

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

INTERVIEW OF:



Wednesday, November 18, 2015

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held at the U.S. Department of State,
Washington, D.C., commencing at 9:08 a.m.

Appearances:

For the SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI:

PHILIP G. KIKO, STAFF DIRECTOR AND GENERAL COUNSEL

SHARON JACKSON, DEPUTY CHIEF COUNSEL

SARA BARRINEAU, INVESTIGATOR

SHERIA CLARKE, COUNSEL

KIM BETZ, MEMBER OUTREACH LIAISON

HEATHER SAWYER, MINORITY CHIEF COUNSEL

PETER KENNY, MINORITY SENIOR COUNSEL

For [REDACTED]:

RAEKA SAFAI, ESQ.

For the U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE:

AUSTIN EVERS, SENIOR ADVISOR

LAURA E. DECK, ATTORNEY-ADVISED

ERIC SNYDER

Ms. Jackson. Ms. [REDACTED], I think we have everyone in the room. And good evening to you. We appreciate your accommodating us in your evening hours and in this forum.

How are you today?

Ms. [REDACTED] I'm good. Thank you.

Ms. Jackson. Good.

My name is Sharon Jackson. I am one of the counsels on the majority staff. And what we're going to do is start with just a brief overview of the process that we're going to follow today, do introductions of the people in the room, and then we'll get started with the questioning.

Ms. [REDACTED] Okay. Great.

Ms. Jackson. And it's my understanding that you've been previously provided with some documents. Have you had the opportunity to review those documents?

Ms. [REDACTED] I have reviewed them but not in great detail. I do have them printed out with me as well.

Ms. Jackson. And for the stuff that you got from the majority staff, do you have the top sort of index of the documents?

Ms. [REDACTED] I do, with the 21 unclassified and then a total of 26 total.

Ms. Jackson. Correct. Then we'll get started.

This is a transcribed interview of [REDACTED] conducted by the House Select Committee on Benghazi. This interview is being conducted voluntarily as part of the committee's investigation into the attacks on the U.S. diplomatic facilities in Benghazi, Libya, and matters related to it pursuant to House Resolution

567 of the 113th Congress and House Resolution 5 of the 114th Congress.

Ms. [REDACTED], could you give us your name for the record, please?

Ms. [REDACTED] Sure. My name is [REDACTED]

Ms. Jackson. We appreciate your appearance here today, and especially given the long time change and your willingness to appear and provide information to this committee.

Again, my name is Sharon Jackson. I am with the committee's majority staff. We will go around the room. You're not going to be able to see everyone in the room, but we would like a record of all who is present. And we'll start with your counsel here today from AFSA.

Ms. Safai. Sure. Raeka Safai from AFSA.

Ms. Deck. Laura Deck, of the Legal Adviser, State Department.

Mr. Snyder. Eric Snyder, State Department, SES.

Mr. Evers. Austin Evers, State Department.

Ms. Betz. Kim Betz with the majority staff.

Mr. Kenny. Peter Kenny with the minority.

Ms. Sawyer. Heather Sawyer with the minority.

Ms. Jackson. And then outside your purview to my left is.

Ms. Clarke. Sheria Clark with the majority.

Ms. Barrineau. Sara Barrineau with the majority.

Mr. Kiko. Phil Kiko with the committee.

Ms. Jackson. Before we begin, I'd like to just review the process that we're going to follow today. Given the distance that you are from us and the fact that we're doing this by videoconference, we have agreed that each side, the majority and the minority, will have 90 minutes to ask you questions regarding the attacks

in Benghazi and matters related to that. So what we're going to do is I, on behalf of the majority, will ask questions for up to an hour. Then we'll switch and allow the minority to ask questions for up to an hour, and then each side will have an additional 30 minutes to ask additional questions or follow-up questions.

Ms. Deck. Sharon, I'm sorry to interject. I just want to make it clear that the highest level of classification that can be discussed during this interview is secret.

Ms. Jackson. And that was my next point I was going to make. We are doing this by secure video teleconference and that is that this session will allow for the discussion of classified information and as we have all agreed, that we are going up to the secret level. If for any reason any question that is posed to you makes you believe that you have to go higher than that, please just let us know, and we'll have to reserve that for another time and place to get an answer to that question.

Many of our questions are going to be in the unclassified realm, and so to the best of our ability if we can highlight when we're going into classified information, that will help the review of the transcript down the road, but there will be a review of the transcript in this case.

You have counsel from AFSA here today. If at any time throughout the interview you would like the opportunity to consult with your counsel, please just let us know. We will all depart the room and allow you the opportunity to consult with counsel before we continue with any answer or any question that is posed to you.

As you may be able to see, we have an official reporter here that is taking down everything so that we can have a written record of today's events. Also,

given that it's a video teleconference, it's going to be important that you give verbal answers to everything as opposed to nods of the head, shakes of the head, and things like that. I'm going to ask the reporter to interrupt if for any reason she does not get a verbal answer. We actually have two reporters here today. They will be switching off during the proceedings.

Again, because we are trying to get a written record, and given the delay that there is in this video teleconference, it's going to be important that we try and not talk at the same time as each other, but given the delay, I don't think that's going to be a problem.

We are asking that you give us the best recollection of events. We do understand that these happened about 3 years ago. But if there are things that you do not remember or can't remember, please just say so, and if you could, inform us to the best of your ability who might be able to provide information for our questions.

And then, do you understand that you are required to answer questions from Congress truthfully?

Ms. [REDACTED] I do.

Ms. Jackson. Do you understand that this also applies to questions that are posed to you by a congressional committee and its staff?

Ms. [REDACTED] I do.

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

Ms. [REDACTED] I do.

Ms. Jackson. Is there any reason that you are unable to provide truthful

answers to today's questions?

Ms. [REDACTED]. No.

Ms. Jackson. Okay.

Well, that is the end of my questions for the process and the procedures that govern our interview today. I would ask if the minority has anything that they would like to add at this time.

Ms. Sawyer. No, we don't. Thank you for making the time for us this evening. We really do appreciate it. And we'll try to be as efficient as we can in our questions.

Ms. Jackson. By my watch, it is 8:12 D.C. time, and I will begin the first hour of questioning.

EXAMINATION

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Ms. [REDACTED], how long have you been with the State Department?

A I joined in January 2005.

Q If we could just go back for the last 5 years, can you walk us through the various assignments that you've had since 2010 forward?

A Sure. In 2010, I transferred from Embassy Caracas in Venezuela to Washington, D.C. Then I spent 5 years in D.C. before moving here [REDACTED] [REDACTED] this past summer. In D.C. I spent 1 year at the Operations Center. I then joined the Libya desk and worked in the Office of Maghreb Affairs for 2 years. I then served at the National Security Council for a year and then did a year of language training at our Foreign Service Institute.

Q Ms. [REDACTED], one of the reasons that we have asked to interview you today is because from the review of documents that we have received it appears

that you had an integral role with respect to the reaction and response on the night of the attacks and in the days after for both the State Department and the interagency. And because you were there and we weren't, we need to talk to the people who have that firsthand knowledge.

Can you just walk us through how you first became aware of the Benghazi attacks on September 11th, 2012, what you did, how you got information, what you did with that information, what you were directed to do? If you could just walk us through that night.

A Sure. So in the late afternoon I was giving a briefing to a group of people who were heading out to Libya, and someone interrupted the briefing. This was in a separate building at the State Department across the street from the main building. Someone interrupted the building to say that there was a news ticker that there was some sort of attack or problem or fire -- I don't recollect the details -- at our mission in Benghazi.

I then ran back over to my office. It was quickly clear that there was something very serious going on. So my deputy director and I agreed that I would go upstairs to the Operations Center on the seventh floor to see if I could be more valuable up there. So I remember running through the halls of the State Department to get up to the Operations Center, and I spent the rest of the evening there until I went home.

In terms of what we were trying to do, we were trying to do everything we possibly could. We were trying to get information from everywhere we possibly could. We were trying to reach every resource we could think of. I was trying to share every information I thought with whoever I thought might be able to help us. And that was definitely the tone of everyone on the operations floor and also

everyone that I worked with within the State Department.

Q Explain to us how the flow of information occurs in the Operations Center. Who is in the Operations Center? Are people tasked with certain agencies to reach out to or collection of information from either foreign partners, from Libya? Just walk us through that and help us understand how that worked.

A The Operations Center has its own system for trying to gather information. I wasn't trying to interfere within that. I was just trying to be value-added because I would have the substantive knowledge related to Libya and be right there on the floor with them so I could provide that really quickly.

Separately the assistant secretary for NEA was also gathering information from her side. You know, we called people we thought might be able to provide information. We tried to reach our people in Benghazi. We were in contact with our people in Tripoli. And we shared it as quickly as we could.

Q Was Assistant Secretary Jones in the Operations Center with you?

A She was not. She was in her office.

Q Was there other individuals from NEA in the Operations Center?

A I don't think so. I think it was just me. But I, you know, I quickly would relay any information I had from my NEA world and my NEA email to the people on the floor. And similarly for the people within the Operations Center, if they had any information that I felt anyone in NEA needed, I would immediately transfer that.

Q Who were the people in the Operations Center?

A They were the people who were -- who were on -- the Operations Center is staffed 24 hours a day, so they were the people who were on shift until 11. And then they swapped out, and I was there for a little bit of the next shift. I

don't remember their names. I didn't know them personally.

Q Would any of the senior leadership come to the Operations Center to monitor what was ongoing?

A Senior leadership sometimes would come to the Operations Center as a way to thank people for the work they were doing, but it wasn't actually a useful thing to us to have them on the floor with us because we were set up to provide support for them in their offices or wherever they happened to be in fact.

Q So in the Operations Center is there a person who is tasked to coordinate with the military and another person tasked to coordinate with the intelligence community? I'm still not understanding exactly how it works.

A Sure. There are different roles within the -- within the -- I think it's usually five people on shift. There's the watch officer, who is first on answering phones and keeping a log of the phone calls coming in. There is an emergency action officer who would be the person who would normally reach out to the interagency, to reach out to DOD contacts.

During the working day there's also a separate DS agent who's part of watch order, and that person worked there so she would be tapped into the DS watch center as well. Then there is an operations specialist who helps particularly with interagency documents, particularly the ones that are highly classified, but also is helping on the phones, since primarily phones are a lot of the work that's up there.

Then there's the person who writes the briefs, because there are briefs that go out regularly, and so there is one person who is working on producing that brief that goes to the seventh floor and the Secretary and other principals. And then there's the senior watch officer who's really in charge of making sure everything is

working well.

So, for instance, when there was a phone call, there was a phone call that night, which means the Secretary and the President of Libya, you know, one person was tasked with connecting that call. Somebody else was tasked with making sure they were taking notes during the call. Because I was up there, I also sat in on the call and took notes as a backup note taker.

But there's a standard process that happens there, and in situations like September, that day in September, it can be helpful to have a substantive person right there at the floor. Both I and my direct supervisor in the Office of Maghreb Affairs, [REDACTED], had both worked in the Operations Center the year before, so we were very familiar with what they could do and what value it would be to have one of us up there during this time.

Q And so your deputy director, Ms. [REDACTED], and others in NEA, such as Assistant Secretary Jones, where were they physically located? Where is NEA in relation to the Ops Center?

A NEA is spread out in different offices in the Main State building of the State Department. The Office of Maghreb Affairs at the time was on the first floor. The assistant secretary's office was on the sixth floor. I believe that over the course of the evening our director, [REDACTED], went up to Assistant Secretary Jones' office and was there for some of the work that he was doing. Other people from my office might have been doing that as well. I wasn't tracking their movements that night.

Q Did you personally make any outreach to interagency partners, such as the intelligence community or DOD, the National Security Council, National Security staff? Did you undertake any of those actions yourself?

A I'm sure I was sharing information with them and was in constant communication with them. I don't have any particular memory of deciding at what point I needed to contact them. As soon as there was this type of crisis, we all were just focused on trying to get any help we could possibly get. So, yes, I was in touch with them to see what we could do.

Q Okay. Do you recall who you contacted?

A So I would have been in regular touch with our -- the National Security Council director for Libya, Ben Fishman. I also was in touch with someone with -- I actually think that he contacted me, and it's in the documents about someone [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I had a counterpart at OSD Policy, and I would have been in regular touch with him as well.

Q And I'm sorry, what was that office that you just mentioned?

A OSD Policy. So the Department of Defense, the Office of the Secretary of Defense Policy.

Q And who was that individual?

A The names escape me, and they're blocked out in these documents, so I apologize for not remembering. But he would ^{be} ~~we~~ my counterpart, the desk officer for Libya in OSD Policy.

Q And so it's whoever's name is redacted on those documents?

A Right.

Q You said you were in contact with Ben Fishman from the National Security Staff. Did you have a prior professional relationship with Mr. Fishman on

Libya issues?

A Certainly. There is a lot of work that we did within the interagency, and Ben Fishman was involved with that, and I worked closely with him in coordinating that.

Q And just taking a step back prior to the night of the attacks, can you describe for us some of the issues that you would have worked directly with Mr. Fishman on?

A It would have been the range of policy issues related to Libya. So what were our policy priorities there, what were the preparations for the elections that happened there, what happened during the transfer of power from the Transitional National Council to the newly elected government. Really the range of issues related to Libya. You know, we were in close coordination with many different parts of the U.S. Government and therefore with the National Security Council.

Q And did you personally play that role in the interagency process? When you mentioned working with other interagency partners, did you personally undertake working with, you know, DOD or members of the intelligence community in developing the policy with regard to Libya?

A So the Office of Maghreb Affairs would host weekly meetings where we invited people from around the interagency to both brief them and to hear from them on the programs they had in place or they had planned or concerns they had. So we were regularly coordinating with a wide range of people given the complicated nature and changing nature of our work in Libya.

Q And those were meetings that you attended as part of the Office of Maghreb Affairs.

A So those are meetings, I'm thinking of the meetings that we actually would host in the State Department, and I would attend them, and my office director normally would chair them.

Q Okay. Are there other meetings that you participated in in the interagency?

A There may have been other meetings from time to time on particular issues. It would have been very low-level, working level if I were the person participating in them. But we tried to communicate really well so that we could all know what each other was doing and make sure we were doing things in a coordinated way.

Q Returning to the night of the attacks, you've described your role as being in the Operations Center to be fully aware of the information flow through the Ops Center and be a subject matter resource to them. Who were you communicating information to outside of the Ops Center, within the State Department, who within NEA or senior leadership or Diplomatic Security? What was your role with regard to pushing information out within the State Department?

A So within the State Department, I was primarily making sure that all the information on the ops floor was available to my assistant secretary in NEA, my office director in NEA, and my colleagues working on Libya within NEA. That was my primary focus. But I believe I also was in touch with the task force representative who was at the State Department that night, and I would have probably been responding to other queries as they happened because people knew that I would be working on this issue, so as they heard about it they were contacting me.

Q Okay.

A And then the Operations Center is sent up to then brief other parts of the State Department that would need to know that kind of information.

Q And did they do that through primarily email communications?

A They could do it through email alerts. They could do it through phone calls. So they could use either one, whichever one they felt was more efficient.

Q You described that the Ops Center had contact with Embassy Tripoli. Is that correct?

A That's right.

Q Would you describe for us those communications that the Ops Center had with Tripoli?

A So I think as soon as it happened I would imagine -- and this would have been before I got up to the ops floor but knowing the practice of the Operations Center, and I think I saw this when I got up there -- usually what happened, they would have reached out to the deputy chief of mission in Tripoli to get the latest information to him. So they were doing that and getting updates from him on what was happening, and at one point I believe the assistant secretary from NEA said, I am going to start being the point of contact with him. We can't keep having people who don't know enough, don't have the same kind of background reaching out to him at this time. There are too many people reaching out to him basically. So she made sure it then became a phone call that originated from her to him. So then it shifted away from the ops reaching out to her, reaching out, which is something that is pretty standard practice because otherwise the people in the crisis are being hampered by the number of calls that are going out to them.

Q And were you a participant or listener/observer to those conversations between Assistant Secretary Jones and the deputy chief of mission?

A I don't recall. I might have been. But once it became something that she was calling from her office, I would not have been because I was up in the Operations Center.

Q Okay. And after her conversations with the deputy chief of mission, did she memorialize those conversations and send out the information?

A I don't know. If there was something specific that he said that she felt she needed to relay, I'm sure she did that, but I don't know that there was the kind of note taking that we would have done on a, you know, on a call with a foreign national that was where we were actually taking notes of everything that they're saying.

Q You stated earlier that you attempted to reach the mission in Benghazi. Did the Ops Center ever reach anyone at the mission that evening?

A I don't recall. I don't think so. We certainly, certainly by the time that I got up there, we never reached Ambassador Stevens.

Q It's my understanding that the DS Command Center had communication with the agents who were on the ground in Benghazi. Was there ever a live feed of those communications into the Ops Center?

A What do you mean by live feed?

Q Where you -- where the people in Ops Center were -- like a three-way call or some sort of way conferencing in so that people in the Ops Center were listeners to the conversations between the agents and the DS Command Center?

A I don't think so. I don't recall that.

Q Would the DS Command Center send information to the Ops Center?

A They certainly should, and there is communication between the DS Command Center and the Operations Center, although they are not located in the same building. I don't recall the exact mechanisms of that night.

Q Do you recall, was there any issues, problems, or concerns with the flow of information between the Command Center and the Ops Center?

A No, I don't. I don't recall any issues or concerns about it.

Q Based on your understanding of the events that were occurring in Benghazi that evening, can you describe for us what you understood was occurring over there and had occurred, how the attack occurred?

A It's a little hard for me to think back to what I knew at the time since it's been so long since then and so much more information has come out. But we knew there had been a fire. We knew there were people there attacking. And then we knew that Ambassador Stevens was missing. We knew that one body had been found and that it wasn't Ambassador Stevens. We were at the time trying to identify that person and then notify his next of kin. There was some confusion about that.

There had been lots of information that Ambassador Stevens was okay, that he was over in this place, that he had been sighted somewhere else. There was a lot of information that clearly was wrong. But it was clear that something very bad had happened. And, you know, I knew quickly that once Ambassador Stevens had been missing, we never found him until it was quite clear that he had been killed.

Q In all of the information that came in that night, was there any information that there had been a protest prior to the attack or crowds gathering to protest anything prior to the attack?

A I have no information about that other than to say that there were press reports -- I don't remember if it was that night or the next day -- that said there were protests, but otherwise there was no information suggesting that there was a protest.

Q So no information that came in from your Embassy in Tripoli or through the Command Center said that there was a protest prior to the assault on the compound?

A I at no time during that evening thought that there had been a protest because I thought that if there had been a protest Ambassador Stevens would have told us, and so we would have known that there was a protest. If there had been something happening prior to the very significant thing that was clearly leading to a very tragic and sad result, we would have known about it. So I at no time during that evening thought there had been a protest.

Q So Ambassador Stevens was someone who was in regular communication with you and others in NEA regarding what was happening within Libya, whether it was Tripoli or Benghazi?

A He was in regular communication with us, yes.

Q At any time of the day of the attack or in the days preceding the attack, did he or anyone else within Libya communicate to you or others that there was any call for any type of protest in Benghazi, such as through social media, the regular media, or just picking up the word on the street?

A No.

Q Is that something that Ambassador Stevens would have communicated to you and others in NEA had that been the state of events?

A The protests against the U.S. facilities would have been something that was very rare, and if Ambassador Stevens had thought that was in the works, I'm sure he would have shared it with us.

Q And would you have been a person who would have known that if it had been shared with anyone in NEA?

A It would have depended on whether it was primarily a security issue that was being flagged or if it was something that was a more general issue. So probably I would have. If it was something that Ambassador Stevens thought was important, I probably would have known about it. But there was a division in our work between the kind of policy work and then the security work. So DS channels, for instance, had their own information streams, and I wasn't aware of those.

Q Did you, though, at times learn of security incidents that occurred within Libya?

A Yes.

Q And how would you gather that information? How would you learn that information?

A We would hear it from Embassy Tripoli.

Q Would you ever get any reporting from your counterpart in DS, the individual who headed the Libya issues for DS here at Main State?

A No.

Q Were you aware of an individual by the name of [REDACTED] ?

A Certainly.

Q And what, if any, interaction did you have with him?

A So I was in email contact with him from time to time. The primary reason was generally that a DS agent would need a visa, and so they would need to come to the Libya desk to get that visa. That was our primary purpose for communicating.

Q Returning to the night of the attack, were you aware that there was an interagency SVTC about 7 p.m. that evening?

A I was not aware of that, to the best of my recollection.

Q So you did not participate or attend that SVTC?

A I did not.

Q At any time during the evening, did Assistant Secretary Jones or Mr. [REDACTED] or anybody else update you on what the interagency plans were for responding to the attack in Benghazi?

A I don't recall an update like that.

Q Do you recall whether you learned of what, if any, military response was being contemplated as a result of the attacks in Benghazi?

A So I knew that there was some use of resources for collecting information that were in use, and I knew that there was support from the other agency that was on the ground, or that they were trying to be that kind of support. I knew that there was a plane that went to Benghazi to save them later, to evacuate the people who were on the ground. But I was not part of the conversations about any other sort of military response, to the best of my recollection.

Q Were you aware of whether there was any discussion, either within the Ops Center or within the larger State Department, about deploying the FEST?

A I was unaware of the FEST discussion.

Q Do you know a Mark Thompson?

A I do know Mark Thompson. We worked on occasion together, and I understood that he testified to Congress or spoke to Congress later where he focused a lot on this FEST issue.

Q On the night of the attack or in the days following, did you ever have a conversation with Mark Thompson about his feelings on whether or not the FEST should have been deployed?

A I don't recall one, but there could have been one. It was a really difficult, difficult time for all of us, and we had many people, many issues that we were working on very intensely.

Q At some point the personnel, the State Department personnel, leave the mission and they go to the Annex facility nearby. Do you recall approximately when that was? Was that fairly early in the evening or was it later on?

A As I recall, it was later on in our evening, but I don't recall the exact time line.

Q Okay. If I could, if you could go to what was No. 15 on the list of documents that we sent you, the list of 21 unclassified. It is an --

Ms. Sawyer. I'm just going to interrupt for a second. We don't have copies of those documents here in the room.

Ms. Jackson. Yes, you do.

Ms. Sawyer. Can we get copies?

Ms. Jackson. Yes, I have copies, just like we do with any others.

Ms. Sawyer. Well, great. Before we ask questions of the witness, I think it would be helpful if the people in the room also get a chance to look at it.

Ms. Jackson. Yes. I was just going to identify it so she could find it.
I'm going to mark it as exhibit 1, and it is document No. C05580494?

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 1

Was marked for identification.]

Mr. Snyder. I'm sorry. Can you read that again? I have it. I apologize.

Ms. Jackson. It is an email from a [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] on
September 11 at 6:08 p.m.

Ms. [REDACTED]. I have that document.

Ms. Jackson. And then I would also ask if you would pull out the document
that was item No. 16, which I'm going to mark as exhibit No. 2, which is another
email exchange to you and others.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 2

Was marked for identification.]

Ms. Jackson. It's document No. C05580512, from a [REDACTED] to you
and others on September 11 at 7:57.

And then I would also ask if you would pull the document at what was tab
17, or item No. 17, which I'm going to mark as exhibit 3, which is a document that
was produced to us by the White House.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 3

Was marked for identification.]

Ms. Jackson. It bears document No. SCB 000029. It's an email from, at
the top, [REDACTED] to Ben Fishman on September 11 at 10:32. I'm going
to ask you some questions about these three documents.

A Okay.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q I'm actually going to Exhibit 2 first, the September 11 email at 7:57 p.m. The subject line says, "RE: The (redacted) compound in Benghazi is under fire." There is a redacted word in there. Did you take that to be the CIA Annex facility? Did you understand that to mean that?

A When I wrote that, I believe that's right.

Q So at the bottom of the page, you started this email exchange from you to -- it appears to be a distribution list and a Mr. Maxwell. And you wrote -- and you meant at that time the Annex is under fire. Is that correct?

A That's right.

Q And you also wrote at the bottom, "That is where everyone is now." And by everyone, what did you mean by that?

A I would have meant everyone that we -- everyone that was -- all the survivors. I don't think at that moment we had confirmation that Ambassador Stevens had been killed, but everyone that we were in touch with were there.

Q So the State Department personnel had relocated to the Annex facility?

A So I'm looking at these emails now and remembering it back from then, but based on this, that would be my understanding, yes, that everyone that we were in touch with was over at that other compound.

Q You also write in this first email that this is through intel channels. How is it that you acquired this information?

A So I would think that -- I don't recall, but my guess based on where I was at the time was that that came through intel channels in the operations floor, which does have access to people in INR Watch, who sit right off of the operations floor and would have access to the intel channels.

Q And then if you could go to exhibit 3, which is an email exchange between Ben Fishman and [REDACTED]. The top line of that email, or the last exchange at 10:32 p.m., it says that -- they talk about you being in Ops and that Jeff is on the phone with Beth to pass along some info that he has gleaned. Is Jeff referring to Jeff Feltman?

A I would think so. I couldn't say for sure at this point, but I would think so.

Q And did you have an opportunity to review this document before?

A I did look at it. I just got it today, so, you know, I reviewed it quickly.

Q I'd like to go to the exchange at the bottom of page 1 and the top of page 2 where it's Ben Fishman to [REDACTED] at 9:19 p.m., where Mr. Fishman writes, "You don't have anything further on Chris, right? I was sitting in that meeting for 2 hours. I don't know why Pat Kennedy is so concerned about what extra security folks are wearing. Does that come from Greg? The time for being overly sensitive to Libyan concerns about military appearances seems to be over."

In your interactions that evening, can you glean anything from this exchange between Mr. Fishman and Ms. [REDACTED] about Mr. Kennedy being upset over or concerned about military going in in uniform?

A I don't have any recollection about there being a huge concern about military going in in uniform.

Q And then going to exhibit 1 that I asked you to look at, an email exchange between [REDACTED] and yourself at 6:08 p.m., you first write to her, and the subject line is, "points per NEA that are being drafted now for Magariaf and," then I think you go on to main points of the call. What are you trying to

accomplish in this -- what are you trying to communicate that you're doing in this email -- by this email?

A So per the best of my recollection, and I certainly wouldn't remember much of this if I didn't have the document to look at, my guess is that [REDACTED], who is an operations specialist and was working on the floor, was assigned to note take for the call between the Secretary and Magariaf. And in advance of note taking for a call, it is standard practice that you would have the call sheet so that you could review the information that was being proposed to the Secretary to discuss because that would facilitate your ability to be able to quickly and accurately take notes on the call.

So I was helping staff prepare for the phone call by letting her know what the points were. In this case, of course, the call sheet would have come up right before the call started if we even got it, because it was such an urgent situation. So I was letting her know this is what we are going to ask the Secretary to discuss with Magariaf.

Q Do you recall if there was a call sheet for that call that the Secretary made, if one formally got pulled together?

A I don't recall.

Q Okay. Now, you stated earlier, I believe -- correct me if I'm wrong -- that you were a note taker on that call between the Secretary and President Magariaf?

A So I wasn't an official note taker. There is an official one -- official -- there is a primary note taker who is then responsible for writing up the record of a call. This is true for all phone calls with foreign officials. And then there is a secondary person who really acts as a backup. And then because I

was on the floor and because it was helpful for us in our work for me to know immediately what was said, I sat in as a third note taker where I took notes of the call and shared it with people on the floor and shared it with my colleagues in NEA.

Q Okay. And how did you share that information? Did you email your recollection of that call to others in NEA so that it could reach more than one person at a time -- at the time?

A I believe I did. I don't recall. It would have been outside of standard practice to do so. The Operations Center standard practice would not be to have people emailing this kind of information around. They'd prefer that it go through the standard formal review process where they can make sure everything is accurate before any of it is shared. However, in these circumstances, I expect that I decided that I would share it with everyone I thought needed to see it if it in any way could help us help our people who were under attack in Benghazi.

Q Okay. During that phone call between the Secretary and President Magariaf, did the Secretary describe the events in Benghazi as an attack or as a protest gone bad?

A I don't recall specifically. I believe it would have been our people are under attack and we need help. That would have been, to the best of my recollection, what she said.

Q Do you recall whether the Secretary talked to the Libyan President about U.S. military going into Libya to assist in the evacuation or exfil of the U.S. Government personnel on the ground in Libya?

A I don't recall. I believe the main point was we need your help to stop

this. And, unfortunately, the President didn't have the capabilities to help us.

Q Given the fact that Libya as the host nation didn't have the capacity to assist, was there any, though, any conversation about other assets going into Libya to assist outside of the U.S. military, such as FBI or agency or anything of that nature?

A You know what, I really don't recall, but I -- in some ways I'm -- it's difficult to answer because nobody thought that any outside -- or I certainly didn't think that there were any outside resources that could help us. This was an attack that was happening. Our Ambassador was already missing. We needed something immediately, and there was nothing that could be immediately available on the ground except for our colleagues at the agency. That was our only hope.

Q And I believe you described before that there were some from Tripoli who then went to Benghazi?

A Yeah. I understand that there were. I know that people were evacuated, and I know there was a plane that evacuated them. I don't know exactly the mechanisms of how that happened.

Q Were you involved in the discussions or decisionmaking process on the evacuation of personnel out of Benghazi?

A I don't recall. I don't recall that.

Q Other than the State Department personnel and the Annex personnel, are you aware of whether there were any other American citizens that were evacuated with the State Department and CIA personnel?

A I'm not aware of others.

Q Were you aware of whether any Libyans were evacuated from that country, either the night of the attack or in the days following the attack?

A I don't recall that being an issue.

Q Did you know of an individual by the name of [REDACTED] ?

A [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q [REDACTED]

A [REDACTED]

Q [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] ?

A [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Were you still with NEA at the time?

A I don't recall.

Q After the DS agents were evacuated from Benghazi, were in Tripoli and then went to Germany, were you given any additional information regarding their version of the attacks? Were they debriefed in any way? Was that information shared with you and others in NEA as to what happened that night? Did you learn that in the days immediately following the attacks?

A So I think that the only way in which I heard a story that came from them was that my deputy director, [REDACTED], and I spoke with the ^{PO/Econ} ~~polycon~~ chief from Embassy Tripoli the following day or the next day after the attacks, and he, based on his conversations with the DS agents, gave us a very detailed account of what had happened.

Q And who was that individual? Was that Mr. [REDACTED] ?

A That's right.

Q And what did Mr. [REDACTED] tell that you he had learned from the agents?

A Well, this was actually very detailed about how the attacks started, how there was a fire -- or how the DS agent brought the Ambassador and his colleague to a safe haven place and then left, and then a fire broke out, and then he wasn't able to get back in, and then the details of how that happened.

Q In any of the information that Mr. [REDACTED] related to you and Ms. [REDACTED], was there any mention of any type of demonstration or protest preceding the attack?

A No.

Q In the days after the attack, what, if any, awareness did you have or any role, any review role that you may have had, in what has become known as the talking points? Did you play any role in the development of any talking points?

Mr. Kenny. Please be clear as to which talking points you're referring to.

Ms. Jackson. I would just ask the witness if she knows of any talking points, and then I'll ask her which talking points she's referring to.

Mr. Snyder. All right. So the question she has -- do you want to repeat the question so it's clear?

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Did you plan a review or review of any type of talking points regarding the attacks?

A I likely was part of efforts to produce many talking points related to Libya during that period.

Q And who would you be interacting with on these talking points?

Was it within NEA or was it within the larger interagency?

A So if I could just be specific, are we talking about the talking points that were used on the Sunday after the attack, or are we talking about talking points in general that I would be producing for a variety of reasons?

Q That's exactly what I'm trying to get at. You know, what were you involved in? Were you involved at all in the talking points that were used by Ambassador Rice or were you involved in different talking points or both?

A So I don't recall all the engagements that happened over the course of that week, but I regularly was involved with developing talking points related to things in Libya. For the specific talking points that Ambassador Rice used on Sunday, I was not involved in the development of those talking points.

[9:04 a.m.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Okay. You had not -- Mr. Fishman or no one else from the national security staff had forwarded you a copy of those over the weekend?

A I had no information about those talking points.

Q Okay. If you could pull out the documents that were marked at tab 20 and 21, I'm going to mark them as exhibits 5 and 6. Number 5 --

[REDACTED] Exhibit Nos. 4 and 5

Were marked for identification.]

Ms. Sawyer. And I'm just going to interrupt for a second because your time is about -- you've got about 2 minutes in your first hour.

Ms. Jackson. Twelve after.

Ms. Sawyer. Oh, this is 5 minutes fast. I'm sorry. I'm looking at Peter's.

Ms. Jackson. If have like 7 minutes.

Ms. Sawyer. I understand. But if it goes over that, we're more than happy to let you finish with these exhibits, but we would just then ask since we both have 90 minutes we just subtract it. That's all I'm saying. I didn't want to have to stop you once you got started.

Ms. Jackson. Now, can I have an extra 30 seconds now?

Ms. Sawyer. You absolutely can have an extra 30 seconds.

Mr. Evers. Which one is number 5?

Ms. Jackson. Number 5 is an email exchange, it's document number C05580617; and exhibit 6 is C05580618.

Number 5 is an email exchange that at the top of the page between [REDACTED] to [REDACTED], and [REDACTED]. And actually, it

appears that exhibit 6 is a continuation of that exchange, but it bears a different document for whatever reason.

Ms. Betz. Just so I'm clear, this is what everybody has.

Ms. Jackson. The multiple-page one is exhibit 5 and the single page one is exhibit 6.

Ms. Betz. We're trying to figure out where exhibit where exhibit 4 is. I think we jumped.

Ms. Jackson. Oh, that would be -- then let's change the numbers. I marked a 4 and evidently didn't use it. All right. We'll change these numbers to 4 and 5.

Ms. Betz. So your multipage document is exhibit 4, and your single-page document is exhibit 5.

Ms. Jackson. And that's why you're here, keep me on the straight and narrow.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Ms. [REDACTED], do you have those documents in front of you?

A I do have those documents.

Q Okay. And were you able to review them prior to talking with us today?

A I did review them.

Q Okay.

A I have reviewed them.

Q Going to exhibit 4, you talked about you were involved in drafting talking points, and at the back of this document, there appears to be -- it's entitled, the very last page, "NEA Press Guidance, September 17," and then, "Key Points."

Are these the type of talking points that you would have been involved in review, editing, commenting, or drafting?

A So it's interesting nomenclature, I suppose. This would be, from my perspective, press guidance, which in my world, would have been a little bit different than talking points. But, yes, I regularly provided press guidance to our press folks in advance of briefings with the press where they thought something that I covered might come up in the press briefing and therefore wanted my input on the guidance.

Q Okay. When you received these -- this press guidance, what was your reaction when you saw them?

A So my concern with this guidance was that it made our definitive declaration on the nature of the attack, and I felt that the information that we had at that time wasn't sufficient to make that determination. And so I thought that they should be -- you know, we shouldn't go on the record with saying something like that because we just didn't have the information at the time to warrant it.

Q And what in particular concerns you? Was it the phrase that the demonstrations in Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by the protests at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and involved into a direct assault against the U.S. Mission?

Ms. Safai. Can you tell us what page you're on.

Ms. Jackson. It's the second page.

Ms. Sawyer. It's actually not. You had her on the last page. That's not the same point.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q If we go to the second page under the 12:36 p.m. exchange, under key points, the first bullet point.

A Right. I didn't think there had been demonstrations in Benghazi, and therefore, I thought we shouldn't say this to the press.

Q Okay.

A I think I might have known by that point, and I certainly found out in the meeting on Tuesday, that the IC did think that there had been demonstrations or parts of the IC did think that. I don't recollect exactly if I clearly knew that on the Monday, the 17th of September.

Q Okay. But you did not receive that information until Tuesday the 18th?

A Well, I just have a very distinct memory on Tuesday the 18th of being in an interagency meeting with the IC, that the IC arranged, where I said there were no demonstrations, and someone in the IC said that he had information that there were demonstrations, and we had an exchange where I, you know, continued to disagree with him about that issue. So I knew that -- I know now that at least, you know, as of the Tuesday following, there were still parts of the IC that believed that there had been demonstrations.

Q And who was the person in the IC that you would --

A But I was quite certain that there had not been.

Q I'm sorry. I interrupted you.

A Sorry.

Q Could you repeat your last comment:

A Sorry. Just to complete the sentence, I was quite certain that there had not been demonstrations, and so I was responding in this way to the press guidance.

Q Okay. And who was the individual in the interagency that you were

having this discussion or disagreement with on the 18th?

A You know, I honestly don't know his name and I wouldn't have even known his name at that time. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Who else from the State Department participated in that meeting?

A I think I was probably the only person from NEA, but there would have been people from our CT office that would have actually hosted and arranged the meeting.

Q Okay. And would there be a record of your and other persons' participation in that SVTC?

A I don't know that there would have been a written record of who attended. There may well have been, but it wasn't something that I was involved in putting together or tracking.

Q Is there at least a sign-in sheet for who's in the SVTC room?

A Not that I recall.

Q Okay. Going back --

A It was working level. It's not important -- not high-level people in the meeting.

Q Okay. Going back to exhibit 4, at 2:16 p.m., you write to [REDACTED], and [REDACTED] and I quote, "I think Rice was off the reservation on this one." Could you elaborate on that comment and why you wrote that?

A So I was just continuing to say that I didn't think that this was right. You know, my colleagues were responding that this had already been said, and so I was going back by saying, it's still not right. So I still don't think we should say it.

Q Okay. Were there other aspects of Ambassador Rice's comments on the Sunday talk shows that you disagreed with or that you thought did not fall within your understanding of what had happened in Benghazi?

Ms. Sawyer. Can we establish whether she saw them first --

Ms. Safai. Right.

Ms. Sawyer. -- her comments.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Then let me ask you this, did you either watch any of the Sunday talk shows or review transcripts of them afterwards?

A No.

Q Okay. Then on what basis did you make this comment that Ambassador Rice was off the reservation?

A Because my colleague in the press shop told me that she said this on five Sunday morning shows, and that's why I thought she was wrong about it.

Q Okay. And then if we could briefly go to what we marked as exhibit 5, which is the continuation of this email exchange where at 2:19 p.m. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] responds to you and others, "WH" -- which we understand to be White House -- "very worried about the politics. This was all their doing." Was that your understanding?

A I had no information about that.

Q At any time after this exchange, did you ever have a conversation with Ben Fishman or anyone else from the White House regarding what

Ambassador Rice had said or the narrative that the Benghazi attacks were a result of -- as a result of the Cairo protests?

A I don't recall any specific conversation about it. It wasn't something that I was focused on because we had our colleagues in Stuttgart who had just gone through a traumatic event. We had our colleagues in Tripoli who were really, really going through a difficult time. They abandoned one of their compounds. They were then moving into another compound. They had just lost Ambassador Stevens. We had just lost Ambassador Stevens and our other colleagues.

So this was not a big part of what I was spending my time on. But if someone had asked me, I would have immediately said there was no protest. And the real discussion that I remember about that was with the IC on the Tuesday following the attacks.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. And with that, I'm going to conclude my first hour. I see that, by my watch, I went over by 3 minutes. So my next session will be 27 minutes instead of 30.

And would you like a short 2- to 5-minute break just to maybe stretch, get some water, and then we can reconvene perhaps maybe --

Ms. Sawyer. Yeah. I would just suggest maybe if we can do it, take 10 minutes, that would give you at least 5. And then if you wanted or needed to talk to your lawyer, you could do so before we start up again.

Ms. Safai. Sure. And I have 9:17 as the time. So I have 5 minutes over. Are you going off of this or that?

Ms. Jackson. No, I've been going after my watch that I started at 12 after and then did a quarter after.

Ms. Sawyer. So we'll start up again about 9:30.

Ms. Jackson. So on the hour. We'll resume on the hour.

Ms. [REDACTED] Okay. Thank you.

[Recess.]

EXAMINATION

BY MR. KENNY:

Q So we'll go back on the record. The time is now 9:35 a.m., local Eastern Standard Time now. We are on standard time.

And, Ms. [REDACTED], again, thank you. Welcome. On behalf of the select committee minority staff, I want to thank you again for appearing today and thank you as well for your service to our country. We appreciate your willingness to speak with us, including during off duty hours in your location, so we hope to make this process, again, just as simple and as straightforward for you as possible.

At the outset, I also did just want to mention that we do understand that you lost -- you and your colleagues lost friends and fellow patriots on the night of the attack, so we want to be respectful of that fact and both of you and your time as well today. And again, just thank you for your service and being here.

I would hope to start by returning where we left off in the last round in the discussion of emails related to NEA press guidance on September 17. And I'd like to close out that discussion just while it's still fresh in everybody's mind. And in order to do so, I'm actually going to mark a new exhibit. It's a similar, related thread, and this will be exhibit number 6.

And this document, it has the Bates number C05580621. It's an email, the top email is September 17, 2012. The timestamp is 1:52.

Ms. Safai. Is this part of the list that the -- or is this part of your document?

BY MR. KENNY:

Q So this will be part of the minority staff documents that were submitted to you in advance, I believe. Is that correct?

A I have it. I have it.

Q Okay. Great.

A I have it in front of me, yeah.

Q And please, just let me know when you're ready for --

A I'm ready.

Q And again for the record, this is document ID C05580621. And this is a similar email thread to exhibits 4 and 5 that we were just discussing previously. You'll note that the third email in, in the middle of the first page, is an email that you were asked about in the last round where you wrote, quote, "I really hope this was revised. I don't think we should go on record with this," closed quote.

Do you see that?

A I do.

Q Okay. And you'll note that that is also the same email that appears in exhibit 4 at the top of the second page.

A Yep.

Q And so just to be clear for the record, this email then appears to take a different track from the other emails. The next two emails in this thread are new emails, and those are the ones that I'd like to ask you about here. Just bear with me one second.

And in the last round, the majority had asked about your concerns about specific talking points that appeared throughout this thread. We'll get into that in a

little bit. But what I just wanted to first start with is, and I'll read it into the record, the email above the one I just referred you to is from [REDACTED] at 1:47 p.m. And who is Mr. [REDACTED]?

A So he and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] all worked together in the NEA press shop. So he is one of the people we would be in touch with about press guidance.

Q Okay. Thank you. And it is Mr. [REDACTED]. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And at 1:47 p.m., Mr. [REDACTED] wrote to you, "This is what I think we should go with. There is an ongoing FBI investigation. We are looking to that investigation to give us the definitive word as to what transpired."

And then above that, at 1:52 in the top parent email, you wrote back, "Yes!", exclamation point, closed quote.

And the question I had for you, you had raised in the last round a concern about being too definitive about specific information that was included in some of the press guidance that you'd reviewed in this email thread. And I just want to ask whether this is also a reflection of that concern.

A Yes. I feel that the two email threads were -- reflected a consistent belief on my part.

Q Okay. And moving on. And just real briefly, again, to better understand or help us better understand what your concern was at that time, when you said that you had this concern about information being too definitive or statements or press guidance being too definitive, was that because at that point in time information was still being collected and analyses were still being performed on that data set in order to make a determination about what had

transpired?

A Absolutely, that was my concern.

Q Okay. And that applies even to this --

A We just didn't know what had happened.

Q No. Thank you. That's helpful.

And that applies even to this date, which is September 17, 6 days after the attacks. Is that correct?

A That is correct.

Q Okay. Thank you.

I think we'll move on, or move back rather. So we'll refer you back to exhibit 4.

A So my numbering is a little bit different. Is that --

Q Sure. So this is -- the top email is from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. The timestamp is 2:17 p.m.

A Oh, okay. Sure. Sure.

Q I'm sorry. 2:18 p.m. Do you see that there?

A I do. I do. Thank you.

Q And the email I'd like to refer you to in this thread is at the bottom of the page. It's, again, an [REDACTED] email. The timestamp is 2:02 p.m.

And you had indicated to us in the last hour that at this point in time, to the best of your recollection, you had not seen Ambassador Rice appear on the five Sunday talk shows. Is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q Okay. And at this point in time, had you seen transcripts? I believe I had in my notes that you didn't review the transcripts at this particular point in

time, but I just want to make sure that the record is clear on that.

A I have no recollection of reviewing the transcripts.

Q Okay.

A To the best of my recollection, I heard about these Sunday talk shows during this email chain.

Q Okay. And so when you say the first you heard that she was on the Sunday shows, would that have been at this 2:02 p.m. email from [REDACTED] ?

A To the best of my recollection, yes.

Q Okay. And moving up two emails in that thread, and this was the email you were asked about again in the last hour, where you write, quote, "I think Rice was off the reservation on this one," that comment, you were asked about the basis of what the reference was for that comment. And I guess what I was hoping to understand is, well, first, there seems to be a little bit of confusion in the last round as to which set of press guidance you were referring to when you made that specific comment?

A Well, I mean, I would have objected to a declaration one way or another about whether it was spontaneous or planned, because we didn't have enough information to make that determination. I also didn't think there had been demonstrations, and so I would have, again, objected to that characterization.

Q Okay. And just so that we can follow you with those comments, are you referring to the NEA press guidance, the draft that appears at the back of this exhibit, or are you referring to what's referred to as the, quote, "NSS language," unquote. Page two.

A So I'm right now referring to the email from [REDACTED] at 12:36 p.m. that says, this is the most recent. "Just saw NSS language, which I

used as the key points here. NEA press guidance." And then it lists these points.

Q Okay. And I guess part of the reason for my confusion is I heard you just a moment ago refer to planning or preplanning. And I'm not sure I see information as to preplanning in those particular points, but I do see those in the earlier press guidance, which is on the last page or page four.

Ms. Safai. Can you repeat your -- what's the question?

BY MR. KENNY:

Q So I'm just trying to isolate your concerns. So you said you think that the concerns that you expressed in the last round were in reference to [REDACTED] email at 12:36, the key points email. But I thought I heard you just a moment ago say that --

A That's right. I mean that -- I mean, I would -- I don't recall my exact thought process on that day, but normally I would not go and read the whole chain. If my press folks told me this is the most recent guidance, please review this, then the most efficient thing for me to do would be to review that most recent guidance and respond to that. So it was a very, very busy and intense day, and I'm sure that I would have done, you know, what I needed to do to be accurate, but I doubt that I would have gone through and read closely the long chain of press guidance below that.

Q Okay. Well, that's helpful.

And I believe you were asked also in the last round whether press guidance of this sort would be the sort of thing that you would be asked to weigh in on or provide comment or feedback on. Just to help contextualize this for us, can you recall in this time period some of the other activities you were undertaking within

NEA-MAG, perhaps a support post or otherwise, other activities that you were working on to support post.

A Sure. Sure. I mean, press guidance was often a daily action, but it was never the thing that I spent most of my time on. During this period, we had our colleagues who had been evacuated to Germany and they were going through a very difficult time there.

We had our colleagues who were still in Tripoli, and they were dealing with a lot of concerns there about whether there might be threats to them. They had to abandon one of their compounds, and they had lost Ambassador Stevens, of course, and so they were really dealing with very difficult circumstances.

Within NEA-MAG writ large, our Embassy in Tunis had been subject to an attack the previous week as well, and the American school right next to the embassy had been burned down, and so we had people who were evacuated from Tunis as well. They were also with our colleagues in Germany at that point.

It was a very, very difficult time in NEA writ large, and certainly for those of us who had worked very closely with Ambassador Stevens. It was also a time when we were all grieving for him.

Q Thank you. I think that's helpful for us to understand some of the other activities that you and your office were undertaking during this time period.

I think part of the other reason that I hope to ask that question is you had defined your role as the Libyan desk officer within NEA-MAG, and I was hoping that we could just take a step back and you could just explain for us what a desk officer does on a day-to-day basis at the State Department?

A Sure. So on the desk, you're really the focal point where all of the information related to the range in policies used with the post comes together

within the Department. So we would try to support post in whatever they needed, make sure that felt like their voice was part of meetings within Washington about the policy issues.

We relayed information back from the range of offices within the Department that would work on the small piece of our Libya policy, but it would be at our desk that those pieces all came together.

So, you know, we also would support our colleagues from post, particularly the ambassador, the deputy chief of mission, when they were back in Washington for consultations. We would brief people who were going out to serve at post. We were very involved in the confirmation process for Ambassador Stevens, so helping him prepare for his hearing.

So we really were where all the different information and the many aspects of our policy related to Libya would come together.

Q Okay. And was that a shared role? In other words, was there another Libya desk officer or a person who could have stepped in to help support if the portfolio became too much for one person to manage?

A So when I started on the desk, there was just one desk officer. We then found some temporary support and were up to three desk officers by the end of the first year and then we went down to two officers moving forward. I understand it is bigger now.

But it was a very, very busy desk. It required long hours, and it was, I think, one of those places where the workload had increased tremendously but our staffing hadn't increased rapidly enough to accommodate that increase in workload.

Q Sure. And you mentioned when you started, just as a bit of

housekeeping, when did you serve -- when did you become the Libya desk officer, and when did you move off that position?

A . So I started in July 2011. I officially left the position in July of 2013. Starting from January 2013 until about July 2013, I was also acting deputy director for the Maghreb office when our office director went out to be charge d'affaires in Tripoli and our deputy director became acting director.

Q Okay. And returning to the discussion we were just having about how busy the portfolio was, can you just give us a sense of how that worked, I guess, explain for us at the working level how that portfolio would be carved out or how responsibilities would be shared among the various desk officers?

A So I don't really remember how we divvied up work between myself and the other desk officer, but, you know, we generally had so much work that whoever was not working on something urgent at a time would do the other task at hand. So whether it was writing info memos to the Secretary, whether it was preparing call sheets for people to engage with Libyan officials, whether we were, you know, briefing people who were heading out to post, whatever it was that needed to be done, we would find a way to do it.

Q Okay. That's helpful.

And you mentioned a few moments ago that -- some of the various folks or actors you'd have contact with, I thought. And I just wondered if you had a primary point of contact, either at Embassy Tripoli or the Special Mission?

A So I would have been in regular contact with the deputy chief of mission, with the ^{Pol/Econ} ~~pol/econ~~ chief. Those would have been my two primary points of contact. I'd also been in very regular contact with Ambassador Stevens when he was a Special Representative out in Benghazi and certainly through his

confirmation process. But I tried to respect his role as ambassador and not email him often but try to get the work done at the more working level where possible.

Q Okay. And you were asked a little earlier about your interaction with [REDACTED] in DS/IP/NEA, and I'd just like to ask if on a routine basis or regular basis you would interact with other professionals in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, whether at post or back at Main State?

A So when overseas, in general, we interact with the regional security officer very, very frequently, depending on the circumstances. On the Libya desk, I did not interact with DS representatives often, and I think that [REDACTED] was the only -- my only regular contact in DS.

Q Okay. And how generally would you describe your working relationship with him or with the bureau, writ large?

A My relationship with him was good, but it was very much very specific questions that I would answer, specifically, as I mentioned earlier, about visas. So when DS agents needed visas, they would contact me for that. It was rare that we would work on other things, but it happened on occasion.

Q Okay. And how often did you work or interact with personnel in NEA-EX, NEA-SCA/EX?

A I worked regularly with personnel --

Q Okay.

A Sure. I worked regularly with personnel in NEA-EX as they were in charge of the resources and management operations.

Q Okay. And if we could just talk, because you have longevity in your position and at your post, but during your time as the Libya desk officer, how would you generally characterize the support that they provided to you?

A So they wouldn't have been providing support to me. They would be providing support to post. So we were -- you know, we were counterparts where I covered policy issues and are they would cover resource issues for the post. There would be areas where those would overlap, obviously, so we would work -- we would try to work closely together on those areas.

Q Okay. No, I appreciate the distinction.

Perhaps I could ask it, did you have an assessment of the support that they provided to post? How did you view the support that they provided to post?

A You know, I think that we were all working under very strange circumstances in that it was a post that was in constant flux. And so I know they worked very hard to provide the resources that were required, given that there were changing circumstances on the ground.

Most of the State Department's staffing patterns and resource patterns are all planned out far in advance of any particular date. So it really was very unusual that they would be having to staff up a place that hadn't had anybody previously or tried to send people back to reopen a mission.

And I would also note that NEA writ large was going through a time of a lot of change with the Arab Spring and related turmoil across the region. So our NEA-EX colleagues were really dealing with a whole range of very difficult issues at the same time.

Q Okay. And just, as a general matter, what is your understanding of NEA's role with respect to providing security resources at post?

A I would think that that was Diplomatic Security's role in providing security resources at post.

Q Okay.

A But it certainly wasn't something that I was directly involved with.

Q Okay. To your knowledge, does NEA have -- or at this time did they have specialized knowledge or expertise on securing and protecting facilities and personnel?

A NEA would not have had that expertise, no.

Q Okay. And where would that expertise have resided within the Department?

A That would have been with Diplomatic Security, and so we would rely on their expertise for those issues.

Q Okay. At this point, we're going to shift gears a little bit, and I'm going to introduce into the record what I'll mark as exhibit 7.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 7

Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. KENNY:

Q And this is an email that's dated February 9, 2012, from you to [REDACTED], and the document number is C05390170. Let me know if you have any luck finding that. And, again, it's February 9, 2012.

A If you can provide the date again.

Mr. Snyder. It's February 9, 2012.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q And we were just informed, it's also number six in, it looks like, the index that the majority provided to you.

A Oh. Okay.

Q I apologize in advance that we didn't also provide an index, but --

A No, I have the email. Thank you.

Q Okay. And I'll give you just a moment to review that. Let me know when you're ready.

A Okay.

Q Okay. And I'll direct you to the first chain in the email, which is the bottom of page one. This embedded email, it's also a February 9 email, in which [REDACTED] writes to [REDACTED], and she includes what appears to be a draft email. There's a cover and then some hashmarks and it appears to be some texts below that.

And I'd first just like to ask what your understanding of this email is?

A So, you know, as you can tell, this isn't my email. Reading through it and, you know, per a very vague recollection, this would have been something that [REDACTED] was drafting for [REDACTED] to send to our assistant secretary to use, to email to our under secretary for management. Because we were having difficulty getting the staffing levels up in some of our posts.

Q Okay. And our understanding, just based on our review of this document, is that the hashmarks, what appears below there is that draft note. Is that your understanding as well?

A That would be my understanding, yes.

Q Okay. So I'd like to just read into the record that first portion below the hashmarks. And it reads, quote, "We determined early on that it was important to us to maintain a presence in Benghazi to engage with the TNC and keep an eye on political and security developments in the east.

"The Mission in Benghazi has also allowed PM and USAID to conduct periodic TDYs in the east to further develop their contacts and monitor progress on our MANPADs, elections, and civil society assistance programs. The simmering

protests in Benghazi and the east against the TNC and local councils over the last few weeks, (along with the violent unrest in Bani Wali in the west), have shaken the interim government and illustrated the importance of maintaining a broad base of contacts and visibility outside of Tripoli," closed quote.

And I'll just preface this next set of questions by saying that there have been some lingering questions about the purpose of the U.S. Government's presence in Benghazi. So I just wanted to at this point take a little bit of time and walk through some of the reasons and the justifications that are listed here.

And I'd first just like to begin by asking if you could explain for us why it would've been important to maintain engagement with the TNC in Benghazi?

A Well, we at the time thought that what was happening in Benghazi was very important to what was happening in the country writ large, and so having a presence there meant that we could maintain these contacts with the Transitional National Council and with a variety of other actors there so that we could better understand and also effect developments in the country writ large.

Q Okay. And we understand that at some point the TNC may have moved its base of operations from Benghazi to Tripoli. Was it your understanding that some of those TNC members would have still resided or come from Eastern Libya?

A That's right. I mean, many of them would have moved as soon as they could when Tripoli, you know -- when Qadhafi was ousted from Tripoli. But some of them did reside in the east, and certainly our people in Libya thought that it was important that we have a presence there.

Q Okay. And just moving down to a next reference in the paragraph that I read to you, can you just explain for us why it would've been important to

keep an eye on political and security developments in the east?

A Well, there are a lot of things that were changing, and we knew that the government in Tripoli didn't have full control over the country such that the only real way to know what was happening in the east would be to have somebody there who could engage with the local communities, who could engage with people from a broad range of civil society and politicians to understand how things were developing there. And to be part of a process that, you know, led to support for general nationwide elections, which occurred later that year.

Q Okay. And so when you referred to the nationwide elections, would that have been one of the potential political developments that it would've been important for the U.S. to monitor?

A That's right.

Q Okay. And moving down through the email, can you explain for us why it may have been important for the State Department to monitor its Pol-Mil operations in Eastern Libya?

A Yes. Pol-Mil was actually present very early on when we were able to have a presence in Benghazi because they were very concerned about the possibility that MANPADs, so this is shoulder-operated missiles that can take down airplanes, which Qadhafi had very, very high stockpiles of, I think the highest in the world for a country that didn't actually produce them.

They were very concerned that these stockpiles would become available on the open and black market and available to people seeking to use them against -- basically for terrorist purposes, including against the U.S. national interests. So they had a program in place to try to identify stockpiles and disable stockpiles of MANPADs from very early on in our presence in Benghazi, following

the start of the uprising against Qadhafi. So they had a very active program.

Q Okay. And there's also a reference here to USAID programs. Can you just explain for us why it was important for the State Department to monitor those programs?

A Well, we felt those programs are very important in helping a society that had had basically no free expression and no civil society and no free press and no elections of any kind for decades, transition toward a more Democratic and free place.

So we had -- you know, it happened almost immediately as Qadhafi would be pushed out of an area -- or was forced to be pushed out of an area, these small civil society groups would start and USAID was very active in helping them and helping them understand what their role of civil society was, what the role of the press would be in a democracy dealing with very, very basic questions from people who had had literally no experience with that at all.

Q Okay. And just taking a step back from our discussion of some of these specific pieces, we've seen some discussion about maintaining a physical presence in Benghazi at one point in time versus what was referred to as a, quote, "virtual presence," which we understand to mean no physical presence in Benghazi but operating from Tripoli as a base of operations.

And in light of some of these specific programs that we discussed or projects, can you explain for us how a physical presence would have helped further those priorities?

A Well, with a visible presence you can maintain regular contact with a range of people that you need to contact. You can then more easily support visitors going into an environment because you have people on the ground who

understand what's going on there.

I really deferred to my colleagues who were in Libya on these issues. So, you know, we really took our direction from them, from Ambassador Stevens -- he wasn't ambassador yet at this time but he, you know, had recently been the Special Representative and had a lot of contacts in Benghazi -- and then also our colleagues, Ambassador Cretz, and our other colleagues who were in Tripoli at the time.

Q And do you recall what then-Special Envoy Stevens, later Ambassador Stevens, what his views were about maintaining a U.S. presence in Benghazi?

A Yes. Ambassador Stevens felt strongly that it was important to have a U.S. presence in Benghazi.

Q And what about Ambassador Cretz?

A I believe he also supported maintaining a presence there.

Q And you mentioned a moment ago that you may have deferred on some of the decisions, but I'd just like to ask whether you had a personal view on the importance of having a presence in Benghazi?

A My personal view is that the more engagement we can do, the better we're able to do to develop and implement good policy. So my personal view at the time, although it was not asked really, because we were very clear from people who had much more on the ground expertise was that it was a good idea to maintain a presence in Benghazi.

Q And when you say it was clear from people with on-the-ground expertise, can you just explain to us what you mean by that?

A I just mean Ambassador Stevens --

Q Okay.

A -- saying to us that he thought it was a good idea to maintain a presence there.

Q Sure. Okay.

We'd like to return just briefly to the draft email that we were discussing. This is in exhibit 7, the top of page 2. I'll just read the next paragraph. It begins, quote, "Unfortunately DS staffing is becoming a recurring problem in Benghazi. At the current security threat level, Benghazi needs a minimum of four agents to support moves out of town, three to accompany the principal officer, or TDY officer, and one to remain on compound with the IRM management person.

"Post needs a minimum of three agents to facilitate one movement at a time in town and one to remain on the compound. DS staffing has dropped to two agents several times over the last few months between rotations, which has prevented the PO from leaving the compound."

And I'd just first like to ask whether you agreed with this assessment that the staffing of DS agents in Benghazi had become a, quote, "recurring problem," closed quote.

A I did agree that we had difficulty adequately staffing DS agents based on what DS determined was required for security to support movements off compound.

Q Okay. And there is a mention of that. It refers to what is a PO, is the abbreviation. Is that principal officer?

A That's right.

Q Okay. And that person would have been the senior diplomat present at the facility?

A That's right. I believe at this time we would have just had two people apart from the DS agents, so a senior -- a principal officer and then the IRM management person.

Q And if Diplomatic Security wasn't able to support movements off compound or around town, why was that a concern?

A Because that limited our ability to make use of our officer who was out there serving as the diplomat. It limited our ability to engage with people effectively.

Q Okay. You'll see in the next discussion, if you continue on, that Ms. [REDACTED] in the draft includes a discussion about the minimum number of DS agents, or in what we just discussed. Did you have an understanding of where that recommendation came -- would have come from? Would that have been something that would have come from post, for instance?

A That would have come from Diplomatic Security. I don't know if it would've been from the RSO at post or from Diplomatic Security in Washington, but that would have been determined completely by DS security, as far as I know.

Q Okay. So you don't have any reason to believe that [REDACTED] [REDACTED], for instance, was generating the list of requirements of DS agents at the special mission?

A I'm certain that she was not generating a list of requirements for the DS agents.

Q Okay. And that's because that wouldn't have been the role of NEA-MAG to assess and come up with security requirements for a post?

A That would not have been the role of NEA-MAG to determine those requirements.

Q Okay. The email continues in that third paragraph on the second page, quote, "DS tells post it is unlikely they can fully staff Benghazi due to broader staffing challenges across NEA and has suggested we adjust our expectations about movements in outreach," closed quote.

We touched on it a little bit earlier, but what do you remember about these discussions about security staffing challenges at this point in time?

A So I actually don't recall where this information would have come from. It's also not something I wrote. It is consistent with my understanding that it was very difficult to get DS agents -- sufficient numbers of DS agents to post.

They couldn't find -- you know, normally, in a normal mission, [REDACTED], we have people who are permanently assigned for tours of 2 or 3 years, in some places 4 years. And because the Benghazi positions were all unexpected within our staffing patterns, DS was finding 4-week TDYers to fulfill those roles, which is why there would be gaps. She mentions that there are gaps between the TDYers. So that made it very difficult to have continuity over time with people there.

Q Okay. So was the issue a continuity issue, or was it one of never actually attaining the minimum required number of DS agents at post, for instance? The way I understand you is that --

A So from our perspective -- sure. From our perspective, it was that the people on the ground weren't able to do the outreach they wanted to do because the DS wasn't staffing the numbers that they had determined were required for people to move off compound.

Q Okay. And was your understanding that that was due to some sort of resource constraint on the part of DS?

A That was my understanding, but I didn't have any real insight into why that was or how, you know, Benghazi stacked up against other posts that had important security needs as well.

Q Okay. If I could direct your attention back to the first page of exhibit 7. In the email above the hashmarks from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED], she writes, quote, "[REDACTED] let me know if this works and whether you want to consult with [REDACTED] or EX before sending this to the FO," closed quote.

Does FO here refer to the NEA front office?

A That would be my understanding, yes.

Q Okay. And you mentioned earlier that that would have been the acting assistant secretary? I don't know if she was -- if it was Ambassador Jones at this point in time, or I believe it was still Jeff Feltman. Is that your recollection as well?

A I believe, in February 2012, it would've been Assistant Secretary Feltman.

Q Okay. Do you know whether this draft note was ever sent to Assistant Secretary Feltman?

[10:24 a.m.]

Ms. [REDACTED]. I honestly don't know.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Okay. Do you know if the NEA front office had discussions with the M Bureau about the matters discussed here?

A I have no information about that.

Q Okay. Do you recall any other steps that were undertaken in this timeframe to address some of the concerns in this email? For instance, whether Deputy Chief of Mission [REDACTED] may have had meetings, whether Chris Stevens would have had meetings, or whether Ambassador Cretz would have had meetings with anyone back at Main State?

A I'm sure that they had meetings, and I would imagine that they would have raised this, but I don't recollect anything specific.

Q Okay. And just to close out this piece, and I apologize for jumping around, but at the bottom of the second page there is a reference to -- the second-to-last sentence in the last paragraph, bottom of page 2 -- about if there being no recourse, some sort of reconsideration about whether they're keeping the mission going. And do you recall whether that conversation took place?

A I have no recollection of a serious conversation about closing the mission in Benghazi.

Q Okay. We'll stay in the same document, but shift a little bit and move up to the email that you wrote at the top of page 1. You wrote to [REDACTED], quote, "Also the Secretary asked last week if we still have a presence in Benghazi -- I think she would be upset to hear that yes we do but because we don't have enough security they are on lockdown," close quote.

First, I'd just like to ask, in that first sentence you refer to a question that the Secretary asked. Did you hear that directly from Secretary Clinton?

A I did not hear that directly from Secretary Clinton.

Q Okay. And how did you hear that she had asked this question?

A It was a secondhand or thirdhand comment forwarded or told to me, and I at this point can't remember how I heard it.

Q Okay. And when you heard or learned that the Secretary had asked if we have a, in your language here, "if we still have a presence in Benghazi," what did you understand that to mean? What did you understand her question to mean?

A There had been some discussion when we moved our -- many of our operations to Tripoli whether we should maintain a presence in Benghazi. Some of our international partners were moving everybody to Tripoli. Some were maintaining a presence. So there had been some discussion. So I -- and, again, I don't remember the details of how this was related to me. When I had heard that that might have -- that the Secretary might have asked about it, I would have thought that she was just confirming whether or not we had still maintained an active presence in Benghazi.

Q And in the second part, when you said that the Secretary would be upset to hear that due to inadequate security resources post was on lockdown, just when you refer to lockdown is that a reference similar to what we were discussing below about without the adequate number of DS agents that the principal officer would not be able to make off-compound movements?

A The lockdown is shorthand for being required to stay on compound. In most circumstances you would use it because of a security threat that made

people determine that it was safer to be on the compound than off the compound. In this case it was resulting from not having adequate DS agents on the ground that DS had determined was adequate to allow for movements off compound.

Q So a little while ago I had asked you why it was important to have a physical presence, why it was important for a principal officer to be able to report and travel around town. I'd just like to ask, what did you mean when you said that Secretary Clinton would be upset about this -- learning this particular fact?

A So I believe that Secretary Clinton thought that the work we were doing in Libya was important and that she would have not been pleased to hear that we didn't have the resources in place to do that work.

Q Okay. And when you say you thought that the Secretary thought that the work that was being done in Libya was important, what gave you that impression?

A I mean, she had been very active in Libya. She had visited there. She had done a lot of work on the policy. And I believed her when she said it was important for U.S. national interests.

Q Okay. But the reason I ask some of these questions is this email in particular has become a little bit of political fodder. Secretary Clinton was asked about it during the Select Committee's October 22 hearing as possible evidence that she didn't care about Libya, and in particular Benghazi, after Qadhafi fell.

To your knowledge, was Secretary Clinton engaged on Libya matters? And we'll start with the 2011 timeframe, from when you became the Libya desk officer?

A Yes, Secretary Clinton was engaged on Libya.

Q Okay. And did that, your sense of her engagement, her level of

engagement, did that continue through 2012?

A Yes. From my perspective she maintained engaged on the developments in Libya.

Q Okay. So then in your view would you agree with the characterization that Secretary Clinton checked out on Libya in 2012?

A I would not agree with that.

Q Did she turn a blind eye to Libya in 2012?

A I would not agree with that.

Q Okay. And did she turn a blind eye to Benghazi in 2012?

A I would not agree with that statement either.

Q Okay. And if you would, could you just explain to us the basis for why you gave those responses?

A I felt it was clear that Libya had -- that Libya was a high-profile portfolio, that there were people on the seventh floor that were actively watching it. They were actively interested. They wanted to visit regularly. And I didn't see any change in that level of interest over time.

Q Okay. Did the Secretary ever say or do anything to suggest to you that she did not care about the Department's personnel in Libya?

A No.

Q Did she ever say or do anything that suggested she didn't care about personnel who were assigned to Benghazi?

A No.

Q And to the extent that some may have pointed to this email as evidence that Secretary Clinton did not know or did not care about Benghazi, at least after Qadhafi fell, do you think that that is an accurate or fair reading of what

you said or what you meant?

A I do not.

Ms. Sawyer. The pause is just us figuring out a couple more questions to ask before we take our next break, so that's all that's going on over here.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q We just have a few more minutes, and we obviously want to try to be as respectful of your time as possible.

If I could quickly redirect your attention to exhibit 1?

A Could you remind me what that was?

Q Yes, sure. It's No. 15 in the majority's index. It's [REDACTED], September 11, 2012.

A All right.

Q And the email that you write at 6:06 p.m., which we understand to be about 12 o'clock local time in Libya, again these are some of the main points that you were prepping for a call between the Secretary and the Libyan President-elect or Libyan President Magariaf. And the second point of this call is that, quote, "We need help in Benghazi -- Ambassador Stevens is still missing," close quote.

And I just would like to ask for your understanding, since you were in the Operations Center on the night of the attacks, whether your sense was that Benghazi was somehow not a priority; in other words, that the priority was Tripoli and not Benghazi?

A My sense from working on this in the State Department during the attacks was that everyone was trying to get whatever resources we could get to help our people in Benghazi. It was absolutely a focus on Benghazi.

Q And just moving real briefly to exhibit 3, this is the email from

██████████ to Ben Fishman, No. 17 in the exhibit list.

A Yes.

Q And what I'd just like to ask for your understanding, again being in the Operations Center, and you had indicated earlier that you had some contact with Ben Fishman, a country director, at the NSS, here in this email it appears that Ben Fishman makes a recommendation for some outreach that could be done to help expedite some help in Libya. Is that your understanding as well?

A So this is a conversation that was mostly -- you know, I had very little recollection of this particular email when I reviewed it. But, yes, upon reviewing it I believe that Ben Fishman was also trying to figure out who we could contact who could get help as fast as possible to Benghazi. And so I believe that the idea would have been that the Qataris could have had some connection to groups within the Benghazi area that could have come to our assistance.

Q And so when you had mentioned earlier or characterized the response within the Operations Center as everybody trying to do everything possible, would that have extended as well to the partners in the interagency, to include the White House national security staff?

A That would absolutely have extended to anybody that I had ever worked with on Libya.

Q Okay.

A We had all worked really closely with Chris Stevens. You know, he was both a really valued colleague and a valued friend just because of the way that he interacted with anyone that he worked with. He made friends out of all of his colleagues. And everyone was trying to do everything that we could do to get help.

Mr. Kenny. And I see with that our time is up, and so we'll go off the record. Thank you.

[Recess.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Okay, Ms. [REDACTED], we are going to start with our next and final round with you for the next 25 minutes or so. I want to return to exhibit 7 and ask you a few more questions about that, and in particular the first line that you wrote where you say, and I quote, "Also, the Secretary asked last week if we still had a presence in Benghazi."

You said that you didn't have a specific recollection of who said that to you, but can you tell us anything about the context in which you received that? Because it's, quite frankly, a very declarative statement.

A I really don't recall who conveyed it to me.

Q Would it have been someone --

A I don't recall the context. But it was not conveyed to me in a sense of surprise. It was very matter of fact -- very matter of fact question.

Q And it came from someone who you believe they were accurately relaying information to you?

A I really apologize that I can't remember who told me it, but as far as I can recall it was someone who I thought would be relaying something accurate.

Q Because obviously you wouldn't further report it if you didn't think it was an accurate recitation of what the Secretary had said?

A I mean, we are always interested in what the boss' boss' boss' boss' et cetera thinks about things. So information like this is not always accurate, but I did believe it at the time when I wrote that.

Q Okay. So you believed it accurate at the time that you wrote it?

A Yes.

Q You were asked a lot of questions in the last hour about your belief that the Secretary maintained a high level of interest in Libya throughout 2012, but you weren't asked the basis for that knowledge, and so I want to take a few minutes and explore your personal basis for that assessment.

In the year 2012, how often would you personally be in a meeting with the Secretary?

A I don't think I was ever in a meeting -- that's not true. I don't recall exactly, but it would not have been very frequent.

Q Okay. And would that have been perhaps one, maybe two times throughout that entire period of 2012? Or I'm just trying to gauge what you mean by it would not be frequent.

A It's not frequent that desk officers are in meetings with the Secretary in general at the State Department. I should also note that in 2012 I was on leave from March 29 until late July, so I was not actually on the desk or working during that time.

Q So during that time period you would have no way of assessing at all the level of interest by the Secretary. Is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q Can you describe your personal involvement in either attending meetings or briefing the Secretary's senior staff regarding issues pertaining to Libya in 2012?

A So, again, given the hierarchy and the operations in the State Department, it would be rare that a desk officer would be in meetings like that.

Usually it would be more senior people who would be doing those kinds of briefings.

Q Okay. So you then don't have any firsthand personal knowledge of the level of involvement of the Secretary's senior staff in the period of 2012. Would that be a fair assessment?

A So I don't recall specific incidences that I can point to you easily, but when you are working on an issue at the State Department you often have a pretty good sense for whether it's something that someone cares about on the seventh floor or not. And that's true in terms of what kinds of questions get down -- get reported down to you, what kind of briefings are asked, whether they make trips, whether they have senior -- other senior officials do trips.

There is a way to tell when the seventh floor is interested in an issue, and I had always felt from the moment I started on the desk that there was a high-level interest from senior people of the Department.

Q And who would you get that information from? Would that be something that you would learn through [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] or others?

A Questions? So there's also the SP staff, the Secretary's policy planning staff. They would ask questions. The P staff, so our under secretary for political affairs. Our deputy secretary's staff, they would ask questions. I would get those directly to me. And then I would also hear questions that were filtered through our assistant secretary, and they would be filtered down as well. And occasionally we would have -- you know, we always had a weekly all-hands meeting with the assistant secretary, and in those meetings it also seemed quite clear that our assistant secretary was asked a lot of regular questions about what

was happening in Libya and that there was a high level of interest.

Q Okay. Did you brief any of those, the under secretary for P or the policy people in the Secretary's staff, did you brief any of those individuals?

A I was in very, very regular contact with their staff. So they would have one person who would cover NEA, and I would be in very close contact with that person.

Q And who was that person on the policy side?

A So, for instance, for our deputy secretary, that would have been [REDACTED]. People changed over time. There's one person in each school year, I suppose would be the way to say it, but those people are all people that I worked with very closely.

Q And one last sort of area to explore on the February 9th email is the crux of that email is the problems with staffing on security measures in Benghazi. And what we're really trying to understand is, if Libya was so important within the State Department, why was security such a problem? And that's the crux of what this committee is looking for, is that if, as you've described, Libya was different, you know, why wasn't its security posture correspondingly different?

Mr. Kenny. And just to be clear, this email refers to Benghazi. And I think your question --

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Benghazi. Yeah.

A I guess I would have two responses to that question. The first is that this was not about whether or not we had adequate security per se, but whether we had adequate staffing per what the security professionals said was necessary to do off-compound movements. So this was not a discussion about

we don't have enough people to be safe there. It was a discussion about do we have the security, the Diplomatic Security, that was required in order for us to do off-compound movements which we think are important.

The second thing is, the problem with -- the staffing writ large is a really complicated issue, and unfortunately the State Department is not very flexible about how they move people around quickly. And this was a time of very high -- a lot of dangerous places within NEA. So I think that was what was related to having it be so difficult in getting the people that Diplomatic Security said was needed in order for us to do these movements.

Q I want to just go back to something that -- to the first part of your answer to that. Isn't having a sufficient number of Diplomatic Security agents to move with a principal officer off compound part of the security? I mean, doesn't security encompass both the physical security of the grounds and the personal security of the people who are there?

A So I would respond by saying that in response to that level, the people -- the personal security was provided by maintaining and by requiring those people to be on the compound. This is not something that I'm an expert in in any way, this is just what Diplomatic Security said was necessary. Which is to say that this was not a conversation about us not having enough security. It was a conversation about the Diplomatic Security saying that we shouldn't do the type of off-compound movements that we wanted to do.

Q So how were you going to achieve the political reporting if you couldn't move off compound?

A Well, that's certainly what we were saying in this or what [REDACTED] was proposing that [REDACTED] say. That was a frustration from the policy side.

Q I want to move to one last exhibit in my remaining minutes, and it's item No. 14 in the stack that we sent. It's an August 17 information memo to the Secretary. And we're going to mark this as exhibit 8.

[REDACTED] Exhibit No. 8

Was marked for identification.]

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q And I would note that the version that we sent to you, although marked confidential, has been reviewed by a classification authority, and it is now, the version that we're going to talk about, is redacted and releasable for public release. It bears document No. C05390124.

A Yes, I see it. I have it.

Q Okay. Let me first ask, Ms. [REDACTED], did you have any part in drafting this memo?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And would you describe your role in drafting this memo? Who tasked you with doing it, what information you used to draft it, and what was its purpose.

A I don't recall whether this was a memo where we were requested to do an info memo or whether it was something that we in NEA decided to do. Both would have been very, very possible in the circumstance.

So normally I would do the first draft. I would share it with some colleagues within the State Department for their input. And then it would be paired up through my chain of command to my deputy director, my office director, our deputy assistant secretary, our principal assistant secretary, and then from acting Assistant Secretary Beth Jones, to who it came from, it was sent from, to

the Secretary.

Q Okay. And do you recall who within NEA tasked you with drafting this memo?

A So I have a vague recollection, but I do recall discussing it with our -- with my office director, [REDACTED].

Q Okay. And do you recall what information you used to talk about, to write about the overall security situation and the uptick in violence? Were you relying on cables from post? Were you in contact with people on the ground in Benghazi? Where were you accumulating the information that you used as the basis of this memo?

A So I would have used a range of sources normally, and I would imagine with this as well. I would have used reporting from post, potentially conversations from post, open source reporting, you know, whatever sources there were in order to get the most accurate information into this memo.

Q And, again, I just want to clarify, what was the purpose of this memo? Why was there a need to write a memo like this?

A So when there is something happening that seems significant that we want to make sure our principals have a full picture of we would write an info memo about those to get past sort of the things that they might see in other smaller reports. So that would be the purpose, to provide information about a changing -- a change or something that was happening within Libya.

Q Just circling back a minute, you said earlier that you were on leave until July sometime of 2012. When was it in July that you returned?

A I believe it was the third week of July.

Q So you'd been back about 30 days at the time?

A I don't have the exact date with me.

Q So you would have been back approximately 3 to 4 weeks at the time you're drafting this memo and it goes up to the Secretary?

A That's right.

Q You've described before that it was your personal assessment that the Secretary was involved in and maintained her level of involvement in Libya, so it kind of begs the question as to why you would have to write a memo like this if the Secretary has maintained a high level of visibility and engagement in Libya.

A I guess I would disagree with the premise of that question. I think it is -- I think, in fact, it is when we think the Secretary is particularly interested in a topic that we tend to write these kinds of memos.

So it was a complicated situation. What was causing the increase in the violence? How important was it? Was it something that was going to lead to anything in general or not? So it was a topic that warranted this kind of more in-depth report than you might get if you're just looking at spot reports or one-off reports on information.

Q Do you recall whether or not you reviewed a particular cable that had been written on or about August 8 that was subtitled "The Guns of August"?

A I'm sure -- I do recall reviewing that cable.

Q And did you use the information in that cable in any way to form the basis for the information that was in here?

A I don't recall my exact process, but I certainly would expect that, yes, I did.

Q There was another cable, a Benghazi EAC, that was issued on August 16th of that day. Do you remember if you saw that cable?

A I don't remember if I saw that cable.

Q You recognize now the cable I'm referring to? You remember a cable on August 16th?

A I believe I reviewed it. I believe I reviewed it in the preparation for this meeting. I believe it was captioned HIPDA (phonetic), which might not have been something that would have gone to me.

Q So today you don't have a recollection of whether or not you saw that cable at the time it was issued?

A That's right. I don't think that I did, but I can't recall.

Q Was there any discussion within NEA in the drafting and issuing of this information memo for the Secretary, was there any discussion regarding closing or suspending operations in Benghazi?

A I don't recall any such discussion.

Q Were you aware of whether now Ambassador Stevens was considering closing Benghazi because of the uptick in violence?

A No, I don't. In fact, to the contrary, I think Ambassador Stevens was working with us to try to come up with a policy case for establishing a more permanent presence in Benghazi.

Q Was that the purpose of his trip?

A I don't think so, but it may have been something he was thinking about, but I don't recall that being stated as a reason for his trip there.

Q Were you aware that the Secretary was planning another trip to Libya in the fall of 2012?

A I don't think that I was aware of that, but I'm not surprised or I wouldn't have been surprised if she had been. I don't recall it specifically, though.

Q You've described that you would have conversations with Envoy Stevens and then later Ambassador Stevens. Did he ever express to you his concerns over security, particularly in Benghazi?

A He did not.

Q At no time did he discuss security with you?

A I do not recall him discussing concerns about security in Benghazi during this timeframe.

Q It seemed that you emphasized the word "concerns." Did he discuss security generally with you or did I just misread your answer?

A Well, I thought you had shifted the question to include, you know, general security. I mean, he may -- I don't recall during this time period a conversation with him about security in Benghazi. He was in Benghazi the previous year, and I don't have any specific recollection right now of something that was specifically about security then, but there may well have been discussions about various security issues.

Q Were you aware that Ambassador Stevens was going to travel to Benghazi in September of 2012?

A Yes.

Q And what did you understand was the purpose of his trip?

A Partly it was because we had a gap in coverage in Benghazi because we also were having difficulty getting permanent people there to cover the principal officer role. I knew that he wanted to go back there. He had spent a lot of time there in the previous year but hadn't been back since becoming Ambassador, as I recall. And so he was interested in reconnecting with a number of his contacts there as well. That's my understanding.

Q Did you know or have any understanding that he wanted to keep his trip low profile and not have it published or have publicity about it?

A That generally would have been something that the security professionals would be -- would recommend. So I'm not surprised to hear that, but I don't recall it being a particular issue that we discussed.

Q Is it your experience as a foreign service officer that when an ambassador travels, that he or she will have a higher level of security protection than, say, yourself as a foreign service officer or any other type of political econ reporting officer?

A It really depends from place to place, but I would say generally that would be more common than not certainly. So I would say more generally yes, an ambassador would likely have more security than a working-level person.

Q And then returning to the information memo that was sent to the Secretary, what happened after that? Were there any meetings convened? Was security discussed among NEA and DS or at higher levels in the State Department? What happened as a result of that memo?

A So we wrote this memo as a policy memo in the sense of we were talking about security with regards to our policy work rather than talking about security with regards to our specific missions there. I am not aware of conversations or I don't recall conversations that resulted immediately following this memo regarding security for our missions in Libya.

Q In my last minute or 2, can you describe when an information memo like this goes up to the Secretary, does it go -- does it also get disseminated to other members of her senior staff?

A I think so, but I don't know exactly as to how it's distributed.

Ms. Jackson. I'm out of time, right? Yeah, okay.

Well, I am out of time with my questions, Ms. [REDACTED]. Thank you very much for your patience with us today and answering our questions today. And hopefully we will have you out of here soon. And we'll go off the record for just a minute as we change seats.

[Discussion off the record.]

Ms. Sawyer. We're going to go back on the record. We're certainly hopeful that we will not need our full half hour and that we can finish up with just some few remaining questions and let you go home after a long day. But thank you again for your patience.

Ms. [REDACTED]. Could I make one more statement that's related to the last discussion we just had?

Mr. Kenny. Please.

Ms. Safai. [REDACTED], do you want to --

Ms. [REDACTED]. I'd just like to --

Ms. Safai. Go ahead.

Ms. [REDACTED]. That's okay. I'd just like to note that, you know, I had served in Iraq from 2006 to 2007, and I had also served in Saudi Arabia in our consulate in Dhahran soon after our consulate in Jeddah was attacked, where we had several local staff killed. When I was in Iraq, we were under regular threat of rocket fire. We slept in containers that didn't have hard cover, so we were really vulnerable to the rocket fire that was happening regularly the year I was there.

Which is just to say that people working in the State Department, and particularly in NEA at this time, just had a lot of experience with being in places that were clearly not very safe places, but thinking that it was important for U.S.

national interests and for our long-term security goals to do the work that we were doing. So we had a level of familiarity with being in very risky situations. That's all.

Mr. Kenny. Thank you. That is a helpful clarification.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Ms. [REDACTED], also returning to where the discussion left off in the last hour, I'm going to refer to you exhibit 8, which is the August 17th information memorandum. And you were asked just a few minutes ago about -- and I'll give you a second. Do you have the document ready?

A I do.

Q Okay. You were asked whether you had reviewed certain documents that had been disseminated in preparation of the drafting of this product. In particular you were asked about an August 15th Emergency Action Committee memorandum or cable. You were asked about a cable that was also written entitled "The Guns of August."

For those types of products, would those have been cleared in any way through post? So in other words, would Embassy Tripoli have had eyes on those particular documents, the August 15th EAC, "The Guns of August" memo, before they were reported back in?

A Yes, they would.

Q And I understand it's a bit circular question asking if Embassy Tripoli is aware of the fact that Embassy Tripoli or the Special Mission wrote in, but the reason I'm asking that question is we're trying to understand who at post would have had familiarity with the types of issues that would have been contained in

those documents. And I understand that you've reviewed some of those and we hadn't prepared or put any of those documents directly in front of you here today, but I did want to ask whether you recall that either of those two documents had been viewed or cleared by either the deputy of chief of mission in Tripoli or the Ambassador himself.

A I think that they certainly would have been reviewed by both the deputy chief of mission and the Ambassador, but I don't have any particular evidence that I'm thinking of. That would just be normal practice.

Q Okay. So to the extent that that applies in this situation, would your understanding then be that the Ambassador and the DCM had an awareness of the issues that were raised in those documents?

A Oh, yes, I would certainly think so.

Q Okay. And then moving to this particular document, it is an information memo. The "from" is NEA Acting Assistant Secretary Jones. Would this document have also been run through Embassy Tripoli to your knowledge?

A I just don't -- I don't remember. In theory, and this is something about the changing technology and how it affects our work, I think there's been a shift where in the past something like this would not have gone to Tripoli -- to the post, right. It would be a document produced in Washington for Washington. But since now so many things are so easily shared, we may well have shared it with post. And I would be -- I don't recall specifically, but I would expect that we had discussed it with post since we really considered them the experts on all this information.

Q Okay. And it's our understanding that the Emergency Action Committee process, that recommendations can come out of that process for

changes in the security posture at post or other types of security-related recommendations. Would the information memo that you see here in exhibit 8, would that also have been a similar vehicle whereby certain recommendations would have also been included?

A If there had been recommendations included we would have made it an action memo.

Q Okay. And perhaps you can help me understand.

A So as an information memo it only -- sorry.

Q No, please.

A As an information memo it would just be providing information. It is quite distinct from an Emergency Action Committee meeting, which is very deliberately about the security of the people in the mission and what steps need to be taken related to that.

Q Okay. And when you mentioned at the end of the last round that you viewed this document to be more of a policy document rather than a security-focused document on security resources, is that because the EAC, that cable, that process would have been the appropriate venue for those types of discussions?

A I don't know that there's causality there, but this is a document about the security issues -- or the security situation in the country rather than a document that talks about the security needs of our mission in the country. And I think of those as very distinct products, and I would be involved in the policy document, and I would be much less, if at all, involved in the other type of document.

Q And the reason I'm just trying to talk about those two pieces in

context is a memo like this, where you described it as a policy memo, wouldn't then mean that Main State was ignoring, for instance, security needs or security requests that might flow from an EAC. Is that correct?

A They would be -- could you perhaps just say the question again?

Q Sure. Yeah. Sure. And I apologize if I'm being a little obtuse here. What I'm trying to understand is you had characterized this document as a policy document focused on policy, and for those of us outside of the State Department, outside of the foreign service officer world, I'm just trying to understand that there are different processes or vehicles for raising certain types of concerns. And the policy dimension would have been appropriate for a document like this, whereas a different type of set of recommendations or discussions, especially if they emanated from post, would have been appropriate for another process, such as the Emergency Action Committee, at this time. Is that correct?

A Yes, I agree with that.

Q Okay.

Ms. Sawyer. And just to be clear, even setting aside that distinction, at face what I heard you saying was that at any point in time had there be a recommendation where you were seeking action at the Secretary's level, this would not have been just an information memo, but an action memo. Is that an accurate characterization?

Ms. [REDACTED] That is accurate, yes.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q And I guess just to -- maybe I'll try to summarize it a little bit better this time -- but this document doesn't show that NEA-MAG was ignoring security

concerns or security requests at the Special Mission. Is that a fair assessment?

A I'm sorry. I missed part of that sentence. Could you repeat it?

Q Sure. Again, I'm just trying, we have the EAC on the one hand, where a post makes specific recommendations about security concerns, security recommendations, and then we have a document such as this. And I'm just trying to understand, this document or any -- let's step back and not focus on this document. Let's just talk about NEA-MAG. NEA-MAG was not ignoring, somehow ignoring security concerns at the Special Mission Compound, or were they?

A We were not ignoring security concerns in Libya. If our colleagues in Libya had said that they wanted something, we would have done whatever we could to try to get it for them. And this memo is not -- was not trying to get -- the intent of this memo was not to get more security resources for our mission in Libya.

Q Okay. Thank you.

Just real briefly before we move on, you had mentioned -- you were asked about Ambassador Stevens' views about continuing the Special Mission or a mission in Benghazi in light of security incidents and the deteriorating security environment in this August-September 2012 timeframe. And you referred to his efforts perhaps to seek a more permanent status for the Benghazi mission. Could you just elaborate on what your understanding of those efforts were at that point in time?

[11:32 a.m.]

Ms. [REDACTED] To the best of my recollection, it has been a few years. You know, we were working with our embassy in Tripoli, and specifically with Ambassador Stevens and DCM Hicks, on putting together the policy rationale for having a more permanent presence in Benghazi.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Okay. And so, do you recall, for instance, in the late August, early September timeframe that Deputy Chief of Mission Hicks or Ambassador Stevens may have sent back to NEA-MAG that proposal, a draft proposal?

A I believe that's right. I believe we then were, you know, working with that draft to provide, you know, our input to that to give to NEA-EX, which would be the place for that kind of resource request would most likely come from.

Q And was your sense that Ambassador Stevens was being instructed to move that process along, or was that something that he himself supported and took some initiative in moving himself?

A Oh, I understood it to be something that he believed was important.

Q Okay. And so it didn't surprise you then that he may have sent a proposal back to Washington to have a permanent presence there even after some of these products we were discussing earlier, the information memo, the Emergency Action Committee meeting?

A No, it didn't surprise me.

Q Okay. And we didn't touch on this in our discussion in the previous hour about the mission in Benghazi, but did you understand especially you had mentioned a task force in an earlier round, did you understand there to be a counterterrorism imperative or rationale for being in Benghazi?

A I certainly thought there was a broad counterterrorism reason to be there in the sense of there are a lot of -- I'm just trying to remember what I thought at the time rather than what I've thought subsequent to that time. So, I guess, at the time, as far as I can recall, I thought it was -- I understood that there was a counterterrorism interest there, but I wasn't aware of the specifics of it.

Q Okay. And I'll just follow up, one of the reasons I ask that question is, we have seen some reasons put forward or justifications on the counterterrorism front and, again, not being within the State Department FSO family, we're just trying to understand. It seems a little counterintuitive if you have the threat of extremism in a place that you'd also want to be there in order to address or counter that counterterrorism threat or the terrorism threat.

Is that something that you can help explain for us? If not, that's okay.

A I mean, I really think we find in the world that where we're able to engage and where we're able to be present, we're better able to counter threats of terrorism than when we aren't present and we aren't on the ground. So just as a general principle, I think our national security interests are best served when we're able to be where these kinds of groups are forming and operating so that we can best counter them.

Q Okay. And at this point, I'd like to shift gears and this will be the final portion of the minority's questions.

And at the outset here, we'll just let you know that this, ours, the select committee is the eighth congressional investigation into the attacks, and it's our hope that it will be the last and final investigation. And therefore, we've been asking every single witness a series of public allegations that have been made about the attacks.

And while folks can speculate about the attacks, there's only a handful of people who do have the actual knowledge of what happened, both before, during, and after the attacks. And so what I'm going to ask you here is a series of questions and not looking for your opinion or speculation, but really whether you have firsthand knowledge. And if you don't, we can simply move on to the next allegation. But there are a dozen, so please bear with me.

The first is, it has been alleged that Secretary of State Clinton intentionally blocked military action on the night of the attacks. One Congressman has speculated that Secretary Clinton told Leon Panetta to stand down, and this resulted in the Defense Department not sending more assets to help in Benghazi.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary of State Clinton ordered Secretary of Defense Panetta to stand down on the night of the attacks?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that Secretary of State Clinton issued any kind of order to Secretary of Defense Panetta on the night of the attacks?

A No.

Q Next, it has been alleged that Secretary Clinton personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security to Libya. The Washington Post Fact Checker evaluated this claim and gave it Four Pinocchio's, its highest award for false claims.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security resources to Libya?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton was personally involved in providing specific instruction on day-to-day security resources in

Benghazi?

A No.

Q Next, it has been alleged that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risk posed by Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for military operations in spring 2011.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risk posed by Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for military operations in Libya in spring 2011?

A No.

Q Next, it has been alleged that the U.S. Mission in Benghazi included transferring weapons to Syrian rebels or to other countries. Bipartisan report issued by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence found that, quote, "The CIA was not collecting and shipping arms from Libya to Syria," closed quote, and they found, quote, "no support for this allegation," closed quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict the House Intelligence Committee's bipartisan report finding that the CIA was not shipping arms from Libya to Syria?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that the U.S. facilities in Benghazi were being used to facilitate weapons transfers from Libya to Syria or to any other foreign country?

A No.

Q A team of CIA security personnel was temporarily delayed from departing the Annex on the night of the attacks to assist the Special Mission Compound, and there have been a number of allegations about the cause of and appropriateness of that delay. House Intelligence Committee issued a bipartisan

report concluding that the team was not ordered to, quote, "stand down," closed quote, but that instead there were tactical disagreements on the ground over how quickly to depart.

Do you have any evidence that would contradict the House Intelligence Committee's finding that there was no stand-down order to CIA personnel?

A No.

Q Putting aside whether you agree with the decision or think it may have been the right decision, do you have any evidence that there was a bad or improper reason behind the temporary delay of CIA security personnel who departed the Annex to assist the Special Mission Compound?

A No.

Q Next, a concern has been raised by one individual that in the course of producing documents to the Accountability Review Board damaging documents may have been removed or scrubbed out of that production.

Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department removed or scrubbed damaging documents from the materials that were provided to the ARB?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department directed anyone else at the State Department to remove or scrub damaging documents from materials that were provided to the ARB?

A No.

Q Let me ask these questions also for documents that were provided to Congress. Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department removed or scrubbed damaging documents from the materials that were provided to Congress?

A No.

Q Next, it has been alleged that CIA Deputy Director Michael Morell altered unclassified talking points about the Benghazi attacks for political reasons and that he then misrepresented his actions when he told Congress that the CIA, quote, "faithfully performed our duties in accordance with the highest standards of objectivity and nonpartisanship," closed quote.

Do you have any evidence that CIA Deputy Director Mike Morell gave false or intentionally misleading testimony to Congress about the Benghazi talking points?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that CIA Deputy Director Morell altered the talking points provided to Congress for political reasons?

A No.

Q Next, it has been alleged that Ambassador Susan Rice made a, quote, "intentional misrepresentation," closed quote, when she spoke on the Sunday talk shows about the Benghazi attacks.

Do you have any evidence that Ambassador Rice intentionally misrepresented facts about the Benghazi attacks on the Sunday talk shows?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that the President of the U.S. was, quote, "virtually AWOL as commander in chief," closed quote, on the night of the attacks and that he was missing in action.

Do you have any evidence to support the allegation that the President was virtually AWOL as commander in chief or missing in action on the night of the attacks?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that a team of four U.S. military personnel at Embassy Tripoli on the night of the attacks who were considering flying on a second plane to Benghazi were ordered by their superiors to, quote, "stand down," closed quote, meaning to cease all operations. Military officials have stated that those four individuals were instead ordered to, quote, "remain in place," closed quote, in Tripoli to provide security and medical assistance in their location.

Republican staff report issued by the House Armed Services Committee found that, quote, "There was no stand-down order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi," closed quote. Do you have any evidence to contradict the conclusion of the House Armed Services Committee that there was no stand-down order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi?

A No.

Q We are almost at the end. I know it's been a long day. This is actually the last one.

It has been alleged that the military failed to deploy assets on the night of the attack that would have saved lives. However, former Republican Congressman Howard Buck McKeon, the former chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, conducted a review of the attacks, after which he stated, quote, "Given where the troops were, how quickly the thing all happened, and how quickly it dissipated, we probably couldn't have done more than we did," closed quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict Congressman McKeon's conclusion?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that the Pentagon had military assets available to them on the night of the attacks that could have saved lives but that the Pentagon leadership intentionally decided not to deploy?

A No.

Mr. Kenny. And with that, we'll just take a quick moment to thank you once again.

Ms. Sawyer. Yeah. Thank you very much for your patience. We know it's late there, but I did want to just give you the opportunity now that you have patiently sat through and answered all of our questions if there's really anything you wanted to add before we go off the record.

Ms. [REDACTED] No. I think I'm all done. Thank you.

Ms. Sawyer. Great. Well, thank you again. Please be safe getting home, and thank you so much for your past and continued service to the country.

Ms. [REDACTED] Thank you.

Mr. Kenny. We'll go off the record.

[Whereupon, at 11:47 a.m., the interview was concluded.]

Certificate of Deponent/Interviewee

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

Witness Name

Date

Errata Sheet

Select Committee on Benghazi

The witness reviewed the accompanying transcript and certified its accuracy by providing the following corrections. These corrections are reflected in the transcript as identified below.

<u>PAGE</u>	<u>LINE</u>	<u>ALL CORRECTIONS MADE BY WITNESS</u>
12	20	Replaced "he would we my counterpart" with "he would be my counterpart."
28	20	Replaced "polycom" with "Pol/Econ" in reference to Political/Economic staff positions.
46	23	Replaced "polycom" with "Pol/Econ."