us about a half hour to get there, 6:00 or 7:00.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Let me ask you this: Was it still dark when you left the embassy?

A No.

Q Okay, first light?

A Right, yeah. We didn't want to risk moving at night, having the break in contact, or you wouldn't be able to see enough. We just weren't sure enough about the conditions on the road, number one, which are dangerous, and then what was out there. So the decision was made, okay, unless there's anything, we haven't gotten any information that there's any direct attack threat, let's hold what we got here, and then wait for daybreak, do this in an organized manner so we don't lose control.

ORI BY [REDACTED]:

Q Had the attack on the Annex taken place at that point?

A At the point that the decision was made?

Q At the point that you all left the embassy.

A Not that we were aware of. Not that I was aware of.

So we're moving, and the first I'm hearing about this is when we [REDACTED], say, hey, there was another -- a subsequent attack at the Annex. Okay. Yeah, so we've got more KIA, and we've got wounded. Okay. Now we're simultaneously working on getting those people back while figuring out at this point two separate missions are the, okay, medevac, let's nail this down, we've done the majority of the legwork, let's get times and everything locked tight, and then let's work on the FAST platoon.

[REDACTED]

CR2 BY [REDACTED]

Q We have a few minutes left on this hour. I just want to just get into something about when you arrived [REDACTED]. Now, I'm going to ask you some questions, but I'm going to be very careful how I ask them.

A Okay.

Q I think you can understand why when I start asking them. So what I'm going to ask you is kind of what you saw as you came [REDACTED], but I don't want you to describe -- I only want you to talk about what it was like that night. I don't want you to talk about anything subsequent to that night, that morning, I guess, 9/12, and I don't want you to name any units or describe anything in, you know, great particulars. I just want to get a general sense of whether you feel that when you arrived [REDACTED] that there was a robust security presence there to kind of protect that location.

A Okay. So we make the move [REDACTED]. We had all been [REDACTED] before, [REDACTED], we had had meetings there. [REDACTED] It had its security people there, and we just drove in with a lot of our people. I think we had about 25 to 30 people. [REDACTED]

Now, mind you, the contract aircraft that had left that night from Tripoli to Benghazi [REDACTED] on board in addition to two other [REDACTED] so they had visibility, and it would be those coms that they would have. But in terms of what was the security posture or profile, anyone who was a security-related person [REDACTED] was there pulling [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

security responsibilities, as were all the regional security officers at the embassy. So you've got more people because you're combining both security elements.

Q Were the security forces [REDACTED], were they augmented by host nation at all or indigenous forces?

A So similar they had outside, you had local militia. What the exact relationship was I'm not sure. My understanding is this was a -- this was part of their security plan, this was part of their outer perimeter security out front. Inside, like with us, the inner security was U.S. I'm not sure if that's what you -- if that helps clarify things or not.

Q Would you describe it as a secure location? Relative perhaps at least. Give you something relative. Would it be secure relative to the embassy as it was when you left it? More secure, about the same?

A I would say generally the same.

Q Okay.

A I don't know their numbers, I don't know how many people they have, but that's not necessarily -- but the net effect of consolidating to one location, taking security people from both, made for a better improved security posture.

OR2 [REDACTED] Understood. Okay. That's helpful. I think we're about --

OR1 [REDACTED] Off the record.

[Discussion off the record.]

OR1 BY [REDACTED]:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Go back on the record. The time is 1:58.

[REDACTED] thank you again, appreciate your patience as we ask our questions.

I'd like to return to the discussion we were having during the last hour. You had walked us through a sequence of events that happened on September 11th, and I was hoping we could start just before you learned of the attacks. And there was a question in the last round about maybe your understanding of certain demonstrations that might be occurring elsewhere, and I just would like to clarify for the record, prior to learning of the attack on the Benghazi special mission compound, were you at all aware of events unfolding at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo?

A I would have to go back and check the timeline. I presume those events happened prior to -- I feel like they were in the days leading up to. The protest in Cairo was connected to the film; is that correct?

Q Yes, but just to focus on the event itself rather than the cause. So there were a series of demonstrations that were taking place. Did you have awareness of that?

A There was awareness of that. I had awareness of it just in the general media. Mind you, I was in stateside and I feel like it was during that time frame that the demonstrations were going on related to the release of the film, but, yes. So I had general awareness of the negative reaction in Cairo to the films.

Q Okay. So you believe that you first learned of the demonstrations in Cairo while you were TDY to the U.S., is that correct, or you just don't remember?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A I can't remember. I don't remember. Because I don't remember when they happened. I don't remember how I learned about them.

Q Did you -- after learning about the demonstrations, did you have any discussions with any personnel in Tripoli?

A I don't recollect having any conversations with any personnel in the embassy related to that.

Q Okay. I would like to fast-forward a little bit. You were discussing some of your responsibilities on the night of and the actions that you undertook to help facilitate response and a medical evacuation, and I would just like to kind of go through -- and I may jump around a little bit -- and just ask some more specific questions based on some of your statements in the previous hour.

You were describing the situation in the Tactical Operations Center, and you mentioned that you first learned of the attack on the special mission compound when embassy personnel came in to the TOC. Do you recall -- well, let me try to ask it this way: So you had mentioned that there was an attempt to track down the deputy chief of mission at that point in time to inform him of the attacks. Do you recall that sequence of events?

A Not at that point. That's not how it transpired. So at some point the deputy chief of mission showed up, and he was involved in the process. I'm not sure if he got a phone call his own way, but it was subsequently, as people were getting information, and you're trying to cross-level, you try and track down the person in charge at that time, who was the DCM.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Okay. So was there an effort made, though, by personnel in the TOC to reach out or locate the DCM?

A Yeah, I get a little confused. At some point he came to, and it was shortly thereafter. All the key embassy people collected or gathered at the TOC in the span of probably 5 to 10 minutes.

Q Sure.

You mentioned that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was also one of the military side, the military personnel to come to the TOC, and you mentioned that you had a quick huddle with him. Can you maybe help us understand -- so you mentioned, I think, in passing that he was in contact with SOC Africa, but I believe you also mentioned that there was some contact on your side or through your subordinates with a different JOC. Or would all the information have been going to the same place, or can you maybe just help walk us through each one of these strands of communication?

A Yeah, sure. So ultimately the answer is yes, all this information would have come together at one point. So if we take AFRICOM as a big headquarters, a subcomponent of which is the Special Operations side, SOCAF, Special Operations Command Africa, that was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] main inject, that was his headquarters, that's who he would talk to. Myself -- so they have their own TOC or their own operations center --

Q Okay.

A -- in addition to one in AFRICOM, the higher headquarters, with whom myself and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] were talking directly periodically.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

So without knowing exactly what happened, what most likely happened is we would push information to the AFRICOM JOC, and then a responsibility of the Special Operations Command Africa JOC after receiving information from [REDACTED] [REDACTED] would be to also feed in to the AFRICOM Joint Operations Command, or JOC. [REDACTED]

Q Okay. And did all the task forces report in to that JOC, or that was a JOC for the task force to which the four were detailed?

A [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] They had a separate kind of communications. I don't know exactly what it was, but it was to an element. Similar to the way [REDACTED] [REDACTED] talked to an element that was a subunit of AFRICOM, they would feed in to a unit that would in turn report to AFRICOM. Does that clarify issues?

Q Yes.

A Okay.

Q Can you maybe take us back to the Tactical Operations Center. It was a difficult period, a lot of folks converging in one place trying to get a grasp on the situation and respond. Can you maybe talk about how you coordinated with the other personnel in there?

A Yeah. So the benefit of all being on one compound when there's a crisis is you're all on one compound when there's a crisis. So you had all the key players who were there. So no one was very far away. Someone might be on the upstairs making a phone call, or someone may be elsewhere, but essentially the way information -- we all kind

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

of conglomerated around the RSO's area and desk, and we would talk after conversations. If you got something of value in a conversation with a host nation contact, for instance, you would go and cross-level it with the political officer or the DCM.

The DCM, in my view, at that point was in charge, so every time you could, you would give him the -- I would give him a quick brief on what we know, what I know from the DOD perspective.

Periodically we would sit down and do a huddle. For instance, when the decision was made to do the evacuation, that was a, hey, sir -- myself and the RSO encouraging the DCM -- we need to sit down and get everybody together to make sure everyone understands, because there's a lot of concern and frictions, people are hearing different things, and we can really kind of lay out the plan for them.

So there was a huddle, at least one, where all hands came together. In my recollection this was about the 2 a.m. in the morning. There's still kind of the lull, and we're trying to figure out what to do. A decision is made to evacuate. So we put that out, and we then subsequently worked the plan for that, and at the same time we tell people what we know and what we don't know.

Q Okay. Do you feel that key decisions were being made in an expeditious fashion?

A Key decisions as in?

Q Well, you mentioned the medevac instance, for example.

A Yeah. No, I feel that decisions were being made in as good a conditions and as expeditiously as possible. The real driver was

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

information. The real driver was good information, which no one had. So there was an assessment period, and you start without -- you're never going to have the full picture, but I felt that once there was enough of a picture, okay, we know the team has left, and we're missing one. Then you could make a decision, and I felt that, yeah, we would coordinate together, and there was a good cross-leveling of information.

Q Can I ask, how was information coming to you about the events as they were unfolding at the special mission compound during that initial 45 minutes or so or the initial hour?

A Okay, at the temporary mission facility? That was all a good point. So, again, that communications channel that we tried to keep inviolate was between essentially, if I remember correctly, Alec Henderson and initially Ambassador Stevens with either [REDACTED] the RSO. Or I know that [REDACTED] also had contact with one of the other RSO officers in Benghazi at the time.

Q Okay.

A They would find out, quick data dump. Hey, everybody, this is what we know, this is what I just heard, okay? You try and confirm it, or you reach out to your contacts and see what they know.

Q So did you have any direct connections to any personnel in Benghazi?

A I did not.

Q Okay.

A I did not have direct communications with U.S. personnel at the temporary mission facility in Benghazi, if that makes sense.

[REDACTED]

Q Okay, that's a helpful clarification.

You had mentioned kind of your understanding of -- you characterized the attack and had made some comments about the attackers, and you felt that they had a plan that came off a shelf, and you also made this comment that you felt that they knew the security posture at the temporary mission facility. Can you maybe explain how or why you think that?

A I think, one, it was --

Q And let's just -- we'll focus on information the night of, so if you've learned anything subsequent to that, we'll put that aside.

A So things you've learned subsequent to or prior to?

Q Well, just focus on information the night of.

A Yeah. So, one, they knew the location, so they knew where it was. So clearly they had done some sort of homework or what we call reconnaissance. I think if you are a bad person, and you are looking for opportunities, you do that at a minimum. You kind of do initial intelligence work to find out if you have potentially contacts, or you know somebody who knows somebody who may be part of the guard force or related to the militia that is serving as the government's protective force, those kind of things. They would do that.

I think it's not too big of a step to presume that anyone who is going to attack the embassy or the temporary mission facility in Benghazi would have done that. I think the fact that there was a degree of orchestration with the police officer leaving ahead of time prior to the attack, and then once they got on the compound, it appears that they

[REDACTED]

had a good familiarity with the layout.

**ADI** BY [REDACTED]:

Q But could I just -- but the temporary mission facility wasn't clandestine, right? The Ambassador had meetings and things like that?

A Right, it was not clandestine.

Q It was not clandestine. So any citizen of Benghazi might have been aware?

A Certainly. Probably most. I don't know if that's a fair characterization, but, no, correct, this wasn't necessarily -- I mean, there had been meetings there with numerous Libyan officials. Sometimes the meetings would be held at the facility. This is even prior to Ambassador Stevens getting there. The political officer who was in charge would have meetings there and would sometimes host representational events. For instance, I think it was the Turkish consular officer who had had dinner that evening with Ambassador Stevens. So --

**ODI** BY [REDACTED]:

Q And just to clarify, so there was no specific intelligence reporting of an imminent threat; is that accurate?

A No, none that I'm aware of. Nothing clear, concise, time, any of that kind of detail. There was the situation in Benghazi which was deteriorating, but I knew of no -- and I don't think anyone knew of any -- specific threats directed towards either the facility or the chief of mission when he was in Benghazi.

Q Okay, that's helpful. Thank you.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

You mentioned a conversation you had with a DOD person before they departed from Tripoli to Benghazi. Once the two Special Forces personnel as part of that team left, how many specialized military personnel were there remaining in Tripoli?

A So if we go back to our numbers, if we say we had 10, and you have 2 DOD personnel who went up on the contracted aircraft to Benghazi, that would leave us with 8 total. Let's not count myself, [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] necessarily. So that leaves you your four special --

Q I'm sorry, I was counting three, so five would be the difference. Or did you name -- there are four personnel?

A There was four of the former SST personnel who I think -- I just did public math. That's probably a bad idea.

Q That's okay. Maybe we can go through it a little more slowly.

A Okay.

Q You mentioned 10, and then 2 left.

A Yep.

Q So that left us with eight. And then not counting --

A Then four.

Q The four, okay.

A Me, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and then you've got four SST, former SST.

Q Okay.

A One of whom is General -- is [REDACTED] and then his three personnel, one who -- two are SF NCOs, and one I think

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

is your admin --

Q To be clear, so the four in the embassy, their mission at this point, including yourself, wasn't an RSO-like responsibility, right?

A Correct.

Q Okay. So what was the remaining security footprint at Embassy Tripoli after the two -- well, the two weren't collocated, so --

A So what you had at this time, and I would have to go check, you had the RSO and the assistant RSOs. I don't know exactly how many you had.

Q Was it less than five, less than three?

A I feel like it was five, so -- and then you had -- you also had a host nation contract at the gate, men at the gate, I believe. I feel that at some point locally engaged RSO personnel came to the embassy to be of assistance, and then you had your four former SST personnel, who at that point now say, hey, RSO, we have weapons, we know how to shoot them, can we help you? And at that point I feel the RSO said, okay, yeah, get on the roof. I'm not sure where they went, but they assisted.

Q So I know you were very focused on your mission at this particular time, but did you have any concerns, I guess, in the early period or throughout that time that you were in the Tactical Operations Center about your security at that facility?

A There were general concerns, and that was ultimately why the decision to evacuate. We just didn't know. My personal opinion, again

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

because I had seen no traffic, and recognizing that the east in Benghazi is a little different than Tripoli in the west, I wasn't too, too concerned about it, but all the steps the RSO took made sense to me. Okay, let's consolidate, and let's move to a more secure location or move together so we have a more secure position.

Q So you agreed with the decision?

A Yeah.

Q Do you recall who made the decision?

A I don't know. I know who said the decision was the RSO, but whether he made it unilaterally, if he made it in conversations with the DCM, or if they made it based off conversations with Washington, I don't know. I presume it's a combination thereof.

Q Okay. And I believe you talked about it a little bit in the last hour, but it sounded like your personnel then basically took on the responsibility of the consolidation into the single facility; is that accurate?

A Yeah. We said, hey, we can help with this, this is something the military is pretty good at, so you can focus on everything else that's going around. So we helped kind of come up with the manifest, make sure we have our accounted for, identify drivers.

Q Can you just walk us through some of that and maybe discuss some of the challenges that were associated with getting everything together, executing the plan, moving all the personnel?

A Yeah. So not a lot of people had been in situations this stressful, so I think that was an aspect of it. Foreign service

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

officers, even military. It's dark, you've got a facility up in the east that's being attacked, there's a lot of unknowns, and someone as strong a leader as Ambassador Stevens is missing. So that was one aspect of it.

So there was a lot of confusion. I spent a lot of time, we did, trying to be clear. This is what we're going to do, we're going to be safer, we'll move, we'll make a decision then.

Accountability was initially difficult because at some point, although we were all on the same compound, some were in their bedroom, some were in living rooms, things like that.

But once we got everyone accounted for, and once we had the initial meeting, at that point we said, okay, everybody come back in, and we'll give you a briefing prior to departure. When you come back have a bag, an overnight bag.

And then we had to identify all the armored vehicles because we weren't going to make this move in anything but armored vehicles. Okay. Who in your estimate -- who in our estimate has got the wherewithal to be able to drive these things, because not everyone in the State Department necessarily, or even the military for that matter, had the training or the presence of mind necessarily. So you identify the drivers.

You would then identify, okay, do we all go together; do we send one group and follow up with the next? And then also you're working, okay, what do we do with the equipment? What do we do with this? The decision was made to execute the destruction plan. So that was done.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The key for me was, okay, let's not forget anyone, and let's make sure we do this safely. That worked out.

Q Throughout that period and including the movement, how did you stay in contact with folks?

A It was all cell phone.

Q Okay. Were there any issues associated with that, reliability of -- I mean, was it difficult to connect with people?

A No, by and large it was reliable. I can't think of any cases where our -- depending on reception, you might have to go outside to have this conversation, but outside of that, no, communications was reliable.

OD2 BY [REDACTED]:

Q Can you describe sort of who is in charge throughout all that evening in Tripoli? Is there a formal structure? Is this something that you kind of do as sort of a committee of the State Department people, the military people? Is everybody providing input? I mean, there's a lot of decisions, and people are directing a lot of different things, so where are these orders coming from, and how are you determining what to execute and in what order?

A There was no confusion in my mind of who is now in charge. The senior person is the DCM, who was Greg Hicks, and so when he's there and he's having these conversations, but he's present. So as these decisions are made, again, it's me going to him, I'm sure it's [REDACTED] talking to him, and we're feeding him information. He's simultaneously on the phone, I believe, with Washington to a fair amount

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

both trying to explain to them how things are unfolding on the ground and what we know and what we don't know, and then receiving feedback from them. So ultimately it was Greg Hicks was in charge as the senior person.

Q Then from a military perspective, that information you would also feed then to the DCM?

A Right. So anything I did or thought or anything, I would push to him or talk to the RSO, who in turn would talk to him.

CD2 [REDACTED] Okay.

CD1 BY [REDACTED]

Q Continuing on the medevac and the issue of the flight clearances, I believe you mentioned in the last round that you had put together packages, formal packages, to submit.

A No, not necessarily. So as it transpired, there's formal paperwork required in order to have -- you know, we need a letter from the embassy requesting a flight to land. Not packages per se, it's just paperwork. But that being said, we had done all the legwork upfront, had the phone conversations, these are going to come. The feedback from my Libyan military contacts in the Air Force and others, understood, got it; you can have whatever you want, let's just make sure we get the paperwork.

Q Even if that was after the fact?

A Ideally afterward, yeah. We will help you, don't worry. However, when an aircraft comes to land in a foreign country, they need a permission number essentially, flight clearance number, to pass the

[REDACTED]

tower.

**ADI** BY [REDACTED]:

Q But the paperwork wasn't going to be the constraining factor to get the airplane in?

A No. I felt confident that this was going to happen. Like the Libyans were not going to be obstructionist, they're like -- but you wanted to do it, so you had the paper trail and everything straight.

**ODI** BY [REDACTED]:

Q Did you receive all the authorization you thought necessary from the host country in order to facilitate the movement of American aircraft into Libya?

A Yes. I would go so far as to say we received authorities from the Libyan side of the house that if the situation were reversed, it would have been much more difficult for our government to do.

Q Did you communicate that information to the deputy chief of mission?

A Yes, in the form that, [REDACTED] we're working the clearances, it's going to happen. Where the FAST platoon is going to inbound, we're going to have the medevac. Other way around, the medevac will come in first, and then it looks like the FAST platoon will come in subsequent.

**ADI** BY [REDACTED]:

Q We're talking about the FAST platoon. Can you talk a little bit about push versus pull from your higher? So who initiated the idea that, okay, now we're sending -- was the -- were you requesting reinforcements, and their solution was a FAST platoon, or did they come

[REDACTED]

up on that and say, we're going to push you, we're starting this movement here. Because we haven't even started talking about the Special Operations guys. So your narrative so far is focused on what was happening in Tripoli, but what, if any, help, were you getting pushed to you?

A Yeah, so this is my understanding of the genesis of a FAST platoon request. I actually started a conversation between Greg Hicks and his higher, I don't know if it was the Secretary or whom, but he was the one who requested additional security forces in Libya, and it was from that, I believe, that State Main then went to DOD, and then we got involved and said, okay, what assets are available? I don't think -- it's possible that the request was for a FAST platoon, I don't know, but in my estimate it was the right asset to send.

I don't know if that clarifies things or not. This was not DOD.

Q But it was working in parallel, I guess. What actions do you feel AFRICOM was taking in parallel to support -- to anticipate and support your requirements?

A Yeah. Without knowing all the details, my presumption is upon receipt of that initial phone call from me to the AFRICOM JOC, a lot of wheels started spinning. So the way the military works is, okay, what's the situation, what do we have? Let's look at a -- our lay-down of our assets and our forces in region. Okay, let's what-if this thing, okay? If we need to surge forces, what's available?

This is just how the military thinks. So they -- my presumption is it was probably working in parallel and probably working up both chains

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

at the same time: Hey, Madam Secretary, or whomever was involved, we, DOD, can provide this. Or was it, you know, State going, hey, listen, just got off the phone with the DCM. We want -- he wants a FAST platoon there, or he wants additional resources. Somewhere those intersected.

Q Why was the decision made to move to the [REDACTED] rather than collapse [REDACTED] onto embassy?

A I don't know.

Q Is one significantly safer than the other, for example, on physical characteristics or --

A In my opinion, it probably had to do with two things. One is the physical structures. The embassy compound was bigger, and more difficult to defend, and more sprawling, not necessarily the most accurate term, whereas the [REDACTED] was essentially a big rectangle.

Another reason -- so it would be easier, especially if you had additional security forces that came over with the team from the embassy, it would be easier to secure.

The second aspect of it, I think, would probably be tied to both numbers and the communications capabilities that resided [REDACTED]

Q We've heard some places that DOD was not aware of the Annex in Benghazi, but now we know through what you said in the first hour that you actually visited the Annex in Benghazi, right?

A Yes.

Q You talked about a planned -- the planned event on September 11th versus the -- you know, an elementary concept that came together.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Was there -- when you looked at it again later in your professional experience, did the attack exhibit organization or any command and control, or was it more aptly described as a collection of individuals?

A It exhibited, in my estimate, a degree of command and control. There was -- I think there were key people in the group who kind of seemed to be shifting some people one direction. You look at the use of the available resources like the fuel to kind of start the fire, as I understand it, and just the withdrawal of the police officer prior to, my estimate is there was some degree of leadership at some point.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

RPTS JOHNSON

DCMN HERZFELD

[2:28 p.m.]

ADI BY [REDACTED]

Q Not to get out ahead of the chronology of this thing, we are now at the point where you've assembled on the [REDACTED]. Has [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] begun the discussion of his desire to move forward up to this point yet?

A I don't know. I'm not aware because --

Q I mean, everybody wants to move at the sound of the guns, right?

A Yeah. I found out most of that stuff after the fact.

Q Okay.

A This was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] working with his chain of command and working, you know, apparently with the DCM, with Greg Hicks, and whereas I was fixated on let's just get the aircraft from Tripoli to Benghazi. At no point was I aware that, hey, someone wants to get on that aircraft and go up. That just never really came across my desk.

Q The point is up until this point you and he had not been having those sorts of discussions.

A No.

Q No.

A We touched base periodically as what I know what you know. I don't remember him saying, hey, [REDACTED] I want to be on the next thing smoking up there. That's not my

[REDACTED]

recollection.

ODI BY [REDACTED]:

Q How did [REDACTED] -- [REDACTED] and his team assist during the consolidation or the movement in the securing of personnel?

A Yeah, they played a key role from security. I believe I had them -- they went ahead and kind of ran the route for us, so to speak. So they were helpful in that regard. They may have also -- I had a contingent kind of bring up the back end as well to make sure we kept integrity. And then once there, they fell in on the security plan, to the best of my recollection, that [REDACTED] had in place.

Q Was there a discussion, after you arrived at [REDACTED] about pulling out from that position and evacuating from there?

A There was no discussion about that, as I recall. Now, at this point -- and I forget when exactly it was made -- the decision was made we're going to go to minimum manning, and we are now -- we have got a third mission to evacuate nonessential personnel. So we have got the medevac of the hurt people, we have got the FAST team coming in, we have got the decision to downsize to minimum manning.

Q Was there any concern about the ability to receive the incoming from Benghazi?

A Where?

Q The personnel being evacuated from Benghazi. Was there a concern at [REDACTED] about your ability to receive them and secure them?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A [REDACTED] in terms of, like, space?

Q Yes.

A No.

Q Okay.

A Mind you, some of the killed [REDACTED] as well, so there was --

Q You mentioned -- there was a question during the last round in which you mentioned that perimeter security for both the Tripoli -- Embassy Tripoli and the [REDACTED] were provided by the same entity. I wonder if you have any insight as to whether there was something similar in Benghazi, whether there was a sharing of local indigenous forces there.

A If that's what I said, then I need to make a correction. They were -- the outside security was provided by similar-type elements, not the same organization or the same company, to the best of my knowledge. So as I can -- to the best -- and I am not the RSO, so you would have to kind of go back. Outside of the compound, either compound, you had -- [REDACTED], you had it seemed like a local militia with a physical presence. Sometimes you would have that at the embassy in Tripoli. But then you would also have the local guard force contractor to work the gates, and then you would have U.S. personnel. So it was almost three layers, if you will, if that clarifies things. But that's not to say that those outside, you know, the [REDACTED] were the same as the ones outside the embassy in Tripoli.

Back to your point, I don't know if the elements in front of the

[REDACTED]

Annex in Benghazi were the same as those affiliated with the temporary mission facility in Benghazi. I don't know if they were the same militia, you know, the 17 February Brigade. I don't know.

OD2 BY [REDACTED]

Q You just mean host nation support in one capacity or another outside both entities. Is that fair? So whether a militia --

A I mean host nation support provided in the form of --

Q Militia?

A -- whatever they had, which is -- in most cases ended up being a militia.

Q Right.

OD2 BY [REDACTED]

Q I wonder if maybe we can move on a little bit. After the attacks happened, can I just ask how long did you remain in country?

A Yeah. I stayed until June this last year, 2013.

Q Okay. And maybe we can focus on the days and the weeks immediately after the attack. Can you just describe for us from your vantage point sitting on the country team operations at the embassy at that time?

A Yeah. I would characterize it as the embassy was reeling for a long time as a result. So we had downsized considerably. So you have a significant portion of the embassy personnel are pretty much in limbo in Europe. So everyone's trying to figure out what's going to happen to them.

In the meanwhile, you have an essential manning crew in Tripoli.

[REDACTED]

And then you go through a series of different acting chiefs of mission. So we had Greg Hicks was in the position for a while, I think until early to mid-October time frame. And then you had Ambassador Pope, who came in from that time frame until end of December. And then you had Bill Roebuck come in.

Q Can I ask just a clarifying question? When you refer to the country team, who exactly are you referring to? Which positions within the embassy?

A Okay. Sure. I may get this a little bit wrong, but traditionally when you talk about the country team, you talk about the chief of mission, the deputy chief of mission, and then the heads of section.

Q Okay.

A So political officer, sometimes there is a separate economic officer, your RSO, your Defense attache.

Q So would that be considered the senior leadership then at post?

A I think that's a fair, yeah, characterization.

Q In the days and weeks after the attack, how many of the country team rotated out of -- or were pulled out of Tripoli?

A I would have to go and check the numbers to see who was actually on the drawdown list, but in the core personnel, I think our public affairs officer left for a while, I believe.

Q That's Mr. [REDACTED]

A No. Mr. [REDACTED] stayed throughout, and he was a political

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

econ chief. So he remained. RSO obviously remained. I remained. I feel like we kept the consular officer.

Q Okay.

A Because she may have gone out initially and came back in just because of the importance of that position.

Q So that sounds like the heads of most of the sections.

A Right.

Q So who then did leave?

A So we sent out -- for a while the security cooperation officer left. The security cooperation NCO left from the military side of the house and public affairs side of the house. If the chief of the section left, then they all left, but if not, he may have been the only one who stayed. The remainder left. You had some recently arrived mission personnel, I think one was from human resources, management side of the house. We downsized there as well, I think two or three officers from the management side of the house.

Q Would you describe the days and weeks after the attack as a challenging period?

A I would characterize them as a challenging period, yes.

Q Okay. Can you maybe help explain for us some of the challenges that you were all working through during that period? Obviously, there was the trauma associated with the loss of the personnel. But were there any other challenges you were facing just in operating the embassy?

A Of course. It's a combination of all things. So there was

[REDACTED]

obviously the increase in security side of the house. So movements became much more difficult, I think justifiably. In a lot of ways we spent a lot more time on compound as opposed to getting off and trying to, you know, learn more, and each person trying to move forward. But we all understood that. And then, again, the leadership changes, I think, had an impact in terms of where are we going, what are the priorities? So from that aspect it was challenging.

Q Can we focus on that for a moment? So it sounds like some sort of a lack of continuity in terms of direction with new leadership coming in. Can you maybe explain what happened or why that was the case?

A Yeah. I don't know all the details. I understand it's probably a very difficult process and a longer process to get a new ambassador, as was the case. So without really being able to expound more upon it, so, again, Greg Hicks was the charge for a while, and then Greg Hicks returned to the States and then did not end up coming back to Tripoli. You had Ambassador Pope come in, and he provided what I thought to be strong leadership and guidance, but that was only until the end of December, at which point Bill Roebuck came in. And you also had the RSO swap out. So you have the RSO, [REDACTED] departs post. And then what you had was you had that billet filled by a series of TDYers initially until, I think, March time frame, when you got a new permanent RSO, which made things difficult, because, you know, the TDYers didn't know much initially.

Q Thank you. That's very helpful.

Maybe continue to move on now. You mentioned that you remained



[REDACTED]

A When I left, either everything to enhance it short of finding a new location altogether had either already been enacted or was completed, frankly.

ODI [REDACTED]. So thank you very much. I think that concludes our round. We will go off the record.

ARI BY [REDACTED]

Q We are back on the record.

So, [REDACTED] bear with me, please, because the Armed Services Committee, this end of the table, we are particularly interested in the discussions about the military assets that were potentially available that evening and the days following, and the understanding at post of what those forces were and the timelines and so forth.

So I think you said that shortly after word came into the TOC that Benghazi was under attack, you and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] established a communication, and your warrant officer established a separate communication [REDACTED] in your warrant officer's case, and you and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with AFRICOM?

A Yes.

Q And separately I think we have established that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had his own communication. And I think you also said you didn't have a lot of fidelity into the specifics of his communication; is that correct?

A Correct.

Q So let me talk now just about the conversations that you and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] were having. And I need, if I can help -- if you can help [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

me understand this, distinguish between the conversations you actually had and the conversations that you understand [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had, but that he related to you.

A Okay.

Q And you said, if I understand correctly, shortly after the events unfolded, you understood that you had a one KIA, I think you said, and thus there appeared to be a need for medevac. And you communicated -- did you communicate that need on the AFRICOM end to AFRICOM?

A I don't remember exactly whether I communicated that directly. I believe that we transmitted that through [REDACTED] [REDACTED] because this would have happened after the initial attack, when we're getting feedback from those in Benghazi of what the situation is. So in my mind's eye this is probably 10:45-ish or so, at which point I had already had Greg focused, as is my primary conduit or the primary conduit with AFRICOM. So that would be my --

Q Fine. That's helpful. Thank you.

And I think, and correct me if I'm wrong about this, you also said that the discussions about the possibility of dispatching a FAST team originated with Mr. Hicks and his conversations with State Department, Main State?

A Yeah. That's my recollection. And it happened later. So probably 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning-ish would be my memory.

Q And regardless when it happened, it is not a conversation that you initiated or was not brought to your attention by AFRICOM. In

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

other words, that was a result -- the prospect of dispatching a FAST team didn't originate from your line of communications.

A No. Not my recollection.

Q Or [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

A No.

Q Were there other -- setting aside medevac, and setting aside for a moment other types of aircraft, through your communications and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] communications, do you have recollections of discussions of other forces that might come?

A At that point, no. We were not privy to conversations about what forces were available to AFRICOM, what AFRICOM was thinking, and what conversations AFRICOM was having with probably Washington about what was available, what could be brought to bear as the situation went forward.

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

So now let me turn specifically to -- sorry. And you said you were aware of ISR, and you confirmed that it, in fact, was up, and you redirected it?

A Yes.

Q Did any of your conversations or, to the extent you remember them, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] conversations through your line of communication address any other ISR assets other than what was overflying Derna?

A No. I don't remember a conversation about additional ISR assets.

Q Did you ever have any conversations or, to your knowledge,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] ever have any conversations about the availability of AC-130s?

A I do not -- I know I didn't have any conversations about AC-130 aircraft. And I am confident that [REDACTED] didn't have any conversations about AC-130 availability.

Q So now let me turn to another category, and that is fighter aircraft, fast movers. Did you have any or, to your knowledge, [REDACTED] have any discussions about the prospective availability of fighter aircraft?

A So, again, trying to recollect back 16-plus months, this is how, from my perspective, the conversation about fighter aircraft transpired. As I talked about periodically touching base with the DCM, Greg Hicks, about what we were doing, we had a brief conversation about the availability of fast movers, and he asked me, is there anything available? And it was about in general terms such as that. At which point I talked to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] said, let's reach back. The question has been asked. We are going to relay that question back directly. And at which point [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was having a conversation with AFRICOM about the availability of fast movers.

Eventually the answer came back, to the best of my recollection, that there is nothing available that can get there in any timely manner. And it may have been tied to fueling abilities of tankers, but the details of which I don't remember. I just recollect the question was asked from Hicks to me, [REDACTED] and I relayed that to AFRICOM, and then they studied the problem.

[REDACTED]

Q And is it your recollection that you had those discussions, [REDACTED] had those discussions, you shared those discussions? I'm sorry, those discussions with AFRICOM I mean.

A I see. It is my recollection that at that point in the evening, the conversation was generally I talked to the DCM, [REDACTED] and I talked, and then he has got the main communications channel with AFRICOM after I would hand off the -- my initial opening conversations with the AFRICOM JOC.

Q I see.

And before you relayed that discussion that evening and then heard [REDACTED] report about AFRICOM reporting back about the availability, did you have any particular knowledge about the force laydown of fighter aircraft available, potentially available, to the AFRICOM AOR?

A I did not, not in any type of detail or even generalities.

Q So this information didn't strike you as either way -- I mean, you asked a question and got an answer.

A Uh-huh.

Q But you didn't have any preconceived or any particular notion what the answer was going to be when you had the question posed by way of [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

A No, I did not.

Q And you specifically, I think you said, remembered [REDACTED] reporting that tanking might be a problem.

A Yes.

[REDACTED]

Q I think you said --

A I'm thinking as I go. Certainly the point was it couldn't get here in a timely manner. My recollection is, and probably a few contributing factors, but one of which seemed to be a key limiting factor was fuel.

Q But, again, is that your understanding just because you're a military officer, or was that something that was broached at the time that we had this fuel limitation?

A That is my understanding in conversations with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] as to the challenges of getting fast-moving aircraft.

Q And you relayed this answer to Mr. Hicks?

A Yes.

Q And can you characterize his reaction to that?

A Yeah. There was -- there was no significant reaction, according to my recollection. We asked the question, what's available? It came back to him: It just doesn't look like we can bring fighter aircraft in in any timely manner. And then it was like, okay, let's keep working the problem. That was about the extent of it.

Q Fine.

A As I try to portray -- there a lot going on.

Q Sure.

A But that wasn't -- it didn't really go much further than that.

Q Sure.

Are there any other categories of response forces or topics that were broached by you or [REDACTED] [REDACTED] that I have left off here? I mean,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

ISR, and medevac requests, and --

A No, there is no -- that was really kind of it. There's no other conversations or other types of platforms, whether aircraft or anything else, that really came up at that point.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]

Q One quick question I thought I could logically put in here. With respect to the flight clearance issue, step back one more time, we have discussed this a couple of times. If you can recall, when were you formally directed by the DCM or anybody else with the State Department at the embassy there to officially request flight clearances from the Government of Libya? That's vice --

A It never transpired that way.

Q How did it transpire exactly?

A The decision was made to have the medevac come in and the FAST platoon come in. The implied task in there is to coordinate the flight clearances. So there was never a scenario or a situation where either Greg Hicks or [REDACTED] or somebody said, hey, pursue those; it's like, hey, we need the aircraft, and then the onus was on us to work with the host nation to get them.

Q Can you recall when the actual -- the relevant information that was needed, like tail numbers and things, when was that transmitted to the Government of Libya?

A I don't. But I would also come back to the fact that we had a green light from the Government of Libya to bring it in. It was just a question of when we were going to know the specific information that

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

goes into a standard flight clearance request. So it had to have been, I would say, sometime midmorning to noon on the 12th. It could have been a little bit after that.

Q And that's when you received the relevant information you needed to pass on, or what happened?

A Probably both. In the course of the morning, leading up to the afternoon, we got the information we required, and then we were able to subsequently transmit it to the Libyans.

ORR [REDACTED]. Okay. That's helpful.

ARI BY [REDACTED]:

Q So we have been briefed by [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who appeared before the Armed Services Committee and provided some of his recollections. We've also heard from a Marine [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. I don't know if you know [REDACTED] [REDACTED].

A I know [REDACTED] [REDACTED].

Q And [REDACTED] [REDACTED] recounted that he talked by cell phone to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] shortly after the attacks became known. Do you have any recollection of that? In other words, do you remember [REDACTED] [REDACTED] reporting what he had heard from that conversation with [REDACTED] [REDACTED].

A [REDACTED]

Q I beg your pardon, [REDACTED]

A No, but it doesn't surprise me --

Q Sure.

A -- because as we discussed it. But I don't remember, you know, for instance, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] coming to me and say, hey,

[REDACTED]

I just talked to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and X, Y, or Z.

Q So, fine.

So [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] both report that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] instructions to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] initial responsibility upon knowledge of the attack was to secure Embassy Tripoli. Again, you don't have any personal knowledge of that?

A No.

Q Those instructions?

Did you get -- is your recollection that those were the sort of activities that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was undertaking?

A Yes. So as I kind of saw things out of the periphery, and was talking periodically with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I think he lashed up with the RSO and said, [REDACTED] how can I help? We've got guys. And that was my understanding is he embedded himself and offered his assistance and his guys to supplement [REDACTED] in his efforts.

Q And do you have any recollection of his desire to move on forward to Benghazi?

A I do not. I don't -- I don't recollect a conversation, for instance, where he came to me and said, hey, [REDACTED] if I got a chance, I want to go to Benghazi. I don't recollect that, no.

Q Fine. I understand.

When the group in Benghazi moved from the temporary mission facility to the Annex in Benghazi, did you learn about that movement?

A Yes.

Q And you learned about it from your direct conversations with

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

individuals in Benghazi, or because the people that you had communicated with in Benghazi reported it to you?

A The latter. So again, as described, the four were all together, okay, I just heard they are linked up with the Annex personnel, they are now moving to the Annex together.

Q And who at Embassy Tripoli? Was it you, or Mr. Hicks' people, or whose responsibility was it to report to higher authority that the group in Benghazi is now at the Annex?

A It was never framed in those terms. Who has responsibility to report? It was -- I would update, and we would update through our channels, our kind of chain of command, both through the channels I have described from the AFRICOM [REDACTED]. Who did it on the State Department side, whether -- my presumption is that Greg Hicks, who was kind of -- you know, was aware, would then in his conversations with Washington relay the current status of situation on the ground.

Q So regardless of who else may have done it, did you or [REDACTED] report up to AFRICOM our understanding is the group is now at the Benghazi Annex?

A Did we put it exactly in those terms? No. But we would push that information, periodically check, and say this is the situation.

Q I'm not trying to be difficult here. I'm just trying to establish that at some point AFRICOM knew that the folks that were at the temporary mission facility had now been consolidated to the Benghazi Annex.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Yes.

Q And from AFRICOM only, a couple chains of command, you think you communicated that, you think [REDACTED] [REDACTED] communicated that, it would have been one of the two of you and you can't say which?

A This is similar to the previous conversation where we had -- you know, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] listening to the same conversations I am, we are getting the information together. My recollection would most likely say, hey, [REDACTED] make sure you push that up to AFRICOM. Hey, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], make sure you update the status so people know. I did not personally do it. I tried to kind of, you know, task it out so I could focus on the moment.

Q I understand. And so from your recollection of however to AFRICOM that word was transmitted, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] through the communications network that you and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had, do you have any recollection of there being any surprise on the AFRICOM end that that movement had been made or confusion about that movement?

A No. I didn't get the sense that there was surprise or confusion. It was just kind of an update, push it to higher, and like, okay, got it, acknowledge.

Q Sure. So the reason I ask is because the same Senate report that I was mentioning earlier has a line on page 27 going over to 28 which says, "According to U.S. AFRICOM, neither the command nor its commander were aware of an Annex in Benghazi, Libya." And the footnote is to an email that the committee received from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Office of Legislative Affairs to the committee staff.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

And I am just assuming that that footnote is correct, and assuming that Commander AFRICOM didn't know about the Annex, and assuming that others -- not everyone, but assuming that others at AFRICOM didn't know about the Annex, I was wondering if then when the report came that they moved to this facility called Annex, if that was surprising to anyone, or begged the question what is this Annex? But you don't have any recollection of those sort of confusions or --

A No.

Q Does it surprise you to know that this report says that the Commander of U.S. AFRICOM didn't know about the existence of the Benghazi Annex?

A I think what I would do is I would look at the number of changes to the diplomatic -- U.S. diplomatic presence in Libya over the prior probably 10 to 12 months. So at least two or three times, and even earlier than that, the actual main embassy had changed in Tripoli. And then you had the chief of mission -- after the revolution, you have a couple different iterations, okay: Where is the mission in Tripoli? Is it the chief of mission's office? And then we had this villa compound that we stood up. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] And I feel there was a similar situation in Benghazi. Originally I think the mission was in the Tibesti Hotel. Okay, well, that moved at one point. And then I believe there was a lease of the land that the temporary mission facility was on, and then in addition to the Annex. So all that taken in, I could see a scenario where you don't have the actual updated grids on all these locations.

[REDACTED]

Q But you didn't -- you didn't get any indication of that that evening; in other words, that there was some confusion about we didn't know about this facility, or where is that?

A I received no indication of it.

AAI [REDACTED] Okay. Sure. Helpful. Thank you.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]

Q I just want to follow up on that. I know you said you had traveled to Benghazi in April. I can't remember, did you say you traveled to it subsequent to that, or was that the only time?

A That was the only time, when I was there TDY during some transition.

Q When you were there, you -- I know you spent some time at the temporary mission facility and also at the Annex, right?

A Yeah. So I stayed on that temporary mission facility compound, and then we did -- had a meeting over on one of the days.

Q Just to clarify, did you ever discuss that trip with anyone at AFRICOM?

A No. I never had a conversation.

Q You can see where I am getting at?

A Right.

Q I'm just trying to think of another way to approach the question of --

A Yeah.

Q Okay. Thanks.

A The short answer is no, I didn't go and debrief AFRICOM on

that visit.

Q Okay. Didn't think so. Thanks.

A Sure.

**ORI** BY [REDACTED]:

Q Just to clarify, AFRICOM was not your reporting structure.

A Especially then.

**OR2** Mr. [REDACTED] That's why I suspected the answer was no, but I just had to ask. Thanks.

**ORI** BY [REDACTED]:

Q And even when you were the DAT, you didn't -- your chain of command was through the chief of mission; is that correct?

A Right.

Q You took your direction from the chief of mission?

A Correct, 100 percent correct.

And the other aspect I would bring up on that, too, is the diplomatic security role in that and the Regional Security Office role on, hey, these are our locations. And the lash-up happens elsewhere, as I understand it, between the larger organizations, the Department of Defense and Department of State. And I don't know where in that -- how that process works or how, one, Department of State officially recognizes or identifies to the Department of Defense its current facilities or what the threshold for that is.

**OR2** Mr. [REDACTED] Sure. Thanks.

**ORI** BY [REDACTED]:

Q Following the attacks, sort of within the country team or

[REDACTED]

the folks on the ground in Tripoli, what was the general consensus about what had taken place? Within the folks that were there that night and, you know, in the days after, what was your understanding and the understanding of those around you or consensus about what had happened?

A There didn't seem to be a whole lot of confusion necessarily in that there was clearly an attack on the temporary mission facility, and there was a subsequent attack at the Annex. There wasn't a lot of, frankly, time spent on dwelling on it, I think probably multiple reasons. But one of the main drivers is we had a lot going on at that time to reoccupy.

So kind of a long way of saying not a whole lot of time was spent on what happened in terms of specifics outside of we were attacked in Benghazi, four Americans were killed, and how are we going to move forward?

Q Did you witness or experience sort of any surprise or displeasure amongst the embassy staff at sort of how the events were being at least portrayed publicly or through the U.S. Government?

A No. There's a lot of emotion that comes to surface, but that emotion, I think, was tied just to the devastating loss of friends and loved ones, as opposed to or headed towards the U.S. Government or the Libyan Government or anything. I think I have characterized that in a way that's clear, but --

Q I was just trying to understand if the country team or the folks that sort of were there on the ground that were still in country or that you had spoken with were sort of confused by what was coming

[REDACTED]

out of official channels or otherwise.

A Yeah. No. There was a little bit of numbness, frankly, to all involved, just trying to process. But in terms of -- and then shortly after that we had a series of visits from State Department and DOD to kind of figure out, again, where we were at, where we were going. It got busy really quickly. It was busy before; it just got busier.

Q On the night of, or on September 12th, were you aware of any of the discussions ongoing about whether or not to deploy the FEST team?

The joint State Department-DOD --

A FEST separate from FAST, right?

Q Right, FEST.

A Thank you.

I was not. Those were not conversations I was privy to. I don't know anything about it, or don't remember.

Q Okay. And then were you at all involved in sort of trying to bring in the FBI team and get them to Benghazi, or aware of any sort of challenges of getting them to Benghazi?

A Certainly.

Q Can you walk us through that?

A Yeah. So I feel this was about -- when did we finally get them there? This was early October, or was it November?

Q First week of October.

A Okay. First week of October. Okay. So first we got them in and worked the flight clearances. And then the challenge became, okay, how do we assist them to -- not only in interviews in and around

[REDACTED]

Tripoli, but how do you get them to Benghazi? That was the big challenge.

So we worked from a security aspect, which was the big concern. Working with the Libyan military, I arranged a meeting between [REDACTED], the head of the FBI team, myself, and the Director of Operations in the Libyan military to simultaneously get an idea of what he could provide in terms of security. I made it clear to him that it's important to the United States for this team to get there and have access to the compound.

And then he had ideas on how we should proceed. He wanted to kind of do it a little bit more low profile. We expressed to him we have security concerns, so that's going to be -- that's of our paramount interest. So it probably will be a little heavier than that.

Simultaneously, my diplomatic and State Department colleagues were working it with the civilian side of the house. Ultimately what we ended up doing is it went through the flight clearance request process to send aircraft with the package that eventually went to Benghazi. And then the Government of Libya approval for those aircraft became essentially -- we had had a lot of verbals, okay, no problem, but not a lot of formal dip note concurrence. But approval for the aircraft to land in Benghazi essentially became our green light to go ahead and proceed with getting the FBI team up there.

Q So some of the delay was sort of a function of the bureaucratic interactions with the Libyan Government? Or was it foot dragging on behalf of the Libyan Government? Or was it all due to security concerns?

A It's difficult to pinpoint one cause. I think a fair amount

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

of it was the immaturity of the Libyan Government. Mind you, this is a government that had been in place now only a couple of months. I think they had already actually lost one Prime Minister. Abushagur lost a vote of confidence. So that was an aspect of it. And then our strong desire -- our strong desire to make sure it was done safely and securely was another aspect of it. Those were the principal causes, I think, for the time it took.

Q I just have one follow-up on something we discussed in our first hour, which was sort of the evolution of the security force assistance and the 1208 program. And you had talked about how Ambassador Stevens wanted to do it very smartly, I think was the way you characterized it, sort of do it methodically, make sure we check the boxes.

When those discussions started in July, do you recall if any of the discussions resulted in disagreement or hesitation on the part of Ambassador Stevens related to the previous agreement that had been reached between General Ham and Ambassador Cretz regarding the 1208 program and the lack of a written formal approval from the Libyan Government? Did any of that come out?

A I wouldn't characterize it so much as a -- as contentious or being upset about it. It was more like, okay, understand this is an agreement made with the previous chief of mission. Now I need to get spun up on all the details. I want to make sure I understand fully what's going on, appreciating or respecting what was done previously with Ambassador Cretz. And it really did kind of -- again, this is tied

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

to the extension piece. It was only toward the end of July that we were able to shift focus, because so much attention and effort was dedicated to whether the State Department was going to decide -- and they were doing a lot of, I think, internal communications to decide what they wanted to do with regard to requesting an extension or not.

So once that decision was made, that puts us at about the end of July time frame, with the extension due to expire on the 4th. So at that point SOCAF was having the conversations, well, this is what we would like to do. So in a sense it was sequential. The Ambassador is like, okay, now that we know you are not going to be here to be SST, okay, talk to me more about this when you have the time and opportunity to kind of study it.

Q And just to be clear, I think you said this earlier, but prior to the decision about withdrawing the SST, was it your sense that Ambassador Stevens wanted to extend them or was interested in continuing their presence?

A I don't know if I'd put it that way. I know, and I think this is captured in cable traffic back, whether it was SST that ended up doing the mission or not, both the RSO and, I feel, Ambassador Stevens recognized that there was a need, particularly if the SST mission were to end, to have a robust -- a more robust security element until such time as we could get to a more normal state of affairs.

AM BY [REDACTED]:

Q So we just have three kind of follow-up questions just to make sure we understand some of the specific elements that you've raised.

[REDACTED]

I want to go back for a second to understand the FAST team as an example. So you said, I think, that through someone else the prospect was raised that a FAST team would come in. And I think, if I understood you correctly, that you understood that -- well, let me say that the wheels were put in motion for that possibility on the DOD side.

A Potentially.

Q Well, a FAST team ultimately came.

A Yes.

Q And I think you said that you were involved in doing certain preclearance things, such as securing tail numbers and landing rights and so forth.

A Uh-huh.

Q Correct?

A Yes.

Q And if I understood you correctly, you assumed that preparations were proceeding for that movement even though you were still submitting formally with the Libyan Government all the data, the tail numbers, and the landing rights, and so forth?

A Yeah. So the way these things work, a lot is being done in parallel. So that's an accurate -- I was only trying to clarify the point I don't know originally where the let's get a FAST team --

Q Sure. Agreed.

A -- to Libya came from.

Q Agreed. But you were involved in some of the arrangements, as I said, the prospective landing rights --

A Yes.

Q -- and tail numbers and things like that. And I think you also said that one of the difficulties was formally transmitting to a Libyan Government office that was open and in receive mode for that sort of data, getting them to process whatever it was during daylight hours, and then submitting back.

A Uh-huh.

Q Is that correct? In other words, you were doing some things in anticipation of the Libyan Government formally processing the paperwork and so forth.

A Correct. If I could caveat that, I never had any doubt that we were going to get the clearances based off conversations. And I think it's important to state, too, that the Libyans themselves were absolutely devastated by this, I think from the President on up. They recognized -- both Ambassador Stevens in a lot of cases was personal friends with a number of them, but I also feel that they had the sense that this is going to significantly have a detrimental effect, have a significantly detrimental effect on our ability to grow as a nation and just in the international arena and spectrum.

Q Sure.

And do you have awareness of when -- agreeing that they wanted to do it -- when the Libyans actually compiled all the necessary paperwork and all the proper signatures and so forth that were required?

A As I tried to address earlier, I don't know. I can't remember. I would have to say it was probably sometime midmorning to

early afternoon is when we finally got the flight clearance numbers that we could pass to the crew. Now, in some cases, and I'd have to go back and check, what we've done is say, you launch; we will send you the flight clearance number en route. It is just an admin thing. We have got clearance. It is just helping the Libyans go through the process and get it done.

Q But that evening did they launch before getting the actual clearances, to your understanding, or did they await the formalized process from the Libyan Government?

A It wasn't in the evening, all right? So it was that day.

Q Sorry.

A I don't know 100 percent. My understanding is it wasn't ultimately the flight clearances that were holding aircraft before leaving. Someone probably knows the answer to that, but I don't remember.

Q Okay. Thank you. That's helpful.

And, look, I appreciate very much your spending all this time with us today, and I know we've marched through a lot of different things. And, of course, the House of Representatives has, you know, independent authority to examine matters like this, and we do all the time. Are the sort of questions and the topics we've explored here today similar to those that you had discussions with with the Accountability Review Board?

A I would have to go and look at a transcript of the ARB. But that meeting took about 20 minutes. I feel like theirs was kind of more

[REDACTED]

focused on the night of and those conversations at the TOC, how -- to help contextualize for them how things transpired essentially from 9:45 until that morning. But there could have been more. I don't remember.

Q Sure.

And do you remember if they asked you this line of questions that I did about [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and his instructions?

A Not to my recollection. I don't feel like we went down that -- in the detail that we did today.

Q Sure. Thank you.

One other thing, totally different topic. I just want to make sure -- I have got all these notes. I want to make sure I got it straight. So at the very beginning today we talked about this former SST team, formerly known as the remnant, the four-person organization, and this other two members who had another responsibility. And a couple times, again, we talked about those four or some subset of those four going with the other two, doing certain things and so forth. I think you said they provided logistical assistance at some times?

A Okay. Yes. Sorry. In the course of -- okay, prior to 9/11. We are not talking night of.

Q I beg your pardon. Excuse me. I am going back. I just want to clarify something that we talked about this morning. I'm trying to make sure I understand fully that the four individuals who were formerly part of the SST and the other two people [REDACTED] had two discrete functions -- it's your understanding had two discrete functions in Libya.

[REDACTED]

A So if I could help clarify. They had two distinct --

Q Two distinct missions.

A Missions. It wasn't four. So for the bulk of the SST mission until 4 August, it was 16.

Q I'm sorry, I'm talking about once it becomes the four and it has this transitional purpose, it's no longer the SST.

A So once it becomes the four, okay, I understand, between basically August 4th and --

Q Correct.

A Okay.

Q And then we have these other two. They are there for two -- six people there for two different reasons. Correct or not correct? The four --

A Correct. There is the two who are dedicated to the 1208. There are the four who, frankly, are in limbo status.

Q All right. But you said sometimes one or more of the four did certain things with the other two.

A Yes. On occasion. All that came to an abrupt halt on 6 August, so 48 hours after the --

Q Okay. Okay. So between 6 August and the attack --

A Yes.

Q -- the four were in a little bit of limbo. They weren't purely site security.

A They were not site security.

Q They were not site security.

[REDACTED]

A They were distinctly not site security.

Q And they were preparing to transition to what was hopefully a different DOD activity had the attacks not taken place.

A I think that's a fair assessment.

Q I just want to make sure we had that established. Thank you.

A Good.

OR | [REDACTED] We will go off the record.

[Discussion off the record.]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

RPTS COCHRAN

DCMN CRYSTAL

[3:40 p.m.]

OR1 [REDACTED]. We will go back on the record.

ARQ BY [REDACTED]

Q One final question from HASC. We walked through the ISR assets that were available at the time. We walked through your understanding of the availability of an AC-130. We also talked about the possibility of a fighter aircraft getting to Benghazi on September 11th. And my question to you is, were you surprised at the answer you got back from DOD about the availability of any of those assets or their ability to get there in time to make a difference?

A So to be clear, I didn't ask for additional ISR assets. But with regard to the other requests, no, I was not surprised. Whether it is unfortunate or not, I don't know, but at the end of the day, frankly, and I will hold my head high for my service in the military, I thought did a very strong job, a commendable job to get the assets they did get in terms of the Medevac aircraft and the FAST team in there with two, three C-130s.

So the short answer is, was I surprised? No.

Q Thank you.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]

Q Two quick questions. You mentioned you were interviewed by the ARB. Do you recall roughly when you were interviewed by the ARB?

A It had to have been before the end of December, because I

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

believe Ambassador Pope followed me in the interview. So I would say between 15 and 30 December.

Q Okay. I think just maybe to help, that my recollection is the ARB was actually issued 16 December.

A Disregard my last answer.

Q Fine.

A Okay.

Mr. Hudson. We will make that an erratum.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] It must have been November, I apologize. I know I was at the tail end of the interview process.

**OR2** BY [REDACTED]:

Q That's helpful. It was a long time ago. I understand. And then one other question, similar nature. When were you interviewed for a DOD after-action report about what had happened?

A Outside of the ARB?

Q Uh-huh.

A There was no separate DOD AR process that I participated in. That seem unusual to you or not?

A As my role as a member of the country team and being under chief of mission authority, it doesn't seem particularly surprising.

**OAI** [REDACTED]. I just want to offer, if there is anything that we haven't covered today, at least on our side, that you would like to offer up or that you think we should be aware of, we will give you this opportunity to let us know.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Maybe just a couple of points to kind

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

of finalize. I would go back to a point I tried to make earlier that in my military assessment, the actual attack on the -- the initial attack on the TMF, the temporary mission facility, was short. I don't think they were on the objective, so to speak, longer than 45 minutes. They kind of got on, did their business, and left.

The impression some have is, with the looters coming on, and so you have hours later I think people throwing stuff and you see the graffiti and things like that, I think that's one thing that's worth -- so as we are trying to figure this out, they're already in -- we are figuring it out, I think the attackers were kind of pulling off the objective, so to speak.

And I had an additional point. It'll come back to me.

Oh, I had an opportunity -- it was not transparent to us that there were in fact three separate attacks. You have that initial -- I did not find out about the kind of probing attack, if you will, at the annex until probably a day or two later. Now, someone may have known and [REDACTED] may have had communications with the annex. But that wasn't readily available to everybody, if you will.

So as I was working through that evening, okay, there was the attack initially on the night of the 11th, and then [REDACTED] you realized, okay, there was a subsequent attack at the Benghazi annex. So I don't know if that is of value. But as we saw it there was the attack, okay, guys need to get from the airport to the annex in Benghazi, but then we already -- we shifted focus because that attack was over, we had accountability for everyone except for one, and we were focused

[REDACTED]

on helping the survivors out while simultaneously conducting the evacuation [REDACTED]

Those are the two points I'd like to make.

**ARI**

BY [REDACTED]

Q So that is actually an interesting point, because AFRICOM, as I understand it, was relying upon the sort of things that you were communicating, you and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] were communicating up through your chain of command about what was transpiring in Benghazi. Is that correct, or did AFRICOM have another way to understand what was happening in Benghazi?

A My recollection is we were the predominant conduit. Now, we talked about the [REDACTED], and maybe I wasn't clear enough on this. I tried to earlier. [REDACTED]

Q I understand.

A How they lashed into the AFRICOM JOC and what information they provided the AFRICOM JOC, I don't know.

Q But it follows because you didn't know about the probing attack until a day later, you certainly didn't communicate anything about the probing attack up to the people you were talking to because you didn't know about it.

A Correct.

Q So to the extent people were relying on what they were hearing coming up through your chain of command, they wouldn't have known about the probing attack?

[REDACTED]

A I have no recollection of hearing about a probing attack until a day or two later.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]

Q What about the ISR over Benghazi?

A What about the ISR over Benghazi?

Q Would it provide perhaps in theory information about the probing attack at the annex?

A So I guess the two questions I would have, where was the ISR at the time --

Q Right. My understanding is it had to go off station at some point.

A Right. It went off station at one point. I had no feed. Like I don't know what the ISR is seeing, so I don't know what it's seeing. But then I would have to kind of look at when they swapped out --

Q Setting aside the issue --

A So as I am thinking through this, clearly someone at the annex knew there was a probing attack and somebody at the annex fed it up [REDACTED]. I guess my point is I didn't know about it, so I didn't feed it up to AFRICOM. But that's conjecture on my part [REDACTED], I would presume.

Q And then setting aside the issue of ISR going off station, there being a gap, setting that aside, presumably that's going to higher headquarters, that feed, right?

A Correct. That is going somewhere. And whether an ISR asset can pick up a probing attack, assuming it was over now at the annex and

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

not still over the temporary mission facility --

Q Got it.

A I don't know enough about ISR and what you can detect and what you can't. My presumption is it would have gone up just verbal from the guys, vice ISR is not your best asset to confirm that.

**OR1** [REDACTED] Barring any follow-up based on questions from the minority, I want to thank you for your service, and on behalf of Chairman Issa thank you for your service and your appearance here today and your time.

**OR2** [REDACTED]. And your time and your very precise answers. Thank you.

**OR2** [REDACTED]. We are done.

[Whereupon, at 3:50 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

[REDACTED]



Certificate of Deponent/Interviewee

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

\_\_\_\_\_

Witness Name

