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

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11 INTERVIEW OF: SUSAN RICE

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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2016

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Washington, D.C.

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21 The interview in the above matter was held at the New
22 Executive Office Building, 725 Seventeenth Street, NW,
23 Washington, D.C., commencing at 9:38 a.m.

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Present: Representatives Gowdy, Jordan, Pompeo, Roby,
Cummings, Schiff, and Duckworth.

1 Appearances:

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5 For the SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI:

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1 For SUSAN RICE:

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10 For the WHITE HOUSE:

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14 JAMES WALSH, ASSOCIATE COUNSEL

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16 CAROLINE TESS, SENIOR DIRECTOR FOR LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS,

17 NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

18 BRIAN EGAN, LEGAL ADVISER, NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

19 SUZY GEORGE, DEPUTY ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT

20

21 ALSO PRESENT:

22 LORI GOODIN, STENOGRAPHER FOR THE WHITE HOUSE

23

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1 Mr. Missakian. Let's go on the record.

2 Good morning, everybody. My name is Craig Missakian. I
3 am one of the majority counsel, and I will be doing most of
4 the questioning today here, Ambassador.

5 It's our understanding that you received the -- an
6 explanation of the mechanics of today's interview as well as
7 some of your rights. Is that correct? Were those explained
8 to you?

9 Ms. Rice. I just got the piece of paper this morning,
10 yes.

11 Mr. Missakian. Okay. Did you have a chance to review
12 it?

13 Ms. Rice. I did. I appreciate it.

14 Mr. Missakian. Great. Do you have any questions before
15 we begin?

16 Ms. Rice. No.

17 Mr. Missakian. Even though we are not going to be
18 putting you under oath today, as would be typical at a
19 deposition in a Federal trial, for example, do you understand
20 that if you were to give false testimony here today you may
21 be subject to criminal penalties because this is a
22 congressional investigation? And that would apply to whether
23 Members are asking you questions or staff is asking you
24 questions. Do you understand that?

25 Ms. Rice. I do understand, yes.

1 Mr. Missakian. Then let's begin.

2 Mr. McQuaid. If I could just note the time.

3 Mr. Missakian. Yes.

4 Ms. Rice. I was just told they're going to turn the
5 clocks on but they're going to be an hour off.

6 Mr. McQuaid. We won't ask for that hour to count
7 against your time.

8 Ms. Rice. Thank you. It depends.

9 EXAMINATION

10 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

11 Q Ambassador, let's start with the day of
12 September 11th. Where were you?

13 A New York City.

14 Q Were you at your office?

15 A I was at my office partially and out of the office
16 at other times.

17 Q And when did you first become aware of the protests
18 that were occurring in Cairo?

19 A I don't recall precisely what time of day.

20 Q Okay. Approximately?

21 A Late afternoon, ^{early} evening.

22 Q Do you have an understanding of, when you learned
23 about the protests in Cairo, it was a short time after they
24 had begun or a while after they had begun?

25 A I don't recall precisely.

1 Q How did you hear about the protests in Cairo?

2 A I don't recall precisely. I know I did receive
3 some email from colleagues, but I can't remember if that's
4 the first I heard.

5 Q Do you recall having any discussions with anybody
6 about the protests in Cairo?

7 A I don't recall ⁱⁿ any ^{depth} no.

8 Q Generally speaking, what do you recall learning
9 about the protests in Cairo on that day?

10 A It was 4 years ago, so I don't know that I have a
11 precise recollection of what occurred on that day. I don't
12 remember what I heard first from whom. I was obviously at
13 the U.N., so I could have heard it from colleagues at the
14 U.N. I could have heard it from mission staff. I ^{honestly} ~~obviously~~
15 don't remember.

16 Q And, generally speaking, what do you recall
17 hearing?

18 A That a large group, perhaps several hundred, up to
19 several thousand, had stormed our embassy in Cairo and,
20 indeed, tried to breach the embassy compound; that initially
21 the security forces, the Egyptian security forces, were slow
22 to respond; and that the event in Cairo seemed to have been
23 prompted by the "Innocence of Muslims" video.

24 Q And where did you learn that?

25 A It was in the media. It was, I think, relayed to

1 me by my team. And I think it was some sort of a widely held
2 understanding of what transpired.

3 Q With respect to the connection between the video,
4 "The Innocence of Muslims," and what was going on in Cairo,
5 do you recall that that conclusion was based on news reports
6 or something else, if you recall?

7 A I think it came from a variety of sources.

8 Q Okay. What were the other sources besides news
9 reports?

10 A I don't remember precisely.

11 Q Do you recall getting any classified briefings
12 about what was occurring in Cairo?

13 A Subsequently.

14 Q When?

15 A In the days following.

16 Q Is your office in New York, is it a SCIF?

17 A Yes.

18 Q And do you recall having any classified meetings in
19 your office in New York at any time that week about Cairo?

20 A No, I don't recall.

21 Q As you sit here today, what do you recall being
22 told about what occurred in Cairo at any point during that
23 week?

24 A I think I just described to you what I recall.

25 Q I would like to mark as exhibit 1 to the interview

1 a one-page document.

2 [Rice Exhibit No. 1

3 was marked for identification.]

4 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Ambassador Rice, would you mind
5 speaking up just a little bit?

6 Ms. Rice. I can try.

7 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

8 Q For the record, this is a one-page document. It's
9 an email from [REDACTED] to Susan Rice and others, dated
10 September 11th, 2012, at 7:55 p.m., the subject: "More on
11 Cairo Embassy Attack."

12 When you have had a chance to finish looking at this,
13 Ambassador, just let me know.

14 A I have finished reading it.

15 Q Okay. Let's break it down. The first sentence
16 says, "Some more detail on the attack on the Embassy Cairo
17 beyond the press coverage you may have already seen."

18 Does that help you recall where you received your
19 information from about the attack -- the protests in Cairo?

20 A No, it doesn't.

21 Q Okay.

22 Let's go to the second paragraph. "2000 protesters
23 total. 20 got to the top of the wall, 10 got inside the
24 perimeter -- they tore down the flag and sprayed graffiti
25 inside the compound. They went after employee cars as well."

1 Do you recall that being the information you received on
2 September 11th about what was occurring in Cairo?

3 A Well, I clearly received this email. It's more
4 detailed than I recall 4 years subsequently but broadly
5 consistent.

6 Q And you don't recall receiving this email, but you
7 don't have any reason to believe you did not receive it at
8 the time.

9 A Exactly.

10 Q Okay.

11 And at any point during the rest of that week, did you
12 receive any information that contradicted the statement
13 contained in the second full paragraph of this email?

14 A I don't recall.

15 Q The third paragraph states, "Limited police
16 response until Patterson (in Washington) called the Prime
17 Minister (reportedly the new government thought we had our
18 own police inside the Embassy). Egyptian police did finally
19 move the protesters off the compound peacefully. All
20 employees safe and accounted for."

21 At any time after you received this memo, did you
22 receive any information that contradicted the statement
23 contained in that second full paragraph?

24 A The second or third?

25 Q Call it the third. The paragraph that begins,

1 "Limited police response."

2 A Not that I recall.

3 Q Then I guess what we will call the fourth
4 paragraph, I will read that.

5 "Protest was over the (rather low budget) Prophet
6 Mohammed video produced in part by Pastor Terry Jones of
7 Quran burning fame."

8 At any time, did you receive any information after this
9 email that contradicted the statement contained in that
10 fourth paragraph?

11 A I don't recall.

12 Q So, as best as you sit here today, your
13 understanding of what occurred in Cairo is there was about
14 2,000 protesters total, about 20 got over the wall, 10 got
15 inside the perimeter, they tore down the flag and sprayed
16 graffiti inside the compound. Is that fair?

17 Mr. McQuaid. Can we go off the record for a moment?

18 Mr. Missakian. Yes, we can go off the record.

19 [Discussion off the record.]

20 Mr. Missakian. Let's go back on the record.

21 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

22 Q I will rephrase the question, Ambassador. Focusing
23 on just your recollection at the time, is your best
24 recollection at the time that Cairo involved 2,000 protesters
25 total, that 20 got to the top of the wall, 10 got inside the

1 perimeter, they tore down the flag and sprayed graffiti
2 inside the compound?

3 A That's more detail than I recall.

4 Q Do you have any reason to believe --

5 A But broadly consistent with what I -- with what I
6 recall.

7 Q Okay. Do you ever recall hearing, during that
8 period that we're talking about, that any of the protesters
9 at the Cairo embassy had weapons, showed weapons, used
10 weapons in any way?

11 A I don't recall.

12 Q You don't recall that they did?

13 A I don't recall one way or the other.

14 Q Ambassador, let's move forward in that day. When
15 do you recall hearing about the attacks at the Benghazi
16 facility?

17 A To the best of my recollection, in the evening.

18 Q And by "the evening," what timeframe are you
19 referring to?

20 A Seven? Eight? Six? In that vicinity.

21 Q And how do you recall hearing?

22 A I don't recall whether this was the first source,
23 but I do recall receiving an email from my team alerting me.

24 Q Now, it's accepted that the attacks began at about
25 3:40 p.m. East Coast time. And your best recollection is you

1 heard about them several hours after that. Is that correct?

2 A That's my best recollection.

3 Q And is it your best recollection that you heard
4 about it through an email or through a conversation with
5 somebody?

6 A I don't recall. The only thing I recall that
7 alerted me to it -- but I don't suggest that this was the
8 only source -- was emails from my team.

9 Q And when you say your team, who are you referring
10 to?

11 A Specifically to my colleague [REDACTED]. But I
12 don't know if I received other emails, as well, from other
13 members of my team.

14 Q And do you --

15 A [REDACTED] is on my team, and she was clearly reporting
16 on a different stream of information.

17 Q In preparation for your interview here today, do
18 you recall reviewing the email you received from
19 [REDACTED]?

20 A Yes.

21 Q And what did that email say?

22 A It was a chain, so I think it was a series of
23 emails. And I don't recall --

24 Q What did it say on the subject of Benghazi?

25 A I don't recall precisely. I imagine you might have

1 it and can refresh my memory. But I think it was him
2 reporting as we were hearing evolving information first about
3 an attack, then about our concern that Ambassador Stevens may
4 be missing, concern that something may -- tragic may have
5 befallen him. And I don't recall getting clarity on the
6 outcome until the morning.

7 Q Okay. Is it fair to say that what you were
8 receiving were updates that were being circulated within the
9 State Department generally?

10 A No, I don't think it's fair to say. I think that I
11 was hearing from my colleagues at USUN in Washington. I
12 can't be certain what their sources were. I assume they were
13 seeing some of the information coming from the field, but I
14 can't state with certainty where their information came from.

15 Q Did you ask them where they were getting their
16 information?

17 A I did not.

18 Q Did you have any conversations with them?

19 A I don't recall having phone conversations.

20 Q What did you do in response to receiving this
21 information, if anything?

22 A I recall asking to be kept posted on any additional
23 updates. I recall expressing grave concern about Ambassador
24 Stevens, who was a close colleague of mine.

25 Q And when you said to -- when you instructed them to

1 keep you posted and updated, what did you mean by that?

2 A I meant keep me posted and updated.

3 Q Well, did you mean if something significant
4 happened, on a minute-by-minute basis, as information may
5 have changed?

6 A I meant as we learned more about the safety and
7 security of our colleagues.

8 Q Okay. And did they do that?

9 A Yes. As that information came to them, they kept
10 me posted.

11 Q So, even though you were in New York, you received
12 information on a regular basis about what was going on in
13 Benghazi. Is that correct?

14 A I received information as my team acquired it and
15 sent it to me.

16 Q Did you receive any information from any other
17 sources other than your team?

18 A I am sure I was receiving, as others were, what was
19 available in the public domain, but I don't have any specific
20 recollection of other sources of information.

21 Q When you say you were receiving information that
22 was in the public domain, I assume you mean newspaper
23 articles?

24 A I mean press reporting.

25 Q Press reporting.

1 A Wouldn't that include -- would include newspapers
2 but obviously not limited to newspapers.

3 Q Now, how would you have received that?

4 A By reading, by watching TV, by receiving updates on
5 email that may have been press reports.

6 Q At the time, were you aware that the CIA had a
7 classified annex in Benghazi?

8 A Are we in a classified setting here?

9 Mr. McQuaid. Can we go off the record for just
10 1 second?

11 Mr. Missakian. I think I can clear this.

12 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

13 Q At this point, the fact of the CIA facility in
14 Benghazi is no longer classified, so you're free to answer.

15 A But you're asking what I knew at the time.

16 Q Yes. Did you know it at the time?

17 A I don't recall knowing that the CIA was -- at the
18 time -- was the -- was in control of that annex compound.

19 Q I'm not sure I understand. Did you understand that
20 there was an annex in Benghazi at the time?

21 A Well, I learned it when it was attacked. I don't
22 recall knowing it beforehand.

23 Q Explain that. How did you come to learn that the
24 Annex was attacked?

25 A Well, for one thing, it was in the emails that I

1 was sent.

2 Q Okay. Now, prior to receiving those emails, did
3 you know the Annex existed?

4 A I don't recall knowing the Annex existed.

5 Q So tell us what you first learned about the attacks
6 in Benghazi at the time.

7 A I think we've gone over this. I learned, as I've
8 said, the evening of the 11th. And you've asked me how I
9 learned that. And, to the best of my knowledge, I recall
10 receiving emails from my team. I'm quite certain I was
11 conscious of what was going on in the public domain, but
12 beyond that, I don't have a specific recollection of sources
13 of information.

14 Q Yeah, I'm not asking you about sources at this
15 point. Just kind of your general recollection of what you
16 heard about the nature of the attacks. What was going on?
17 What were you told?

18 A To the best of my recollection, that a crowd had
19 gathered and participated in an assault on our -- our
20 consulate compound and that it had evolved into a much larger
21 attack on our consulate and then on an annex facility.

22 Q And you learned that that night, the night of
23 September 11th.

24 A That's my recollection.

25 Q Do you recall anything about the -- learning

1 anything about the motivation of the individuals that took
2 part in this attack on the night of September 11th?

3 A I don't recall learning about motivation that
4 night.

5 Q Do you recall hearing anything about the number of
6 attackers on the night of September 11th?

7 A I don't recall.

8 Q Do you recall hearing anything about their
9 affiliation to any militia or terrorist organization?

10 Mr. Sauber. That night?

11 Mr. Missakian. Yes, September 11th.

12 Ms. Rice. I don't recall anything definitive. I recall
13 speculation in the press that it might have involved Ansar
14 al-Sharia.

15 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

16 Q Do you recall that night being informed that Ansar
17 al-Sharia had taken credit for the attacks?

18 A Not precisely, but I wouldn't be surprised to be
19 reminded of that.

20 Q And what time did you go home that night?

21 A I don't remember.

22 Q Was it early in the morning on September 12th?

23 A No, I don't think so. Early in the morning?

24 Q Right. The attacks began at about 3:40 on
25 September 11th, and the attacks went well into the early

1 morning of September 12th. Do you recall when you left your
2 office on September 11th or September 12th?

3 A I don't remember. But I'm quite certain it was on
4 the 11th, not the 12th.

5 Q When you left, did you know anything about the
6 condition of the Ambassador when you left?

7 A I don't recall.

8 Q At that point, at the point in time when you left,
9 do you recall that the Annex facility had been attacked?

10 A I don't recall when I learned that relative to when
11 I left.

12 Q Okay. Do you recall how you learned that?

13 A As I've said, to the best of my -- the clearest
14 recollection of the information that I received was the
15 emails -- the email chain I was on with [REDACTED].
16 Beyond that, I don't recall precisely what sources of
17 information I may have had.

18 Q Our understanding is -- well, let me withdraw that
19 question and take a step back.

20 Do you recall hearing anything the night of
21 September 11th about the type of weapons that the attackers
22 had used at the Benghazi State Department facility and at the
23 Annex?

24 A I don't remember when I learned about the type of
25 weapons.

1 Q Okay. Whenever you did learn, what did you learn?

2 A I learned that it included heavy weapons.

3 Q By that, what do you mean?

4 A I don't think it was described precisely.

5 Q Do you recall who described it for you?

6 A I recall receiving intelligence updates in the
7 subsequent days that included reference to heavy weapons.

8 Q And those intelligence updates, were they provided
9 to you in writing or did somebody give you the information
10 orally?

11 A In writing.

12 Q You read them.

13 A Yes.

14 Q Okay. How many did you read?

15 A I don't remember the exact number.

16 Q Do you recall when you read them?

17 A I receive a daily intelligence briefing every
18 morning. As the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., I receive a
19 thorough briefing package, and I read it in the morning, so,
20 I presume, each of the mornings subsequent to September 11th.

21 Q Other than that daily briefing that you received,
22 did you receive any other classified information about what
23 had occurred in Benghazi that week?

24 A Not that I recall.

25 Q On the evening of September 11th, we understand

1 that there was a telephone call that occurred at 7:30. It
2 was a secure video teleconference that involved a number of
3 people. Did you take part in that call?

4 A No.

5 Q Did you know about it?

6 A I don't think I knew about it at the time.

7 Q Did you have any understanding of the military
8 response that was being planned for Benghazi at that time?

9 A No.

10 Q Did you know that a military response was being
11 considered?

12 A No.

13 Q So, during that entire week, you were not told that
14 a military response was being considered.

15 A I thought you were talking about the night of
16 September 11th.

17 Q We can start with the night of September 11th. I
18 gather you didn't have any information that night.

19 A No.

20 Q Did you have any information in the subsequent days
21 about a military response?

22 A What I recall about the military was ^{the} effort to
23 evacuate our personnel that remained in Benghazi and then
24 consideration as to whether evacuation of Tripoli was
25 necessary.

1 Q Other than the daily intelligence briefings that
2 you had beginning September 12th and continuing through that
3 week, did you have any other meetings or discussions with
4 anybody about what had occurred in Benghazi?

5 Mr. Davis. I'm sorry. We were waiting for a response
6 to the question.

7 Ms. Rice. I thought you were going to add something to
8 the question.

9 I don't recall any meetings that I participated in. I'm
10 certain I had discussions with colleagues at the U.S.
11 Mission, perhaps with colleagues at the State Department. I
12 don't have any specific recollection of that, but, obviously,
13 when you lose four colleagues, it's something that affects
14 all of us. And many of my colleagues were Foreign Service
15 officers; many of us knew Ambassador Stevens personally. So
16 I'm quite certain we had discussions about it.

17 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

18 Q And we wouldn't necessarily expect you to have a
19 specific recollection of any of those conversations. They
20 may all blend together in your mind, and that's fine. Do you
21 have a general recollection of what was being discussed?

22 A Just our heartbreak at the loss of our four
23 colleagues and our shock and our grief and our sense of a
24 huge loss, particularly for Ambassador Stevens, who was well
25 known to me and to many others and with whom we'd worked very

1 closely.

2 Mr. Missakian. My colleague may step in, and others as
3 well, to ask you questions along the way.

4 BY MR. DAVIS:

5 Q Your intelligence briefing you mentioned that you
6 received the day after the attack and subsequent days, that's
7 something that occurred every morning?

8 A Every morning except Sunday.

9 Q And that was in writing?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And were you given a packet of information, or was
12 it given to you electronically?

13 A I receive a binder that contains the daily
14 intelligence.

15 Q And the binder was put together by who?

16 A My briefer.

17 Q And your briefer was stationed in New York with
18 you?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Did the briefer sit through your review of the
21 binder?

22 A Typically.

23 Q And did you engage in discussion with your briefer
24 if you had any questions?

25 A I don't recall. If I would -- if I had questions

1 on any given day, yes, I would pose those questions.

2 Q Do you recall if on the morning of September 12th
3 you had any questions for your briefer?

4 A I don't recall.

5 Q What about the morning of September 13th?

6 A I don't recall.

7 Q And the morning of September 14th?

8 A I don't recall.

9 Q And what was the name of your briefer?

10 A And the morning of September 15th, I don't recall.

11 Q The name of your briefer at the time, do you
12 recall?

13 A I don't recall. But I would remember if you
14 refreshed my memory.

15 Q The binder of intelligence you were provided every
16 morning, is that something the briefer took back with him or
17 her?

18 A Yes.

19 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

20 Q Ambassador Rice, were you asked to do any
21 television shows during that week?

22 A Are you talking about the Sunday shows?

23 Q No, not the Sunday shows. Shows other than the
24 Sunday shows.

25 Mr. Sauber. The week of September 11th?

1 Mr. Missakian. Yes.

2 Ms. Rice. Not that I recall.

3 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

4 Q Okay. Were you asked to do the -- I believe it's
5 called "Rock Center with Brian Williams"?

6 A That week?

7 Q Yes.

8 A I don't recall.

9 Q Let's mark this as exhibit No. 2 to the interview,
10 a one-page document.

11 [Rice Exhibit No. 2
12 was marked for identification.]

13 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

14 Q This is a one-page document that contains two
15 emails. The top email is from Susan Rice to Erin Pelton,
16 dated September 13th at 11:30 a.m., subject line: "Rock
17 Center with Brian Williams."

18 Once you've had a chance to review it, please let me
19 know.

20 A I've reviewed it.

21 Q Okay. Does this help you remember whether you were
22 asked to do the "Rock Center" show with Brian Williams?

23 A It doesn't help me remember, but I'm sure it's
24 accurate.

25 Q And who is Erin Pelton?

1 A She was my press secretary.

2 Q And Ms. Pelton is asking you if you want to do the
3 shows, correct? And your response is, "No thanks."

4 Do you recall why you decided not to do that show?

5 A I don't recall precisely. I could guess.

6 Q Please.

7 A Uh --

8 Q You didn't want to talk about Justin Bieber.

9 A I didn't want --

10 Mr. McQuaid. I was going to ask for the record that the
11 Justin Bieber piece you referenced be brought up.

12 Ms. Rice. I didn't want to be on the same show as
13 Justin Bieber.

14 Frankly, it didn't seem to be something that I needed to
15 do. I wasn't looking to go on television to talk about this.
16 It was also 10 o'clock at night live, which wouldn't have
17 been my preference.

18 That's my best guess. But it seemed like they were
19 asking for me, and I didn't have any particular need or
20 obligation to do it.

21 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

22 Q Okay.

23 Let's talk about the -- a little bit about the other
24 shows that you did on Sunday morning. Let's start with the
25 process by which you were selected to do those shows. Who

1 asked you to do them?

2 A Ben Rhodes.

3 Q And was that in person or by telephone?

4 A Telephone.

5 Q Did he ask you once, or did he have to ask you
6 multiple times?

7 A Sort of in between. I received a phone call as I
8 was in my car on my way to Andrews for the ceremony receiving
9 our fallen colleagues. And in that phone call from Ben, I
10 was asked whether it would be possible, if Secretary Clinton
11 were unable to appear on the shows, if I could appear on the
12 shows. It was a contingency question at the time. And I
13 said that, you know, I had other plans for the weekend and
14 that it would not be my preference but if they needed me and
15 there was not an alternative that I would be willing to do
16 it.

17 Q Had Mr. Rhodes ever made a similar request to you?

18 A Many times.

19 Q Many times to appear on television shows in place
20 of Secretary Clinton or just many times to be --

21 A No, not necessarily -- sometimes, perhaps. But
22 many times over the course of my tenure in New York.

23 Q So that was the first call. I gather there were
24 subsequent calls.

25 A There was one subsequent call --

1 Q And when did that occur?

2 A -- as I recall. After the ceremony. To say that
3 Secretary Clinton was unavailable and to ask if I would be
4 willing to do it.

5 Q Was Mr. Rhodes at the ceremony?

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

7 Q Do you recall him telling you anything more about
8 why Secretary Clinton was not available?

9 A No.

10 Q Did you ask him any questions at that time?

11 A About what?

12 Q About what the appearances would entail.

13 A I'm sure I did. I don't recall exactly what they
14 were.

15 Q Do you recall generally what you discussed with
16 him?

17 A It was a very brief phone call, as I remember. I
18 might have asked which shows, was it all of them. But I
19 don't have a specific recollection of the conversation, other
20 than what I've shared.

21 Q Did you ever come to have an understanding that
22 week about why Secretary Clinton had not done the shows?

23 A Not a direct one, no.

24 Q Okay. What was your indirect understanding?

25 A I made some assumptions. I don't know that I ever

1 had a conversation with anybody that would have given me any
2 direct knowledge.

3 Q What was your best estimate on what you knew at the
4 time?

5 A I assumed that, having had a very grueling and
6 emotionally intense week, that she was tired and it was not
7 her preference to go on the shows. I had no specific
8 knowledge from her or anybody else as to her reasons for
9 declining.

10 Q Did you meet with Secretary Clinton at all that
11 week?

12 A I believe I met with her Friday morning, as I often
13 did.

14 Q And was that a standing meeting?

15 A It was when we were both available.

16 Q And what do you recall about that meeting?

17 A Nothing.

18 Q As you sit here today, you're not even sure it
19 happened?

20 A I believe it happened.

21 Q Why do you say that?

22 A Because I've been reminded in the course of your
23 work, by public statements, that it happened. And I've gone
24 back and asked, and I'm told that it did happen.

25 Q Okay. Who did you ask?

1 A The woman who was my scheduler at the time.

2 Q And who is that?

3 A [REDACTED].

4 Q And do you recall anything that you discussed with
5 Secretary Clinton at that meeting?

6 A I have no recollection of the meeting. I honestly
7 didn't remember having it until your work surfaced that
8 recollection.

9 Q Would it have been typical for somebody at that
10 meeting to take notes to reflect what was discussed?

11 A It was always one-on-one.

12 Q Where did that occur?

13 A In her office.

14 Q Other than Ben Rhodes, did you talk to anybody else
15 at the White House about appearing on the Sunday talk shows?

16 Mr. Sauber. Before the appearances? Just the
17 timeframe.

18 Mr. Missakian. Yes. We'll focus on that timeframe up
19 to September 16th.

20 Ms. Rice. I don't recall speaking to anybody else in
21 the White House apart from those who may have been on the
22 prep call that I participated in.

23 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

24 Q All right, which we'll get to.

25 Why don't we move into that now. So I gather you came

1 to Washington on Friday, September 14th.

2 A I don't recall if I came Friday morning or Thursday
3 night. I often came Thursday night.

4 Mr. McQuaid. Can we just go off the record for just
5 1 second?

6 Mr. Missakian. Sure. Let's go off the record.

7 [Discussion off the record.]

8 Mr. Missakian. Let's go back on the record.

9 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

10 Q Now, to the subject of preparing for the talk
11 shows. So I gather -- well, let me ask you, did you do any
12 preparation on Friday, September 14th?

13 A No.

14 Q None whatsoever?

15 A No.

16 Q You didn't review any documents? You didn't speak
17 to anybody? You didn't do anything to prepare?

18 A I didn't know until Friday night that I was going
19 on the shows.

20 Q So Ben Rhodes called you Friday night and gave you
21 the news.

22 A And asked me if I would in fact do it, given that
23 Secretary Clinton was unable to.

24 Q So, prior to that time -- and how would you
25 describe generally your -- your attempts to investigate what

1 had happened in Benghazi, like, the week up to
2 September 14th? For example, were you just relying on the
3 information that was provided to you in the daily briefing,
4 or did you go beyond that to have meetings, discussions? How
5 would you describe it?

6 A I received my daily briefings. I received -- I
7 consumed press reporting, as I always did. I don't recall
8 participating in any meetings, interagency, in that window.

9 Q Now let's go --

10 A On this topic.

11 Q On this topic, yes. We're just talking about the
12 attacks in Benghazi.

13 So let's go forward to -- did you do anything after
14 speaking to Mr. Rhodes on Friday night to begin preparing?

15 A No.

16 Q What did you do the next morning to begin
17 preparing?

18 A I reviewed briefing materials.

19 Q What briefing materials? Would that just be the
20 same daily briefing materials that you received in the
21 ordinary course, or was this different material?

22 A It was both. I received my daily intelligence
23 briefing on Saturday morning, and I also began reviewing a
24 briefing book that had been prepared by my staff for -- in
25 preparation for the Sunday shows.

1 Mr. Davis. Do you know if that briefing book was
2 classified or unclassified or a mixture?

3 Ms. Rice. It was unclassified.

4 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

5 Q The briefing book, does it still exist?

6 A I don't know.

7 Q And who put it together for you?

8 A I believe it was put -- it was put together by my
9 staff, I'm pretty sure. I believe that would have been Erin
10 Pelton, but I can't be certain that she was the only person
11 who was involved in that.

12 Q And you recall receiving this briefing book in the
13 morning.

14 A I recall looking at it in the morning. I'm not
15 sure if I got it Friday night or Saturday morning.

16 Q The first time you looked at it was Saturday
17 morning.

18 A Yes.

19 Q Did somebody hand-deliver it to you?

20 A I don't recall how I received it.

21 Q When you're here in Washington, where do you go to
22 work?

23 A At the State Department.

24 Q You have an office there?

25 A I did.

1 Q Did. Yes, you did. So is that where you reviewed
2 this material, at your office at the State Department?

3 A No.

4 Q Where did you review it?

5 A I had it with me throughout the day on Saturday,
6 and I was not in the office on Saturday.

7 Q As best you can, do you recall what was in that
8 briefing book that your staff provided?

9 A I recall it included statements that other senior
10 administration officials had made, including the President
11 and the Secretary. I recall it including background Q&A and
12 top-line themes covering the wide range of issues that we
13 anticipated would come up on the shows: the protests that
14 occurred all around the world that week; obviously, also what
15 happened in Benghazi.

16 And, also, because it was 1 week before the opening of
17 the U.N. General Assembly in New York and Iran was expected
18 to be a prominent issue, and Prime Minister Netanyahu's visit
19 also a prominent issue, I recall preparing for that
20 discussion as well.

21 Q And do you recall the binder being augmented at all
22 during that day, or was the material you reviewed in the
23 morning the material that you had at the end of the night?

24 A No, I think I received the famous talking points on
25 Benghazi later in the day.

1 Q Other than that, did it remain the same?

2 A To the best of my recollection, but I'm not certain
3 of that.

4 Q Do you recall whether or not the material you
5 received included a transcript of the President's interview
6 with Steve Kroft on "60 Minutes" that occurred on
7 September 12th?

8 A I don't recall.

9 Q Were you aware of that interview?

10 A I don't recall.

11 Mr. Sauber. As of when?

12 Ms. Rice. In this --

13 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

14 Q At the time. Unless I say otherwise, we're talking
15 about that time period between September 11th and
16 September 16th.

17 A I don't have a recollection of it, but I imagine I
18 would've been aware of it at the time.

19 Q And is that something that you would have normally
20 received as part of your preparation? When you received the
21 President's public statements, would it have been -- made
22 sense for you to receive that transcript as well?

23 A It would have made sense, but I don't have a
24 specific recollection of reviewing it.

25 Q Approximately how many -- let me withdraw that

1 question.

2 In your preparation for your interview here today, do
3 you believe you reviewed all of the documents that were
4 contained in that binder?

5 A I don't know if I did.

6 Q Would there be -- if we wanted to reconstruct that
7 binder, how would we go about doing it?

8 A If I knew the answer to that, I might have done it
9 myself. I don't know.

10 Q It wasn't something that was emailed around? It
11 was something that --

12 A I think bits and pieces of it were, but I can't
13 assume that the entirety of it was ever put in one place
14 other than what was handed to me.

15 Q Okay.

16 As we understand it, there was a telephone call that
17 occurred that day around 4 o'clock. Do you recall that
18 telephone call?

19 A I do.

20 Q Prior to that telephone call, did you have
21 discussions with anybody about the appearances on the talk
22 shows?

23 A Not that I recall.

24 Q So, as far as you can recall, you were basically
25 just locked in a room with your binder and cramming for

1 the --

2 A I didn't say I was locked in a room.

3 Q Okay. But it's fair to say you were on your own,
4 you weren't working with anybody, you weren't talking to
5 anybody about Benghazi, you had your binder, and that was
6 pretty much it.

7 A I had received my morning intelligence briefing. I
8 had received my binder and had reviewed my binder, at least
9 all its contents up to that point. And I don't recall any
10 intervening conversations prior to the prep call.

11 BY MR. DAVIS:

12 Q Your morning intelligence binder, what was
13 normally, generally speaking, contained in the intelligence
14 binder? Was that new intelligence or assessments that came
15 out on that particular day?

16 A So in my intelligence binder would have been
17 materials compiled by my briefer. They include the
18 President's daily briefing. They include additional
19 materials, mostly finished intelligence products,
20 occasionally raw intelligence products, all selected for me
21 by my briefer on the basis of his judgment of what I would be
22 most in need of seeing and interested in reviewing.

23 And, yes, each day it was refreshed. So presumably what
24 I received on any given day was the latest information we
25 had.

1 Q So was it unlikely, in your opinion, that on
2 Saturday, September 15th, there would have been materials in
3 there that may have been in your intelligence binder from the
4 12th, 13th, or 14th?

5 A No. Each day -- the materials for the 15th were
6 the materials for the 15th. It didn't -- wasn't a
7 cumulative --

8 Q Nothing was repeated, generally speaking.

9 A No, not unless I asked for something.

10 Q Do you know if you asked for something on the 15th?

11 A Asked for what on the 15th?

12 Q Asked for anything in particular to be included in
13 your intelligence briefing.

14 A No, I don't ask for -- unless I have a question and
15 had posed a question and there's a followup piece of
16 information provided.

17 Q Do you know if you had asked any particular
18 question on the 13th or 14th?

19 A I don't recall asking for anything in particular.

20 Q Okay.

21 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

22 Q All right, Ambassador, let's talk about the prep
23 call that you had that day. Our understanding is that it
24 occurred about 4 o'clock. Is that true?

25 A I remember it being late afternoon. I don't

1 remember the precise time.

2 Q Where were you when the prep call occurred?

3 A Where was I physically?

4 Q Yes.

5 A Columbus, Ohio.

6 Q So you were on the phone, obviously.

7 A Yes.

8 Q Where were you in Columbus, Ohio? Let me ask you
9 this. Were you in a SCIF in Columbus, Ohio?

10 A No. It was an unclassified telephone call.

11 Q Okay. So I gather from that that no classified
12 information was discussed on the call.

13 A No.

14 Q Who else was on the call with you?

15 A I don't recall all the participants.

16 Q Is there something that you could look at to help
17 you remember?

18 A I don't know. Do you have something that would
19 help me?

20 Q I don't. Do you?

21 A No. I honestly don't recall, and I've thought
22 about this. I recall certain individuals.

23 Q Okay.

24 Let's -- Nick, if you want to have a break and talk to
25 the witness -- you're passing notes -- we're fine to take a

1 break.

2 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

3 Q Okay. Why don't you go through the people you
4 remember being on the call.

5 A I remember Ben Rhodes. I remember Erin Pelton, my
6 press secretary. I remember Salman Ahmed, my chief of staff.
7 I remember that there was somebody from the State Department,
8 but I don't remember who. I remember David Plouffe.

9 And, frankly, beyond that, I can't piece together who
10 else was on the call. I imagine there were more White House
11 people. There may have been more State Department people.
12 And there may even have been more of my own team on the call.
13 But those are the ones that I remember.

14 Q And I believe you said that this was not the first
15 time that Ben Rhodes had asked you to do the talk shows. Is
16 that correct?

17 A Yes.

18 Q And for each of those other prior occasions, did
19 you have a similar prep session?

20 A Typically.

21 Q Typically. And was it roughly the same people that
22 participated in those prior prep sessions as participated in
23 this one?

24 A Roughly. There would typically be my own team,
25 State people, and White House communications people. And,

1 typically, Ben would be on the call.

2 Q Okay. Was David Plouffe a typical participant in
3 these calls that you had on prior occasions?

4 A I don't recall David being on other calls, but I
5 remember other White House communications people being on the
6 calls.

7 Q Do you have any understanding of why Mr. Plouffe
8 was on this call in particular?

9 A I don't.

10 Q Do you recall him saying anything during the call?

11 A I don't believe he did.

12 Q All right.

13 Let's go back to the basics. How long did the call
14 last?

15 A I don't remember exactly, but I would guess a
16 half-hour to 45 minutes.

17 Q Were there any conversations after the call about
18 the talk shows?

19 A I can't recall. The reason I'm hesitating is
20 because, in other instances, sometimes right before going on
21 the shows in the morning, we've had brief catch-up calls. I
22 don't recall that happening this time, but I'm not certain.

23 Q Did you make any calls? For example, did you pick
24 up the phone and call anybody at the State Department or
25 anything like that to discuss Benghazi?

1 A In what timeframe?

2 Mr. Sauber. Yeah.

3 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

4 Q That day. September 14th, September 15th,
5 September 16th, did you, yourself, initiate any calls to the
6 State Department about Benghazi?

7 A I can't remember.

8 Q Now, as best you can recall, who was doing most of
9 the talking during this call?

10 A I think it was a combination of me, Ben, the State
11 Department colleague who I can't recall. That would be my
12 best recollection.

13 Q The State Department person, can you recall
14 anything about that person in terms of their position? For
15 example, were they somebody from the press office or were
16 they somebody from the Libya bureau or desk, for example?

17 A I believe a press person.

18 Q Was it Victoria Nuland?

19 A Honestly, I don't remember. But she would've been
20 the logical person.

21 Q As best you can recall, did the people on the other
22 end of the phone, were they all in the same room, were they
23 on multiple phones in multiple rooms?

24 A I have no idea. I assume, because it was a
25 Saturday afternoon, that they were in different places.

1 Q Tell us how it went in terms of reviewing
2 documents. Did you have the sense that everybody had the
3 same binder as you had and people were kind of flipping
4 through, document by document, following along? How did that
5 happen?

6 A I don't assume that they had the same binder I had.

7 Q Do you recall any discussions about specific
8 documents? For example, did everybody flip to the CIA
9 talking points and let's talk about those now?

10 A No.

11 Q Do you recall anything at all specifically that was
12 discussed in that regard?

13 A I don't recall us talking about the CIA talking
14 points. I recall being reminded that they were forthcoming
15 and that we would be relying on them because they had been
16 prepared for Members of Congress and they were our best
17 distillation of what we knew at the time.

18 Q Okay. Who told you that?

19 A I'm not certain, but I believe it was Ben. And so
20 we didn't talk about Benghazi, in fact, on the phone call, as
21 I remember. We just said that those were the points.

22 Q Let's go into that a little bit more. If I
23 understood you correctly, you said during this prep call for
24 the Sunday talk shows you did not talk about the attacks in
25 Benghazi at all. Is that correct?

1 A In any depth. I don't have any recollection of
2 talking about them in any depth.

3 Q And if I also understood you correctly, you, at
4 that time, meaning during the prep call, did not have a copy
5 of what would be later known as the CIA talking points?

6 A I think I -- I'm not certain, but I recall
7 receiving them somewhere after the call, sometime after the
8 call, later the same day.

9 Q And how did you receive them?

10 A I don't remember. I mean, they were obviously
11 delivered to me in some form or fashion.

12 Q As best you can recall, what was discussed during
13 this phone call?

14 A We talked primarily about the protests that had
15 occurred around the world, our understanding of the security
16 state of our facilities around the world. We talked about
17 Prime Minister Netanyahu's visit and his statement about red
18 lines. We talked about the question that we anticipated as
19 to whether or not, you know, the President would have the
20 opportunity to see Prime Minister Netanyahu. That's my main
21 recollection of the substance of the call.

22 Q And at some point after the call you received the
23 CIA talking points, which -- why don't I do this. Why don't
24 I mark this next document.

25

[Rice Exhibit No. 3

1 was marked for identification.]
2 [Rice Exhibit No. 4
3 was marked for identification.]

4 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

5 Q Ambassador, I've just given you two documents. The
6 first one is marked exhibit 3. This is a series of emails.
7 The heading at the top is "UNCLASSIFIED." It's from Matt
8 Olsen to a number of people, including Benjamin Rhodes.

9 Exhibit 4 is a compilation of the various versions of
10 the talking points, the CIA talking points that we've been
11 discussing, showing the original version from Friday,
12 September 14th, and how it evolved into the final version.

13 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Craig, can you identify for the
14 record whether exhibit 4 is a document that you put together
15 or is from some other --

16 Mr. Davis. Sure. Exhibit 4 was put together by ODNI
17 general counsel Bob Litt.

18 Ms. Sawyer. So, just to be clear, this was the piece
19 originally provided to Congress --

20 Mr. Davis. March 2013.

21 Ms. Sawyer. 2013. And then we got it both from HPSCI
22 and also in the course of our investigation.

23 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

24 Q Okay. First, let me ask you about exhibit 3. Do
25 you recall this document being a part of the packet of

1 materials you were given on Saturday, September 15th?

2 A It was not. I have not seen this document before
3 today.

4 Q Now let's go -- exhibit 4, as I said, is a
5 compilation of changes made to the CIA talking points.

6 Now, when you received the CIA talking points on the
7 evening of September 15th, however you received it, did you
8 have any conversations with anybody after receipt?

9 A I don't recall.

10 Q But you knew it was coming.

11 A Yes.

12 Q And who told you that it was coming?

13 A As I said, to the best of my recollection, it was
14 Mr. Rhodes on the phone.

15 Q And to the best of your recollection, what did
16 he -- how did he characterize the CIA talking points?

17 A As being carefully vetted and cleared, drafted by
18 the CIA, and provided -- produced for the purpose of being
19 provided to Members of Congress and, thus, what we would also
20 utilize.

21 Q So, as far as you were concerned or as far as you
22 understood, the CIA talking points represented the best
23 information about the attacks in Benghazi at the time.

24 A Yes. That's how I -- that's what I understood them
25 to be, and that's, in fact, what I knew them to be, because

1 they mirrored very precisely the intelligence that I had also
2 received.

3 Q So I just want to get the chronology straight. You
4 received the CIA talking points; you're not sure if you had
5 any further conversations with anybody about them that night.
6 Did you have any conversations with anybody about the talking
7 points the next morning?

8 A I don't recall.

9 Q Did you do any preparation work for your appearance
10 on the talk shows between the time the call ended on Saturday
11 evening and --

12 A I'm sure I continued to review my materials.

13 Q But no meetings, no discussions?

14 A I don't recall any subsequent meetings.

15 Q During the preparation call, do you recall anybody
16 raising the topic of whether there were any indicators that
17 the attack in Benghazi had been preplanned?

18 A No. As I said, I don't think we got into detail.

19 Q To the extent -- your best recollection is there
20 was no discussion about whether Benghazi was preplanned or
21 spontaneous during that call.

22 A I don't recall any.

23 BY MR. DAVIS:

24 Q Turn to exhibit 4 for a moment, and then turn to
25 the very last page, page 8. 11:26 a.m. --

1 A Can you explain what this document is?

2 Q Sure. So it's a document put together by Bob Litt,
3 and it's a document he compiled. And it's the evolution of
4 the talking points from the very first draft at the top of
5 page 1 to the final draft in the middle of page 8.

6 And so, for our purposes, I'm asking about the final
7 version of the talking points on page 8. And the word
8 "Consulate" is crossed out, and that's to reflect the very
9 last change that was made to the talking points before they
10 were finalized and disseminated to Congress and other
11 entities.

12 So the three bullet points under "11:26 a.m.," does that
13 represent, to the best of your knowledge, what the final
14 talking points were that were provided to you?

15 A They look very familiar.

16 Q So that's a "yes"?

17 A I believe so. This is not the form in which they
18 came to me --

19 Q Sure. I understand that.

20 A -- so --

21 Q I'm concerned about the content of the talking
22 points.

23 A The content looks very familiar.

24 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. If it would be helpful, we can
25 enter into the exhibits the final version from the SSCI

1 report, where they declared it the final version. Would that
2 be helpful to you?

3 Mr. Missakian. Yes, that's fine.

4 Ms. Rice. It would be helpful to me too.

5 [Rice Exhibit No. 5
6 was marked for identification.]

7 Ms. Rice. Which page am I looking at?

8 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. If you look at the second page of
9 exhibit 5 now, that's the appendix to the Senate report from
10 the Intelligence Committee. If you sort of go halfway
11 through, it says, "The final" --

12 Ms. Rice. "The final" -- yes.

13 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Yes.

14 BY MR. DAVIS:

15 Q So if you look at I believe it's page 43, I think
16 lines up exactly with what's on page 8.

17 So my question to you is you had testified a couple
18 minutes ago that Ben Rhodes said that these talking points
19 were carefully drafted and vetted. Is that correct?

20 A That's my recollection.

21 Q But you said you knew them to be the best
22 assessment, as well, because it mirrored previous
23 intelligence that you had received. Is that correct?

24 A That is correct.

25 Q So what part of these talking points, I guess,

1 mirrored intelligence that you had previously received?

2 A The first bullet point.

3 Q And can you read exactly what you're referring to?

4 A The entirety of the first bullet point.

5 Q "The currently available information suggests that
6 the demonstrations in Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by
7 protests at the US Embassy in Cairo and evolved into a direct
8 assault against the US diplomatic post in Benghazi and
9 subsequently its annex. There are indications that
10 extremists participated in the violent demonstrations."

11 That's what you're referring to?

12 A Yes, it is.

13 Q And do you recall what previous intel you had
14 received that mirrored that statement?

15 A Finished products provided to me and other very
16 senior U.S. policymakers.

17 Q And do you know how closely those products mirrored
18 that bullet point?

19 A Virtually identical but not verbatim.

20 Q Okay. And do you know, if it was not verbatim,
21 what the differences were between what you read --

22 A I can't tell you precisely, but if you -- I do
23 recall looking at them side-by-side and being comfortable
24 that they were -- well, at the time, I didn't look at them
25 side-by-side, but I knew from having seen intelligence as

1 early as that previous morning, Saturday morning, that this
2 was very consistent with our latest information.

3 Q And you have since looked at them side-by-side?

4 A Yes.

5 Q And you're still comfortable that what was in the
6 intelligence is virtually identical to what's in that bullet
7 point?

8 A Yes.

9 Q And do you recall how recently you looked at them
10 side-by-side?

11 A Very recently.

12 Q And is there anything in this bullet point that may
13 not have been in the intelligence that you reviewed? Are
14 there any words or phrases?

15 A Anything in the bullet point?

16 Q The bullet point, bullet point 1, "The currently
17 available information suggests that the demonstrations in
18 Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by the protests at the
19 US Embassy in Cairo."

20 A I'm sorry, I'm not understanding your question.

21 Q Sure. My question is you said that you looked at
22 them recently side-by-side, correct?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And you were comfortable that what was in the
25 finished intelligence is reflected here in this bullet point.

1 A Yes.

2 Q Okay. And did you recognize any differences
3 between, looking at them side-by-side, what you saw in the
4 intelligence versus what's in the bullet point?

5 A Okay. So let me be precise. What's in this bullet
6 point closely mirrored a similar paragraph in the finished
7 intelligence product that I received at the same time. I'm
8 not saying this is the sum total of what I saw.

9 Q Sure. And you say it closely resembled or closely
10 mirrored. My question is, what are the differences between
11 what you reviewed and what's in here?

12 A I don't recall any substantive differences.

13 Q And you looked at this recently?

14 A Yes.

15 Q Thank you.

16 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

17 Q What did you look at when you were doing your
18 side-by-side comparison? We know the CIA talking points are
19 here. What was on the other side?

20 A Finished intelligence products.

21 Q Okay. Where did you obtain those?

22 A From the intelligence community.

23 Q What did you ask them to compile for you? Because
24 you were attempting, I gather, to reconstruct what you had
25 back at the time. So who did you talk to, and what was your

1 request?

2 Mr. McQuaid. Could we go off the record for 1 second?

3 Mr. Missakian. Let's go off the record.

4 [Discussion off the record.]

5 Mr. Missakian. Let's go off the record. We'll take a
6 break.

7 [Recess.]

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1 [11:00 a.m.]

2 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Let's go back on the record. It
3 is 10:58.

4 Ms. Rice. Okay. Our clock is off then.

5 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Oh, I guess I am. I stand
6 corrected.

7 My name is Susanne Sachsman Grooms. I'm a staff
8 director on the Democratic side of the Select Committee for
9 Benghazi. I'm going to introduce the ranking member, Elijah
10 Cummings, and Ranking Member Schiff from the House Permanent
11 Select Committee on Intelligence, who is with us today.

12 Mr. Cummings. I'm also a member of the Benghazi
13 Committee.

14 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. And also a member, obviously, with
15 the Benghazi Committee.

16 On behalf of all of us, I want to just start by thanking
17 you for appearing today voluntarily. I understand that as
18 the current National Security Advisor, your time is precious,
19 and we will try to treat it in that way. And so we really
20 appreciate your willingness to take the time out of your
21 schedule to come and talk to us.

22 Ms. Rice. Thank you.

23 EXAMINATION

24 BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

25 Q At the time of the attacks, you were the Permanent

1 U.S. Representative to the United Nations. Is that right?

2 A That is correct.

3 Q And so you were asked a lot of questions about, I
4 think in the last round, the military response on the night
5 of and the time you went home. Is it fair to say you had no
6 formal role in the response on the night of the attacks?

7 A That is fair to say.

8 Q And so your role, essentially, in this discussion
9 is really more in what you said on the Sunday talk shows. Is
10 that sort of accurate?

11 A Entirely.

12 Q And just to be abundantly clear, when you were on
13 the Sunday talk shows, were you there in a capacity to talk
14 about your sort of expertise on foreign policy and national
15 security issues, or were you there to talk because you had
16 some specific personal knowledge about the attacks or the
17 security situation in Benghazi?

18 A The former. I was on the shows as a senior
19 administration official and a member of the President's
20 National Security Council and Cabinet, and I was appearing in
21 a public context, as I often did, both in the media and in my
22 day-to-day role as U.N. Ambassador.

23 Q And so you had no personal involvement in the
24 security setup for the Benghazi mission. Is that right?

25 A None whatsoever.

1 Q And I think it would be helpful to put into context
2 the events of the week of September 11th as you were
3 preparing to speak about on the Sunday talk shows. There was
4 the attack in Benghazi, but there was obviously also
5 significant unrest throughout the region that week.

6 Can you explain how the rest of the week unfolded in
7 terms of the unrest and the protests throughout the region?

8 A Well, I think we were all concerned and consumed by
9 the widespread nature of the protest demonstrations and, in
10 some cases, attacks on our diplomatic facilities ⁱⁿ ~~and~~ capitals
11 around the world. It wasn't just in the Middle East. It was
12 in various parts of Africa and South Asia, and we were first
13 and foremost concerned about the safety of our personnel and
14 the integrity of our facilities.

15 Q And what was the general understanding of what was
16 triggering the unrest in all those protests?

17 A Our general understanding is that this was prompted
18 by the video known as the "Innocence of Muslims."

19 Q And was there a continued or an increased concern
20 as Friday approached because particularly if some things
21 really did -- that seemed offensive to Islam, that there
22 would be a risk that protests would take place around the
23 Friday prayers in that region?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And can you explain how that context impacted your

1 preparations for and your expectations for what would happen
2 on the Sunday shows?

3 A Well, we were concerned not only to put the events
4 in their factual context but also not to say or do anything
5 that would inadvertently further flame tensions and cause
6 greater harm to our personnel.

7 Q So part of what you were thinking about when you
8 were talking on the Sunday shows was how you were going to be
9 received publicly by foreigners. Is that --

10 A We wanted to make clear that there was never --
11 there is never any excuse for violence against our
12 facilities, and I think I said that repeatedly, but also to
13 be clear that this was a video that the administration
14 condemned. And we didn't want to be in a situation where
15 people could read public statements by administration
16 officials as further inflaming antipathy toward the United
17 States and inadvertently fueling protests.

18 Q And that would be a message to foreigners in order
19 to keep our American personnel safe?

20 A That was something I think that was in the back of
21 my mind and other people's, but our principal audience,
22 obviously, but clearly for the Sunday shows, was an American
23 audience.

24 Q In the last round, we talked about and we entered
25 into the record exhibit 5, which we commonly refer to as the

1 HPSCI talking points. Are you familiar with those?

2 A Yes.

3 Q Were you at all involved in drafting the HPSCI
4 talking points? So that would be now we're looking at
5 exhibit 5.

6 A Not at all. I had no role in drafting the talking
7 points.

8 Q And I think you explained this in the last round.
9 When they were presented to you, were they described to you
10 as being the intelligence community's best current assessment
11 of the facts that could be shared publicly at the time?

12 A Yes, and fully cleared.

13 Q And cleared to be shared publicly, right?

14 A Yes, cleared in two respects. Cleared to be shared
15 publicly and cleared as among the interagency, having been
16 drafted by the CIA.

17 Q And so, by that, you mean there was an agreement
18 that there was no disagreement with that within the
19 interagency?

20 A That's my understanding.

21 Q And you understood them to be factually accurate,
22 as determined by the intelligence community?

23 A I understood them to be our current best
24 assessment, and I had a high degree of confidence that they
25 reflected our current best assessment because they very

1 closely mirrored the intelligence that I had been provided
2 and that other senior policymakers had been provided.

3 Q And you didn't personally have any reason to
4 question the accuracy of those talking points?

5 A I did not.

6 Q Had anyone else indicated to you that there was
7 anything inaccurate about those talking points?

8 A No.

9 Q And did you understand those talking points to be
10 something that was appropriate to say publicly so that it
11 would not reveal anything that would negatively impact
12 intelligence sources or the ongoing criminal investigation?

13 A Yes, which is why being cleared by the relevant
14 agencies and vetted throughout was important.

15 Q So when you read intelligence, I would assume that
16 the intelligence that you were reading might have had more
17 detail in it than was contained in the HPSCI talking points.

18 A Yes.

19 Q Is that accurate?

20 A Yes.

21 Q And would it have been your understanding that you
22 should share the limited sphere that was in the
23 cleared-for-public-release HPSCI talking points?

24 A Yes. When talking about our understanding of what
25 prompted the attacks, it was my understanding that it would

1 be wise to adhere to these cleared talking points.

2 Q And why was that?

3 A Because this is what the intelligence community
4 believed was accurate, and this is what the -- at the time --
5 and this is what the intelligence community deemed could be
6 said publicly without compromising sources and methods.

7 Q And did you think at the time that it was
8 appropriate to defer to and use the intelligence community's
9 assessment as described in those talking points?

10 A I thought it was entirely appropriate.

11 Q And would it -- I think you were asked in the last
12 round what you did to investigate what happened in Benghazi.

13 Would it have been appropriate for you, in your role, to
14 have tried to reinvestigate or redo the intelligence
15 community's assessment?

16 A It would have been entirely inappropriate for me to
17 do that.

18 Q And why is that?

19 A Because as a senior policymaker with no direct
20 operational responsibility for what transpired in Benghazi,
21 for me to go out and try to second guess the intelligence
22 community or glean individual pieces of information and make
23 my own judgments would have been to substitute my personal
24 judgment for the best assessment of the intelligence
25 community, which, by definition, brings together all of the

1 information that is available, both open source and
2 classified, and from that, the intelligence community's job
3 is to distill their best judgment or assessment. And it
4 would have been highly inappropriate for me to substitute my
5 own for that or anybody else's.

6 Q And when you spoke during the Sunday talk shows,
7 was it your goal and intention to communicate the information
8 that was in those talking points by HPSCI when you were
9 talking about Benghazi, to the best of your ability?

10 A When asked about that -- when asked questions that
11 were relevant to that information, yes, it was my objective.

12 Q Is it fair to say that when asked questions that
13 were relevant to that information, you did try your best to
14 stick to the language and the meaning of the HPSCI talking
15 points as closely as possible?

16 A I did indeed.

17 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. I think, at this point, what I'd
18 like to do is go through some of those, so I'm going to enter
19 into the record exhibit 6, which is a compilation of the
20 Sunday talk shows.

21 [Rice Exhibit No. 6
22 was marked for identification.]

23 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. So exhibit 6 is, for the record,
24 is an email chain, email from Jonathan Lalley, dated
25 Wednesday, September 19th, 2012, at 4:31 p.m. It's document

1 No. C5394585. If you'll turn to the second page, it appears
2 to be a compilation of the transcripts from the Sunday shows.
3 So the second page reads: Sunday Shows, Ambassador Rice,
4 September 16th, 2012. And it has an index to the different
5 Sunday shows. Does that look right?

6 Ms. Rice. Yes.

7 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. I want to walk you through some of
8 the specific statements that you made on the programs because
9 they appear to follow a pattern. Generally speaking, you
10 start by talking about the FBI investigation. Then you give
11 the current best assessment from the HPSCI talking points.
12 And then you finish with another caveat that the
13 investigation will give the final answer. So let's turn
14 first to ABC's "This Week," so page 3.

15 And you stated, and I quote: "Well, Jake, first of all,
16 it's important to know that there's an FBI investigation that
17 has begun and will take some time to be completed. That will
18 tell us with certainty what transpired."

19 Mr. McQuaid. I just -- Ambassador Rice was preparing
20 the mark -- what I think you guys are going to mark as the
21 exhibit, so I'm giving her my copy, and then I will just
22 follow along.

23 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. No problem.

24 Ms. Rice. I was looking to where my part started, so --
25 I got it.

1 BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

2 Q I'm sorry. It's at page 3 on the document, so the
3 document has page numbers at the top.

4 A Yeah, and there's -- my piece begins -- it's not
5 separated as a paragraph. That's what I was --

6 Q Sorry.

7 A Confused about.

8 Q Why did you -- have you found the part? Sorry.

9 A Yes, I did.

10 Q Okay. Why did you start the answer with a caveat
11 or a warning that the investigation is ongoing and so any
12 information you shared was subject to change?

13 A Because I was very mindful that any such
14 situations, particularly tragic events of this sort, that we
15 typically learn more as time unfolds. We learn from our
16 investigation, and I was mindful that what I was able to
17 provide was purely the best assessment that we had at the
18 time, and I wanted to convey that this could well change.

19 Q And was that important to you?

20 A Of course.

21 Q You go on to say in that next full paragraph,
22 quote: "But our current best assessment, based on the
23 information that we have at present, is that, in fact, what
24 this began as, it was a spontaneous -- not a premeditated --
25 response to what had transpired in Cairo."

1 Again, here you seem to be very deliberately clarifying
2 that this was the U.S. Government's current best assessment
3 at the time. Is that right?

4 A That is correct.

5 Q And as you go on throughout that sentence, when you
6 say "in fact," is that intended to negate the concept that
7 this is just the current best assessment and that it was
8 subject to change?

9 A It was not intended to negate that.

10 Q Can you now take this exhibit, which is exhibit 6,
11 and put next to it exhibit 5, which is the HPSCI talking
12 points?

13 A Yeah.

14 Q Can you compare that sentence I just read from your
15 statement to the first line of the HPSCI talking points? Are
16 they consistent?

17 A I believe they're quite consistent.

18 Q Do they both use the word "spontaneous"?

19 A Yes.

20 Q And do they both reference that they were related
21 to the events in Cairo?

22 A Yes.

23 Q To the extent that you used slightly different
24 words -- for example, you called it "a response" instead of
25 saying it was "inspired by" in this particular instance, and

1 in other instances, you also used slightly different
2 wordings -- did you view your language as being synonymous
3 and consistent with the HPSCI talking points?

4 A That was my intent, and that was my sole -- my sole
5 effort was to be consistent with the talking points.

6 Q In the next sentence, in exhibit 6, you go on to
7 say, quote: "In Cairo, as you know, a few hours earlier,
8 there was a violent protest that was undertaken in reaction
9 to this very offensive video that was disseminated."

10 And we had talked about this previously, but was that a
11 commonly known fact at the time that the Cairo protests were
12 a reaction to the video?

13 A Yes.

14 Q And further down, you again say, quote: "We'll
15 wait to see exactly what the investigation finally confirms,
16 but that's the best information we have at present," end
17 quote.

18 A Yes.

19 Q Was that again an attempt to bookend and reinforce
20 your statement that the facts were still developing and yet
21 another caveat or warning that the information was subject to
22 change?

23 A That is exactly what it was.

24 Q Based on these statements, did you in any way mean
25 to express that what you were sharing with the American

1 people was the definitive and final accounting of what
2 happened in Benghazi?

3 A No. On the contrary, I was trying to convey that
4 this was the best information as of the day I was speaking,
5 that it was likely to change, and that we would learn more as
6 the investigation unfolded.

7 Q Let's turn to CBS "Face the Nation." It's page 8
8 at the top. We're going to do this again.

9 So in the sort of first Rice statement here, so in
10 response to Bob Schieffer's first press links.

11 A "Well, Bob."

12 Q You start, quote: "Well, Bob, let me tell you what
13 we understand to be the assessment at present. First of all,
14 very importantly, as you discussed with the President, there
15 is an investigation that the United States Government will
16 launch, led by the FBI that has begun."

17 Is this another instance of you starting, once again,
18 with the FBI investigation?

19 A This is another instance of my underscoring that,
20 indeed, there will be an FBI investigation and that all I'm
21 able to convey at present is our best assessment.

22 Q He interrupts and says, "But they are not there
23 yet," and you go on to say, after a little bit, quote: So
24 we'll want to use the results of that investigation to draw
25 any definitive conclusions.

1 That investigation that you're referring to there, the
2 word "that" is referring to the FBI investigation. Is that
3 right?

4 A That is correct.

5 Q And, again, you seem to be stating here that,
6 again, that the ongoing FBI investigation made it impossible
7 at the time to draw any definitive or final conclusions about
8 what had occurred. Is that correct?

9 A That is precisely correct.

10 Q You then continue, quote: "But based on the best
11 information we have to date, what our assessment is as of the
12 present is in fact what -- it began spontaneously in Benghazi
13 as a reaction to what had transpired some hours earlier in
14 Cairo, where, of course, as you know, there was a violent
15 protest outside of our Embassy sparked by this hateful
16 video."

17 A Again, does your language here, comparing the fact of
18 the HPSCI talking points in exhibit 5, basically track that
19 first sentence in the HPSCI talking points?

20 A I believe it does.

21 Q And was that your intention at the time, to track
22 the HPSCI talking points?

23 A Yes, indeed, that was my intention.

24 Q And here, again, you're using the word
25 "spontaneously" in referencing the Cairo events as the

1 inspiration or the cause of the reaction. Is that right?

2 A I'm sorry. Can you --

3 Q I'm sorry. Here, again, you're referencing the
4 word "spontaneous," which is also in the HPSCI talking
5 points?

6 A That's correct.

7 Q And you're explaining that the events in Benghazi
8 began spontaneously as a reaction to what had transpired some
9 hours earlier in Cairo, and that matches what it says in the
10 HPSCI talking points. Is that accurate?

11 A That is accurate.

12 Q And the discussion of the video here, when you
13 said, "the events earlier in Cairo, where, of course, as you
14 know, there was a violent protest outside of our Embassy
15 sparked by this hateful video," was that the assessment that
16 the -- was that your assessment at the time that what had
17 happened in Cairo was a response to the video?

18 A Yes.

19 Q And do you have any reason to think that that's not
20 accurate today? Has anything changed your understanding of
21 what happened in Cairo that the events in Cairo were a
22 reaction to the video?

23 Mr. McQuaid. Can we go off the record for a second?

24 [Discussion off the record.]

25 Mr. McQuaid. Back on the record.

1 BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

2 Q Did you -- you understood that the Cairo events
3 were in response to the video. Is that accurate?

4 A That is what I understood at the time I was on the
5 Sunday shows.

6 Q And, again, you said in this quote that it was the,
7 quote, "best information we have to date," leaving open room
8 for a change later based on the FBI investigation. Is that
9 accurate?

10 A Yes, indeed.

11 Q Let's turn to page 12, which is your appearance on
12 NBC's "Meet the Press." We'll go to the first full
13 paragraph.

14 It starts, quote: "Well, let us -- let me tell you the
15 best information we have at present. First of all, there's
16 an FBI investigation, which is ongoing, and we look to that
17 investigation to give us the definitive word as to what
18 transpired," end quote.

19 A Yes.

20 Q Again, you're starting your answer here with the
21 FBI investigation and a warning that the information that you
22 had at the time was not definitive. Is that right?

23 A That is correct.

24 Q And then you stated, quote: "But putting together
25 the best information that we have available to us today, our

1 current assessment is that what happened in Benghazi was, in
2 fact, initially a spontaneous reaction to what had just
3 transpired hours before in Cairo, almost a copycat of the
4 demonstrations against our facility in Cairo, which were
5 prompted, of course, by the video."

6 Does that statement again emphasize that you were
7 working off of the best information to date?

8 A Yes.

9 Q And does it again reference the spontaneous
10 language from the HPSCI talking points?

11 A Yes, it does.

12 Q And it, again, references that the events in
13 Benghazi were a spontaneous reaction to what had occurred in
14 Cairo, which is the same as in the HPSCI talking points?

15 A Yes.

16 Q You continue to call these, quote, opportunist
17 extremist elements came to the consulate as this was
18 unfolding.

19 Does that match the HPSCI talking point that, quote,
20 "there are indications that extremists participated in the
21 violent demonstration," end quote?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And we've been told by many individuals in the
24 national security field and at the CIA that the term
25 "extremist" and "terrorist" are often used interchangeably.

1 Is that also your understanding?

2 A They are often used interchangeably, and indeed, in
3 the materials prepared and in the talking points, that's the
4 term that's used.

5 Q So the HPSCI talking points that you were given
6 used the word "extremist"?

7 A Yes.

8 Q And did you use the word "extremist" because that
9 was the language in the HPSCI talking points?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Is it fair to conclude that you would have assented
12 to use whatever language had been cleared for release by the
13 intelligence community?

14 A Yes.

15 Q So if the cleared language in the HPSCI points had
16 said "terrorist," is it fair to conclude that you would have
17 used the word "terrorist"?

18 A Yes, of course.

19 Q And if the HPSCI talking points had said "Ansar
20 al-Sharia" or "Al Qaeda affiliates," would you have used that
21 cleared language?

22 A Yes.

23 Q You later go on to say, quote: "Obviously, that --
24 that's our best judgment now. We'll await the results of the
25 investigation, and the President has been very clear. We'll

1 work with the Libyan authorities to bring those responsible
2 to justice," end quote.

3 Again, by suggesting the FBI investigation would provide
4 the definitive word as to what transpired, did you mean to,
5 once again, bookend your statements with warnings and caveats
6 that the assessment was subject to change?

7 A That's exactly what I was trying to do.

8 Q Let's go to the last one we'll do, which is "Fox
9 News Sunday." It's on page 23 at the top.

10 So at the top of page 23, it starts with you, quote:
11 "Well, first of all, Chris, we are obviously investigating
12 this very closely. The FBI has a lead in the investigation."

13 Is that, once again, you starting the answer by
14 referencing the ongoing FBI investigation that would provide
15 the definitive answers?

16 A Yes.

17 Q You went on to say, quote, "The information, the
18 best" -- I'm sorry -- "The information, the best information
19 and the best assessment we have today is that in fact this
20 was not a preplanned, premeditated attack, that what happened
21 initially was that it was a spontaneous reaction to what had
22 just transpired in Cairo as a consequence of the video."

23 Was this you again attempting to repeat the HPSCI
24 talking points?

25 A It was me trying to repeat the HPSCI talking

1 points.

2 Q And so this was, once again, you trying to repeat
3 your understanding of the intelligence community's best
4 assessment at the time?

5 A Yes, indeed. That's exactly what I was trying to
6 do.

7 Q Then you stated, quote: "Obviously, we will wait
8 for the results of the investigation, and we don't want to
9 jump to conclusions before then, but I do think it's
10 important for the American people to know our" current best
11 -- or, I'm sorry -- "our best current assessment," end quote.

12 Was this, once again, you ending the statement with a
13 caveat or warning that the information you had was
14 preliminary and subject to change?

15 A Yes. What I tried to do in each appearance -- and
16 I think you've just reminded us that I did do in each
17 appearance -- was to start with a caveat and end with a
18 caveat that indeed this information was only what we knew as
19 of the day, and it was subject to change, and indeed to
20 suggest that it was likely to change.

21 Mr. Schiff. Ambassador, thank you for your time today.
22 I should begin by just observing that the -- this all came
23 about when the ranking member of the Intelligence Committee
24 asked for unclassified talking points, thus demonstrating
25 that nothing good ever comes from the ranking member of the

1 Intelligence Committee.

2 Would you agree with that, Mr. Chairman?

3 Chairman Gowdy. Not anymore, I don't.

4 Mr. Schiff. I wanted to just walk you through some of
5 the comments people made in the wake of criticism of the
6 Sunday show appearances and the talking points, and I
7 apologize if much of this is redundant.

8 Frankly, you have already been interviewed on this
9 subject many times, and I'm not sure how much new ground
10 there is to cover, but in the interest of having a complete
11 record, let me ask you about some of these statements and get
12 your reaction to them.

13 After you were criticized for statements made during the
14 talk shows, bipartisan reports and nonpartisan officials have
15 repeatedly confirmed that the information you provided was
16 consistent with the intelligence community's current
17 assessment about what had happened in Benghazi on the night
18 of the attacks.

19 The House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
20 released our bipartisan report in November of 2014 and found
21 that, quote: The CIA only changed its initial assessment
22 about a protest on September 24, 2012, when closed-captioned
23 television footage became available on September 18, 2012 --
24 that would have been 2 days after your appearance on the talk
25 shows -- and after the FBI began publishing its interviews

1 with U.S. officials on the ground on September 22nd, 2012.

2 So as of the date that you spoke on the Sunday talk
3 shows, September 16th, the Intelligence Committee's
4 assessment remained that there had been a protest in
5 Benghazi. Is that your understanding?

6 Ms. Rice. Yes, that is correct.

7 Mr. Schiff. And you relied on that assessment?

8 Ms. Rice. I did indeed.

9 Mr. Schiff. Did you have any reason to doubt that
10 assessment by the intelligence community that had been shared
11 in talking points with the Congress?

12 Ms. Rice. I had no reason to doubt that it was our
13 current best assessment. I was aware that in these types of
14 circumstances, as we gain more information, our understanding
15 could change, which is why I tried to reinforce that point as
16 best I could on the Sunday shows. But I also understood it
17 to be the intelligence community's current best assessment,
18 as I stated, because it mirrored very closely the finished
19 intelligence products that I had received.

20 Mr. Schiff. And I'm glad that you had an opportunity
21 today to go through in great detail and in all the various
22 iterations of the Sunday talk shows just how many caveats you
23 gave in each interview. You began with a caveat and you
24 ended with a caveat, and I mention that because there have
25 been people who have said both openly in the press by way of

1 criticism as well as privately before this committee that you
2 should have caveated what you said. And I can only conclude
3 that they're not familiar with what you actually said on the
4 shows because I'm not sure how you could caveat it more than
5 you have without spending your entire time with caveats. So
6 I'm glad that we had a chance to go into that.

7 Is it also your understanding that the intelligence
8 community did not revise its assessment until 8 days after
9 your appearance on the Sunday talk shows?

10 Ms. Rice. That is my understanding.

11 Mr. Schiff. On April 18th, 2013, Director of National
12 Intelligence James Clapper testified before the Senate Armed
13 Services Committee and, referring to you, said, quote: "I
14 thought it was unfair because the hit she took, I didn't
15 think it was appropriate. She was going on what we had given
16 her, and that was our collective best judgment at the time as
17 to what should have been said."

18 The Director of National Intelligence would have had
19 access to all of the most up-to-date intelligence assessments
20 about the Benghazi attacks. Is that right?

21 Ms. Rice. That is correct.

22 Mr. Schiff. And he told Congress that you were relying
23 on what the intelligence community had given you, their
24 collective best judgment at the time as to what should have
25 been said, and that is what you were relying on?

1 Ms. Rice. That is what I was relying on.

2 Mr. Schiff. Director Clapper thought that you were not
3 treated fairly in attacks against you for repeating the
4 intelligence community's assessment, the same assessment
5 that, frankly, had been provided to us in Congress.

6 Did you ever anticipate that kind of negative reaction
7 to what the Intelligence Committee gave you?

8 Ms. Rice. No, certainly not in the moment.

9 Mr. Schiff. Have you forgiven Ben Rhodes for asking you
10 to go on the show?

11 Ms. Rice. I don't blame Ben.

12 Mr. Schiff. We also have an email from an official at
13 the Director of National Intelligence Office shortly after
14 the attacks, on September 27th, where he agreed with the
15 sentiment of his boss, Director Clapper, stating: As I read
16 the laydown, her comments were consistent with our intel
17 assessment at that time.

18 In fact, had you not used the HPSCI talking points, had
19 you given statements that were inconsistent with the best
20 estimates of the intelligence community at the time, that
21 would have opened you up to legitimate criticism. Would it
22 not?

23 Ms. Rice. I would agree. Had I made my -- provided my
24 personal judgment or that of anybody else's and deviated from
25 what was the intelligence community's current best

1 assessment, I would have been mistaken, and I would agree,
2 subject to legitimate criticism.

3 Mr. McQuaid. Mr. Schiff, can I just go off the record
4 for one second?

5 [Discussion off the record.]

6 Mr. Schiff. And departing from those talking points
7 would have opened you up to potentially legitimate criticism
8 both because the talking points were an accurate reflection
9 of the other intelligence you were provided and because what
10 the Intelligence Committee was -- community was providing you
11 was what you could say without compromising sources and
12 methods or the FBI investigation.

13 Ms. Rice. That is correct.

14 Mr. Schiff. And the intelligence community would have
15 been in the best position to be able to provide guidance as
16 to what could be said without the compromise of intelligence
17 sources.

18 Ms. Rice. Yes.

19 Mr. Schiff. In addition to the intelligence community,
20 the State Department officials also agreed that your
21 statements on the Sunday talk shows reflected the best
22 available intelligence at the time. The day after the Sunday
23 talk shows, Department spokesman, Victoria Nuland said during
24 a press -- daily press briefing, quote: Ambassador Rice and
25 her comments on every network over the weekend was very

1 clear, very precise about what our initial assessment of what
2 happened is, and this was not just her assessment. It was
3 also an assessment that you heard in comments coming from the
4 intelligence community and comments coming from the White
5 House.

6 I don't know if you recall her saying that.

7 Ms. Rice. I don't recall it, but it would be consistent
8 with what was the case at the time.

9 Mr. Schiff. A month later, on October 10, 2012, State
10 Department Under Secretary for Management Patrick Kennedy
11 testified before the House Committee on Oversight and
12 Government Reform, saying, quote: "If any administration
13 official, including any career official, were on television
14 on Sunday, September 16th, they would have said what
15 Ambassador Rice said. The information she had at that point
16 from the intelligence community is the same that I had at
17 that point."

18 Do you have any reason to doubt the veracity of either
19 Ms. Nuland or Under Secretary Kennedy's statements?

20 Ms. Rice. No.

21 Mr. Schiff. I've read these statements into the record
22 because the question of why you said what you said on the
23 Sunday talk shows has been answered so many times by so many
24 individuals, who all agree you were the repeating the
25 Intelligence Committee's best available assessment at the

1 time. Not only have all these individuals validated what you
2 said here today, but you have said it before as well.

3 And I want to also point out for those who might not
4 realize that you have already publicly addressed these
5 issues, so let me give a few examples.

6 On November 27, 2012, you put out a statement explaining
7 these facts, and said, quote: "The talking points provided
8 by the intelligence community and the initial assessment upon
9 which they were based were incorrect in the key respect:
10 there was no protest or demonstration in Benghazi. While we
11 certainly wish that we had had perfect information just days
12 after the terrorist attack, as is often the case, the
13 intelligence assessment has evolved. We stressed that
14 neither I nor anyone else in the administration intended to
15 mislead the American people at any stage in this process.
16 The administration updated Congress and the American people
17 as our assessments evolved."

18 That was your view in November of 2012, and that remains
19 your view today. Does it not?

20 Ms. Rice. Yes.

21 Mr. Schiff. Again, on February 23, 2014, ^{more than} ~~within~~ a year
22 after the Benghazi attacks, you appeared on NBC's "Meet the
23 Press" and explained: "Once again, what I said to you that
24 morning and what I did every day since was to share the best
25 information that we had at the time. The information I

1 provided, which I explained to you, is what we had had at the
2 moment. It could change. I commented this was based on what
3 we knew on that morning, was provided to me and my colleagues
4 and indeed to Congress by the intelligence community. And
5 that's been well validated in many different ways since. And
6 that information turned out, in some respects, not to be 100
7 percent correct, but the notion that somehow I or anybody
8 else in the administration misled the American people is
9 patently false, and I think that that's been amply
10 demonstrated."

11 And that's exactly what you have said again here today.
12 I'm not sure what more this committee can ask of you. I'm
13 not sure what more I can ask of you, so I'd just like to
14 conclude my portion by saying that I'm in complete agreement
15 with Director Clapper. I think the attacks on you have been
16 patently unfair. I greatly appreciate the service that you
17 have provided the country and the sacrifices you made
18 personally familywise, the long hours, and to go on
19 television at a time when the American people are hungry for
20 information about what had happened in the loss of one of one
21 of our ambassadors and other Americans to give them the best
22 information we had. And to be attacked for it I think is a
23 terrible abuse of a tremendous public servant, and I regret
24 this ever happened, and I appreciate your service to the
25 country very much.

1 Ms. Rice. Thank you very much, sir.

2 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Representative Duckworth has a
3 couple of questions, and then we'll round out with the
4 ranking member.

5 Ms. Duckworth. Thank you again for being here,
6 Ambassador Rice. I appreciate your time, and I know these
7 are many hours that you have provided testimony over and over
8 again.

9 I wanted to cover again how you felt your role -- what
10 your role was going on the talk shows. Did you see your role
11 going on the talk shows as providing your personal assessment
12 of the situation, or was it to provide the best information
13 available to the American public at the time?

14 Ms. Rice. No, ma'am. It was not my role to provide my
15 own personal assessment. It was my role to convey as
16 faithfully as I could the intelligence community's current
17 best assessment. It was also my role to underscore that this
18 was our best information in the moment and that it was likely
19 to change and that we had an FBI investigation that would
20 give us the whole picture.

21 So I saw my job as simply and clearly to try to convey
22 as faithfully as I could the information we had at the time.

23 Ms. Duckworth. Is that why you adhered so closely to
24 the HPSCI talking points?

25 Ms. Rice. That's why I tried very hard to adhere

1 closely to the HPSCI talking points.

2 Ms. Duckworth. In other dynamic situations, in addition
3 to Benghazi, you've been in service at the highest level for
4 a long time. I would like to discuss with you the changing
5 nature of information gathering, especially in a dynamic
6 situation as this.

7 Have you seen in other situations where information
8 provided may change, information provided to you may change
9 as new information or new evidence comes to light?

10 Ms. Rice. Almost always changes.

11 Ms. Duckworth. Almost always changes. So the talking
12 points that you may have received were just estimates,
13 intelligence report from the intelligence community to you --
14 changes from which the initial reports would be, and that has
15 happened in other situations.

16 Mr. McQuaid. Go off the record for one second.

17 [Discussion off the record.]

18 Ms. Duckworth. Back on the record. I just wanted to
19 underscore that in receiving the HPSCI talking points, she
20 did not expect those to be permanent, that was definitive,
21 that was the situation, and that it would be something that
22 would not be unusual to receive updated later on, which is
23 why you said over and over again: This is what we know at
24 the time, and there's an investigation, and it may change.

25 Ms. Rice. I had sufficient experience to know that

1 often in dynamic situations of the sort that we were dealing
2 with in Benghazi, that our understanding would evolve over
3 time as we did an investigation, as we had the ^{opportunity} ~~opportunities~~
4 to learn from those who were there, and so I had no doubt
5 that it was important to characterize this as the best ^{information} we had
6 at the time, not necessarily the final word.

7 Ms. Duckworth. And at any time did you feel that you
8 should veer from the HPSCI talking points as you were on the
9 talking shows? You went on multiple talking shows. Did you
10 feel there was any need to deviate from them?

11 Ms. Rice. To the contrary. I thought it was important
12 to adhere as closely as I could to the HPSCI talking points.

13 Ms. Duckworth. Why is that?

14 Ms. Rice. Because this reflected ~~to~~ the intelligence
15 community's best assessment as of the 16th of September.
16 They ^{had} ~~have~~ been carefully vetted and cleared and cleared, in
17 particular, such that they could be unclassified and would
18 not reveal sources and methods.

19 Ms. Duckworth. Okay. Thank you. I appreciate you
20 being here. That's all I have. I just wanted to make sure
21 that we understood what you felt your role was going on those
22 talk shows.

23 Ms. Rice. Thank you.

24 Ms. Duckworth. And I thank you for your service.

25 Ms. Rice. Thank you.

1 Mr. Cummings. Off the record.

2 [Discussion off the record.]

3 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Let's go off the record.

4 Ms. Sawyer. Let me just ask just one question.

5 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Oh, okay, we can go back on the
6 record.

7 BY MS. SAWYER:

8 Q Just a quick clarifying question, Ambassador Rice.
9 When you were discussing with Representative Duckworth, you
10 said that it was important when you were talking to adhere to
11 the HPSCI talking points. I presume that was when you were
12 answering questions on those shows directly about Benghazi,
13 that you were adhering to the HPSCI talking points.

14 A Yes, and relevant questions about Benghazi that
15 related to the content of the talking points.

16 Q Because you were certainly asked on those shows
17 other questions, including questions about Iran.

18 A I was asked many other questions. All of the
19 interviews were wide ranging. If I'm not mistaken, I think
20 ~~on~~ on CNN, I wasn't^{even} asked about Benghazi.

21 Q And in addition to being asked about Benghazi, you
22 were also asked more broadly on those shows about the
23 regional unrest.

24 A That indeed was where many of the conversations
25 began.

1 Q And so with regard to the regional unrest that was
2 broader than Benghazi, you were talking about the dynamic
3 throughout the region and not just about Benghazi.

4 A Yes, with frequency.

5 Q And the HPSCI talking points that we've been
6 discussing in great length did not talk about that broader
7 regional unrest.

8 A That's correct. Simply on Benghazi.

9 Ms. Sawyer. Thank you.

10 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Okay. Let's go off the record.

11 [Discussion off the record.]

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1 [11:45 a.m.]

2 Mr. Missakian. Let's go back on the record.

3 Just a housekeeping item. With respect to the document
4 issue we discussed at the end of the last break, my
5 understanding is that that document will be identified by the
6 Ambassador's counsel or by Mr. McQuaid at some future time.

7 Mr. McQuaid. The --

8 Mr. Missakian. This is specifically the document.
9 We've asked her -- she testified that she did a side-by-side
10 comparison between the HPSCI talking points and the
11 intelligence report. So my understanding is either the White
12 House or Ambassador Rice's personal counsel will identify
13 that report to us in writing.

14 Mr. McQuaid. So can we just go off the record for a
15 second? Are we on? I'm not sure if we're on.

16 Mr. Missakian. We're on the record.

17 Mr. McQuaid. Could we just go off the record for a
18 moment?

19 Mr. Missakian. Okay. Let's go off the record.

20 [Discussion off the record.]

21 Mr. Missakian. Let's go back on the record.

22 Mr. McQuaid. We will work with the committee staff to
23 identify the intelligence she referred to in the answer in
24 response to your question.

25 Mr. Missakian. Thank you.

1 I'm going to turn it over to Mr. Jordan now.

2 Mr. Jordan. Thank you.

3 Ambassador, other than the Friday morning meeting with
4 Secretary Clinton, did you have any other conversations or
5 meetings with the Secretary between September 11th and when
6 you were on the shows, Sunday the 16th?

7 Ms. Rice. I don't recall having any other meetings. I
8 may have had informal conversations in passing.

9 Mr. Jordan. Informal conversations in passing. And
10 that would have been in person while at the State Department,
11 or those could have been phone calls?

12 Ms. Rice. I don't believe there were any phone calls,
13 so it would have been in person. We were, for example,
14 together at Andrews Air Force Base.

15 Mr. Jordan. Right.

16 Ms. Rice. I don't recall being together any other time
17 in that window, but I can't exclude that possibility.

18 Mr. Jordan. In your Friday morning meeting with
19 Secretary Clinton, did you discuss the video during that
20 meeting?

21 Ms. Rice. I don't recall what we discussed in that
22 meeting, but I doubt it.

23 Mr. Jordan. You doubt it. In your last hour, you
24 talked about, in the context of the video, we want to make
25 clear that there's never an excuse for violence. And I think

1 you even said something to that effect on some of the shows.
2 I'm just curious if that was brought -- it was a big topic of
3 conversation that week. You don't recall if that came up?

4 Ms. Rice. I don't recall that it came up. But
5 understand that my weekly meeting with Secretary Clinton was
6 typically about the substance of issues we were working on
7 that were overlapping, so the work that I was doing at the
8 U.N., and making sure that we were sharing information that
9 was relevant to the work I did at the U.N.

10 Mr. Jordan. Do you recall if you talked about Benghazi,
11 about the death of the Ambassador in the meeting with
12 Secretary Clinton on that Friday morning?

13 Ms. Rice. I don't recall the substance of that meeting.
14 And, indeed, as I said, until recently I didn't recall having
15 that meeting.

16 Mr. Jordan. Is it likely that that would have come up?
17 I mean, this is --

18 Ms. Rice. I can't imagine that we did not share our --

19 Mr. Jordan. Okay.

20 Ms. Rice. -- grief and remorse about what happened to
21 our people in Benghazi.

22 Mr. Jordan. My understanding is you got two phone calls
23 from Ben Rhodes relative to your appearance on the Sunday
24 shows. When did you receive the first phone call?

25 Ms. Rice. As I said, it was as I was driving to Andrews

1 Air Force Base.

2 Mr. Jordan. And that would have been before the meeting
3 with Secretary Clinton or after the meeting?

4 Ms. Rice. After.

5 Mr. Jordan. Directly after the meeting?

6 Ms. Rice. No. The meeting with Secretary Clinton was
7 in the morning. This would have been late afternoon.

8 Mr. Jordan. Okay.

9 Can you again, just real quick, walk me through the
10 timeline? Thursday night, the 13th, you traveled from New
11 York back to Washington. Is that accurate?

12 Ms. Rice. I said I don't recall for sure whether I came
13 back Thursday or Friday morning.

14 Mr. Jordan. Okay. Friday morning, you had a meeting
15 with the Secretary, Friday the 14th?

16 Ms. Rice. Yes.

17 Mr. Jordan. And what time was that meeting?

18 Ms. Rice. I don't recall exactly, but it was usually
19 around 10, 10:30.

20 Mr. Jordan. Sometime after that meeting but before the
21 afternoon appearance at Andrews, you got your first phone
22 call from Ben Rhodes suggesting that you may -- they may want
23 you to go on the Sunday shows?

24 Ms. Rice. It was as I was driving to Andrews, so it
25 was --

1 Mr. Jordan. As you were driving.

2 Ms. Rice. -- in close proximity to getting to Andrews.

3 Mr. Jordan. Okay.

4 And then there's the event at Andrews. And then Friday
5 night, you get a subsequent call, the second call, from Ben
6 Rhodes saying we would like for you to actually go on those
7 shows.

8 Ms. Rice. That's correct.

9 Mr. Jordan. All right.

10 You then go to Columbus that night or the next day?

11 Ms. Rice. The next morning.

12 Mr. Jordan. The next morning. And it's there that you
13 did the 4 o'clock prep call.

14 Ms. Rice. Yes.

15 Mr. Jordan. Okay. And then traveled back to Washington
16 sometime Saturday or Sunday morning.

17 Ms. Rice. Saturday evening.

18 Mr. Jordan. Saturday evening. Okay.

19 Ms. Rice. After the phone call.

20 Mr. Jordan. Okay.

21 I'm good.

22 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

23 Q Ambassador Rice, we have a few questions about some
24 of your specific statements during the talk shows, as well.
25 But one thing I want to clear up, at the time you went on the

1 talk shows, did you know that a link between the extremists
2 in Benghazi had been drawn to either Al Qaeda or groups
3 sympathetic to Al Qaeda? Were you aware of that fact?

4 A What do you mean by "a link"?

5 Q Well, that some of the participants in the Benghazi
6 attacks were either linked directly to Al Qaeda or were
7 members of groups that were sympathetic to or affiliated with
8 Al Qaeda?

9 A I think we didn't know -- my recollection is that
10 we didn't know precisely who was responsible, but we had seen
11 some claims, as well as some indications, that Ansar
12 al-Sharia may have been involved.

13 Q Were you aware that the CIA or the intelligence
14 community had removed references to Al Qaeda in the talking
15 points?

16 A No. I had nothing to do with and no knowledge of
17 the preparation of those talking points.

18 Q So when you testified earlier that the talking
19 points had been cleared so as not to disclose sources and
20 methods, were you aware of any specific change that had been
21 made to do that?

22 A I had no knowledge of how the talking points were
23 cleared or prepared.

24 Q Okay. So, at the time, you had no idea whether or
25 not they had been cleared to protect sources and methods.

1 A No, no. That's not what I said. I believed -- I
2 understood they had been cleared, including to protect
3 sources and methods. But I had no knowledge of what was
4 taken -- what was put in or taken out or how they were edited
5 at the time.

6 Q Okay. How did you get that understanding, that
7 they had been edited in a way to protect sources and methods?

8 A Because they were unclassified talking points
9 cleared by the intelligence community. So part of the role
10 of the intelligence community in that instance, as in any
11 other, would be to ensure that the material was unclassified
12 and could be shared publicly.

13 Q So is it fair to say that you didn't -- nobody told
14 you that that had occurred, that you just assumed it based on
15 the fact that you knew the intelligence community had
16 reviewed the talking points?

17 A I think I was told that these were unclassified,
18 cleared talking points that were prepared by the intelligence
19 community.

20 Q I understand that, but did anybody tell you, in
21 addition to that, that material had been removed to protect
22 sources and methods?

23 A I don't -- nobody said something had been removed
24 or added. What I understood was that the final product was
25 unclassified and cleared by the intelligence community for

1 public dissemination.

2 Q Very good. Thank you.

3 Let's talk about some of the specific statements. We
4 can go back to exhibit 6 that the minority marked in the last
5 hour, if you have that in front of you.

6 A I do.

7 Q Let's begin with your comments on ABC "This Week."
8 Mr. Sauber. Let's get the page number.

9 Mr. Missakian. Page 3.

10 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

11 Q Now, I understood your testimony when the minority
12 attorneys were asking you questions, and I'd like to focus on
13 the paragraph that begins, "But our current best assessment."
14 Do you see that?

15 A I do.

16 Q And you do use the term "in fact." Do you agree
17 with me that somebody listening to that statement and hearing
18 those words, "in fact," would take that as a demonstrative,
19 proven fact?

20 A Not if they heard the caveats that I was careful to
21 employ at the beginning and the end.

22 Q So, in that particular sentence, because the caveat
23 was so close to the declared statement, you would expect that
24 they would put the two together.

25 A I would expect that, having said at the outset and

1 at the conclusion that this was current best information and
2 that there was an FBI investigation, that it would be
3 incorrect to say that I was providing a final, definitive
4 assessment.

5 Q And what did you know at the time about the FBI
6 investigation?

7 A That it was going to occur.

8 Q That it had not started yet?

9 A Right. It had just begun.

10 Q Did somebody tell you the FBI was going to begin an
11 investigation, or did you read about it in the paper? How
12 did you come to learn that? It's not in the talking points.

13 A Whenever we lose American lives in a terrorist
14 attack overseas, there is an FBI investigation. I knew from
15 experience, but I also knew, based on the fact that we had
16 announced that there was going to be an FBI investigation,
17 that, indeed, there was going to be an FBI investigation.

18 Q When was that --

19 Chairman Gowdy. Craig, let's try it a different way.

20 Ambassador Rice, was there anybody from law enforcement
21 on the 4 o'clock phone call that you had with Ben Rhodes?

22 Ms. Rice. Not that I recall.

23 Chairman Gowdy. Did anyone from the Bureau or any other
24 law enforcement agency provide you a briefing before you went
25 on the Fox Sunday morning talk shows?

1 Ms. Rice. No.

2 Chairman Gowdy. On one of the occasions, you said --
3 this is to Chris Wallace -- "The FBI has a lead in this
4 investigation." How would you have learned that if you had
5 not talked to the FBI?

6 Ms. Rice. Because I was aware, as a senior policymaker,
7 that the FBI has a lead role in conducting investigations in
8 this circumstance and others like it.

9 Chairman Gowdy. But there's a tremendous difference
10 between the FBI has "the lead" and the FBI has "a lead." "A
11 lead" is a law enforcement term that we have a suspect, we
12 have a lead.

13 Ms. Rice. No, no, no. Excuse me. That was not what I
14 was trying to say. I was saying they had the lead, as in the
15 leadership role, not a lead on a suspect in the
16 investigation.

17 Chairman Gowdy. All right. So at least with respect to
18 that transcript, you intended the article "the" instead of
19 the article "a" to modify the lead. You were not suggesting
20 that they had a lead but that they were taking the lead in
21 the investigation.

22 Ms. Rice. That's what I meant.

23 Chairman Gowdy. Okay. All right.

24 Well, then, if we could go to the interview with Bob
25 Schieffer, you said, "The FBI" --

1 Mr. McQuaid. What's the page, Congressman?

2 Mr. Missakian. Page 8.

3 Chairman Gowdy. If you go back when the issue was first
4 broached. "Well, Bob, let me tell you what we understand to
5 be the assessment at present. First of all, very
6 importantly, as you discussed with the president, there is an
7 investigation that the United States government will launch,
8 led by the FBI that has begun."

9 Then your next comment is, "They are not on the ground
10 yet but they have already begun looking at all sorts of
11 evidence."

12 What were they looking at that you knew about?

13 Ms. Rice. I didn't know specifically what evidence, but
14 I knew that the investigation had begun and that they would
15 do as they customarily do, try to gather as much evidence as
16 possible.

17 Chairman Gowdy. They do customarily try to do that; you
18 are correct. But your statement was, "They have already
19 begun looking at all sorts of evidence." Who told you that?

20 Ms. Rice. I don't recall exactly who told me that.

21 Chairman Gowdy. Do you know when you would have been
22 told that?

23 Ms. Rice. I don't know exactly when but sometime
24 between September 11th and September 16th.

25 Chairman Gowdy. And there was no one from law

1 enforcement on the 4 p.m. call?

2 Ms. Rice. No, not to my knowledge.

3 Chairman Gowdy. Do you recall talking to anyone with
4 the Bureau before you went on the Sunday morning talk shows?

5 Ms. Rice. No.

6 Chairman Gowdy. Well, this is what I'm trying to
7 reconcile. If you didn't talk to anyone with the FBI, who
8 would have told you that they had all sorts of evidence?

9 Ms. Rice. I didn't say they had -- "they have begun
10 looking at all sorts of evidence." I was aware, as a senior
11 U.S. policymaker, that we had announced there was an FBI
12 investigation already underway and that that investigation
13 would involve gathering and looking at all sorts of evidence.

14 Chairman Gowdy. All right. But you go on to say
15 "already available to them and to us." What evidence was
16 already available to you?

17 Ms. Rice. To me personally, none.

18 Chairman Gowdy. Then why would you have said "available
19 to them and to us"?

20 Ms. Rice. I meant to the administration.

21 Chairman Gowdy. Do you know what was available to the
22 administration?

23 Ms. Rice. Not precisely at this point.

24 Chairman Gowdy. Not at this point or not at the point
25 that you --

1 Ms. Rice. At the time.

2 Chairman Gowdy. You did not know at the time what
3 evidence was available to the administration.

4 Ms. Rice. That's correct.

5 Chairman Gowdy. Then why would you say "already
6 available to them and to us"?

7 Ms. Rice. Because I knew that we had already begun the
8 process of gathering information, both from an intelligence
9 side as well as from the law enforcement side.

10 Chairman Gowdy. All right. I'm with you on the
11 intelligence side, but this -- but I can't find an interview
12 that you conducted where you did not use "the FBI." And what
13 I'm trying to understand is what was the source of your
14 information from the FBI.

15 Ms. Rice. I didn't have any specific information from
16 the FBI. I was aware and what I was trying to convey is that
17 the FBI was in the process of beginning its investigation.

18 Chairman Gowdy. So if you were to say they already had
19 begun looking at all sorts of evidence of various sorts
20 already available to them and to us, in fact, you were not
21 available -- you were not aware of what evidence they had.

22 Ms. Rice. I knew they were looking at intelligence
23 among other sources of evidence.

24 Chairman Gowdy. Do you know whether the FBI played a
25 role in drafting the talking points?

1 Ms. Rice. I don't know what role the FBI played in
2 drafting the talking points.

3 Chairman Gowdy. They were not on the 4 p.m. call, to
4 the best of your recollection. Do you know if they were
5 already interviewing survivors?

6 Ms. Rice. I don't know.

7 Chairman Gowdy. Would you agree that the survivors
8 would have been a very good source of evidence or information
9 as to what happened in Benghazi?

10 Ms. Rice. In all likelihood.

11 Chairman Gowdy. Do you know whether -- you do not know
12 whether those interviews had begun taking place or not?

13 Ms. Rice. I don't know. I didn't know, and I don't
14 know.

15 Chairman Gowdy. I certainly understand the history of
16 the Bureau investigating incidents overseas. What I'm trying
17 to come to grips with is you mention at every one of your
18 Sunday morning talk shows and at least one occasion you said
19 they had a lead in the investigation. You say you ~~had~~^{meant} "the
20 lead." That's fine. I don't have anything to contradict
21 that. But then you said, "They have already begun looking at
22 all sorts of evidence."

23 Can you understand how that might suggest to the viewer
24 that the FBI had placed its imprimatur on what you were
25 saying?

1 Ms. Rice. No. I don't see that connection.

2 Chairman Gowdy. You don't see how saying, "They have
3 already begun looking at all sorts of evidence of various
4 sorts already available to them as to us" -- you don't see
5 how that could be perceived --

6 Ms. Rice. "And they will get on the ground and continue
7 the investigation."

8 Chairman Gowdy. Right. And I would have no qualms if
9 you had said they have begun their investigation and we don't
10 know yet what they know. But that doesn't read to me like
11 what you said.

12 Ms. Rice. Okay.

13 Chairman Gowdy. What does the phrase "in fact" mean to
14 you?

15 Ms. Rice. It means "indeed."

16 Chairman Gowdy. It means "indeed."

17 Ms. Rice. It can mean different things, but it can mean
18 "indeed." It can mean "as a matter of fact." It can mean
19 "as a statement of fact."

20 Chairman Gowdy. You used that phrase a lot during all
21 of the interviews. What did you mean by the phrase "in
22 fact"?

23 Ms. Rice. I'd have to look at it in the context of each
24 of the interviews.

25 Chairman Gowdy. Okay. We'll start with the Jake Tapper

1 interview. "Our best current assessment, based on the
2 information" --

3 Mr. Sauber. What's the page, Congressman?

4 Mr. Missakian. Page 2. Page 2.

5 Chairman Gowdy. I'm looking at the same exhibit you
6 are.

7 Mr. Sauber. Page 2?

8 Ms. Rice. Two or 3.

9 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. It's on page -- it's number 3,
10 halfway through.

11 Mr. Sauber. Yep. Thank you.

12 Chairman Gowdy. "Our best current assessment, based on
13 the information that we have at present, is that, in fact,
14 what this began as, it was a spontaneous" -- what did you
15 mean by "in fact"?

16 Ms. Rice. What I meant was that what we understood to
17 be the case at the time was as I described. It was
18 spontaneous, not premeditated, et cetera.

19 Chairman Gowdy. But why would you use the -- why would
20 you use the phrase "in fact"? Ranking Member Schiff took
21 great pains to talk about all the qualifying language that
22 you used. "In fact" strikes me as being more definitive than
23 qualifying language.

24 Ms. Rice. Given all the qualifiers that I put in here,
25 I was not trying to convey that what I was saying was the

1 last and final word on this.

2 Chairman Gowdy. Okay.

3 What does the word "premeditated" mean to you?

4 Ms. Rice. It means that whoever was involved had
5 planned in advance to do what they did.

6 Chairman Gowdy. How much planning would need to have
7 taken place for it to qualify as premeditated or preplanned?

8 Ms. Rice. I don't have a clear answer to that.

9 Chairman Gowdy. Well, you specifically said it was not
10 preplanned and not premeditated. So I'm trying to get an
11 understanding of how short a period of time something would
12 need to be planned to not be preplanned or premeditated.
13 What time period?

14 Ms. Rice. I don't have a definitive answer to that
15 question.

16 What I was trying to do, sir, is to convey, consistent
17 with the talking points, that this was, to the best of our
18 understanding, a spontaneous reaction. And, to me, the
19 antithesis of "spontaneous" is "preplanned or premeditated."
20 I was trying to say the same thing in a slightly different
21 way.

22 Chairman Gowdy. Okay.

23 Go on, Craig.

24 Mr. Missakian. Okay.

25 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

1 Q Continuing with your interview on ABC, I'd just
2 like to go over a couple of other statements.

3 Let's flip to the top of page 4. This is an answer --
4 at the very top, you give an answer. Mr. Tapper asks you on
5 the previous page, "Why was there such a security breakdown?
6 Why was there not better security at the compound in
7 Benghazi? Why were there not U.S. Marines at the embassy in
8 Tripoli?"

9 And then you respond, and this is also at the bottom of
10 page 3, "Well, first of all, we had a substantial security
11 presence with our personnel."

12 A Where are we?

13 Q We're at the bottom of page -- page 3. "Well,
14 first of all, we had a substantial security presence with our
15 personnel." Do you see that at the bottom?

16 A Yes, I do.

17 Q Okay. When you said "our personnel," were you
18 referring to the State Department's?

19 A Yes.

20 BY MR. DAVIS:

21 Q What did you mean, you said, "We had a substantial
22 security presence with our personnel"?

23 A I meant what I just said.

24 Q What does a substantial security presence mean to
25 you?

1 A It means significant, more than one, more than two,
2 more than three.

3 Q Did you have any indication of how many security
4 personnel were actually with the State Department in
5 Benghazi?

6 A Did I have any indication?

7 Q Did you have any indication at the time you made
8 the comments how many State Department personnel, security
9 personnel, were in Benghazi?

10 A I knew we had a Diplomatic Security presence.

11 Q Okay.

12 A I knew we had contractors.

13 Q Okay.

14 A I knew that two of the people who had been killed
15 were there in a security capacity.

16 Q Okay. But in terms of "substantial security
17 presence," to you that means more than one individual?

18 A It means -- it can -- certainly means more than
19 one. But it doesn't mean -- I wasn't trying to say it means
20 10, it means 20, it means 50. It was substantial.

21 Q Is "substantial security presence" more than one?
22 Is that -- in all situations, does a substantial security
23 presence mean more than one, or are you referring
24 specifically to Benghazi in this case?

25 A I was referring to Benghazi.

1 Q Okay.

2 A But I was also making the point, as you'll see
3 subsequently, that it obviously didn't prove sufficient to
4 the attack.

5 Q Okay. So I just want to make sure I'm clear.
6 "Substantial security presence," in your mind, can mean two
7 individuals.

8 A I didn't say that.

9 Q You said more than one.

10 A I said more than one, more than two -- we can keep
11 going. I didn't mean to imply --

12 Q Well, if it is more than one, then --

13 Mr. Sauber. For the sake of the record, let's just back
14 off a little bit and just let everything get put on the
15 record.

16 BY MR. DAVIS:

17 Q "Substantial" you said was more than one. Is that
18 correct?

19 A I did not put a number on "substantial."

20 Q But "substantial" could be two, because two is more
21 than one.

22 A I didn't say that.

23 Q So you had really no indication of what number you
24 were referring to when you said "substantial."

25 A I knew that the State Department spokesperson had

1 called it robust. I knew from my time visiting Libya that
2 that there was a Diplomatic Security presence that was
3 noteworthy. And I know that, in general, when we have
4 Diplomatic Security present and contractors, that it is not
5 insubstantial.

6 I want to recall, as well, that I said very clearly that
7 it was not sufficient to the attack that transpired.

8 Q Sure.

9 So, following along, top of page 4, you say, "With our
10 personnel and the consulate in Benghazi." Was there a
11 consulate in Benghazi?

12 A It was a diplomatic post.

13 Q Why did you say "consulate" if there was no
14 consulate in Benghazi?

15 A I may have misspoke.

16 Q Okay. Is there a difference between a consulate
17 and a diplomatic post?

18 A Yes, in fact, there is.

19 Q Okay. Can you explain what that difference is?

20 A A consulate is there to provide services to
21 American citizens. A diplomatic post could be a more
22 informal office.

23 Q And are diplomatic posts always notified to the
24 host government?

25 A I presume, if it's a State Department facility.

1 Mr. McQuaid. Can we go off the record?

2 Mr. Missakian. Off the record.

3 [Discussion off the record.]

4 Mr. Missakian. Back on the record.

5 BY MR. DAVIS:

6 Q The following sentence, "Tragically, two of the
7 four Americans who were killed were there providing
8 security."

9 Were they providing security to the diplomatic post in
10 Benghazi?

11 A I thought they were at the time.

12 Q You thought they were. How was that your
13 understanding?

14 A Because they were security personnel.

15 Q But were they security personnel for the State
16 Department?

17 A I understood them to be at the time.

18 Q And how was that your understanding?

19 A Because that was the only presence I was aware of.

20 Q When did you become aware of a presence by the CIA
21 in Benghazi?

22 A That's out of scope.

23 Mr. Sauber. Yeah. Within what time period?

24 Mr. Davis. Did you learn between September 11 and
25 September 16 that there was a CIA presence in Benghazi?

1 Ms. Rice. I think -- no. I think I learned
2 subsequently.

3 Mr. Missakian. Can we go off the record for just a
4 second?

5 [Discussion off the record.]

6 Mr. Missakian. Let's go back on the record.

7 Mr. Davis. So nobody told you between the dates of
8 September 11 and September 16 that two of the four Americans
9 who were killed who were providing security actually worked
10 for the CIA and not the State Department?

11 Ms. Rice. Not that I recall.

12 Mr. Davis. All right.

13 Mr. Missakian. And you learned that subsequently?

14 Ms. Rice. To the best of my recollection, I learned it
15 subsequently.

16 Mr. Missakian. How did you learn that?

17 Ms. Rice. I don't remember.

18 Mr. Davis. Really quickly, while we're on the topic,
19 with your interview with Mr. Tapper, I'm going to go back
20 really quickly to page 3. It says, "We believe that folks in
21 Benghazi, a small number of people came to the embassy to" --

22 Mr. Sauber. Hold on. Which paragraph?

23 Mr. Davis. Sure. It's the third full paragraph under
24 "TAPPER:".

25 Ms. Rice. I'm sorry. Where are we?

1 Mr. Sauber. Third full paragraph under "TAPPER:".
2 Under what he's saying or what Ambassador Rice is saying?

3 Mr. Missakian. Her answer begins in the middle of the
4 paragraph --

5 Mr. Sauber. Okay. Okay.

6 Mr. Missakian. -- where he's saying something.

7 Mr. Sauber. Thanks.

8 Mr. Missakian. It's the paragraph that begins, "We
9 believe."

10 BY MR. DAVIS:

11 Q So, second sentence of that paragraph.

12 A Yep, I see it.

13 Q "And then as that unfolded" -- "as that unfolded,
14 it seems to have been hijacked, let us say, by some
15 individual clusters of extremists who came with heavier
16 weapons."

17 What indication did you have that anything was hijacked
18 by extremists who came with heavier weapons?

19 A Well, consistent with the talking points --

20 Q Okay.

21 A -- we understood that this began as a demonstration
22 and that the demonstration involved -- evolved into a direct
23 assault.

24 Q Okay.

25 A Indications that extremists participated. I was

1 trying simply to say the same thing a different way.

2 Q Okay. But you're not aware as to whether or not
3 the extremists were there at the beginning or whether they
4 may have hijacked the demonstrations?

5 A Consistent with the talking points, my
6 understanding at the time was that the demonstrations evolved
7 into something that became much more violent.

8 Q Right. And I guess my question to you is, does it
9 say in the talking points that the extremists came to the
10 demonstrations later or that they had been there from the
11 beginning? I'm trying to understand how you draw the --

12 A It's not specific.

13 Q It's not specific. But you made it more specific
14 in what you said?

15 A I don't read it that way.

16 Q All right. So when you say "it seems to have been
17 hijacked," what does that mean to you?

18 A That it was -- what began as a demonstration
19 evolved into something much more violent and that extremists
20 came to the fray -- I don't know exactly at what stage they
21 came to the fray; I wasn't purporting to try to describe that
22 here -- and that it evolved into something much more violent.

23 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

24 Q Thank you.

25 If you could flip to page 5, towards the top of the

1 page, Mr. Tapper makes this statement: "It just seems that
2 the U.S. government is powerless as this -- as this maelstrom
3 erupts."

4 And then you respond, "It's actually the opposite.
5 First of all, let's be clear about what transpired here.
6 What happened this week in Cairo, in Benghazi, in many other
7 parts of the region...was a result -- a direct result of a
8 heinous and offensive video that was widely disseminated."

9 Mr. McQuaid. Could you just read the full context? You
10 missed a line.

11 Ms. Rice. Tapper adding, "Tunisia, Khartoum."

12 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

13 Q Oh. Absolutely. After you say "in many other
14 parts of the region," Mr. Tapper interjects, "Tunisia,
15 Khartoum." You continue, "was a result -- a direct result of
16 the heinous and offensive video that was widely
17 disseminated." And then it continues.

18 Just so we're clear, you intended to include Benghazi in
19 that statement even though there are a number of other parts
20 in the world that are identified, correct?

21 A No. What I was speaking to was the wide swath of
22 protests that had occurred around the world during the course
23 of the week. And I was making clear that this wide spectrum
24 of protests had occurred and had been linked to the video.

25 Q Okay. Well, we know there were no protests in

1 Benghazi, correct?

2 Mr. McQuaid. Off the record, off the --

3 Ms. Rice. I did not know --

4 Mr. McQuaid. -- record, off the record.

5 Ms. Rice. -- that at the time.

6 Mr. Missakian. Let her -- please let her answer.

7 Mr. McQuaid. Well, no. I don't ^{want} her to answer until we
8 understand that you're not asking her for her current
9 assessment, but ^{her} understanding ^{of} what she said at the time.

10 Mr. Missakian. Well, part of the scope of our agreement
11 is she -- we're entitled to ask her about what she learned
12 after she made the statements on the talk shows. If she did
13 not learn about the fact that there were no protests, she can
14 say that, but we're entitled to ask that.

15 Mr. McQuaid. Well, actually, what we agreed to is --

16 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Are we on the record or off?

17 Mr. Davis. We're on the record, Susanne.

18 Mr. McQuaid. Can we go off the record?

19 Mr. Davis. We can stay on the record.

20 Mr. McQuaid. You're not going to let me go off the
21 record?

22 Mr. Davis. We can stay on the record and have this
23 discussion.

24 Chairman Gowdy. Why don't we just go off the record.

25 Mr. Missakian. Okay. Let's go off the record.

1 [Discussion off the record.]

2 Mr. Missakian. Let's go back on the record.

3 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

4 Q If I recall it correctly, that, as of
5 September 28th, the Office of the Director of National
6 Intelligence came out with a new assessment, a public
7 statement, in which they made clear that there were no
8 protests that preceded the attacks in Benghazi. Are you
9 aware of that?

10 A Yes.

11 Q All right. So at the time or close in time to your
12 appearances on the talk shows, you did learn that, in fact,
13 there were no protests that occurred in Benghazi prior to the
14 attacks.

15 A I learned that after my appearance --

16 Q Yes.

17 A -- on the talk shows.

18 Q After. After.

19 A Some days after.

20 Q Some days after.

21 So I just wanted to understand what you were saying --
22 what you're now saying about what you intended here. Because
23 if I read this, and I think a common reading would be to
24 suggest that what occurred in Benghazi in the attacks were a
25 direct result of the heinous and offensive video.

1 A I think if you look at what I said on the other
2 shows, I was trying to draw a direct link between the video
3 and what happened in Cairo. And here I was trying to explain
4 that the video had been a proximate inspiration for the wide
5 range of protests that we saw around the region.

6 Q You don't use the term "wide range of protests."
7 You specifically --

8 A I say --

9 Q -- identify Cairo, Benghazi. Mr. Tapper then
10 throws in Tunisia and Khartoum. So you specifically single
11 out Benghazi and tie it to the heinous and offensive video.

12 A What I was trying to do, if you look carefully at
13 the transcript, it says, "Cairo, in Benghazi, in many other
14 parts of the region." And then Mr. Tapper cuts me off and
15 adds Tunisia and Khartoum. And then I continued. I was
16 making the broad point about what had transpired around the
17 world --

18 Q But you include --

19 A -- during that week.

20 Q But you include Benghazi.

21 Mr. McQuaid. Let her finish the answer.

22 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

23 Q Are you finished with your answer?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Okay. But you include Benghazi in the answer.

1 A I said Cairo, Benghazi, and many other parts of the
2 region.

3 Q Okay. So why did you include Benghazi in this
4 response?

5 A I was trying to convey that there were
6 demonstrations, including we thought there were
7 demonstrations in Benghazi, and I was trying to say that the
8 demonstrations that occurred around the world were linked to
9 the video.

10 In my other transcripts, if you go through them very
11 carefully, you'll see that I tried to be linking it more
12 directly to what had happened in Cairo, which is really what
13 I was trying to emphasize.

14 Q Okay. We will go through those transcripts. But
15 to the extent you were linking Benghazi and suggesting that
16 there were protests there, your statement -- and tell me if
17 you disagree with this -- your statement that what occurred
18 in Benghazi was a result, and then for emphasis you say "a
19 direct result," of the heinous and offensive video." I mean,
20 do you believe that you went a little bit beyond what was in
21 the talking points in making that statement?

22 A I wasn't even trying to utilize the talking points
23 here. I was talking about what had happened around the
24 world. That's what I meant to be focused on.

25 Q So when you included Benghazi, did you -- was

1 that -- did you misspeak?

2 A Quite possibly.

3 Q Because you would agree that, at the time you made
4 this statement on Mr. Tapper's show, the information you had
5 did not -- did not state that there was a direct connection
6 between the video and what occurred in Benghazi.

7 A That's right. And that's why I was, I think, more
8 precise in the other transcripts.

9 Q Let's move to those other transcripts now.

10 If you could go to the Fox News transcript, which begins
11 on page 17. What happened here, I gather, towards the
12 beginning of the interview is that Mr. Wallace shows you a
13 clip of Jay Carney saying something at a press conference,
14 which I believe occurred the day -- 2 days before, on
15 September 14th.

16 So we're now on page 18. If you look towards the bottom
17 of the page, there's a clip from Jay Carney that says, "This
18 is not a case of protests directed at the United States writ
19 large or at U.S. policy. This is in response to a video that
20 is offensive."

21 And Mr. Wallace makes the statement, or asks you the
22 question, "You don't really believe that?" And you respond,
23 "Chris, absolutely I believe that. In fact, it is the case.
24 We had the evolution of the Arab spring over the last many
25 months. But what sparked the recent violence was the airing

1 on the Internet of a very hateful and very offensive video
2 that has offended many people around the world."

3 Now, as I read that, it seems to me as if you are making
4 a very definitive statement. You used, in the second
5 sentence there, the word "is." "It is the case."

6 How do you respond? Do you believe that you overstated
7 the talking points in giving this answer to Mr. Wallace?

8 A No. The talking points were not germane to what I
9 was being asked. If you go back and look at the start of the
10 transcript, you'll see that the whole setup for this -- for
11 my interview and this piece were the protests that Chris
12 Wallace said had occurred. "Protesters" -- I'm quoting now
13 Chris Wallace at the beginning of the interview with me.

14 Let me begin at the very beginning.

15 "And hello again from FOX News in Washington.

16 "We'll talk with Ambassador Rice and Chairman Rogers in
17 a moment. But, first, here is the latest on the situation
18 overseas:

19 "Protesters have attacked U.S. targets in more than 20
20 nations. Citing concerns over security, the State Department
21 ordered all nonessential U.S. government personnel to leave
22 Sudan and Tunisia. And in Benghazi, Libya, there are reports
23 of more arrests in the attack that killed four Americans,
24 including Ambassador Chris Stevens.

25 "For more on the continuing unrest, let's bring in

1 correspondent Leland Vittert, who is in Cairo, Egypt."

2 And then he goes through what happened in Cairo:
3 protesters carrying posters of Osama bin Laden. In Tunis,
4 U.S. citizens have been advised to evacuate the country. The
5 government of Sudan has denied entry to Marines. Al Qaeda in
6 the Arabian Peninsula has issued a communique urging more
7 attacks.

8 Joining us now is Ambassador Susan Rice.

9 Welcome back to FOX.

10 Thank you.

11 So we are talking here about the attacks. Chris
12 Wallace: "This week, there have been anti-American protests
13 in two dozen countries across the Islamic world. The White
14 House says it has nothing to do with the president's
15 policies."

16 Then you go to Jay Carney.

17 "You don't believe that?" Well, yes, I do, is what I
18 say.

19 Q Okay. So if I understand you correctly then, your
20 answer was meant to exclude what occurred in Benghazi.

21 A My answer was about the protests around the world.

22 Q Okay, even though the lead-in, which you just read
23 to us --

24 A He conflated them.

25 Q He conflated them. Okay.

1 Even though the lead-in mentioned Benghazi, Libya, your
2 answer was meant to exclude it. Is that fair?

3 A It was meant to comment on what was really his
4 question, which was the protests around the world. "Two
5 dozen countries across the Islamic world. The White House
6 says it has nothing to do with the president's policies."
7 That's what I was addressing.

8 Q Okay. But you didn't -- you didn't -- certainly
9 didn't make that clear in the answer.

10 And if you go to the next page, at the very top, you
11 say --

12 Mr. Sauber. So we're on 19 now?

13 Mr. Missakian. Yes, page 19.

14 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

15 Q At the top, you say, "Such things that have sparked
16 outrage and anger and this has been the proximate cause of
17 what we've seen."

18 You didn't exclude Benghazi. I mean, if you had to do
19 it over again, do you think it would have been better to
20 exclude Benghazi from that statement?

21 A I wasn't addressing Benghazi in this statement.

22 Q But you could understand how somebody watching and
23 listening to you could have understood what you were saying
24 to apply to Benghazi. Is that fair?

25 A You know what, I actually don't think so. Because

1 was he showing clips from protests that occurred in all these
2 other places. That was the video on the screen; that was
3 what the question was about.

4 Q And later in your interview with Mr. Wallace, you
5 made the statement -- and I can't find it. Maybe somebody
6 can help me. But you say, we don't see at this point signs
7 this was a coordinated, planned, premeditated attack.

8 Mr. McQuaid. Let's clarify that if you want us to --

9 Mr. Missakian. Let's go off the record for a second
10 while we find this.

11 [Discussion off the record.]

12 Mr. Missakian. Let's go back on the record.

13 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

14 Q Page 23, you say, "But we don't see at this point
15 signs this was a coordinated plan, premeditated attack."

16 Would you agree with me that that's a different
17 statement, conveys a different sentiment, than if you had
18 said, "At this point, our assessment is that this was
19 spontaneous"? Certainly there you would have to agree there
20 were signs that this attack was premeditated.

21 A I'm -- if you will allow me, I'm still trying to
22 read the transcript.

23 Q Please. Just let me know when you're done.

24 A So, again? I'm ready.

25 Q My question is, do you see a difference in saying

1 that our best assessment is that the attacks were spontaneous
2 versus what you said here, where you say there are no signs
3 that the attack was premeditated or coordinated? Do you see
4 a difference in those two wordings?

5 A What I was trying to do is to contrast the
6 spontaneous with preplanned or premeditated.

7 So if you look at the paragraph prior, I say after all
8 the customary caveats, "The information, the best information
9 and best assessment we have today is that in fact this was
10 not a preplanned, premeditated attack. That what happened
11 initially was that it was a spontaneous reaction."

12 So I was trying to indicate, consistent with the talking
13 points, that spontaneous and premeditated, preplanned, as I
14 said earlier, are close to opposites. And that was the point
15 I was trying to make.

16 Q Well, let's ask it this way. At the time, what
17 would you have -- you, personally -- have considered a sign
18 that this was coordinated or premeditated?

19 A I don't have an answer to that question. It could
20 have been any number of things.

21 Q For example?

22 A Intelligence indicating that we had knowledge that
23 the terrorists had plotted this out in advance.

24 Q So, for example, an intercept?

25 A Potentially.

1 Q Anything else?

2 A Any kind of intelligence.

3 Q Any kind of intelligence. Human intelligence,
4 signals intelligence.

5 A Yeah, provided it was deemed credible and
6 reinforced by other sources.

7 Q What about anything else? Do you believe that, for
8 example, the nature of the attack could have been a sign that
9 it was preplanned or premeditated? For example, if it was a
10 complex attack, could that have suggested to you that it was
11 preplanned or premeditated?

12 A Could have been, but not necessarily so.

13 Q Not necessarily so, but it could have been a
14 factor. Okay. What about the types of weapons that were
15 used?

16 A I would say the same. Could have been, but not
17 necessarily so. We knew that heavy weapons were involved.

18 Q Right. In your mind, did that suggest to you one
19 way or the other at the time whether it was premeditated or
20 preplanned?

21 A It could have been, but it was not clear that it --
22 it could have not been.

23 Q But it's a potential that it could have been?

24 A It could have been. But the best assessment that I
25 was given and that I tried to convey is that, indeed, this

1 was a spontaneous demonstration that evolved into a larger
2 attack with heavy weapons.

3 Q What about the number of attackers? Could that
4 have been a sign that it was premeditated? For example, if
5 it was a handful of people, you know, maybe you can get those
6 folks together on the spur of the moment, but if it was 20,
7 50, 100, would that have suggested to you that it was
8 potentially preplanned or premeditated?

9 A I don't think the numbers are indicative of
10 planing.

11 Q Okay. Why is that?

12 A Because a single bomber can have preplanned an
13 attack and carry it out.

14 Q That's correct. But so, on the opposite side, if
15 you had 100 attackers, in your mind, that would not have
16 suggested preplanning.

17 A It does not, in itself, indicate replanning.

18 Q But, like the others, it could suggest preplanning,
19 the number of attackers.

20 A As I said, I don't think the number of attackers is
21 indicative of the degree of planning.

22 Q Well, it may not be indicative, but would you agree
23 that if you have more attackers involved, that they appear to
24 be coordinated, that could be evidence that it was preplanned
25 or premeditated?

1 A I didn't draw any conclusions one way or the other.
2 I was trying to adhere to the best assessment of the
3 intelligence community.

4 Q Okay.

5 Could we go off the record for a second?

6 [Discussion off the record.]

7 Mr. Missakian. Let's go back on the record.

8 All right. I would like to now move to the CNN
9 interview.

10 Oh, yeah. Sorry. My colleague has a question.

11 Mr. Davis. I'm sorry. Just a couple more questions
12 about your interview with Mr. Wallace.

13 BY MR. DAVIS:

14 Q On page 23, the second full paragraph, it says,
15 "But we don't see at this point signs this was a coordinated
16 plan." When you say "we," who are you referring?

17 A The U.S. Government.

18 Q U.S. Government. And that would include the CIA?

19 A It would include the intelligence community.

20 Q Okay. Of which the CIA is a part?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Okay.

23 So when you say, "We don't see at this point signs,"
24 does that mean there were no signs that this was a
25 coordinated plan?

1 A As I said in response to Craig, what I was trying
2 to do is to adhere to the talking points, which said this was
3 spontaneously inspired, and I was contrasting that with
4 premeditated and preplanned.

5 Q But when you said, "We don't see at this point
6 signs," did you mean to say that there were no signs, or did
7 you mean to say that there was no conclusion that it was a
8 coordinated, premeditated attack?

9 A I didn't purport to draw any final conclusions at
10 any point during these interviews. I was very careful to
11 underscore that I was providing the current best information
12 and that information could change.

13 Q Okay.

14 Just a couple more questions about your interview with
15 Mr. Wallace.

16 Your next response: "Well, we obviously did have a
17 strong security presence." What did you mean when you said
18 "strong security presence"?

19 A I think we had this exchange over another adjective
20 I used.

21 Q That was "substantial." I'm asking you about
22 "strong."

23 A The same answer applies.

24 Q Same answer? Okay. So more than one?

25 A That wasn't my prior answer.

1 Q I want to go down a little bit further.

2 "But, obviously, there was a significant security
3 presence." Same adjective? "Strong," "substantial,"
4 "significant"?

5 A You asked me earlier what I meant by "substantial,"
6 and I said --

7 Q Right.

8 A -- "significant." So I meant to use these as
9 similar terms --

10 Q Okay.

11 A -- consistent with the terminology used by the
12 State Department spokesman, which was "robust." I think,
13 actually, these words are not as --

14 Q Strong.

15 A -- strong as "robust." But, nonetheless, as I said
16 here and in other circumstances, it proved inadequate to the
17 attack that transpired.

18 Q Okay.

19 And, really quick, going up the page on page 23, "Well,
20 we obviously did have a strong security presence. And,
21 unfortunately, two of the four Americans who died in Benghazi
22 were there to provide security."

23 A I'm sorry. Where are you?

24 Q I'm sorry. It's "RICE: Well, we obviously did
25 have a strong security presence. And, unfortunately, two of

1 the four Americans who died in Benghazi were there to provide
2 security."

3 Mr. McQuaid. You talked about the top of 23.

4 Ms. Rice. Middle of 23.

5 BY MR. DAVIS:

6 Q Do you see that?

7 A I do.

8 Q So when you say, "Unfortunately, two of the four
9 Americans who died in Benghazi were there to provide
10 security" -- we had this conversation already -- they were
11 actually there to provide security to the CIA, correct?

12 A I didn't know that at the time.

13 Q You didn't know that at the time. But you knew
14 there was a CIA presence at the time?

15 A No. And we've had this conversation. I learned
16 that subsequently.

17 Q Okay.

18 I want to look at your next response, the second
19 paragraph. "But, obviously, there was a significant security
20 presence defending our consulate and our other facility in
21 Benghazi and that did not prove sufficient to the moment."

22 A Yes. And if you go --

23 Q What other facility are you referring to?

24 A Excuse me. We knew there were two buildings. And,
25 indeed, the talking points say "its annex."

1 But I want to point out that, after I said two of the
2 four Americans who died in Benghazi were there to provide
3 security, that I again said, "But it wasn't sufficient in the
4 circumstances to prevent the overrun of the consulate. This
5 is among the things that will be looked at as the
6 investigation unfolds."

7 Q So, with the word "annex" in the talking points,
8 with your comment here about the other facility, it was your
9 belief at the time that those were both State Department
10 facilities.

11 A That was my understanding.

12 Q Okay.

13 A But I -- yes.

14 Q Okay.

15 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

16 Q Ambassador, if you could just flip to page 12, this
17 is a portion of your interview by David Gregory on "Meet the
18 Press."

19 Mr. Gregory says, "All right, well let's talk about --
20 you talked about this as spontaneous."

21 A I'm sorry. Where are you?

22 Q At the very top.

23 A Yep.

24 Q Okay.

25 Then he goes on, "Can you say definitively that the

1 attacks on our consulate in Libya that killed Ambassador
2 Stevens and others there security personnel that was
3 spontaneous? Was it a planned attack? Was there a terrorist
4 element to it?"

5 And then you respond, "Well let us -- let me tell you
6 the best information we have at present. First of all,
7 there's an FBI investigation which is ongoing and we look to
8 that investigation to give us the definitive word as to what
9 transpired. But putting together the best information that
10 we have available to us today, our current assessment is that
11 what happened in Benghazi was, in fact, initially a
12 spontaneous reaction to what had just transpired hours before
13 in Cairo; almost a copycat of -- of the demonstrations
14 against our facility in Cairo, which were prompted, of
15 course, by the video."

16 Now, you would agree with me that nowhere in the CIA
17 talking points does it describe what occurred in Benghazi and
18 what occurred in Cairo as almost a copycat of each other?
19 You would agree with me on that?

20 A I would agree with you on that.

21 Q So would you also agree with me that describing
22 what occurred in Benghazi as almost a copycat of Cairo was
23 really overstating what was known at the time and certainly
24 overstating what was in the talking points?

25 A I don't know that it was overstating or even

1 misstating. But I would agree that the word "copycat" does
2 not appear in the talking points.

3 Q Will you -- would you agree with me that what
4 occurred in Cairo was nothing even remotely close to what
5 occurred in Benghazi? I mean, we saw the earlier email that
6 talked about 2,000 protesters in Cairo. There were not 2,000
7 protesters in Benghazi, correct?

8 Mr. McQuaid. Can you clarify what the basis for
9 knowledge is that you're asking about?

10 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

11 Q Yes. At the time, there was no basis for believing
12 that there had been thousands of protesters in Benghazi.

13 A I did not believe there were thousands of
14 protesters in Benghazi.

15 Q So --

16 A I also said that I didn't recall the number of
17 protesters in Cairo.

18 Q But you do recall receiving that -- receiving that
19 email, though.

20 A No, I don't recall receiving it, as I said. I
21 acknowledge that I received it subsequently.

22 Q Fair enough. Just, there's no reason to believe
23 you did not receive it at the time.

24 A I don't have any reason to believe I didn't receive
25 it.

1 Q So you would agree, as you sit here today, that it
2 would be inaccurate to describe what happened in Benghazi as
3 almost a copycat of what occurred in Cairo.

4 A That's not what I said.

5 Q No, I know. I'm asking you, would you agree with
6 that, that it would be inaccurate to describe Benghazi as
7 almost a copycat of Cairo.

8 A Based on what knowledge?

9 Q Based on even the knowledge you had at the time.

10 A Based on the knowledge I had at the time, I would
11 not say that that was necessarily ~~an accurate~~ ^{inaccurate} -- nor did I
12 intend it to be ~~an accurate~~ ^{inaccurate} --

13 Q And it certainly didn't say that in the talking
14 points.

15 A Yes, it did not say that in the talking points. It
16 did not use the word "copycat."

17 Q At the time, did you know that weapons had been
18 used in Benghazi?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Okay. And you knew -- at the time, did you know
21 that no weapons had been used in Cairo?

22 A I said that I knew weapons had been used in
23 Benghazi. In fact, I said so on the various shows.

24 Q Yes.

25 A And as I said to you earlier, I was not aware

1 whether weapons had been used in Cairo or not.

2 Q Let's flip forward in the document to page -- let's
3 go off the record.

4 [Discussion off the record.]

5 Mr. Missakian. Let's go back on the record.

6 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

7 Q Now we're on page 28. And specifically --

8 A Where are we on 28, please?

9 Q Yes. Ms. Crowley asks you, towards the top of the
10 page, "But this was sort of a reset, was it not? It was
11 supposed to be a reset of U.S.-Muslim relations?"

12 A Can you allow me time to read the context there?

13 Q Would you prefer to do that and then I'll read it
14 into the record afterwards?

15 A Sure.

16 Okay.

17 Q Okay.

18 Now, you respond, "And indeed, in fact, there had been
19 substantial improvements. I have been to Libya and walked
20 the streets of Benghazi myself. And despite what we saw in
21 that horrific incident where some mob was hijacked ultimately
22 by a handful of extremists, the United States is extremely
23 popular in Libya and the outpouring of sympathy and support
24 for Ambassador Stevens and his colleagues from the
25 government, from people is evidence of that."

1 Where did you get the fact that there was a handful of
2 extremists that had hijacked what occurred in Benghazi? I
3 mean, our understanding, even at the time, the information
4 was that there were 20 attackers. That went -- that number
5 went to 50-plus, and then it went to over 100. Where did you
6 get the number "a handful," which, in my mind anyway, is
7 about five?

8 A I don't recall exactly where I got that from.

9 Q It's not in the talking points, certainly.

10 A Talking points say that "the demonstrations in
11 Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by the protests at the
12 U.S. Embassy in Cairo and evolved into a direct assault
13 against the diplomatic post in Benghazi and subsequently its
14 annex. There are indications that extremists participated in
15 the violent demonstrations."

16 Q That's correct. But nowhere in what you just read
17 does the CIA or the intelligence community attribute a number
18 to the number of extremists that took place in -- took part
19 in the attacks, correct?

20 A Not in these talking points.

21 Q Okay. Do you believe that you received that
22 information from another source?

23 A I don't recall.

24 Q But you do believe somebody told you that?

25 A I don't recall exactly how I acquired that

1 information.

2 BY MR. DAVIS:

3 Q You say here, "I have been to Libya and walked the
4 streets of Benghazi myself." That was back in 2011?

5 A Yes.

6 Q And while you were in Benghazi, did you go to the
7 State Department facility in Benghazi?

8 Mr. McQuaid. Off the record.

9 Mr. Missakian. Let's go off the record.

10 [Discussion off the record.]

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1 [1:17 p.m.]

2 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Let's go back on the record. It
3 is 1:20. The ranking member had some questions.

4 Mr. Cummings. Thank you very much.

5 Ambassador Rice, first of all, I want to thank you for
6 your service over many, many years. And I am just going to
7 ask you a few questions, and then I am going to have to go
8 back to the Hill.

9 You are a lawyer. Is that right?

10 Ms. Rice. No.

11 Mr. Cummings. You are not a lawyer?

12 Ms. Rice. No.

13 Mr. Cummings. I guess you remind me of --

14 Ms. Rice. I almost became a lawyer.

15 Mr. Cummings. I take it your reputation is very
16 important to you. Is that right?

17 Ms. Rice. Yes, sir, it is.

18 Mr. Cummings. And I assume you would want to be known
19 for truth and honesty. Is that a fair statement?

20 Ms. Rice. That's a very fair statement. I ^{have} always
21 prided myself on being an honest person.

22 Mr. Cummings. And that's what I want to go to. I want
23 to talk about some questions, get into some questions here,
24 because there are some things that have been said about you
25 that go against that. And as I am sure you are well aware,

1 there have been some very highly critical statements about
2 your appearances on the five Sunday talk shows. And it's not
3 just that it's been stated that you gave wrong information,
4 but it has been stated that you did it on purpose, that you
5 did it intentionally, and that you intentionally lied to the
6 American public. And I know how hard that must be on you to
7 hear that after you devoted your life to the public, serving
8 the public, and trying to uplift the lives of all Americans.
9 So I am going to go to some particular allegations, and I
10 want to give you the opportunity to address them fully. And
11 hopefully -- hopefully -- for the last time.

12 Mr. McQuaid. Can we just go off the record for one
13 second? I apologize, sir.

14 Mr. Cummings. Sure.

15 [Discussion off the record.]

16 Mr. Cummings. Back on the record now. Appearing on the
17 Hugh Hewitt radio show on May 7, 2013, Chairman Gowdy said,
18 and this is a quote, "We know that we were lied to. I think
19 I can prove tomorrow that it was an intentional
20 misrepresentation by Susan Rice and others," end of quote.
21 Now, that's a pretty serious allegation. I would like to
22 give you the opportunity to respond to this allegation
23 directly. Did you lie to the American people or
24 intentionally misrepresent the facts for political purposes
25 on the Sunday talk shows following the attacks?

1 Ms. Rice. No, sir. I never lied to the American
2 people, nor did I ever intentionally misrepresent the facts.

3 Mr. Cummings. Did you always try to ensure that the
4 statements that you made about the Benghazi attacks were
5 accurate?

6 Ms. Rice. Yes, sir, I tried my very best to make sure
7 that my statements were accurate and to adhere as closely as
8 I could to the relevant talking points and, at the same time,
9 to caveat at every instance that the information I was
10 providing was our current best assessment, that it was
11 preliminary, that it could well change, and that we were
12 awaiting the results of the FBI investigation to give us the
13 definitive determination.

14 Mr. Cummings. Now, earlier, in answer to a few
15 questions, I think once or twice, you may have said it may
16 have been a misstatement or -- and I am just wondering. I
17 just want to go back to what you just said. Was there any
18 time that you tried to misstate the facts as you knew them?

19 Ms. Rice. No, sir.

20 Mr. Cummings. Intentionally or unintentionally?

21 Ms. Rice. Neither. Neither intentionally nor
22 unintentionally.

23 Mr. Cummings. Did you attempt to the best of your
24 ability to follow the intelligence community's talking points
25 and press guidance that you understood to be the collective

1 best assessment at the time of what had happened?

2 Ms. Rice. Yes, where it was relevant, I did.

3 Mr. Cummings. And would that be the normal way it would
4 be done?

5 Ms. Rice. Yes, sir.

6 Mr. Cummings. Did you deliberately downplay some facts
7 or emphasize others in order to favor a particular political
8 narrative?

9 Ms. Rice. No, I did not.

10 Mr. Cummings. Do you believe that you followed the
11 guidance from the intelligence community as best as you
12 could? And that your statements were consistent with the
13 guidance from the intelligence community?

14 Ms. Rice. I did my best to remain faithful to the
15 guidance I received from the intelligence community.

16 Mr. Cummings. Did you make every attempt to caveat your
17 statements with the warning that they were subject to change
18 from the ongoing investigation?

19 Ms. Rice. Yes, indeed I did.

20 Mr. Cummings. Similarly, on June 5, Ambassador, June 5,
21 2013, Senator and Presidential candidate Rand Paul appeared
22 on FOX News and stated that you had, I quote, "directly and
23 deliberately misled the public over Benghazi," end of quote.
24 Did you directly and deliberately mislead the public over
25 Benghazi?

1 Ms. Rice. I did not directly or deliberately mislead
2 the public on Benghazi.

3 Mr. Cummings. Were you aware of or involved in
4 perpetuating any kind of an intentionally false or misleading
5 narrative about the Benghazi attacks?

6 Ms. Rice. No.

7 Mr. Cummings. Some have argued that it was false
8 because you should have known by that time that there had not
9 been a protest. How would you respond to those critics?

10 Ms. Rice. First of all, I did not know at the time that
11 there had not been a protest. I was going off the best
12 current assessment of the intelligence community. And the
13 intelligence community subsequently made clear that they
14 changed their assessment to conclude that there was not a
15 protest or a demonstration several days after my appearance
16 on the Sunday shows.

17 Mr. Cummings. Now, going to May 2nd, 2014, Congressman
18 Gosar on his Web site said that you were, and I quote, "sent
19 out to lie about the causes of the attacks instead of
20 Secretary Clinton," end of quote. Did you go onto the Sunday
21 talk shows to lie about the causes of the attacks?

22 Ms. Rice. I did no such thing.

23 Mr. Cummings. Did you go on the Sunday talk shows to
24 somehow protect Secretary Clinton from making inaccurate
25 statements about the attacks in Benghazi?

1 Ms. Rice. I did not.

2 Mr. Cummings. Did anyone ever pressure you to say
3 anything about the Benghazi attacks that you believed to be
4 false?

5 Ms. Rice. Never.

6 Mr. Cummings. Or misleading?

7 Ms. Rice. Never.

8 Mr. Cummings. Did anyone else working on any statement,
9 talking points, or other remarks about the attacks ever tell
10 you that they had been pressured into making changes that
11 they believed to be false or misleading?

12 Ms. Rice. No, sir.

13 Mr. Cummings. Ambassador Rice, you know, you have a
14 long, distinguished career in government. Surely, when you
15 serve in high-level administration positions, you expect some
16 sort of public scrutiny and criticism. We are very familiar
17 with that. But this seems to go much further than that.
18 Would you agree?

19 Ms. Rice. Yes, sir.

20 Mr. Cummings. And if you wouldn't mind sharing, tell us
21 just how have these accusations affected you personally?

22 Ms. Rice. I think you can imagine that when you are a
23 public servant trying to do your best for the people of this
24 country and our policies around the world, to have your
25 integrity impugned is painful. It's painful to me. It's

1 painful to the people who love me.

2 Mr. Cummings. Again, I thank you for your service.

3 And I thank you for -- I use a statement that I say to
4 people -- thank you for being you. And, you know, hopefully
5 this all will come to an end. And there is one thing that my
6 mother, only had a third grade education and former
7 sharecropper, used to say: It's hard to get a reputation
8 back.

9 But I hope that history will look back on this and your
10 reputation will -- history will see your reputation for
11 exactly what it is. Thank you very much. And that's a good
12 thing, by the way.

13 Ms. Rice. Thank you, sir.

14 Ms. Sawyer. Can we just have an off-the-record
15 conversation?

16 [Discussion off the record.]

17 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. So I am just going to cover a
18 couple quick followup things, and then I think we will stop
19 our round. We will let the Republicans do their last
20 30 minutes, and then we will take our last 30 minutes.

21 In the last round, you were asked a number of times
22 about your statements on some of the Sunday shows where you
23 used the words "strong" or "significant" to describe the
24 security presence. And in that round, you referenced public
25 statements by the State Department using the term "robust."

1 And so I just wanted to put some of those into the record.
2 So I am going to mark the first document as exhibit 7.

3 [Rice Exhibit No. 7
4 was marked for identification.]

5 BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

6 Q Exhibit 7 is an email chain sent from Kimberly
7 Gahan, at the top, to Harold Koh and a number of other people
8 on September 12, 2012, 7:34 p.m. The document number is
9 C5396428. I want to bring your attention not to that top
10 email but to the email out from the State Department press
11 office from Wednesday, September 12, 2012, at 6:42 p.m.,
12 subject, Background Briefing, colon, Senior Administration
13 Officials to Update Recent Events in Libya. So if you turn
14 to what I believe is going to be the fifth page in here, and
15 that would be the one that has the number 5 at the bottom --

16 A Yes.

17 Q I don't know if you are counting from the top or
18 the bottom.

19 A Page 5 on the bottom.

20 Q Yes. If you go up to the I believe second full
21 paragraph, this is quoting a senior administration official
22 one, stating, quote: "What I can tell you is that security
23 in Benghazi included a local guard force outside of the
24 compound on which we rely, which is similar to the way we are
25 postured all over the world. We had a physical perimeter

1 barrier, obviously. And then we had a robust American
2 security presence inside the compound, including a strong
3 component of Regional Security Officers. But I am not going
4 to go any further than that on the specifics." Would that be
5 an example of the State Department using the term "robust"?

6 A Yes, it would be.

7 Q In a public statement?

8 A Yes. And the word "strong."

9 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. I am going to mark exhibit 8.

10 [Rice Exhibit No. 8

11 was marked for identification.]

12 BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

13 Q It's going to be another State Department press
14 statement. For the record, this is an email from Bruce
15 Wilmot, September 13, 2012, 3:43 p.m. It is a draft
16 transcript of the daily press briefing from the State
17 Department from Thursday, September 13, 2012, where Victoria
18 Nuland, the State Department spokeswoman, was speaking on the
19 record at a press conference. I am going to go to the second
20 page of that. I believe somewhere on this page she also uses
21 the words "robust" and "strong" on the record. She was
22 responding to a question that's about halfway through the
23 page. The question is: "It does seem, though, that there
24 were very few security personnel at this location." And
25 Ms. Nuland responded, quote: "I am going to reject that,

1 [REDACTED] Let me tell you what I can about the security at our
2 mission in Benghazi. It did include a local Libyan guard
3 force around the outer perimeter. This is the way we work in
4 all of our missions all around the world, that the outer
5 perimeter is the responsibility of the host government.
6 There was obviously a physical perimeter barrier, a wall.
7 And then there was a robust American security presence inside
8 the compound. This is absolutely consistent with what we
9 have done at a number of missions similar to Benghazi around
10 the world."

11 Do you think your statements about having a significant
12 or strong security presence were consistent with the State
13 Department's public statements that the presence was robust
14 and strong?

15 A I do think they're consistent.

16 Q And do you recall whether, at the time, these kinds
17 of daily press briefings, materials, would have been in the
18 materials that you would have reviewed when you were
19 preparing for the Sunday talk shows?

20 A As I said, I don't recall exactly the full contents
21 of the briefing materials I was provided, but it is the type
22 of thing that would often be part of such briefing materials.

23 Q And is it fair to say that if that was the State
24 Department's position at the time, that that position would
25 likely have been communicated to you either by reading the

1 public statements from the State Department or through some
2 other internal conversations with your staff or with other
3 State Department staff?

4 A Yes.

5 Q So you didn't have to use your personal knowledge
6 to make any analysis about what was going on with the
7 security in Benghazi. You were just relying on what was
8 coming out of the State Department's public statements?

9 A I certainly was relying on the State Department's
10 understandings and representations. I think also I had the
11 benefit of a range of other pieces of information. But this
12 was on the record. And so it would have been wise for me to
13 be consistent with that in the absence of information to the
14 contrary.

15 Q And you have already referenced that you had
16 referenced shortly after your statements that there was an
17 ongoing investigation, and you would, of course, find out
18 later what that said about the security presence in Benghazi.

19 A Yes. But I also said that it was obviously
20 inadequate to the attack that occurred.

21 Q Did you have any reason to believe that the -- at
22 the time when you were making the statements on the Sunday
23 talk shows and you used the words "strong" and "significant,"
24 did you have any reason to believe that the robust statements
25 from the State Department were incorrect?

1 A I did not.

2 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. I think what we will do now is a
3 quick break and go off the record.

4 [Recess.]

5 Mr. Missakian. Let's go back on the record.

6 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

7 Q Ambassador Rice, if we could go back to exhibit No.
8 6, please.

9 A Remind me what exhibit 6 is.

10 Q Exhibit 6 is a compilation of the transcripts. In
11 particular, the "Face the Nation" transcript that begins at
12 page 8 -- well, it's not part of this transcript, so I will
13 just read it into the record. Are you aware that prior to
14 you going on that show, that the then-President of Libya,
15 Mohammed Magarief, appeared on the show before you?

16 A Yes.

17 Q And when he appeared on the show, he stated that
18 there was no doubt that the attacks were preplanned. He said
19 they were planned a few months ahead of time. Were you aware
20 of that statement prior to you going on the show?

21 A I was only aware because I heard the clip as I was
22 sitting in the green room.

23 Q Did it surprise you to hear that?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Okay. How did you react? Because if it was me

1 sitting in that green room, I would have asked myself: Does
2 he know something that I don't know? Because you were about
3 to go on television and say the exact opposite, correct?

4 A I am sorry, your question was?

5 Q My question was, how did you react to that?

6 A I was surprised.

7 Q And what did you do? Were you concerned that he
8 may have known something that you did not know?

9 A I didn't know what he knew. I knew what we knew
10 and what the intelligence community's current best assessment
11 was. And so it was my responsibility to faithfully relay
12 that and not make something up on the fly based on what he
13 said.

14 Q Sure. But did you do anything to determine whether
15 or not there was anything to what he had said?

16 Mr. Sauber. Between the time she heard it and the time
17 she went on -- is that what you mean?

18 Mr. Missakian. Let me qualify that. That's a good
19 question.

20 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

21 Q Yes. Either prior to going on the show, did you do
22 anything, or prior to going on any other shows or at any time
23 on that day after the shows, did you do anything to determine
24 whether what he had said was correct or what you had said was
25 correct?

1 A First of all, this was my fifth and final show.

2 Q Oh. Fair enough.

3 A I heard this right before I went on. As I said, it
4 was a surprise. And it was very much inconsistent with our
5 intelligence community's best assessment at the time.

6 Q So you didn't do anything?

7 A There was nothing I could do before going on the
8 show.

9 Q Okay. Did you do anything after the show?

10 A I don't recall doing anything in particular about
11 his comments. But, obviously, I continued to be interested
12 after I went on the shows as to what our evolving best
13 assessment was.

14 Q Sure. Because it was important. As you talked
15 about, your reputation is important to you. If you had said
16 something that was incorrect, you wanted to find that out.
17 So what did you do to try to find out whether or not what he
18 had said was correct or what you had said was correct -- let
19 me finish -- up until the point where you learned there were
20 no protests?

21 A Every day?

22 Mr. McQuaid. Could we go off the record?

23 Mr. Missakian. Sure. Let's go off the record.

24 [Discussion off the record.]

25 Mr. Missakian. Let's go back on the record.

1 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

2 Q Did you have any conversations with anybody, either
3 on the night of September 16th or at any day thereafter up to
4 the point where you learned there were no protests in
5 Benghazi, on the issue of whether or not President Magarief
6 was correct or whether or not you were correct in saying that
7 the attack was spontaneous?

8 A I don't recall specific conversations, but I recall
9 being constantly interested in understanding our evolving
10 best assessment, with a mind to caring about its
11 inconsistency with what I was -- with what I said on the
12 16th.

13 Q Putting aside whether you remember any specific
14 conversation, do you recall generally what you discussed with
15 anybody during that time period?

16 A Just as I said.

17 Q What was that? Do you recall any conversations
18 with anybody on this topic?

19 Mr. McQuaid. Off the record?

20 Mr. Missakian. I am not sure I understand. Off the
21 record is fine.

22 [Discussion off the record.]

23 Mr. Missakian. Let's go back on the record.

24 I would like to show you a couple documents, Ambassador
25 Rice.

1 Q Do you recall that exhibit No. 10 was part of
2 the -- when you say "preparatory materials," do you mean for
3 your interview today or for at the time?

4 A At the time.

5 Q Do you recall specifically seeing this document in
6 the binder you received?

7 A As I said, I have seen a version of this document.
8 I can't be a hundred percent sure that this is the final that
9 was in my prep book. But it's quite similar.

10 Q I understand. Focusing on the second bullet under
11 the heading "Goals," it says: "To underscore that these
12 protests are rooted in an Internet video and not a broader
13 failure of policy." Do you recall any specific discussion
14 about that point, that goal as something that you were trying
15 to achieve in your appearances on the talk shows?

16 A I don't recall specific discussions around this.
17 But I do recall that this point was referring to the protests
18 that occurred around the world that week.

19 Q It was also meant to apply to Benghazi as well,
20 correct?

21 A No, that's not how I understood it.

22 Q Okay. Where did you get that understanding from?

23 A Because there is nothing -- these talking points
24 are not about Benghazi.

25 Q Well, the next bullet I will read into the record

1 says: "To show that we will be resolute in bringing the
2 people who harm Americans to justice and standing steadfast
3 through these protests." So, at that point in time -- this
4 is Friday, September 14th -- the only Americans that had been
5 harmed were the Americans in Benghazi, correct?

6 A To my knowledge.

7 Q All right. I am going to stop my questioning now
8 and turn it over to Members.

9 A I would just add that standing steadfast through
10 these protests, plural, was referring to what had occurred
11 around the world.

12 Q But it was to include Benghazi?

13 A I didn't understand it in that sense because it
14 wasn't specific. And there is nothing else in this document
15 that's on Benghazi, as I recall.

16 Q Let's flip to the second to last page. You are now
17 looking at a summary of what the shows were going to focus
18 on. And this is going --

19 A Where are you? I am sorry.

20 Q It is the second to last page in the --

21 Mr. Sauber. It says page 4 at the bottom?

22 Mr. Missakian. Yes, where it says page 4 at the bottom.

23 Ms. Rice. Where are we on this page?

24 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

25 Q There is an email that starts about a third of the

1 way down from the top from Dag Vega. Who is Dag Vega?

2 A He was like the booker guy at the White House who
3 books the shows. Sorry for being imprecise.

4 Q That's okay. It's to Ben Rhodes and a number of
5 other people. And it gives a summary of what you might
6 expect to be asked about on the talk shows, correct?

7 A Where is it? The promos. I didn't see that piece.

8 Q You did not see that piece?

9 A No.

10 Q So when you received this document as part of your
11 preparation binder, you did not believe that it applied to
12 Benghazi?

13 Mr. McQuaid. Could you just be clear on the record of
14 what she said? I don't think that's accurate to what she
15 said.

16 Mr. Missakian. It's a question.

17 Ms. Rice. Let me be very clear.

18 Mr. Missakian. Please.

19 Ms. Rice. First of all, I said that I received and saw
20 as part of my prep materials a version of this document that
21 was quite similar. I don't believe it was identical. It did
22 not include this email from Dag Vega. And I was saying that
23 these points, up to the line where you see the separate email
24 from Dag Vega, as I recall, and as I look at them cursorily
25 here, did not refer to Benghazi.

1 Mr. Missakian. Okay. Thank you.

2 Mr. Jordan. Ambassador, is there anyone else at the
3 State Department you spoke to that week other than Secretary
4 Clinton on that Friday morning? Did you talk with anyone
5 else?

6 Ms. Rice. I am sure I did. I mean, I was part of the
7 State Department. So everybody I talked to at my mission was
8 technically part of the State Department.

9 Mr. Jordan. Did you talk with Jake Sullivan?

10 Ms. Rice. I don't recall.

11 Mr. Jordan. Did you talk with Chief of Staff Mills?

12 Mr. Sauber. I am sorry, on that Friday?

13 Mr. Jordan. That week.

14 Ms. Rice. ^{Between} ~~In~~ the 11th to the 16th. I don't recall.

15 Mr. Jordan. Patrick Kennedy?

16 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Are we talking about Benghazi?

17 Ms. Rice. That's a fair question. Are we talking about
18 on Benghazi or on any subject?

19 Mr. Jordan. I just want to know if you talked to him.

20 Ms. Rice. Not that I recall.

21 Mr. Jordan. You don't recall talking to Cheryl Mills,
22 Jake Sullivan, or Patrick Kennedy that week?

23 Ms. Rice. No, I don't.

24 Mr. Jordan. Is there anyone -- did you speak with
25 anyone in Libya? Like Greg Hicks?

1 Ms. Rice. During that week? No.

2 Mr. Jordan. Anyone at the State Department in the areas
3 that had jurisdiction over policy and security in Libya,
4 namely the Near Eastern Affairs Bureau?

5 Ms. Rice. I don't recall.

6 Mr. McQuaid. Off the record.

7 [Discussion off the record.]

8 Mr. McQuaid. Back on the record.

9 Ms. Rice. In any given week, I could have spoken to any
10 of those people on any number of topics, but I am trying to
11 give you my recollection, which is I don't have any specific
12 recollection of talking to those people in that window.

13 Mr. Jordan. Okay. That's all I got.

14 Mr. Pompeo. Ambassador, you referred repeatedly to
15 these HPSCI talking points as the intel community's best
16 judgment. Is that correct? Is that how you understood what
17 you were provided?

18 Ms. Rice. Best current assessment.

19 Mr. Pompeo. Best current assessment. But it wasn't the
20 intel community's best assessment. These were fully across
21 the White House vetted and changed. You may not have known
22 that. And that's my question. Were you aware that these
23 weren't what the intel community originally provided, but in
24 fact had been changed and input had been provided across lots
25 of non-intel related personnel at the White House?

1 Ms. Rice. Sir, as I said earlier, I did not have any
2 knowledge of how these talking points were edited.

3 Mr. Pompeo. Why do you keep referring to them as the
4 intel points today, as somehow these were just pure intel?
5 This is a very important point. The White House modified
6 these. And they either didn't tell you or you didn't know.
7 And I am just trying to understand why you even today seem to
8 think these were the intel community's talking points. They
9 were not that.

10 Ms. Rice. Because they were originally drafted by the
11 intelligence community.

12 Mr. Pompeo. First draft.

13 Ms. Rice. They were validated by the intelligence
14 community. You heard Director Clapper subsequently say they
15 were what they provided, and he represents the entire
16 intelligence community. And, moreover, I knew that they were
17 substantially consistent with and closely mirrored the
18 intelligence that I had received from the intelligence
19 community.

20 Mr. Pompeo. But you knew Ben Rhodes had input, right?

21 Ms. Rice. I did not.

22 Mr. Pompeo. You did not. He didn't tell you that when
23 you were speaking to him at 4 o'clock on Saturday?

24 Ms. Rice. As I said earlier, sir, we didn't discuss
25 Benghazi or the talking points on that call. I was awaiting

1 the receipt of the talking points from the intelligence
2 community, which, as you know, were prepared for HPSCI. So
3 we didn't discuss the substance of them.

4 Mr. Pompeo. I understand. So you were just the
5 spokesman. You had been given something, and they told you:
6 Go on out there and do your duty and repeat what you were
7 provided.

8 Ms. Rice. No, sir. I was also a member of the
9 President's Cabinet and the National Security Council. I was
10 a recipient of the most refined intelligence products. And I
11 satisfied myself that what I had been asked to say in the
12 unclassified points were consistent with what I had received
13 in intelligence channels. Otherwise, I wouldn't have said
14 it.

15 Mr. Pompeo. We have had testimony that people were very
16 surprised by what you said on Sunday morning -- intelligence
17 professionals inside the government at that time were
18 surprised by what you said.

19 Ms. Sawyer. Just to clarify, I don't believe that this
20 committee actually has received that.

21 Mr. Pompeo. Sure we have.

22 Mr. Missakian. Let's go off the record.

23 [Discussion off the record.]

24 Mr. Pompeo. Can you account for why the intelligence
25 professionals who you thought had provided you the talking

1 points, or at least some of them or one or two, were
2 surprised by what you went out and said on Sunday morning?

3 Ms. Rice. I can't account for that. I don't know who
4 you are referring to or what information they had. I do know
5 that the intelligence -- senior intelligence officials in
6 Washington had validated these points as our current best
7 assessment. And you have Director Clapper on the record
8 saying as much.

9 Mr. Pompeo. Right. I appreciate that. We are trying
10 to figure out how that could have possibly happened. There
11 have been some suggestions it was political. And I just want
12 to know. We have folks who were deeply surprised inside the
13 government about what you said then. We are trying to
14 reconcile how these all came to be.

15 Ms. Rice. I can't shed any light on that.

16 Mr. Pompeo. I appreciate that. Thank you very much.
17 Thanks for your time.

18 Chairman Gowdy. Ambassador, I just have a couple more
19 questions. Back to this reference to evidence in connection
20 with the FBI. Were you aware that there was a surveillance
21 video or at least the prospect of a surveillance video at the
22 compound that would have captured what happened?

23 Mr. Sauber. As of the day she went on the shows?

24 Chairman Gowdy. Yeah. That's fair.

25 Ms. Rice. I don't believe I was aware of that at the

1 time. I became aware of it subsequently.

2 Chairman Gowdy. It is not a trick question. Would you
3 agree with me that the surveillance video would be among the
4 best evidence, since you used the word "evidence," would be
5 among the best evidence as to what actually happened?

6 Ms. Rice. Would I have agreed at the time?

7 Chairman Gowdy. Would you agree, just in theory? It's
8 not a trick question. In theory, a real-time video of what's
9 happening would be really good evidence as to what happened.

10 Ms. Rice. Yes, sir.

11 Chairman Gowdy. Were you aware that there were
12 survivors of the attacks in Benghazi?

13 Mr. Sauber. On that day?

14 Chairman Gowdy. Yeah.

15 Mr. Sauber. On the day she went on the shows.

16 Chairman Gowdy. Or leading up to them. At any point
17 leading up to your five Sunday morning talk show appearances,
18 were you aware there were survivors of the attacks?

19 Ms. Rice. By "survivors," you mean Americans?

20 Chairman Gowdy. Yes, ma'am.

21 Ms. Rice. Yes, I believe I was.

22 Chairman Gowdy. Did you know whether or not the FBI was
23 interviewing those survivors?

24 Ms. Rice. I was certain they would interview those
25 survivors.

1 Chairman Gowdy. So when you say the investigation has
2 already begun, specifically making reference to the Bureau's
3 investigation, were you referencing that? Did you know the
4 Bureau was already interviewing survivors before you appeared
5 on the Sunday morning talk shows?

6 Ms. Rice. I am not sure I knew when they would be
7 getting to interview survivors, but I knew they would do so,
8 and I knew they were already combing through the intelligence
9 that we had available.

10 Chairman Gowdy. I guess this is what I am getting at,
11 just from a broader perspective. We all hear, whether it's
12 Attorney General Holder, Attorney General Lynch, really
13 anybody in the criminal justice realm just doesn't comment on
14 ongoing investigations. They don't make comments and use
15 qualifying predicates. They just say: Look, I don't know.
16 And I am not going to answer your question until the
17 investigation is complete.

18 Why not respond that way when you were asked on the
19 Sunday morning talk shows?

20 Ms. Rice. Sir, I wasn't trying to qualify or
21 characterize the investigation. I was trying to indicate
22 that there was an investigation, that it was going to be
23 thorough, and that it would reveal the best information as to
24 what had transpired.

25 Chairman Gowdy. I am not challenging that. I am just

1 saying instead of saying, "Our best assessment at this time
2 is that it was not premeditated, not preplanned, that it was
3 spontaneous," one out of five references to the video, why
4 not just say, "The investigation has just begun; we don't
5 know; and I am not going to guess"?

6 Ms. Rice. Because our intelligence community, in
7 response to a request from HPSCI, had provided talking points
8 along the lines that we have discussed multiple times now.
9 And those talking points, which you and your colleagues would
10 have gone out with, were more detailed than simply saying, "I
11 don't know."

12 Chairman Gowdy. Right. But you and I both know in
13 hindsight that the talking points, at least to some degree,
14 were wrong. So I guess the lesson moving forward is maybe we
15 should just say, "It's an ongoing investigation, and I am not
16 going to comment on it."

17 Ms. Rice. Maybe we should.

18 Chairman Gowdy. All right. One last thing, and I will
19 turn it back over. Your credentials are unassailable. I
20 certainly understand why you would be on the list of people
21 to ask to go on the Sunday morning talk shows. But your
22 background is not in law enforcement. Your background is not
23 at the Department of Defense. You did work for the State
24 Department but were not the Secretary of State at the time.
25 Do you know if they asked anyone to go on the shows before

1 they asked you?

2 Ms. Rice. I know they asked Secretary Clinton.

3 Chairman Gowdy. And you met with her the Friday before
4 you went on. Your best recollection is you -- human nature
5 was not such that you would say, "Hey, you mind if I ask, why
6 aren't you going on these shows?"

7 Ms. Rice. So, sir, just to be clear, I didn't know I
8 was going to be asked to go on the shows when I met with
9 Secretary Clinton. I didn't know she had been asked to go on
10 the shows. This was in the morning, Friday morning. I was
11 asked Friday afternoon, late afternoon. And up until that
12 point, I had no knowledge of Sunday shows, her -- the request
13 to me or the request to her.

14 Chairman Gowdy. So the first phone call you got from
15 Ben Rhodes alerting you to at least be open to the
16 possibility was after your meeting with Secretary Clinton.

17 Ms. Rice. Many hours after.

18 Chairman Gowdy. Okay. Did you think about calling her
19 and saying, "Look, I have been asked to do this; I know you
20 had a terrible week; I have had a terrible week too; why am I
21 doing this?"

22 Ms. Rice. No, I didn't call. I saw her subsequently at
23 the DV lounge at Andrews, but we didn't talk about it.

24 Chairman Gowdy. Do you know if anyone other than
25 Secretary of State Clinton was asked to go on the shows?

1 Ms. Rice. I am not certain.

2 Chairman Gowdy. All right. Thank you.

3 Mr. Jordan. Let me just be clear on that. So you meet
4 with Secretary Clinton. You can't recall what you discussed
5 in that meeting. You get a call on the way to Andrews from
6 Ben Rhodes saying: Hey, Ambassador, we may need you to go on
7 the shows. We may ask you to go on the shows because the
8 Secretary may not.

9 On the way to Andrews, you get that phone call.

10 Ms. Rice. That's right, sir.

11 Mr. Jordan. And then you get to Andrews, and you have a
12 conversation with Secretary Clinton.

13 Ms. Rice. No. I get to Andrews, just to be clear -- I
14 don't mean to interrupt; I apologize -- and I am among a
15 number of senior U.S. officials who were there for the
16 ceremony and who were there to express our condolences to the
17 families.

18 Mr. Jordan. I understand.

19 Ms. Rice. I don't recall having a specific conversation
20 with her, though I am sure I interacted with her in terms of
21 at least pleasantries as we were greeting the families.

22 Mr. Jordan. And then after that service is complete,
23 you didn't have any conversation with Secretary Clinton then?

24 Ms. Rice. No, I didn't that day or before going on the
25 shows.

1 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

2 Q Ambassador Rice, just a couple of questions, and
3 then we will finish up and turn it over to the minority. The
4 former Deputy Director of the CIA, Michael Morell, has stated
5 publicly that the CIA talking points, or HPSCI talking
6 points, did not mention the video as a motive for the
7 attackers in Benghazi. And if you read it, there is no
8 mention of the video. Would you agree with that?

9 A Yes.

10 Q And, previously, we had looked at exhibit 3, which
11 is a set of -- another set of talking points from the
12 National Counterterrorism Center.

13 A You are going to have to remind me.

14 Mr. Sauber. Here we go.

15 Ms. Rice. Okay.

16 BY MR. MISSAKIAN:

17 Q And you are familiar with the NCTC?

18 A I am familiar with the organization, yes, of
19 course.

20 Q Certainly. It's part of the U.S. intelligence
21 community?

22 A Yes, sir.

23 Q And this email was sent out on September 15th, at
24 11:15 a.m., the same day that you received the HPSCI talking
25 points. And at the bottom, the very last sentence says: "We

1 are very cautious about drawing any firm conclusions at this
2 point" --

3 A I am sorry, where -- the bottom of the first page.

4 Q Very bottom of the first page. "We are very
5 cautious about drawing any firm conclusions at this point
6 with regard to the identification and motivation of the
7 attackers." So, even here, the NCTC is not connecting the
8 video to what occurred in Benghazi. And Michael Morell, as I
9 said, has stated that the CIA did not blame the video for
10 what occurred in Benghazi.

11 So as we wrap this up, can you just explain to us the
12 process that you went through in reading the talking points
13 and then going on television and making a number of
14 statements where you appeared to say that the video was --
15 attack in Benghazi was a direct result of what you called the
16 heinous and offensive video?

17 Mr. Sauber. Just so I am clear, you are not suggesting
18 that this was sent to her, exhibit 3, or that she saw it.

19 Mr. Missakian. I am not.

20 Ms. Rice. I have never seen this.

21 Mr. Missakian. That was very clear when I showed it to
22 you, that you have never seen that. And we understand that.
23 But I am just pointing this out to suggest that at least
24 within the U.S. intelligence community, it appears that they
25 were not prepared to go as far as you did on the talk shows.

1 And I am wondering how that happened.

2 Ms. Rice. First of all, I don't know the progeny of
3 this or its context. So I can't comment on that.

4 What I can say is that I -- we have been through this,
5 but I was very careful to link the video to what happened in
6 Cairo and to other posts around the world. I did not say
7 that the attack on Benghazi was directly caused by the video.

8 Mr. Missakian. Okay. Thank you. Understand.

9 Any other questions?

10 Thank you. We are done.

11 Chairman Gowdy. Thank you.

12 [Discussion off the record.]

13 Ms. Sawyer. We can go back on the record if everyone is
14 ready.

15 So I wanted to show you what we are going to mark as
16 exhibit No. 11 for identification purposes. And let me just
17 identify this for the record.

18 [Rice Exhibit No. 11

19 was marked for identification.]

20 BY MS. SAWYER:

21 Q This is an excerpt from a public hearing held
22 before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
23 on April 2nd, 2014. This excerpt, I just wanted to direct
24 your attention to page 13. And this is just with relation to
25 a question you were just asked in the last hour by

1 Representative Pompeo about testimony with regard to people
2 within the intelligence community being shocked by what they
3 heard you say on the Sunday talk shows. So about halfway
4 down the page, Mr. Morell is talking about a report that had
5 come in from the chief of station. And I will give you a
6 moment just to read through that page and onto page 14. And
7 then I just wanted to ask you a question.

8 Mr. McQuaid. She will answer, as she did with the
9 majority, just consistent with -- she can respond to it, but,
10 obviously, any information is about what she knew at the time
11 of the 11th through the 16th.

12 Ms. Rice. Go ahead?

13 BY MS. SAWYER:

14 Q So just directing your attention to the bottom of
15 what is page 13 here, Mr. Morell is explaining that at the
16 time -- and this was around the time of your appearance on
17 the Sunday talk shows -- the analysts said that there was a
18 protest, quote: "I also believed it to be a terrorist
19 attack. You see, we never say those two things as mutually
20 exclusive. And so I believe both of those at the same time."

21 Mr. Rogers then asks: "Knowing what you know now, would
22 you have been surprised that many of the eyewitnesses that we
23 have talked to said they were surprised by the narrative on
24 Sunday the 16th? They were shocked, members of your
25 organization, that were -- I think the word was shocked."

1 Mr. Morell, who was then Deputy Director of the CIA
2 said, quote, "Yeah, I'm a little surprised by that, quite
3 frankly, because if they were members of my organization,
4 then they would have seen the analysis written on the 13th
5 that said there was a protest and said the attack evolved
6 spontaneously from the protest. So if they were shocked on
7 Sunday when they heard that, they should have been shocked on
8 Thursday, the 13th, when they read it," end quote.

9 So you were just asked the question about -- the
10 hypothesis was posited to you that we had heard testimony
11 that individuals within the intelligence community were
12 shocked. Mr. Morell was asked that same question when he was
13 in a public hearing on April 2nd, 2014. So I think that's
14 almost 2 years ago. He then explained that if they were
15 shocked when they saw you, they should have been shocked when
16 they actually read -- as I read this -- when they read their
17 own assessments that were circulated through the intelligence
18 community. Would that have kind of paralleled what you have
19 explained to us today in terms of what you were seeing in
20 those talking points was consistent with the intelligence
21 community's assessment through that week?

22 A Yes. As I have said throughout, I was confident
23 that the talking points that I was provided for the Sunday
24 shows on the 16th indeed reflected our current best
25 assessment, because I had seen very similar analysis and

1 indeed much the same language in finished intelligence
2 products that had been provided to me in the days leading up
3 to my Sunday show appearances.

4 Q So to the extent this committee has in fact heard
5 any testimony that anyone in the intelligence community was
6 shocked, would this statement that if they were shocked from
7 what they heard from you on Sunday, if that shocked them,
8 then they also should have been shocked when they were
9 reading the intelligence products that were being created by
10 them and circulated by the intelligence community, including
11 the CIA?

12 A That would be my judgment, that because they were
13 substantially the same, they should have been shocked when
14 they initially heard it.

15 Q So you have been asked a number of questions about
16 the Sunday talk shows, including the questions I just asked
17 you. And you have been very, I think, clear with us that
18 when speaking specifically on Benghazi, you were adhering as
19 closely as you felt possible in an unclassified setting to
20 both what is in that HPSCI -- in the HPSCI talking points.
21 Is that accurate?

22 A Yes, it's very accurate.

23 Q And that you have been asked -- I think really only
24 given one instance where you were asked about the broader
25 regional unrest and protests more broadly, and in that

1 context, the precursor statement was Cairo, Libya. I think
2 added in were Khartoum and Tunisia.

3 A And I said many other places around the region. So
4 I was referring to the broad swath of protests in that
5 statement.

6 Q And you had, when you were speaking with the
7 ranking member, you had said you did not deliberately mislead
8 because at the time, you -- I think, as you phrased it, you
9 said you did not know that there were no protests. I think
10 the affirmative way of saying that would be that you believed
11 there was, consistent with what the HPSCI talking points
12 said, a protest in Benghazi.

13 A I ^{believed} ~~believe~~ our current best assessment was that
14 there was a protest at our facility in Benghazi, not only
15 because it was in the talking points but because it was the
16 latest information that I had received in my intelligence
17 briefings.

18 Q And so, certainly, in talking about protests that
19 occurred throughout that region, it was not inaccurate to
20 include Benghazi as a place where protests had occurred as to
21 the best assessment at the time?

22 A We believed protests had occurred in Benghazi as
23 well as elsewhere.

24 Q And in discussing the underlying cause for protests
25 throughout that region, was it the best assessment at the

1 time that protests throughout that region had indeed been
2 caused by the offensive video?

3 A I was referring to Cairo. I was linking the video
4 to Cairo and to the other places around the world.

5 Q And had any other reason been given for the unrest
6 in those places than the video deemed offensive to Muslims?

7 A My understanding of our best assessment was that
8 indeed the protests around the world, including in Cairo,
9 were linked to the video.

10 BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

11 Q Okay. So, at this point, we are about to wrap up.
12 I am going to try to go through the same set of questions
13 that we ask all the witnesses that come before us. I
14 understand that we have some specific understandings about
15 scope. So certainly when listening to these questions,
16 please do not respond with anything that's related to your
17 current job. I am not talking about your current role as the
18 National Security Advisor. Most of these are pertaining to
19 that time period in the night of the attacks and that week
20 afterwards. And I am asking for whether you have any
21 personal knowledge or evidence of a series of things. And so
22 if you don't, you can just answer no.

23 I am going to start with the one about you. It's been
24 alleged that Ambassador Susan Rice made an intentional
25 misrepresentation when she spoke on the Sunday talk shows

1 about the Benghazi attacks. Do you have any evidence that
2 you intentionally misrepresented facts about the Benghazi
3 attacks on Sunday talk shows?

4 A I did not.

5 Q So that's a no. No evidence.

6 A Not only do I have no evidence, I know I did not.

7 Q Excellent.

8 On a similar point, it's been alleged that CIA Deputy
9 Director Michael Morell altered unclassified talking points
10 about the Benghazi attacks for political reasons and that he
11 then misrepresented his actions when he told Congress that
12 the CIA, quote, "faithfully performed our duties in
13 accordance with the highest standards of objectivity and
14 nonpartisanship." Do you have any evidence that CIA Deputy
15 Director Mike Morell gave false or intentionally misleading
16 testimony to Congress about the Benghazi talking points?

17 A No, I do not.

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

21 A No, I do not.

22 Q It's been alleged that Secretary of State Clinton
23 intentionally blocked military action on the night of the
24 attacks. One Congressman has speculated that Secretary
25 Clinton told Leon Panetta to stand down, and this resulted in

1 the Defense Department not sending more assets to help in
2 Benghazi. Do you have any evidence that Secretary of State
3 Clinton ordered Secretary of Defense Panetta to stand down on
4 the night of the attacks?

5 A No, I do not.

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

9 A No, I do not.

10 Q It has been alleged that Secretary Clinton
11 personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security to
12 Libya. The Washington Post Fact Checker evaluated this claim
13 and gave it four Pinocchios, its highest award for false
14 claims. Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton
15 personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security
16 resources to Libya?

17 Mr. McQuaid. Can we go off the record?

18 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Uh-huh.

19 [Discussion off the record.]

20 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Back on the record.

21 BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

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

25 A No.

1 Q It's been alleged -- a team of CIA security
2 personnel was temporarily delayed from departing the Annex to
3 assist the Special Mission Compound. There have been a
4 number of allegations about the cause of and appropriateness
5 of the delay. The House Intelligence Committee issued a
6 bipartisan report concluding that the team was not ordered to
7 stand down, but that instead there were tactical
8 disagreements on the ground over how quickly to depart. Do
9 you have any -- this is back to that same time period. Do
10 you have any evidence that would contradict the House
11 Intelligence Committee's finding that there was no standdown
12 order to CIA personnel?

13 A I do not.

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

20 A I do not.

21 Q It's been alleged that the President of the United
22 States was virtually AWOL as Commander in Chief on the night
23 of the attacks and that he was missing in action. Do you
24 have any evidence to support the allegation that the
25 President was virtually AWOL as Commander in Chief or missing

1 in action on the night of the attacks?

2 A No, I do not.

3 Q It has been alleged that a team of four military
4 personnel at the Embassy Tripoli on the night of the attacks
5 were considering flying on the second plane to Benghazi, were
6 ordered by their superiors to stand down, meaning to cease
7 all operations. Military officials have stated that those
8 four individuals were instead ordered to remain in place in
9 Tripoli to provide security and medical assistance in their
10 current location.

11 A Republican staff report issued by the House Armed
12 Services Committee found that, quote, "There was no standdown
13 order issued to the U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who
14 sought to join the fight in Benghazi," end quote. Do you
15 have any evidence to contradict the conclusion of the House
16 Armed Services Committee that there was no standdown order
17 issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to
18 join the fight in Benghazi?

19 A No, I do not.

20 Q It has been alleged that the military failed to
21 deploy assets on the night of the attack that would have
22 saved lives. However, former Republican Congressman Howard
23 "Buck" McKeon, the former chairman of the House Armed
24 Services Committee, conducted a review of the attacks, after
25 which he stated, quote, "Given where the troops were, how

1 quickly the thing all happened, and how quickly it
2 dissipated, we probably couldn't have done more than we did."
3 Do you have any evidence to contradict Congressman McKeon's
4 conclusion?

5 A No, I do not.

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

10 A No, I do not.

11 Ms. Sawyer. Before we go, we have asked you a number of
12 different questions. I would just like to give you an
13 opportunity if there is anything that you would like to add
14 or have us know before we let you go to your appointment.

15 Ms. Rice. I would just like to say that what is most
16 painful to me and my colleagues in the State Department is
17 the loss of our four colleagues on that tragic day. And as I
18 have said, in my case, I had a working relationship with and
19 was very fond of Ambassador Stevens. And in all of our
20 discussion today, I think we have ~~had~~ ^{devoted} precious little
21 attention to the import of that loss and to what could be
22 done differently in the future to protect our diplomats and
23 development workers as well as our military personnel in
24 harm's way. And that's what I am most concerned about, and
25 that's what I hope will come out of the work you have been

1 doing.

2 Ms. Sawyer. We appreciate that very much. And, again,
3 we do appreciate your time and the accommodations to come and
4 speak with us voluntarily and answer our questions. So thank
5 you for that and your service to our country.

6 Ms. Sachsman Grooms. Let's go off the record.

7 [Whereupon, at 2:24 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

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Certificate of Deponent/Interviewee

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

Witness Name

Date

Errata Sheet

Select Committee on Benghazi

The witness' White House counsel on behalf of 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' COUNSEL</u>
5	21	Replaced "evening" with "early evening."
6	7	Replaced "recall any, no" with "recall in any depth, no."
6	14	Replaced "obviously" with "honestly."
20	22	Replaced "was effort to" with "was the effort to."
55	10	Replaced "and" with "in."
76	14	Added commas around "on September 27th."
79	21	Replaced "within" with "more than."
83	3	Replaced "opportunities" with "opportunity."
83	5	Replaced "best we had" with "best information we had."
83	14	Deleted "both."
83	16	Replaced "have" with "had."
84	20	Replaced "even on CNN, I wasn't asked" to "on CNN, I wasn't even asked."
99	19	Replaced "met" with "meant."
112	7	Replaced "I don't her to" to "I don't want her to."
112	9	Added comma after "assessment."
112	9	Replaced "understanding" to "her understanding of."
131	11, 12	Replaced "an accurate" with "inaccurate."
135	20	Replaced "I always" with "I have always."
154	14	Replaced "In" with "Between."
170	13	Replaced "believe" with "believed."
176	20	Replaced "had" with "devoted."