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RPTS KERR

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UNCLASSIFIED

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EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

INTERVIEW OF: [REDACTED]

Friday, March 7, 2014

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held at Room 2203,
Rayburn House Office Building, commencing at 10:05 a.m.

[REDACTED]

Participant Key

AR = Armed Services Committee Republican staffer

AD = Armed Services Committee Democratic staffer

OR = Oversight and Government Reform Committee Republican staffer

OD = Oversight and Government Reform Committee Democratic staffer

[REDACTED]
OR2 [REDACTED]. So I am going to go on the record.

Good morning. This is a transcribed interview of [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Welcome, and thank you for coming today, sir.

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 OR2 [REDACTED], a professional staff member with the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

As you may know, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and the Committee on Armed Services are among the committees in the U.S. House of Representatives that are investigating many aspects of the attacks on the 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 chairmen 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 we'll start the questioning, but please understand that this interview is an equal and joint effort of both committees.

We are going to proceed in the following way.

I and a representative of the other committee's chairman will

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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

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

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

Some of our questions might appear to be basic, but this is done to help us clearly establish the 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 the questions, everyone in this room is cleared to the Top-Secret level, and, therefore, you should not hesitate to provide relevant information or details up to that

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

level of classification.

Furthermore, if a question is unclear or you are uncertain in your response, please let us know. If you don't know or remember the answer to a question or don't 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 interviews such as this. Do you understand these circumstances?

[REDACTED] Yes.

OR2 [REDACTED] Is there any reason that you are unable to provide your own truthful answers to today's questions?

[REDACTED] No.

OR2 [REDACTED] Pursuant to an agreement between the Armed Services and the Oversight and Government Reform Committees and the Department of Defense, a transcript of today's proceedings will be provided to the Department as soon as it is prepared. The Department will confirm that the transcript contains Top-Secret material or, alternatively, will apply a lower classification to the document.

The Department has also agreed to return the original transcripts to the committees, along with a second version that includes only Secret information.

In conducting this work, the Department has agreed not to share the contents of previous interview transcripts with interviewees subsequently appearing before the committee or to use

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

these documents to prepare interviewees for their appearances.

With this mind, has the Department made any classified transcripts from previous interviews available to you in preparing for today?

[REDACTED] No.

OR2 [REDACTED] Thank you.

Finally, I would just note that you're accompanied by an attorney from the Department of Defense. And I would ask the DOD counsel to at this time please state his name for the record.

Mr. Richards. Edward Richards. I'm DOD agency counsel.

OR2 [REDACTED] Thanks.

With these preliminary remarks concluded, do you have any introductory comments that you or your counsel would like to make?

Mr. Richards. Yes, I'd like to have a brief statement.

Since the tragedy of 9/11/2001 and the subsequent military operations, the Department has redacted all names of its personnel 06 or GS-15 and below under Exemption B6 of the Freedom of Information Act. As such, we respectfully request both committees not publicly release the names of DOD interviewees who are 06 and below. This includes the interviewees from over the last month. This, of course, does not apply to general officers, flag officers, and civilians who are Senior Executive Service or Presidential appointees. We appreciate the committee's cooperation on this point.

And before we begin, I also want to reiterate, this is a

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Top-Secret interview, and we will expedite a review of the transcript in its entirety. Until then, we would appreciate you treating the transcript as a Top-Secret document. It is the expectation of all future interviews are at the Top-Secret level.

That's all.

OR2 [REDACTED] Thanks.

And we appreciate very much, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] your service and your patience, coming here and joining us today.

The clock now reads about -- we'll call it 10:12 a.m., and I'm going to start the first hour of questions from the representative of the committee chairman.

EXAMINATION

OR2 [REDACTED]

Q So, [REDACTED] if you could just state your current rank and your assignment currently.

A [REDACTED] [REDACTED] United States Army. My current assignment is the chief of staff of the Joint Special Operations Task Force -- Trans-Sahara.

Q Okay. Thanks.

And if you could just briefly walk us through your educational and your professional background.

A So, again, I'm going to reiterate what counsel has said, that I request that my name not be released.

I live on the economy in Germany. I follow one assignment in Europe, where I'll be the special operations liaison officer

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

supporting an allied country. You know, from the beheading of the U.K. servicemember in the U.K. to the kidnapping of U.S. servicemembers in the 1980s, [REDACTED] Buckley, and the assassination of [REDACTED] Nick Rowe.

So the world is a very small place; it is much smaller for those of us who have strangely spelled last names. So, please, again, if you could respect my privacy.

I am a graduate of a military college, the Military College of Georgia.

Q Uh-huh.

A I came on Active Duty in 1994. My military education includes an explosive ordnance disposal course, the parachutist course, Ranger school, Special Forces, attachment officer and commanders course, SERE school that goes with that, along with the U.S. Army advanced courses for my branch and also the Command and General Staff College.

Q And you said you're chief of staff currently at JSOTF-TS. How long have you been in that role?

A Just shy of a year.

Q Okay. And immediately prior to that, what was your assignment?

A I was the current operations director for the SOJ 3-3 out of Special Operations Command Africa.

Q Okay. And if you could just briefly describe what a current operations director at SOCAFRICA -- what your role is on a

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

typical day.

A My job is to ensure that the command can maintain communications with elements that are deployed to the continent of Africa, that we receive all of their reporting, whether that is written situation reports that come in daily or, you know, it is, you know, verbal or picture communications via special secret video-teleconferencing and the like. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] ensuring that we have situational awareness of where our forces are and what they're doing at all times.

Q Okay.

And, obviously, with the role at SOCAFRICA, my understanding that's a theater special operations command. So I mean, your area of responsibility is really the whole continent except for Egypt, right? I mean --

A Correct.

Q Okay. Is it pretty busy -- busy time in that role, or

--

A Yes, it's very busy.

Q Okay.

And how did you -- that position at -- first of all, I guess, you were in that position, I take it, on September 11th and 12th, 2012, when the attack in Benghazi occurred? Was that your assignment at the time?

A Yes, it was.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q So, I guess, at that time, how long had you been in that role?

A I believe a little more or a little less than 18 months --

Q Okay.

A -- I'd been the current operations director.

Q Now, had you been assigned to AFRICOM immediately prior to that, or was that your first assignment at AFRICOM?

A Yes, that -- well, that was my first assignment to Special Operations Command Africa --

Q Yeah.

A -- permanently, but I had deployed to Africa previously in my career --

Q Okay.

A -- to support, it was then SOCEUR --

Q Okay.

A -- before the great divide.

Q Sure. Sure.

And how did you, just so we can understand, I mean, how did you come to be assigned as the current operations director at SOCAF?

A I PCSed in -- permanent change of station -- during that summertime. That is a Special Forces officer billet, so they looked around to see who was coming in. There were three billets for lieutenant colonels within the command, and that was one of

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Okay.

And so, within SOCAF, what was the -- when you were situated as current operations director, kind of, what was the food chain, if you will, at SOCAF, kind of, going up from you?

A So, my immediate supervisor was the current operations director, so the SOJ 3.

Q Uh-huh.

A And then he answers to the chief of staff, who then answers to the commander.

Q Got it.

A Now, there is also a deputy commander in there, but within reporting, the chief of staff runs the staff. The deputy commander is the guy in charge when the boss is away.

Q Sure.

So it sounds like -- and correct me if I'm wrong. I mean, it sounds like, you know, for your, sort of, daily activities, you'd be working within the SOCAF chain. And, now, to the SOCAF chain, was it from the top, would then go, you know, speak to AFRICOM? Is that how it would work? Or did you go outside to deal with AFRICOM folks directly?

A So we would go unilaterally.

Q Yeah.

A So I would talk to the AFRICOM JOC --

Q Got it.

A -- so if they have information requirements. So daily

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SITREPS go from us to them.

Q Uh-huh.

A In a crisis or an emergency situation, we begin talking back and forth almost immediately. So we will go to Tandberg; they were on my short list. So we could talk via secure maintenance really quickly. Now, we were only, geez, I don't know, 50 meters away.

Q Right. It's a small space.

A But, you know, you've sort of got your own world to worry about.

Q Yeah. Would it be on the same floor there physically, or be on different levels or just different cubicles?

A No, it's right across the road.

Q Okay.

A So if you came to Stuttgart, you know where the canteen is --

Q Yeah.

A -- and the old chapel?

Q Yeah.

A So the old chapel is the current operations for AFRICOM. Right across the street is Special Operations Command Africa. And we were on the third floor.

Q Sure. Okay.

And then, so that covers the relationship with AFRICOM. What about with respect to JSOTF-TS? I mean, what was the relationship

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

that you would have with them operationally? Different people than that element.

A They're our subordinate command.

Q Okay. And did you have a counterpart that you dealt with over there?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

A I believe it was -- I can't remember who the current operations director --

Q That's fine.

ARI [REDACTED]. Excuse me. And by name, who was the J3 when you were there?

Mr. Richards. Do you recall?

[REDACTED] Yes, I do.

Okay. So it is [REDACTED]

ARI [REDACTED]. Okay.

And do I understand you to say that the AFRICOM JOC and the SOCAFRICA JOC were in different buildings?

[REDACTED] Correct.

ARI [REDACTED]. Okay.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]:

Q And, you know, we also understand, you know, having studied a little bit about AFRICOM, it's sort of an interesting, more integrated, if you will, relationship with the State Department. I'm just wondering what, you know, on a regular

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

basis, in your role as the current operations for SOCAF, what was your relationship to the State Department personnel that were permanently assigned to AFRICOM.

A We have -- at Special Operations Command Africa, we have our own State Department advisor --

Q Uh-huh.

A -- who is a part of the senior staff, and that would be my interface with State.

Q Would that be what they call the political advisor, or pol ad?

A Right.

Q Okay.

A She was our -- she is our pol ad.

Q Okay. And do you recall who that person was in the time period of the attack, by any chance?

A It was Carl, and now it's Melanie. And I can't remember, I think Melanie --

Q Sure.

A -- was there at the time.

Q Okay.

And, I guess, you know, our understanding also is there's also a deputy to the commander for civil military activities, who's a senior State Department person. Is that -- I take it you didn't interact with that person?

A At AFRICOM?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Yeah.

A Yes.

Q Yeah. I mean, did you interact with that level, or --

A No.

Q -- it was more at the commander's level?

A No, I didn't interact with -- other than my counterparts within current operations at AFRICOM, I did not interact routinely with the senior --

Q Okay.

A -- staff at AFRICOM.

Q Okay.

And what about, obviously, the State Department people out in the field, in Libya for example, I mean, would you interact with them on a regular basis? Or was it more with the military chain of command, folks that were military out there?

A No, as the current operations director, I did not interact with State Department personnel in Libya.

Q Okay. Very good.

Then, also, prior to the attack, the 11 September 2012 attack in Benghazi, were you aware that there was a State Department annex that was in Benghazi? Were you aware of that? We've heard that -- there's been some reporting that some folks may not have been aware that there was actually an annex in Benghazi. Were you aware of that prior to the attack?

A Yes, I was.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q You were. Okay. Was that known -- let me, kind of, work out concentrically. Was that known generally within SOCAF, that there was an annex?

A No -- I don't know.

Q You don't know. Okay.

Mr. Richards. You said "State Department annex."

OR2 [REDACTED] Yes.

Mr. Richards. Okay.

OR2 [REDACTED] An annex, as opposed to the temporary mission facility. So, in other words -- let's separate it. I think I see what you're saying.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]:

Q There's a temporary mission facility in Benghazi, which was where the attack actually initiated, and then there was also an annex in Benghazi.

So I guess my question is, were you aware of both facilities prior to the attacks of 11 September?

A I cannot recall. And I say that because we're 18 months hence, and so I cannot recall if I knew. I knew we had a facility --

Q Yeah.

A -- on 11 September 2012. I do not recall if I knew there were two facilities.

Q Okay.

A I may or I may not have.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Okay. And the reason I ask is we've talked to some other folks, folks on the ground, from the military, who said that they didn't become aware of the fact that there had been a second facility, this annex in Benghazi, until the night of the attack or shortly thereafter. So that's why I asked.

So your recollection is that you're not quite sure when you learned about it prior to the attack; is that right?

A Right.

Q Okay.

A I know now that there are two facilities.

Q Right.

A I do not know if on that date -- I knew there was at least one, and I can't recall if I knew before or afterwards.

Q Understood.

ARI [REDACTED] You don't remember being surprised to learn that there was a second facility?

[REDACTED] No, I don't remember being surprised that there was a second facility there.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]

Q Okay.

I want to move on, actually, and just talk -- and I think we're going to go chronologically, so we're going to talk about before the attack.

The SST, the special security -- or security support team, that was supporting the security of the Embassy prior to the

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

attack, it was a DOD team. What was your understanding -- first of all, you were aware of the team and were you aware of their role, their mission?

A Yes, I was.

Q Okay. I mean, were you pretty familiar with it, or was it not something you dealt with on a daily basis?

A Yes, it was something I dealt with on a daily basis.

Q Okay.

ARI [REDACTED] I'm sorry, was something you dealt with?

[REDACTED] Yes, it was.

OR2

BY [REDACTED]

Q So is it correct to say that the SST's primary function was providing security to the Embassy; is that fair to say?

A If I recall correctly, I mean, there was an EX ORD, an execution order, that was published for the SST --

Q Yeah.

A -- to stand them up. And that was -- if I recall correctly, that was their mission.

Q Okay. Were they, to your knowledge, engaged in other activities beyond providing security strictly?

I can just help you out, actually. We're aware of that there may have been some members of the SST that were engaged in some sort of pre-1208 assessment activity, pending a formal 1208 security force assistance program. Were you aware of that?

A Yes.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Okay.

A I was aware that it was our command's priority to assist the Libyans with standing up the NDAA 1208 counterterrorism force.

Q Yeah.

A That, you know, all special operators are there, you know, to support their primary mission, then also to be prepared to shift and move to the next position when the authorities and the funding are provided.

Q Okay.

Do you recall when the 1208 program specifically for Libya was actually approved?

A It was post-11 September 2012, I believe, but --

Q Okay.

A -- I would have to go back and review the orders --

Q Understood.

A -- to know for sure.

Q Okay. Just try and, kind of, locate it a little bit more precisely. I mean, do you recall, was it approved prior to Ambassador Stevens coming out in, I think --

A No, it was not.

Q Okay.

A Because the documents that I remember seeing have Ambassador Cretz' signature --

Q Okay.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A -- which was after Ambassador Stevens was --

Mr. Richards. I believe it was Cretz, Stevens, and then --

OR2 [REDACTED]. That's correct.

Mr. Richards. -- post, who was after Stevens?

OR2 [REDACTED]. Well, it may have been Bill Roebuck after Stevens.

Mr. Richards. Okay.

OR2 [REDACTED]. Someone was sent out from the State Department to --

Mr. Richards. Right. So Cretz was before Stevens --

OR2 [REDACTED]. Correct.

Mr. Richards. -- because Stevens was after Cretz. And then after Stevens, I forget the Ambassador's name after that.

OR2 [REDACTED]. Sure. Yeah. Okay.

[REDACTED] So then the authority was signed before 11 September 2012, but we had not --

OR2 [REDACTED]. There was an approval process, I think.

[REDACTED] There was an approval, and I think we were concerned -- and, again, we are 18 months hence. I believe we were worried about protections and immunities, at that point in time, for the force --

OR2 [REDACTED]:

Q Yeah, there was an issue -- we're going to ask you about that. We're interested in that.

But I guess the reason I ask is, I think our understanding,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

based upon some of these timelines, some of the information we've heard, is that some of this pre-1208 assessment activity that some of the SST was engaging in may have been prior to the formal approval of 1208. Is that your understanding?

A Rephrase the question.

Q Sure.

A Are you asking, were they doing two things at one time?

Q Yes.

A So, to my knowledge, you know, their primary mission was to provide security.

Q Okay.

A And that's what they did. So, again, that did not preclude them from working with the Defense attache, with the OSC chief, and the other members of the country team to begin to try to figure out what the next logical portion of that mission will look like and how they implement it.

Q Okay.

AA1 [REDACTED] But it's your recollection that the 1208 was -- you associate Ambassador Cretz with the 1208 approval.

[REDACTED] That was the last document I remember. That was the initial document that was signed for the approval for the 1208.

But, again, so it's not a light switch that you can turn on. So, now, you know, the next concern from the command and from State was, you know, protections and immunities for the

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

individuals conducting the training.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]

Q And maybe we just, unless you want to go down this 1208 road, we can talk about the P&I real briefly.

A Uh-huh.

Q So our understanding is that the P&I issue became an issue upon conclusion of the SST's mission, which, just to help you out, I think was 4 August 2012.

So maybe you could just walk us through the concern with the P&I issue. What was your awareness of that?

A Tangential, at best. I knew that it was a concern, it was being worked by the senior staff at AFRICOM. But as far as the nuts and bolts of that, I wasn't fully aware of how they were, for lack of a better term, making the sausage. My intent was, I need to know when they're approved so that we begin, again, to move people in and out of country --

Q Right.

A -- to support the mission.

Q Were there any other security force assistance type of arrangements that were being contemplated? For example, was there any global security contingency fund program being contemplated for Libya, to your knowledge?

A I don't know.

Q Okay. So this would be training of Libyan special forces. Other than 1208, you weren't privy to that?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Oh, so we're talking about, you know, 1206, 1207 alpha?

Q Yes. Yes.

A So, I mean, our -- yeah, so, our plans shop -- so we're trying to look at, what does the future of Libyan security look like? So, you know, we were clearly trying to lean forward to look within Libya, which had a deficit in security, of how we could assist relatively quickly to help reenforce that --

Q And did that --

A -- and create a CT and a counter-VEO capability --

Q Yeah.

A -- you know, within the SOF realm of responsibility.

Q So, just with respect to these security force assistance programs, I mean, can you just describe for us what your role would've been in implementing those or effecting those?

A So, from the current operations director?

Q Yeah.

A None. So, my job is to know that they're coming, okay, how this is fit in the pie. And then, you know, so plans moves them forward, and then we move them into country.

Q Sure.

A And my job is to, you know, track, monitor, get their reporting, make sure we know where they're going and what they're doing, and prepare for contingencies, you know, for whatever.

Q So is it fair to say that, sort of, once the programs are operating and DOD personnel are in country executing them,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

that then you're really, sort of --

A Right. So that goes from, you know, planned operations to execution.

Q Yeah.

A Once they're ready for execution, then they hand off the -- hand up the plan and the forces, and then we deploy them into country.

Q Sure.

A Then that becomes my responsibility.

Q Sure.

Let me jump back for a minute. With respect to the SST, our understanding is there were several extensions of the mission, where the State Department would request DOD to extend the mission for 90 or 120 days. This happened several times.

What was your understanding of that process? Did you have any visibility into that process, specifically the interaction between State and DOD?

A No, I didn't have any knowledge -- well, I didn't have any participation into or knowledge of what the discussions were going back and forth for the extensions.

Your know, my job was, you know, we have a map on the calendar. In accordance with the EX ORD, they're under chief of mission authority. So, you know, I have a mark on the wall of when that EX ORD expires. So it was my job to backwards plan and begin, you know, letting the 3 know we're 30 days out from, you

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

know, this EX ORD. And, you know, the 3, which is the operations, or the J5, which is policy, to, you know, begin going back to go to AFRICOM to say, does State want to extend this or not? And so they had those discussions at the senior policy level.

Q Okay. That's helpful. Thank you.

AA1

BY [REDACTED]

Q So you knew when the SST expired, because it was on your calendar, and you knew that there had not been an extension?

A Correct.

Q And did you know that a smaller unit was being organized to, for want of a better word, replace it in Libya?

A I don't follow your question. What was the smaller unit?

Q Well, there was the SST, which had 16 members; is that your understanding?

A Uh-huh.

Q And [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was the last commander of that unit.

A Correct.

Q And he and many of the 16 left the country when their -- when the EX ORD expired.

A Correct.

Q And then a [REDACTED] [REDACTED] came to Libya with a different assignment but some of the same personnel, a small number of personnel under his command.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Uh-huh.

Q You were aware of that transition?

A Yes, I was.

OR2

BY [REDACTED]

Q And just to follow up on that, our understanding is that that was relating to the wind-down of SST and then standing up with the more normal mil-mil relationship those missions that would be going forward. Is that your understanding, that the drawdown from the 16 to the smaller team that my colleague is referring to, that was part of the drawdown of SST and then moving to a more normal security force assistance relationship?

A Well, it was part of, you know, working through the process of protections and immunities for the forces that were in the country.

Q Yeah.

A So, under the EX ORD for the SST, P&I was ensured because they were under chief of mission authority. When we transitioned to counterterrorism 1208 program, protections and immunities are a COCOM, the combatant commander's responsibilities. So, you know, part of that is you only have people conducting the mission where you can ensure their protections and immunities in country.

Q So, for example, if one of them got into some sort of a legal incident, car accident or something like that, that becomes a concern very quickly, right?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Correct.

Q Okay.

And do you recall how this issue was worked out between State and AFRICOM with respect to the team that was there after SST, how they worked out their P&I?

A No, that was being worked out, again, at AFRICOM J5 and from pol-mil --

Q Okay.

A -- from the deputy commander for DCMA. I forget. The senior pol-mil advisor at AFRICOM and the AFRICOM commander.

Q All right.

OR2 [REDACTED] Could we just go off the record for one moment?

[Discussion off the record.]

ARI BY [REDACTED]:

Q I want to just go back for a second and make sure I have an understanding of your understanding of this transition from the 16-person SST team led by [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to the subsequent team that went in country. For want of a better word, we'll refer to that subsequent team as Team Libya --

A Okay.

Q -- unless you have a --

A No, that's great.

Q All right. So, to what extent were you aware of -- well, let me ask it this way. You were aware that the EX ORD had expired and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and his team's mandate was expiring --

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Yes.

Q -- correct?

A Uh-huh.

Q And you were aware that Team Libya was being stood up, yes?

A Yes. And that was our intent, to transition at some point in time to conduct that mission with Libyan SOF, special operations forces.

Q And were you aware, to the extent that any of the personnel that were in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] unit were -- transitioned to the Team Libya? Do you know if any of the same personnel --

A If memory serves me correct, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] went in, and the other, I believe it was three personnel, were remainders from the original SST. They were members of an Operational Detachment Alpha out of 10 special forces group. So, you know, we were into the second or third iteration of rotating forces both in support of the SST and in prepping for the future for Team Libya.

Q I see. And I understand that -- or we understand that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] produced, I think, daily written situation reports.

A Uh-huh.

Q Did you evaluate them in your position? Did you see them?

A Yes.

Q And did you ever communicate outside the situation reports with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] about his work and activities?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Occasionally.

Q And, similarly, with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] as he was transitioning in, did you ever talk with and meet with him as he anticipated assuming his role in Libya?

A Yes.

Q And did you have any -- ever have any conversation with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] about the either -- well, with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] about [REDACTED] [REDACTED] activities?

A With [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I cannot recall. I mean, so I would talk to my counterpart, which at one point in time was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who was the current operations director at JSOTF-TS before he deployed, and then whoever his subsequent replacement. I would not move directly to a subordinate commander.

Q I understand.

And so the same question applies, then, there's no particular reason for you to talk to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] about [REDACTED] [REDACTED] activities once they started or as they were starting?

A I don't follow your question.

Q I think I'm just trying to ask to what extent you may have talked to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] about [REDACTED] [REDACTED] activities. You explained it wouldn't be typical that you would go to a senior commander about someone else's activities.

A Right.

Q The same applies, I assume, then, about discussing with [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] about [REDACTED] activities once he went in country?

A Yeah, that's correct.

Q Okay.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]:

Q So, if I could, I just want to ask a little bit about security issues on the ground in Libya, to the extent you were aware, understanding that you weren't there --

A Okay.

Q -- but also understanding you were getting -- or seeing SITREPS from, for example, SST, talking to folks there from time to time.

In your role at the time -- and this is, again, before the attack -- did you have any understanding about security at the Embassy in Tripoli? Was that ever discussed with SST, for example?

A Other than generalities.

Q What were those? What was your general sense about the security there?

A I don't recall. I was more concerned with tracking their movements when they were moving generally outside of the Embassy with the Ambassador.

Q I guess I'm just wondering if they may have shared -- if [REDACTED] [REDACTED] for example, may have shared a concern about the Embassy or passed along concerns that maybe he or his team had or

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

State Department people on the ground had. Do you --

A I can't recall [REDACTED] [REDACTED] passing any concerns about the security before I saw him on the news.

Q And what about with respect to the temporary mission facility in Benghazi, the State Department facility, any concerns that you were made aware of by people on the ground that you talked to about the security there?

A Other than it's in Benghazi. That's a long way away.

Q Yeah.

A Again, we talked about the tyranny of distance. The problem is, is that there is -- those kinds of legs become much more difficult if someone comes off and breaks a leg.

Q Yeah.

A You know, we have to medevac people off the continent. And we've had, you know, accidents where we've had to move U.S. servicemembers out from Central Africa. And we're talking now, you know, stabilized for 24 hours to get them out of country.

It's a little bit easier in the Med sometimes, but that was, you know, a concern of the further you're away from your known, you know, capabilities for triaging personnel -- because there were medical facilities that I understand in Tripoli, both within the Embassy and that they had worked with local doctors, and then the ability to move out of Tripoli International --

Q Yeah.

A -- relatively quickly to Europe.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q What about -- you mentioned the tyranny of distance. Any other concerns about Benghazi particularly, as it relates to the security environment there, for example?

A I mean, the east is -- you know, our intelligence assessment -- [REDACTED] -- our assessment was that, you know, the east is different from the west of Libya. I mean, and there's three or four different reasons, depending on how you want to look at it.

The east is, you know, generally more fundamentalist-leaning, historically, than the west.

Q Okay.

A So that is a concern. It wasn't an overt concern, you know, prior to, but it was one of those things where, if you look at the space, it is concerning.

Q Yeah.

A But, you know, there was a facility there that was being staffed by U.S. personnel. That's where we had based out of during the revolution.

Q Right.

A So, you know, it was one of those things that was continually weighed all the time. So it was -- so, again, that's where people had always been --

Q Yeah.

A -- in the east, to support the revolution as they moved west. And so, you know, we had, you know, sort of, roots there

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

early on during the revolution.

Q So what was the -- you said it was continually weighed, and I totally understand why that would be. What was the -- was that a conversation that was kind of an ongoing one inside AFRICOM or inside SOCAFRICA?

A I don't think it was an ongoing conversation. It was just something that we continued to keep our eyes on and evaluate to see if there was some sea change.

Q Uh-huh.

A So, again, you know, the way we looked at all things after the Arab Spring; you know, which way are the politics running in Tunisia? After the In Amenas attack in Algeria, what effect does that have internal within Algeria and our mil-to-mil engagement?

So, again, it's just part of the larger calculus of trying to evaluate daily, how does this affect our engagement mil-to-mil, you know, and then the bigger whole, as far as State and, you know, our whole-of-government approach to countries.

Q And just stepping back to -- you know, again, we're really just trying to understand how AFRICOM works, for example. I mean, is this something that just your military colleagues would be discussing or kind of keep tabs on, or was it also something you'd be discussing with your State Department colleagues in AFRICOM?

A Other than -- so, you know, again, Monday, Wednesday,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Friday, we would have our commander's update brief. There's also an AFRICOM operations and intelligence brief that is done at the Secret level on Defense Connect Online. So, basically, you can sign in from your desk, and that's where you would get an intelligence report back of, here's what we're seeing, here's how we're monitoring the situation, here's what we think is going on. And so I would keep my eyes on those at AFRICOM at the strategic level.

So, to the extent to which the DCMA, who's the senior State Department rep, would speak or, you know, there were USAID briefings in there, to the extent to which they would brief in, kind of, that open forum at the Secret level, I was aware of those conversations. But as far as internal conversations, no.

Q It's sort of our understanding from looking at this for some time, a number of folks have suggested that there was a -- starting about the June 2012 timeframe moving forward, there was kind of a downward trend in security, I suppose in the country generally, but particularly in Benghazi in the east. I mean, there was, you know, the attack on the State Department facility there in June. There was also an attack on the Ambassador from the U.K., his convoy.

A Uh-huh.

Q There was a series of incidents. I mean, was this something that you were tracking, you all were tracking in AFRICOM and, kind of, aware of? Or what was your sense about that?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A It's hard to recall, being it's 18 months hence. So between the run-up before and, you know, afterwards, it's hard for me to differentiate between the attacks.

You know, again, the security situation in Libya in general was concerning, just because of the deficit of a security apparatus after the Qadhafi regime. But, you know, with regards to overt concerns in the run-up beforehand, you know, I can't recall.

I need to say, so there's a metric, right?

Q Yeah.

A So every day is a fire drill in current operations. So if it's not a fire in Uganda, it's a fire in Libya. If it's not a fire in Libya, it's a fire in, you know, in Mauritania or in Mali, you know, because Mali just completely --

Q Your focus on a day-to-day basis was shifting.

A Right. So that's all I do, is -- so that's a large portion of what we do, is running from fire to fire, you know, trying to maintain situational awareness. So, to the extent for Libya, in June, I don't recall.

Q That's very helpful. Thank you.

And then, also, just, again, with respect to the temporary mission facility, the State Department facility in Benghazi, you know, we understand there was a discussion about whether to extend it. It was on a year-to-year timeframe with the State Department. Do you recall any discussions about whether to extend it,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

whether to make it perhaps a permanent State Department facility?
Was that ever brought to your attention, are you aware of?

A No.

Q Okay.

What about, sort of briefly, evacuation? If you needed a noncombatant evacuation, say, from Tripoli, or Benghazi for that matter, was that something that you would be involved in tracking the plans for that, or is that handled elsewhere?

A So -- I don't recall. So, typically, the SOCAFRICA and the theater special operations command isn't necessarily tasked to conduct an NEO, or a noncombatant evacuation operation, because the majority of those assets have to come, you know, for -- is airlift-heavy out of Air Forces Africa. So we would not necessarily be the lead component. If we have forces on the ground, we would be supporting a supported.

So I don't recall seeing or reviewing the NEO, if there was a NEO plan for Libya --

Q Okay.

A -- at that point in time. I just don't recall.

Q Fair enough.

And when did you become aware that Ambassador Stevens had planned to travel to Benghazi?

A I don't think I was aware. Because, again, so the SST was not supporting; therefore, we did not have people traveling with them. Therefore, it was in the big box of things that wasn't

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

my responsibility. I had other fires to fight.

I remember that night, surprised that he was in Benghazi. I didn't recall tracking that he was going to be traveling.

Q So you, sort of, learned, kind of, when you heard that there had been an attack that he was there?

A Yes.

Q Yeah.

A If I recall. Again, I can't-- I wasn't surprised he was in Benghazi, but I don't remember necessarily tracking that he was there.

Q So, just to step back to what you just said, I guess, when the SST was still there and the Ambassador, whether it was Ambassador Cretz or subsequently Ambassador Stevens, and they were traveling with him supporting his movements, that that would've been something that you would've been alerted in a SITREP or something?

A Right. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It would've been something we would've tracked routinely.

Q Okay. That's helpful.

A Generally. Even though they were under chief of mission authority, just for our situational awareness, because they're our forces, we would've kept an eye on them.

Q They'd report in. Yeah. Okay.

A Well, they -- no, they weren't reporting in to us,
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

but --

Q Notifying you?

A [REDACTED] we would've seen in their SITREP where they were going to be traveling.

Q Okay.

Mr. Richards. Can we take 5? Is that all right?

OR2

[REDACTED] Yeah, 5, 10. Yeah, we can go off the record.

[Recess.]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

RPTS JANSEN

DCMN SECKMAN

ARI BY [REDACTED]

Q So, [REDACTED] I want to go back to just one topic and make sure that I understand, just to have clarity on it.

We understand from talking to some other folks and perhaps from some things that Admiral Losey told us when he came and briefed Members that the Department was concerned, SOCAFRICA was concerned that the SST sizing was going from 16 to a smaller number. And we're led to believe, we're having the impression that they were concerned that this reduction, this relatively dramatic reduction in the number of personnel would set back some of their efforts and mil build, capacity building and some other things. And they were concerned and disturbed by this fairly dramatic reduction.

Do you have any contemporaneous understanding or knowledge of that concern and disappointment that the size was going from 16 to some smaller number?

A I knew those discussions were ongoing. I knew that we had sized down from 16 to 4. I knew we were in discussions to, again, get the CT force, the Libyans -- again this, keeping this and below -- getting that training off the ground. So I was aware that those were in conversations. But I was not privy to the discussions.

Q Fine. Thank you.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

You also said that when [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was in his position, you reviewed the daily SITREPS that he produced and sent up?

A Yes.

Q The chain.

A Correct.

Q Did [REDACTED] [REDACTED] produce a similar SITREP when he took his position?

A Yes, he did.

Q And did you review those SITREPS?

A Yes.

Q And you don't remember -- I think from your previous answer -- whether or not [REDACTED] [REDACTED] mentioned in any of those SITREPS that the Ambassador was going to Benghazi?

A I don't recall.

Q And did any other military personnel in Libya, and I'm thinking, for instance, of the NRV, Office of Security Cooperation, produce SITREPS that would have come to you?

A No.

Q All right. Thank you.

OR2 [REDACTED]. Off the record.

[Recess.]

OD1 [REDACTED]. Go back on the record. Time is 11:06.

EXAMINATION

OD1 BY [REDACTED]:

Q [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I'd like to take the opportunity to

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

thank you for your service and for speaking with us today. My name is ^{OPI} [REDACTED]. I'm with the minority staff of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee. And I'm joined by my colleagues on both Oversight and Government Reform Committee and the Armed Services Committee. During our discussion, my colleagues and I would like to ask you a series of questions about the attacks in Benghazi, some of which may revisit some of the topics discussed during the previous hour.

Our intent in asking our questions is to develop as complete and accurate a record as possible. We can only begin to appreciate how challenging the circumstances were for you and your colleagues on that night.

And, [REDACTED] I'd like to begin by asking a series of questions about your appearance here today. Are you appearing before us voluntarily today?

A Can you rephrase the question?

Q Is your appearance here voluntary?

A In a sort, I guess. I mean --

Mr. Richards. There's no subpoena.

[REDACTED] There's no subpoena. So, yes, I guess it is voluntary.

^{OPI} BY [REDACTED]

Q Is there any reason to believe that the statements you're providing today will not be complete or truthful?

A No. There is no reason to believe they are not

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

complete and truthful.

Q Have you ever 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 asked or ordered to sign a nondisclosure agreement related to the attacks?

A No.

Q Like to turn to a conversation during the last hour about your role in the Joint Operations Center, or the JOC. Could you help explain for us the role of the JOC within SOCAFRICA, what role it served?

A So, again, to -- the Joint Operations Center is to monitor current operations, to compile and receive all reporting, whether it is written or over radio or telephone, and to be the focus in a crisis situation to respond to a crisis or emergency.

Q Okay. And how was the JOC generally staffed?

A So I have my current staff, so in the JOC, there was a small enclosed room with secret terminals on the computers, VTC suite for a Tandberg telephones and termination for comms for secure satellite communications. We called it the bubble. So that was manned 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Then I had a number of staff who worked for me in the current operations directorate. But that was kind of the skeleton staff of -- you know, to ensure the reporting was continuing to be tracked. In an

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

emergency situation, a representative from each of the staff directorates would come up in order to prep a -- what we would call a prep for a crisis situation and prepared to brief back a commander on what the current situation was and then receive his guidance and then move on to an operational planning team to prepare to respond and provide options for a crisis.

Q Can you just describe generally your communications capability? You had mentioned during the last hour with the four deployed elements, where the element is in country, how you would maintain communications with them?

A Which ones? It depends -- by principle, we try to establish what is called a PACE plan, Primary Alternate Contingency and Emergency communications. So that, you know, no matter what the situation, we could communicate in some way, manner, shape, or form. And so those take a lot of varying different -- they're different in different places on the continent, based upon where the satellites are for SATCOM, based upon what systems we have to push forward in order to support them. So it just depends on -- I mean, as a principle, we try to keep four distinct -- and by "distinct," you know, not four different cellphones, but four distinct forms of communications, not all of them classified. But -- or not all of them secure, but so that we can contact someone in a crisis situation if we need to.

Q And to serve as a redundant form of communication.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Correct.

CD2 BY [REDACTED]

Q I think you had mentioned that for the JOC, you guys are moving from fire to fire. That you're constantly looking at Africa and dealing with lots of situations. Can you sort of just describe for us sort of what a day in the life of being in the JOC is like, relative to the continent? I mean, what countries are you dealing with?

A So all the -- so for Special Operations Command Africa, it is all the countries on the continent, minus Egypt. And so, again, it depends. It could be very slow or it could be extremely hectic, depending on what's going on. If there is a coup in Mali, that will suck all of the oxygen out of the room, and that is your focus. If there is a kidnapping in the Horn of Africa or if there's a kidnapping, you know, in the Gulf of Niger or -- you know, it just depends. So it depends. Some days are quiet; some days are extremely hectic, depending on what the crisis du jour is.

Q And we were talking about situation reports. Are you getting situation reports from all these different countries pretty much all the time?

A From all of our elements that are deployed from all of the elements that are signed to Special Operations Command Africa, we get daily situation reports.

Q And so how many reports would that typically be or

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

what's the volume we're talking about here?

A Between 10, 20 pages, once we compile them all together and prep them and send them to AFRICOM.

002 [REDACTED]. Okay.

001 BY [REDACTED]:

Q So just following up on Chris's point there, there were other JOCs associated with [REDACTED] on the continent; is that correct? [REDACTED]

A Correct.

Q Okay. Can you maybe explain -- I think you described perhaps the relationship between your JOC and the AFRICOM JOC, for instance, just the connectivity between the different JOCs?

A So we had the regular suite of secure -- I say -- secret level computers, secure, unclassified computers. A secret Tandberg suite for secure video teleconferencing. The same with telephones, they are both secret and unsecure. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. And we had that same with AFRICOM's JOC.

Q And for some of the prior incidents on the continent, or you referred to as the fire drills, were you ever in a position where you were communicating with the other JOCs related to that incident, coordinating any response to whatever might be unfolding on the ground?

A Yes.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Okay. And was that a generally -- how would you describe that process? Was information freely shared?

A Yes. So, I mean, it's collaborative. So it's -- again, I'm trying to understand what AFRICOM is seeing and is getting reporting either from its other components. And I'm trying to provide them an assessment of what we're seeing as much in realtime as possible.

Q And I know you mentioned this during the last hour about hoping you could clarify. Could you just again walk us through your specific reporting structure, your supervisory chain?

A So I was the Special Operations current operations director. So the SOJ-33. My direct supervisor was the operations director, the SOJ-3, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who was part of the staff. So above him was the chief of staff, who was [REDACTED] [REDACTED], the DCO was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and the commander was Admiral Losey.

Q Okay. Okay. But at any given time, would those personnel be located with you in the JOC?

A So if we did a -- you know, again, we call it a 60-minute drill. So 60 minutes from notification of a crisis was to have personnel representatives from the staff in the JOC preparing a brief to brief back to the commander within 60 minutes. That's after we had the final recall. And then to give him a situation report of where we think we stand with regards to a crisis or an emergency or a situation. And then, you know,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

prepare to move on to plan for options.

Q Sure. How often would you perform those drills?

A I would try to do them just as a training -- just recall to get people back in at least once a quarter. Just to make sure that we had updated telephone numbers and we could contact people off duty and have them show up.

Q Okay. And would those drills ever involve communicating, would they ever be held jointly with other JOCs?

A No.

Q I think during the last hour, you had indicated that there were -- there was a State Department advisor that was part of the senior leadership that served in some sort of political advisory role. Can you elaborate on their role and their responsibility?

A At AFRICOM or at SOCAFRICA?

Q Were there two different individuals?

A Correct. So SOCAFRICA has a pol-mil advisor who is from the State Department, and AFRICOM has a pol-mil advisor, or a handful. The deputy commander for operations, I can't remember what, DCMA deputy commander -- DCMA is the senior State Department rep, who is usually an ambassador or former ambassador.

Q Okay. For the SOCAF pol-mil advisor, can you describe for us their roles?

A Their role is to assist the command as an interface with Department of State and the country teams in the individual

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

countries in Africa and also to help our commander understand the perspective for State, you know, when we are beginning to go in and begin programs like the 1208 in Libya, you know, so to help facilitate, you know, those discussions to move those programs forward.

Q Okay. Would those individuals ever issue orders or commands to military personnel?

A State Department?

Q Yes.

A No, they are not within the chain of command.

Q So their role is more advisory; they would interface with their State Department elements. Is that --

A So, again, they're senior staff, but they are special staff in that they are advisers to the commander. Just like so -- just like a -- if you were a judge advocate general representative within the staff, maybe a senior officer, but they're not a commander, they are an advisor to the commander. Make any sense? The term for special staff.

Q Sure.

During the last hour, you used a term, the "tyranny of distance." I was wondering if you could elaborate on that phrase for us and what you meant. I think you described it in some detail, but I was hoping you could describe it in more detail for us.

A Okay. As we joke, Africa is a big country. It's huge.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

So, I mean, it is problematic. It is not insurmountable, but it is -- it is just massive distances. So it is -- for lack of a better term, it is what it is. It's a math problem. It's a routine thing we say. A lot of things, like Rommel said, "Professionals think logistics --" I mean, "Professionals think logistics, and amateurs think tactics." It is time, fuel, distance, aircraft. And so these are things that we have to keep in mind when we're planning operations anyplace in the continent.

Q I think in that discussion, you had also mentioned the tyranny of distance in the context of a medical evacuation or medevac. Just to clarify, you had indicated what was known about the medical capabilities in Tripoli. Can you elaborate on that? I think you described it as a known quantity. Can you discuss how that -- what your understanding was of their medical capabilities?

A My understanding during the SST was that the medical personnel assigned to the operational attachment, Alpha, had worked with the country team. I believe there is an RN or a nurse practitioner assigned to the embassy. And that they had set up, you know -- so, again, routinely, they have limited capability to deal with -- with trauma. But they have some. I didn't know to the extent of what it was, I just knew that they had coordinated it, based upon reading their records, that these things had been working with and there were capabilities.

Q Okay.

A Exactly what they were, I can't speak to specifically.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Was it your understanding they had some confidence in those in those capabilities?

A So anything is better than -- so again -- if we go back to in Iraq, Afghanistan, or, you know, back when I was doing these back before 9/11 when we go to the continent, so the planning factor is anything is better than your Special Forces medic having to stabilize you for 24 to 48 hours in order to get you out of country. Anything shorter than that is better. So I don't know, deal with the specifics of what they had. But Tripoli and Libya are not -- they are relatively advanced for North Africa. And so my understanding was the medical facilities in Tripoli were, you know, at least adequate. That was my understanding.

001 [REDACTED]. Okay. Thank you.

Go off the record.

[Recess.]

002 [REDACTED]. Back on the record. So it's about 11:32 a.m. We're going to start the majority side's second hour.

002 BY [REDACTED]:

Q So, [REDACTED] wondering if we could just shift gears now and move to the night of the attack September 11 to 12, 2012.

Just to kind of set the table on that. Did you have any discussions with military or State Department personnel about the security situation or security planning for Libya in the days leading up to the anniversary of September 11th?

A No. I mean, we were aware the anniversary of the

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

September 11th was coming, so, again, concern from a perspective of just something to keep our eyes on. But I don't remember having discussions with senior policy advisors, command or State.

Q Were there any specific precautions or security plans that you recall that were put in place because of the anniversary?

A I cannot recall.

Q Sure.

A I mean, it would depend on country by country. In a place like Uganda, it's not so important. In a place like Mauritania, a little more important.

Q Sure.

A Sudan.

Q On the day of the attacks, 11 September 2012, were you aware of any specific or general threats to U.S. interests in the region?

A I can't remember exactly when, but earlier that day, so, again, the video about the Prophet Muhammad had surfaced and was causing consternation. But I cannot recall where actual protests may or may not have been taking place. I can't remember.

Q Okay.

A I don't think -- I don't remember -- so, again, I left that evening, I don't remember things being -- things were not terribly contentious when I had gone home that night.

ARI [REDACTED] And "that night" being September 10th? Or which night are you talking about?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

OR2 [REDACTED] Or the 11th maybe.

AA1 [REDACTED] That's what I'm asking.

[REDACTED] So, for the record, what night was the Ambassador.

OR2

BY [REDACTED]

Q It was 11 September 2012. On the anniversary of.

A So on the anniversary of. So it was actually --

Q The attack started about 9:00 --

A The night of the 11th through the morning of the 12th.

Correct?

Q Yes.

A So just to clarify, what was the question again?

AA1 [REDACTED] You left work for your duty day, on the end of your duty day on the 11th.

[REDACTED] On the 11th.

AA1 [REDACTED] We're going to get to this, but subsequently you were recalled.

[REDACTED] Correct.

OR2

BY [REDACTED]

Q And you mentioned the YouTube or the video on YouTube, that you were sort of generally aware of it. Do you recall how you learned about that, that being an issue?

A No. I can't recall exactly where -- I don't know if it came through an intelligence report or open-source media back in the States. So, again, in the Joint Operations Center, we have

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

news coverage coming on. So I can't remember where it came from first.

Q Sure. Do you recall, were there any concerns that you were aware of that that might spark general unrest in the region?

A "Concerns," how do you mean?

Q Just that this video would cause, you know, security concern for our U.S. personnel in the region.

A I mean, so we're always concerned about security for, you know, our personnel in the region. The question is, did this stand out as a particular concern as compared to a coup in Mali or -- so I mean -- what on the scale --

Q Fair enough.

A There's highly concerned. There's, you know, U.S. personnel have been injured, or, you know, or U.S. citizens have been kidnapped, like in the Horn of Africa. And then there's, you know, low level concerns of, you know, random protests at the U.S. Embassy in Sudan. So it depends on, how do you mean? So you just metric these through the --

Q So where would it be on that scale, this video, the higher level or the lower level?

A If it's an open source on the press, until you actually see protests, you know, it would curl up or down. On the 11th, I don't recall.

Q Sure.

A I just remember it being sort of one of the things on

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

the plate of concerns.

Q And just sort of zooming in, if you will, on the region writ large, the day of the attack, do you recall any specific or general threats to U.S. interests in Libya specifically?

A Not to my knowledge. Not to my -- I don't recall.

Q Sure. It would be helpful if maybe you just to walk us through when you first learned that there had been an attack in Benghazi, Libya?

A So I had gone to bed about 2230. I remember getting a phone call shortly after 11, between 23 and 2315. It was one of the senior noncommissioned officers that worked in the Joint Operations Center stating that the deputy commanding officer, [REDACTED] had ordered a 60-minute recall, 60-minute drill. And we have -- we have a problem in Libya.

I said, "Okay. Go back, confirm." Because again it's 2315, 2330. "Please confirm that the DCO actually ordered the recall. I'm changing now. I'm driving that way anyhow, just confirm. Don't tell -- don't tell anybody else to come in. Just confirm with me that this is an actual recall."

And he came back and said [REDACTED] is in the building. The recall is valid. So I drove in.

ARI [REDACTED]. Excuse me. Nothing personal, why would there be any doubt that it was a legitimate recall? I just don't know --

[REDACTED] So I had had sometimes false alarms. It depends on -- so, again, someone would -- who was --

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

person who was calling me, I can't remember why, I just wanted to go back -- and I can't recall why, just please confirm that the DCO. Because usually -- I don't want to say, usually I would call the JB and the JB, because we would have a crisis, it would sort of start to boil. So I'm thinking this did kind of fall within the paradigm. So usually I'm taking the recommendation to the operations director, the J-3, who then asks, you know, the DCO, deputy commander officer or the commander, do you want to do a recall? So this was sort of in inverse that he was calling.

ARI [REDACTED] I see.

[REDACTED] It seemed -- I think I questioned it because I thought it was odd. I wasn't going to not come in, because it's my job. But just wanted to confirm.

Q2 [REDACTED] And just to be clear, [REDACTED] is the deputy commanding officer of SOCAFRICA. Is that right?

[REDACTED] Yes.

Q2 [REDACTED] So when you got into the office, what was your first course of action.

ARI [REDACTED] Excuse me. Then did they call and confirm that, in fact, it was a valid recall?

[REDACTED] Yes. I was in my car driving back when I got the phone call. "The DCO is here in the building, confirm, you know, 60-minute drill. We're recalling everyone."

So.

ARI [REDACTED] Okay.

[REDACTED]

OR2 BY [REDACTED]:

Q Then you got to the office. What was your first course of action? Do you remember what time, about, that was, roughly?

A It takes maybe -- because I live on the economy. Probably like D.C., it's 15 minutes to 45 minutes to an hour, depending on traffic. So it was the middle of the night. So got there in about 15 minutes. So it was before midnight, I don't know if it was 2330, sometime between 2330 and midnight.

Q What did you do then?

A I walked in, tried to get a current estimate of the situation. I was -- I was given that Ambassador Stevens was in Benghazi, that the State Department facility in Benghazi, that there were protests -- there were reports of protests. There were reports of small arms fire and possible RPG fire and that there were reports that the facility was catching on fire or had already caught on fire. And that we had not -- to my knowledge, no one had received any reports from either the Ambassador or his security team.

Q Okay. And then what was your -- what were your responsibilities from then, moving forward?

A My responsibilities were to get accountability of the staff coming in. To make contact with our element on the ground, to talk about, you know, what their participation or would or would not be and then prepare for the brief back to Admiral Losey to give him a current estimate of the situation based upon what

[REDACTED]

reports we had.

Q So then kind of your chain of command kind of spring into action. Who were you talking to both up and then who were you getting reports from, I guess --

A I was talking directly with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and the DCO. The DCO was in the JOC when I first showed up, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] after -- [REDACTED] [REDACTED] came in relatively quickly thereafter.

And -- I'm sorry. State the question again.

ARI [REDACTED] Who was talking to you?

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Shortly thereafter, I had my first discussion with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I called him on a Tandberg, secure means. I don't recall if I had more than one Tandberg discussion with him that night. I may have only touched base briefly, whether that was the first or the second time, but what I did realize was that between then and whenever I talked to him, sometime between after I arrived -- so I'd probably have to say between midnight and 02, and again we're 18 months hence, so don't hold my feet to the fire on these times.

Q2 [REDACTED] No.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Because, again, I had worked a full day, so I had been up at 6:00. I got about 30 to 45 minutes of sleep, and I wasn't going to go to bed for the next 36 hours.

So, you know, what I recall is sometime after midnight to sometime around 2:00 or 3:00, whenever, you know, the country team made to the decision to move from the embassy compound to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. So, at some point in time, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was on the Tandberg with me. I see guys moving around in the background. He is covered in sweat, and they are breaking down all their stuff, their classified information, taking all of their systems with them and moving [REDACTED]

OR2 [REDACTED] Okay. So sometime between midnight and 0200, you said, roughly?

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Roughly.

OR2 [REDACTED] Sure.

AR1 [REDACTED] Do you remember if [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in your conversation with you had said he had a conversation with [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I do not recall. I would not be surprised if he said he talked to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I would not be surprised if he did not mention it. I would expect him to talk to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] or, if he's too busy, to not to. Again, my job is to get information as best we can from him so we understand what's going on on the ground and then stay out of his way because he's got too many things to worry about than for him to handle me.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]:

Q So, other than [REDACTED] [REDACTED] were you talking to anybody else in Tripoli that night?

A No.

Q Were you talking to anybody in Benghazi?

A No, I did not.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q And were you talking with any other military channels, getting any other information other than from the personnel in -- [REDACTED] in Tripoli?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

But it was still very, very -- it was very foggy as to what were actual facts are on the ground. They weren't providing significantly greater depths of information on what was going on because they didn't know either.

Q Okay. Just to sort of just draw a ring around that stream of information, any other streams of information that you were -- from military that you were getting?

A I think AFRICOM was in touch with the defense attache, who was [REDACTED] I think at the time. Is that right?

Mr. Richards. Correct.

[REDACTED] So I'm talking to my counterpart

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

at the AFRICOM JOC. And just trying to understand what -- here's what I know, what do you know. But I don't remember them providing significant amounts of information because I think, you know, they were talking to the defense attache, and that was about it.

OR2 [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were near each other in Tripoli.

[REDACTED] Right. Some I'm hearing what [REDACTED] is telling me. I mean, it was just, are we missing data? Again everybody is running towards the objective. Just make sure, you know, we're not missing something.

ARI BY [REDACTED]:

Q Similarly, were you in contact with Joint Operations Special Operations, JOC, also?

A No, I was talking to their LNO. Just because, I mean, their JOC is much smaller; they have a much smaller footprint on the continent. I mean, they still have people in there 24/7, but it's not as big a -- it's not as robust a capability.

Q Through their LNO, you were apprised of what they do?

A Right. All I was asking them was, let us know what you're doing and let me know if you find out something different. And I was giving them everything that we knew as we were doing it.

Q And the communications that your JOC had with [REDACTED] was through the individual who was seconded to the JOC. You never were in contact with the [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A I think they came over at some point in the night. And I saw them because I knew the commander over there. But, I mean --

Q But they handled communications directly with their people.

A Right. They were terminating comms with their guys.

Q And you were talking to them.

A Yes.

Q But you weren't talking to [REDACTED]

A On the ground in Libya, no.

Q Correct. They were.

A I believe so. I mean -- I don't have firsthand knowledge, I wasn't there, but my assumption would be they were talking to their guys.

Q I guess I'm wondering, though, were you apprised -- you obviously, I guess, weren't apprised of what they were hearing because you weren't sure they were talking. I'm trying to establish if everybody was just linked up with everybody else.

A As best as we could, yes.

Q So how were you, if at all, apprised of what [REDACTED] were reporting out?

A I think fairly well.

Q Because of your conversations with [REDACTED] that was co-located with you.

A Right. And I don't believe -- I mean -- I'm not sure

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

what the question is. We were talking to each other as best we could.

Q Fine. I think you've answered that. That's what I want to know.

CR2

BY [REDACTED]

Q So what I'm going to do now is I'm going to walk through a little bit of what you told us. I want to separate the conversation we just had. I just want to walk through other communications that you were having.

So just to -- I'll reprise what I think you said, and just correct me if I get any of this wrong. You were speaking with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was at the embassy in Tripoli.

Correct?

A Yes.

Q And then, as far as from the field, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was the only person you were speaking with in Libya. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q And then, as far as at Stuttgart, you were speaking with your counterpart in AFRICOM JOC. Correct?

A Yes.

Q And just to be clear, was that JOC physically separated from your JOC?

A Yes. That's the 50 meters.

Q Right.

A -- across the street.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q So you were communicating by phone?

A On Tandberg.

Q Yes.

A So, again, so you can see face to face. It makes it easier, and it makes it a little more personal.

Q And they were speaking with the DAT, [REDACTED]

A I think so. But at that point in time, I don't remember that coming up in the discussion. Again, so we're 18 months hence.

AR1 [REDACTED]. Understood.

[REDACTED] I worked with all of these guys,

[REDACTED] So, you know, and this is a shared, common experience. So I don't remember if I remember talking to them about talking to the DAT that night. I do know that it happened. I just don't remember it coming up in the conversation that evening.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]:

Q And then, in those conversations you were having with your counterpart at AFRICOM, were you -- did you -- or I should say with [REDACTED] in the field, did you participate in any attempts by those in Libya to secure U.S. military assistance for the Americans on the ground in Benghazi? Were you involved in any of those requests?

A How do you mean?

Q Well, we know, for example, that [REDACTED] the

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

DAT, was speaking to AFRICOM about the possibilities of securing either aircraft or some other form of response to assist the Americans in distress in Benghazi. Were you involved in any of those requests from the field?

A So the short answer is no. I mean, when I came in, we were evaluating what could -- so, again, our job is to provide options. What can we provide now with what we have? So, again, we were evaluating where were the aircraft -- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Again, it's just a math problem.

Q Sounds like, is it fair to say that the discussions

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

that you may have been involved with or were involved with about potential assistance, was that sort of in the Special Forces realm and then AFRICOM would be talking about other -- other military assets?

A Correct.

Q Okay.

A So I'm only worried about the things that I can, you know, physically get my hands on and plan for and touch and assist. Understand that they were looking for other capabilities outside of the Special Operations capabilities we have on the ground in the continent, then, you know, that's -- that's -- that's AFRICOM's job to talk to their --

Q So, with respect to that, and I completely understand that. With respect to the non-Special Forces options that were being considered, were you at least monitoring those communications in some way? Were you aware of them was? Or was it shared with you by your counterpart, for example, at the AFRICOM JOC?

A I had asked, you know, what, if anything, was available, you know, what they were working on. As I can recall, AFRICOM has three lines of C-130s out of Ramstein. I just asked what the status was, but I don't remember what the status was of those aircraft.

And then, you know, we had asked about, you know, the disposition of the commanders in extremis force, which was in

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

support of an exercise in southeast Europe at the time of, you know, where they were and what aircraft may or may not be there. But that was being handled by the -- by the operations director, [REDACTED] his discussions with -- so again -- this is where this sort of bleeds over a little bit.

So you've got current operations, which is dealing with telling the J-35, which is operational plans, which runs the operational planning team and brings people together. I'm trying to give him a disposition of, here's where we know where things are and what they're doing. They will then move off to an OPT planning room while I continue to basically, you know, manage the fire, for lack of a better term. So, I mean, that was my job, was to try to give them the information and then, you know, we would provide someone to help us with planning if and when required.

Q Okay. So you mentioned your first conversation with [REDACTED] at the time that you were aware that they were considering -- "they" being the embassy, people at the embassy were considering evacuation to another location. So --

A I don't recall if that happened on the first call. I know --

Q Sure.

A -- what I vividly remember is calling him on the Tandberg -- or he called me on the Tandberg, saying, we're breaking down and we're going to move [REDACTED] here in Tripoli.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

ARI [REDACTED]. That was your second call. Sorry. Your second --

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. I may have had a second call; I may have only had a one call. I can't recall, to be honest with you.

ARI [REDACTED]. Okay.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. The two things that stand out in my mind was that Tandberg discussion, where I can see him face to face, and the second phone call that he had on his cellphone after they had moved.

OR2 [REDACTED]. Okay.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. I would not doubt it if someone came back to me and said I had four different discussions with him that night. But those are the only two I remember.

OR2 [REDACTED]. I think at this point, what I'd like to do, AND we completely understand it was 18 months ago, and memory can sometimes be a challenge. Just to be helpful to you, what I'd like to do is just introduce a transcript here. And what this is is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] actually came in front of the Armed Services Committee on June 26th of last year and kind of briefed the committee. And this is an unclassified, redacted transcript of part of that discussion. It's specifically -- relates to a point in time we want to ask you some questions about. So I'm going to introduce this I think it's Exhibit 1.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 1

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] was marked for identification.]

OR2 BY [REDACTED]:

Q And I've marked it. And what I'd like to do is -- I'm going to read it into the record and let you just follow along with it.

I'm going to start on.

A As I stated earlier in the opening, this is one of my concerns going forward, is that then [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] name was released in the press and his testimony was released in a redacted form. And so, you know, understanding that it was released, his name was mentioned by someone else in their hearing. But I would ask again for you and your committees to respect, you know, our force protection and where we live in the situation and where we live in the continent and the world we live in now.

So go ahead, please.

Q So, again, this is unclassified version of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] testimony, starting at page 82. So he's saying here -- I'll just read it, quote, "There were also various reports of one person confirmed killed, and the Ambassador remained unaccounted for. I briefed the team that, once we get everyone over to [REDACTED] [REDACTED], we would turn and head to the airport to get on the Libyan C-130 heading to Benghazi.

"Of my four-man element, I had one person that was being treated for stress fractures to his foot, and his foot was in a support cast. I asked the medic if the soldier was physically

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

able to go. The soldier took off his cast, put on his combat boot, tightening up his bootlaces in order for provide enough support, and I planned to take him with me.

"In the early morning hours, we began our move [REDACTED]

At approximately 4:45 a.m., I contacted the SOCAFRICA operations center and informed them we were beginning our movement [REDACTED]

"At approximately 5:00 a.m., the movement was complete [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and all U.S. Embassy personnel in Tripoli were secure. We had successfully protected, transported, and secured all Department of State personnel in Tripoli during an uncertain and potentially volatile time.

"I then told the team to prepare for movement. We took all of our weapons and combat gear and were preparing to move to the air base. We were unsure how long the situation in Benghazi would continue or when additional forces would be available.

"I was unsure how we would move from the Benghazi airport and what time of reinforcement we would provide, but I believed we needed to support our efforts in Benghazi.

"I went to Deputy Chief of Mission Greg Hicks and told him we were preparing to move to the airport. He shook my hand and told me to bring the guys home.

"At this same time, at approximately 5:05 a.m., I contacted the SOCAF current operations director, who was in the SOCAFRICA operations center, and informed him that we were preparing to

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

conduct movement to the airport for onward movement to Benghazi. I was calling to inform them of the movement so that they could track personnel.

"At this point, the SOCAFRICA current operations director told me to hold on. He relayed to me that I was to remain in place [REDACTED] and not board the aircraft. I questioned the SOCAFRICA current operations director about the origin of this directive. He stated it was in the SOCAFRICA operations director, who had returned from the SOCAFRICA command deck.

"At this point, I fully understood I no longer had the approval from my command to reenforce efforts in Benghazi. I also fully understood that I no longer had the tactical latitude previously allowed by Joint Operations Trans-Sahara commander. I informed DCM Greg Hicks that I was ordered to remain in place and not board the aircraft."

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

RPTS KERR

DCMN SECKMAN

ORA

BY [REDACTED]

Q So I just want to stop there for a moment and just ask a couple of questions.

Going back to page 82, so where he says there, "In the early morning hours, we began our move [REDACTED] At approximately 4:45 a.m., I contacted the SOCAPRICA operations center and informed them we were beginning our movement [REDACTED]," I guess my first question is, is when he made that call, was that you that he talked to, to your recollection?

A Yes, I believe that -- I believe, and I would have to ask -- well, I would ask to, you know, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] if he means that was the discussion we had, but I believe it was --

Q Okay.

A -- our Tandberg discussion, where we talked face to face.

Q Okay. And actually, can I just ask a clarifying question about that. So, your recollection is you were actually able to see him visually at this point. Do you remember, was he at the Embassy [REDACTED] at this point? Can you recall?

A [REDACTED] So we had a secure communication suite, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] So we were conversing on that system in the U.S. Embassy prior to him breaking down. So, after he broke down and they moved from the U.S. Embassy compound to the --

Q [REDACTED]

A [REDACTED] I was not able to see him or talk secure.

Q And so, at that point, were you speaking on commercial cell phone or --

A Yes.

Q Okay. Okay. And then just referring back to the text. He says, "At approximately 5:00 a.m., the movement was complete [REDACTED] and then he says, jumping down, that he told his team to prepare for movement, and it was at -- he says on the next page, he says, it was at about the same time, at approximately 5:05 a.m., that he contacted SOCAF current operations director who was in the SOCAFRICA operations center and informed him that we were preparing to preparing to conduct movement to the airport for onward movement to Benghazi.

So, same question. Was that -- to your recollection, was that you that he spoke with?

A Yes, that was me.

Q Okay. Can you just walk us through your recollection of that conversation?

A I would have to say that it is almost exactly as [REDACTED] provided in his testimony. He called me and said

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

they were preparing to move the airfield, and I was unsure which airfield he was talking about, whether it was Tripoli International or Mitiga. To get on Libya C-130, I would assume it would have been Mitiga. It's a little bit further drive. And so I said, standby. I went and talked to the operations director, [REDACTED] explained to him what had been relayed to me, and he said, "Standby, let me go down and talk to the commander." So, he went downstairs, I went back and talked -- told [REDACTED] to standby, and then when he came back was when he was given the order to secure the U.S. personnel [REDACTED], and that's what I passed on to him from the current operations director.

Q Okay.

ARI [REDACTED]. And the commander that you make reference to is your Admiral Losey?

[REDACTED] Correct?

OR2 BY [REDACTED]:

Q So I take it Admiral Losey was not in the room with you in the JOC at that point. He was in another location?

A He was in his office.

Q Okay.

A So, again, running a Joint Operations Center is a messy business, and there is -- you know, you -- there's a lot of movement going around, a lot of people talking, a lot of open collaboration. The commander is smart enough to know that those things don't always take place freely where he is, so he comes up

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

for his brief, got the brief back, provided some guidance, and then basically gives everybody some breathing space to sort of start, start generating options. You want to do that in a way, so he was smart enough to, he went downstairs and then he was remaining in contact with AFRICOM, I believe. So, you know, he was -- we were feeding him updates and information --

Q Sure.

A -- as we were getting it.

Q And so, and during this time when [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is going to get instructions from Admiral Losey, you got [REDACTED] kind of holding the line, as it were. Is that right?

A Right. It was relatively quick, though.

Q A minute or 2 minutes, something like that?

A I don't recall, but I mean, it went really, really quickly.

Q Okay. So, just backing up then. So you said -- correct me if I'm wrong -- you said that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] came back and told you to pass on to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to secure the personnel

[REDACTED] Is that --

A They're to remain there, and to the best of my recollection, that was what was passed on to remain there and to help secure.

Q Okay.

A [REDACTED]

Q And what was -- what was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] response to

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

that when you conveyed -- you conveyed that to him, I take it, on the phone. What did he say back to you? Do you recall?

A So, if I remember correctly, we go back to his testimony, where he says, "I questioned current operations director about the origin of this directive," which to me is, you know, he was asking why, and so, you know, and then I stated it was from the operations director that just came from Admiral Losey's office.

Q So, when [REDACTED] [REDACTED] questioned why, I mean, did he -- did he explain why he was questioning it or he just questioned it?

A I don't recall.

Q Okay. So then what happened? Then you hung up or what was the --

A I remember telling him to stay in touch, let us know, you know, what happens next or if he hears anything next.

Q Sure. Okay. So, at any point during this -- I mean, obviously [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is the one that went and talked to Admiral Losey. Did you have a conversation with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] about the reasoning behind the order that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had been given, or was it just simply he passed it to you and you passed it to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and that was it, you didn't talk about it at all?

A At the time, there wasn't much going on. I don't remember it being a point of discussion.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Okay.

A So, again, you know, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and the Special Operations soldiers who were with him, we select them, we train them, and we prepare them, and we want them to run towards the sound of gunfire, so it's not unusual that that's what he wanted to do. And that is the instinct we want, so we never want to have those guys shy away. But you know, commanders make decisions based upon how they are viewing the threat from their perspective, and so I don't recall at the time second-guessing that decision.

Q Sure. So I think what I'd like to do is just jump to another part of the text. If you could go to page 84, the very last paragraph where it says, "Ambassador Stevens," I'm just going to read for a little bit more over to the next page. So, quote, "Ambassador Stevens and Sean Smith were murdered before anyone could have staged a rescue. Departing with the first team and leaving the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli with its personnel unsecured and continuing to split what few forces we had in Libya would have been a tactical mistake with potentially catastrophic consequences."

A Again, is this [REDACTED] [REDACTED] testimony?

Q Yes, sir.

A Okay.

Q "The plane that departed from Tripoli at 6:00 to 6:30 a.m. would not have arrived in Benghazi until approximately 8:00 to 8:30. The situation at that time was unclear, and we were

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

unsure how long the violence would continue. I wanted to get on that plane. However, by the time the second plane got to Benghazi, the first plane was already en route to Tripoli with the wounded.

"The Special Forces medic was instrumental in saving the life of one of the wounded and securing the remains of Ambassador Stevens and others. He was later recommended for the bronze star for his extraordinary actions. I was ordered to not get on the Libyan C-130 going Benghazi. It was a legal and a lawful order, to which I complied. That order and that decision would not have changed the outcome. Failure to comply with this order could have made the situation worse for those returning from Benghazi," unquote.

So, I guess I just want to ask some questions, and I think we all understand, you know, looking at it as a historical matter about what actually transpired, I think we understand what [REDACTED] is saying, that the medic, for example, ended up playing an integral role at Tripoli airport, receiving wounded; that by the time the second flight, the Libyan 130, had taken off, that the plane that was in Benghazi was already transiting back with wounded, so I think we understand that as a historical matter.

I think what we want to do is just ask some questions more from the perspective of like a -- like an after-action review maybe would do, where we want to understand what decisions were made, given the information available at the time, right,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

contemporaneously.

A Uh-huh.

Q Vice looking at it kind of ex post facto about what ultimately happened, you know, historically. So, just -- want to kind of frame the question -- I want to ask a few questions. I just want to frame it with that. Just be thinking about -- we just want to establish what information was available at the time to everybody that was involved in this.

So -- so, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] we actually interviewed him, and he told the committees that -- that at the time that he got this order from the command deck at SOCAFRICA, countermanding his decision to take his team on the second response flight to Benghazi, that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] told us he assumed that that decision was based upon information available to SOCAFRICA which was not available to him. And so I'm just wondering if you -- to your knowledge, would you just explain what factors contributed to that decision by Admiral Losey to give [REDACTED] [REDACTED] that order?

So, for example, maybe just to help you. So, for example, was -- do you know, was SOCAFRICA in direct communication with individuals on the ground in Benghazi, to your knowledge?

A No, not to my knowledge.

Q Okay. Did -- we also understand that there was a drone overhead at various points during this activity. Did SOCAFRICA have access to the drone feed that was coming from Benghazi, to your knowledge?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A I cannot recall.

Q Okay.

A [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Understood. And just to separate what you just said just in an unclassified way, your testimony is you don't recall whether SOCAFRICA had access to the drone feed from Benghazi? Is that correct?

A I would not be surprised if we did, but as fast as things were moving, I don't recall if we did that night or not.

Q Fair enough.

ARI [REDACTED]. Do you remember if you personally viewed any of that drone feed?

[REDACTED] I don't recall. Again, if someone were to testify that I did, I would not be surprised?

ARI [REDACTED]. Why?

[REDACTED] Because, again, on the subsequent FBI movement over there, we did have it on previous missions that involved SOCAFRICA or other forces we had as our feeds, but I can't recall if and when went had it up that night?

CR2 [REDACTED]. This is another question. To your knowledge,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
did SOCAFRICA have specific information about the medical status of those who had been wounded in Benghazi at this time?

[REDACTED] We did not have a specific status. What we did have -- and this is to clarify. What I do recall seeing was the map [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

ARI [REDACTED] Sorry, Tripoli or Benghazi?

[REDACTED] I'm sorry, Benghazi. But they were not co-located together. There had been no call back from any of those elements or from his security or from the ambassador reporting on their status. So, again, it was very confusing as to what was going on. All I could, all I can recall thinking was is that this was bad on a grand scale because, I mean, again, no report, you've got moving of FFDs so it usually means they've captured or they're on the run, but still no one's called back to tell us whether anyone was alive. We had reports, as [REDACTED] [REDACTED] said in his testimony, of some people, maybe we had dead, maybe we didn't, but nobody could confirm.

OR2 [REDACTED] Okay.

ARI [REDACTED] Excuse me. Just a second?

OR2 [REDACTED] Yeah, please.

ARI BY [REDACTED]:

Q [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A We had visibility on State systems that they had with them.

Q [REDACTED]

A [REDACTED]

Q [REDACTED]

A [REDACTED]

Q [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A [REDACTED]

Q Fine. Thank you.

A I do not recall.

Q Okay.

A Because, you know, I can't recall.

Q Fine.

OR2 [REDACTED] Okay.

[REDACTED]

ARI [REDACTED] Because you knew where [REDACTED] was. You

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

weren't so much tracking him because you knew where he was?

[REDACTED] Correct?

ARI [REDACTED]. He and his people.

[REDACTED] Right.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]

Q So, if I could, I just want to fast forward a little bit in time. Can I just direct your attention back to the text? I think it's the immediately preceding page, page 84. Again, this is [REDACTED] testimony in front of the Armed Services Committee on June 26 of 2013.

So [REDACTED] says, quote, "Later that morning, at approximately 7:45 a.m., I received the word from the annex personnel that the first plane was wheels-up from Benghazi and was inbound to Tripoli with wounded. We had the only Special Forces medic available, and I called the SOCAFRICA operations center and told them I was sending the team with the medic to the Tripoli airport to assist with inbound personnel and wounded. I was again told to remain in place. I was visibly upset and vocal in my disagreement with this directive. I told the team to continue to get ready.

"Approximately 5 minutes later, I received a phone call that stated we were cleared to go the airport. My team members went with the U.S. Embassy [REDACTED] to receive the inbound personnel and wounded. My team members continued to provide support to the personnel inbound from Benghazi until the last

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

plane arrived at approximately 11:40 a.m.," unquote.

So I just want to ask, sir, so when he says -- [REDACTED] [REDACTED] says about 7:45, he received word from the annex personnel that the first plane from Benghazi was wheels-up inbound Tripoli with wounded, and he said we had the only Special Forces medic available. He called the SOCAFRICA operations center and told them I was sending the team with a medic to the Tripoli airport to assist with inbound personnel and wounded.

So, again, was that -- was that you he talked to when he called the SOCAFRICA operations center?

A Yes, that was me.

Q Okay. And is your recollection of this conversation similar to what [REDACTED] [REDACTED] says here?

A It is.

Q Okay. So, when [REDACTED] [REDACTED] testimony is that he was told to remain in place, was that -- how did that come about? Just what was the conversation like back and forth?

A So, again, the last order that he was given was to stay and secure State Department personnel [REDACTED] So, in order to relieve him of that order, I needed to go back and get clarification.

Q Okay.

A So, you know, he was calling to me, saying here's what I'm planning to do. I said the last order you were given is to stay there, so again, there were four guys with guns securing 50

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

people, 30 people, however many people [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] So, again, that was a -- that's a commander's decision. So staff officers don't get to make those decisions. So I needed to take that to the current operations director to get a clarification of here's what [REDACTED] [REDACTED] wants to do; they have all this stuff ready to roll out to go do this, and what does the commander want to do?

Q Okay. So was this a similar situation, you told [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to hang on, or you hung up from him and went and checked on the order?

A I can't recall. I think it was generally the way he described it --

Q Described it?

A -- his testimony.

Q Okay. And so how did you secure is that permission from the commander? How did that happen?

A The same way I talked to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] explained to him what he was doing, explained that they had -- you know, I remember vaguely in our discussions that he told me that, you know, they had their weapons. They had their vehicles. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] They had their comms, communications face plan locked in. So, you know, they had all the things they need to move effectively; we just need the approvals if the commander -- if that's what the commander wants to do.

Q So, did [REDACTED] [REDACTED] go to the command deck again?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A If I recall, yes, it was the same --

Q Okay.

A -- procedure. I talked to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Again, Admiral Losey doesn't camp out in the JOC during a crisis because that sort of -- you know, less work takes place around general officers and flag officers, so he knows when and where to be. That's his business, so [REDACTED] [REDACTED] relayed it back to me again.

Q And I take it you're the one that called back about 5 minutes later, according to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] recollection?

A Yes. I believe that was me that called back.

Q So, just to -- you know, in the first call, when [REDACTED] [REDACTED] initially talked to you about this plan to go to send the medic to the airport, he said he was visibly upset and vocal in his disagreement with the directive. Did he express any of that to you on the phone or not?

A I vaguely remember that he was.

Q Okay.

A We've since tugged it out.

AR1 [REDACTED]. Since?

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] We've had a long relationship so it's --

OR2 [REDACTED]. He mentioned that.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] So we're good. That's what I expect. So guys to have to be able to talk to me. I'm okay with

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

that.

ARI BY [REDACTED]:

Q And when [REDACTED] [REDACTED] went to see Admiral Losey --

A [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Q Beg your pardon, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] He's a Navy captain?

A Yes, sir.

Q Went to see Admiral Losey, some discussion to and came back and said direct them to allow them to proceed, you weren't there with the Losey- [REDACTED] discussion, correct?

A To the best of my recollection, I don't remember being in the room for those discussions.

Q So, other than the outcome of the discussion, you don't know what the thought process was or the discussion they may have had about why to come back and tell --

A Based on my recollection and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] said it was 5 minutes, there wasn't a prolonged discussion.

Q You don't know what it was anyhow because you didn't hear it?

A Correct.

Q Other than it wasn't very long?

A Correct.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]:

Q When you were having these -- either the first conversation -- the first conversation in this text and the second conversation, the 5:00 and then the 7:30, 7:45 conversation, did

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] share with you at all the -- about the security situation at [REDACTED]. In other words, did he say, you know, this place is secure, it's not secure, I mean, I'm needed here, I'm not needed here, did he share any of that with you?

A I don't recall. I mean, I -- if he had stated so in his testimony, I wouldn't refute that, but I can't recall specifics. I just remember thinking that the defense [REDACTED] in Tripoli was pretty thin. I mean, four SF guys that -- I mean, we will tell you we can do a lot of things, but if the Mongolian horde comes over the hill, four guys have only got so much time.

Q So, it's your understanding that it was just [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and his three men was the only element protecting [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Is that your understanding?

A [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I don't know what else was there, but I'm pretty sure it was -- I was assuming, and I hate to say that in the military sense of the word because it has to be valid in that it can be true and needs to be necessary for planning. I was

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

assuming that they were thin.

Mr. Richards. Can we -- can we go off the record?

OR2 [REDACTED] I want to follow up real quick on that.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]:

Q So, just to be clear, your understanding of -- was your understanding, such as it was, of the security situation [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was that based upon any personal knowledge? [REDACTED]

A Before September 11th, 2012, [REDACTED]

Q Okay. And is it your testimony that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] would be in a better position than you to assess the security of [REDACTED], given that he was on the ground there that night?

A Absolutely.

Q Okay.

A So, I mean, yes, it's [REDACTED] [REDACTED] fight. He's the guy on the ground, so it's his assessment.

Q Okay. Fair enough. Thanks.

OR2 [REDACTED] Did you want to --

Mr. Richards. Yeah. Can we just have a quick discussion off the record?

OR2 [REDACTED] Sure.

[Discussion off the record.]

OR2 BY [REDACTED]:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q [REDACTED] I just wanted to -- one last follow up on the conversation we were just having. You know, I know we were talking about, you know, [REDACTED] and your conversation with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] about his intention to join the second response flight to Benghazi.

I just wanted to ask you, you mentioned you've known [REDACTED] [REDACTED] for some time, and I just wanted to ask your opinion. Do you think, you know, that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] given that he was on the ground that night, had eyes on as far as the security situation that he was facing and his mission, do you think that he would have carried out any plan that would have put the civilians or his men in danger -- more danger by his getting on that plane?

A How do you mean?

Q In other words, do you know [REDACTED] -- knowing [REDACTED] [REDACTED] do you think he would have formulated the plan to go to Benghazi on the Libyan C-130 if he believed that doing so would place people that he had been protecting in additional danger?

A No, I don't think that he would intentionally make a decision, but then again, no one makes a decision to intentionally make something worse. So, I mean, I don't question the validity of his judgment. I think his judgment is still sound, but the decisions he's making are sound from his perspective.

Q Understood. If I could just shift gears a little bit. I just have a few follow-up questions about after the attack. So, after the attack. Now, let's move forward in time.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Did you have any indication in the immediate aftermath of what happened in Benghazi that the attack there was the result of a protest that had spun out of control? Did you have any indication of that?

A How do you mean? So, it was a --

Q Yeah.

A So it was a protest that incorporated at some point in time, reportedly, small arms fire and RPG fire, and then the annex in Benghazi was -- the State Department annex in Benghazi was set on fire.

Q That was your understanding?

A That is my understanding.

Q Still your understanding?

A Based on what I've seen in the reports in the news, I don't think there is a change to that.

Q The annex or the special mission compound in --

A The State Department annex.

Mr. Richards. Which is a State facility in Benghazi.

[REDACTED] A State facility in Benghazi.

Mr. Richards. -- facility, correct?

[REDACTED] Correct.

CR2 BY [REDACTED]:

Q Okay. So, did you have -- I take it, then, did you have discussions with anyone in the military about what -- that what had happened in Benghazi had been a protest that spun out of

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

control?

A How do you mean?

Q Did anyone on the ground, did you -- did anyone on the ground tell you that what had happened --

A From Benghazi?

Q Yeah.

A No.

Q Okay. Did they -- did you talk to anybody who had been on the ground in Benghazi after the attack?

A Let me think. No. Talked to people who had been in Tripoli that night but not in Benghazi.

AR1 [REDACTED]. When you were recalled arrived at the JOC or maybe in your phone call when you were recalled, how did they say, "there's a protest gone awry at the facility, there's an attack at the facility, we don't know what's going on in the facility"?

[REDACTED] I think all of those. We did not know. So, again, we can't -- you cannot think of a protest in an American perspective, okay, so freedom of speech. So a protest in Africa can quickly and sporadically go violent for no apparent reason or from an apparent reason, so it is -- it doesn't matter. Anytime there's a protest, there is to be concern. So you don't know if there is going to be a nonviolent protest or if it is Tehran 1980 because you don't know how it's going to end up.

OR2 BY [REDACTED]:

Q Okay. So, were you ever debriefed by your chain of

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

command or other U.S. military personnel about what took place on the night of the attack?

A What's your definition of a debrief?

Q Well, was it -- let me start, was there a formal debriefing of any kind?

A I cannot recall because this basically spun for about the next 7 to 14 days.

Q Okay.

A We barely came up for air over the next week and a half or so.

Q What about a -- did you participate in any formal after-action review of what had happened in Benghazi?

A Not to my recollection.

Q Okay.

AR1 [REDACTED]. Did you file any memorandum to the record or anything like that to memorialize your actions that day or --

[REDACTED] No, not to my recollection?

OR2 [REDACTED]. Were you interviewed by the ARB, the accountability review board?

[REDACTED] I was not interviewed.

OR2 [REDACTED]. Okay. All right. I think that's all I have for -- okay. So we will go off the record.

[Recess.]

OP1 [REDACTED]. We will go back on the record. The time is 12:50, and before I begin, counsel would like to make a statement.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mr. Richards. Yes. I believe it was Dr. Bright who asked the question regarding memorandums for the record memorializing the colonel's actions from the night. My understanding is there is no memorandum for the record. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] has -- had drafted a short paragraph last summer, and he might be able to elaborate more what it says in relation to what you were saying today.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] So, last summer while -- again, at the classification level, I was deployed to Tripoli was when [REDACTED] [REDACTED] testified to Congress. It was recommended to me while I was there that I prepare a sworn statement, which I did, as to what my actions were that night. That was a paragraph of roughly five to six lines, which is substantively less than what I've testified to here today, but I wanted to clarify that I had written a sworn statement and had signed it, but I have not provided any other written documentation for that night.

Mr. Richards. That's all.

ODI [REDACTED]. Thank you. That's very helpful.

ODI BY [REDACTED]:

Q [REDACTED] at various times today, you have mentioned that, you know, here we are removed 18 months from the attacks, and just for the record, I would just like to ask kind of a general high level question about, you know, we've asked some specific questions about your awareness, your understanding at specific moments in time during that night, and I'd just like to give you the opportunity, if you'd like it, to maybe explain your

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

level of comfort with speaking to those types of topics and, as far as specific moments in time, you know, the blow by blow, the tick-tock of the night.

A So, based upon, you know, the reading back of other people's testimony, I don't refute their timelines. I would say it is possible that they are long or short in some respects but that the substance of the facts are generally correct, correct in the main. We may differ on specific details, but none significantly that I can see.

Q Okay. Thank you. That's very helpful. In the last hour, there was a brief discussion [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] You mentioned that that was considered and, to use your language, ruled out pretty quickly. And my question is whether those particular air assets were ruled out quickly, in your words, because the option wasn't seriously considered, or was it because the answer was more straightforward to you and your colleagues?

A To my recollection, the answer was pretty straightforward because the [REDACTED] was in Stuttgart. I recall seeing him that evening. I believe the question -- I can't state for a fact. I believe the question was posed, and again, having done this a couple of times, you know, whether we're talking about an order departure from [REDACTED] or moving personnel out, that it was -- a

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

math problem was done relatively quickly, and it came back that it would be hours or longer before we could reposition.

Now, those things began moving in the subsequent days afterwards. As things moved forward, we did end up repositioning them. I can't remember exactly where, and to try to be more responsive to potential fallout in other countries later.

Q Okay. Moving on now to your role and your situational awareness in the JOC on the night of the attacks. You know, there was a discussion in the last hour about SOCAFRICA, that your JOC, the inputs, how information was flowing into the JOC, and I just want to be as clear as possible for the record. I think our majority counterparts had enumerated several sources or categories of inputs and if we could just walk through those just so that we have a better understanding of what your situational awareness was the night of the attacks. And we can start with, I believe the first was your communications with [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

A Correct.

Q Okay. So, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I have is one. I have the AFRICOM JOC is the second?

A Yes.

Q And were there any other inputs of information flowing into your JOC?

A [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A They were coming back and forth. They were there the majority of the type in my JOC, but again, he was coming and going. It's not that far. It's another 50 meters, 100 meters to get to their --

Q Okay.

A -- structure.

Q And was -- what was the source of their information?

A So they had personnel in Tripoli who were on the first aircraft that went over.

Q Okay. Went over to?

A Went over to Benghazi. Sorry.

Q Okay. And after those personnel arrived in Benghazi, this is now the middle of the night, were you still receiving reports from the liaison officer?

A Yes.

Q Okay. You, in the last hour, had described for us the chaotic scene, if you will, in the JOC and had explained why you thought it was standard practice for the flag officer not to be

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

present in the JOC.

A All the time. I mean, he's in there a fair bit of time, depending on when he's going to be briefed on what, whether or not he's got follow-up questions or he was going to come up and talk to the 3, but he has his own office downstairs.

Q Is it your opinion that he, "he" being Admiral Losey, was being kept fully and timely informed of the information as it flowed into the SOCAFRICA JOC?

A No, that's not my opinion. That was we did keep him informed of the information that we were receiving as we received it.

Q Is it your understanding that Admiral Losey was receiving information in addition to what you were providing him from your vantage and lay of the land in the JOC? I think you mentioned in the last hour he may have been speaking to AFRICOM?

A Correct.

Q Are you aware of whether he was having discussions with other personnel within the command?

A So I do not know for certain, but it would not be unusual for him to talk to senior leaders at AFRICOM. That's his role and function.

Q Okay.

A So, I know General Ham was here in D.C. at the time. Again, you know, I cannot state for a fact, but I believe, based on the memory 18 months hence, that he was speaking to senior

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

leaders at AFRICOM routinely that night, and I would have to review his testimony, I believe, you know, to establish that for a fact. He would know but --

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

RPTS JANSEN

DCMN HOFSTAD

[12:58 p.m.]

001 BY [REDACTED]:

Q And the information that you were providing to him through the JOC personnel, that would include not just the information that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was relaying from on the ground but from those other inputs we discussed, as well; is that right?

A Correct. So we would do the initial brief back and then a subsequent one. We did another one, I believe, sometime that morning.

And if it is extremely important, it gets pushed to him immediately. And I would have that discussion with the operations director, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to decide when and if he needs for go down and update him immediately. If not, there would be a time period of every couple of hours where we would sit down, again, and level the bubbles for him in terms of what the current status was.

002 BY [REDACTED]:

Q Can you elaborate on the term "level the bubble"? I think I know what it means, but --

A Sorry. So to "level the bubble" is to make sure that everyone is getting the same information, and so that everyone is working off of the same sheet of music as best as possible. It's just a relative term we use, leveling the bubble, so that everyone

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

is seeing things at least similarly, or at least is getting the same information.

Q And is that process used because you have multiple inputs, in an event such as this, as it unfolds, you can have inputs coming from various places. And so you're trying to, sort of, attach weight to the quality of the information and make sure that everybody has it so that it can be, sort of, discussed before you make a decision as to perhaps an order going back out into the field?

A So, for example, you can have [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] in the same location. [REDACTED] is talking to his counterparts as the Defense attache; [REDACTED] is talking to his guys. And we can talk to them separately and get separate bits of information. They may not talk to each other within the next hour. And we're trying to do this as quickly as possible to provide as much information as possible.

So again, you know, you can get multiple reports from the same place, and that just helps draw a clearer picture of what you see.

Q And that's because some people in the field can be stovepiped with their situational awareness, would that be fair?

A No. I would say it's because it's just time and distance, right? So everyone -- omniscience is for God only, you know, so nobody knows everything that's going on at the same time.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

And, you know, the intent is you've got to try to take as much information as you can and ensure that you're collating it as quickly as you can.

So even if I'm calling AFRICOM JOC and telling them something that is redundant that I've gotten from [REDACTED] [REDACTED] then that confirms what they've already gotten from [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Or if I say, you know, "There's 78 people," "No, no, no, the last call we had was 72," okay, what time was that call? And that's an example.

So, I mean -- I don't follow your question.

Q No, I'm just -- again, the purpose of leveling the bubble is so you can take inputs of information and then try to compare it with other bits of information that you've received to get the most accurate situation on the ground. Is that a fair way to describe it?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

ODI BY [REDACTED]:

Q And, again, to recap the chronology from the last hour and your communications specifically with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] you had indicated that your first or initial communication with him was done via secure means. So you had secure communications capability with him; is that correct?

A Yes.

Q And then, at the point when you communicated that his

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

order was to secure the U.S. personnel [REDACTED], do you recall whether at that point in time you still had secure communications?

A No. He was on his cell phone at that time.

Q Okay.

Can I ask, at that time, did he relay to you any information about the security resources available [REDACTED]

A Other than him and his personnel that were there, I cannot recall. Again, we spoke about the status of him and the three other personnel that were with him and then the security of the personnel [REDACTED]

Q Okay.

Did you feel that the lack of the secure communications inhibited your ability to discuss actions or events with [REDACTED]

A Somewhat, but not significantly.

Q Okay.

Could I ask, after the attacks, did you travel to Libya, did you spend any time there?

A Yes, I have.

Q Okay. And what was your mission there?

A I was the Team Libya commander [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q And how long did you serve in that mission?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A I was there for just a little over 4 months.

Q Okay. And when did that mission begin for you?

A The summer, I believe in April. And I left in August.

Q Okay. Did you spend any time at Embassy Tripoli during that time?

A Yes, I did.

Q Did you observe any security improvements that had been made or were made subsequent to your arrival?

A While I was there, they increased the augmentation of Marine Security Guards at the U.S. Embassy.

Q This is the Marine Security Guard detachment or --

A No, this is the Marine Security Guards assigned for security for U.S. Embassy in Tripoli.

Q Okay. To be clear, the MSG, though, not the FAST?

A They don't have a Marine Security Guard detachment in Tripoli at this point in time. They are elements of -- you'd have to reference -- you'd have ask Marine Forces Africa. I believe they belong to the Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force, but I cannot recall.

Mr. Richards. Right. I don't have any more information.

ODI BY [REDACTED]:

Q I know it's been some time since you've left Libya, but, you know, in your opinion, what more do you think could be done to improve security at the Embassy?

A That's a great big, huge, open-ended question. You can

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

always improve your fighting position.

Q Uh-huh.

A So, I mean, there's any loaded number of questions that could run down that road. You know, I would say that I think the Marines who were there when I was there and I think the Marines that are there now are doing an excellent job of providing additional security to the U.S. Embassy, and that you can always make improvements, and I believe they are continuing to make improvements.

Q Okay.

CP-2 BY [REDACTED]:

Q We talked about the fact that the plane that -- the second plane that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was possibly going to get on to fly daybreak to Benghazi, that plane he did not get on, and some of his men went to the airport. And looking back on the way the decisions were made that night, do you think that those were the correct decisions?

A That night and subsequently, I have not and do not question either, you know, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] perspective as the ground force commander and I did not at that time and I do not now question the validity of Admiral Losey's decisions. Because, as I looked at both of those sets of decisions, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was making decisions based upon the information he had, you know, and where you stand is oftentimes determined by where you sit. And I look at the decisions that Admiral Losey made, and I think as we

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

look at them in hindsight they are and continue to remain solid decisions, you know, both to provide options for the combatant commander and to reinforce security and provide essential aid as required.

Q Okay, thank you.

ODI [REDACTED]. We'll go off the record.

[Recess.]

OR2 [REDACTED]. So, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] we just wanted to say, on behalf of Chairman Issa, thank you for coming today. Thank you for your forthright answers and your cooperation. We really appreciate it -- and your professionalism.

ARI [REDACTED]. And similarly, [REDACTED] the chairman and the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee thank you for your participation and your patience.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Thank you very much.

ODI [REDACTED]. As does the minority for the Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

OR2 [REDACTED]. We'll go off the record.

[Whereupon, at 1:08 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

