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

INTERVIEW OF: GENERAL PHILIP BREEDLOVE

Thursday, April 7, 2016

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held in HVC-302, commencing  
at time 1:00 p.m.

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Appearances:

For the SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI:

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Mr. Tolar. Let's go on the record. Good afternoon, sir. This is the transcribed interview of General Philip Breedlove, United States Air Force, conducted by the House Select Committee on Benghazi. This interview is being conducted voluntarily, as part of the committee's investigation into the attacks on the U.S. diplomatic facilities in Benghazi, Libya, and related matters, pursuant to House Resolution 567 of the 113th Congress and House Resolution 5 of the 114th Congress.

Would the witness please state his name for the record.

General Breedlove. Philip Mark Breedlove.

Mr. Tolar. Again, General, the committee appreciates your appearance here today. My name is Mac Tolar, and I'm with the committee's majority staff. At this time, I would ask everyone in the room to please introduce themselves, starting with Sheria to my left.

Ms. Clarke. Sheria Clarke, majority staff.

Ms. Green. Shannon Green with the minority staff.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. I'm Susanne Sachsman Grooms with the minority staff.

Mr. Kenny. Peter Kenny, minority staff.

Mr. Hudson. Bill Hudson, Office of the DOD General Counsel.

Mr. Richards. Ed Richards, DOD OGC.

Mr. Alexander. Colonel Jeff Alexander, U.S. EUCOM Congressional Affairs.

Mr. Tolar. Thank you, sir. Before we begin, I'd like to go over a few ground rules and explain how the interview will proceed. There will be rounds where the majority staff will ask questions for up to

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[REDACTED]

1 hour. At the end of that time, the minority will have an opportunity to ask questions for an equal period of time if they choose. We will continue to rotate back and forth accordingly until we have exhausted all our questions.

As you could see, we've got [REDACTED] here as our reporter taking down everything we say in order to make a written record. Accordingly, I would ask you to provide verbal responses such as "yes" or "no" to all questions as opposed to nods of the head. I'm going to ask Catalina to feel free to jump in if we are nodding and doing things of that nature.

Please give your best recollection. If there's things that you don't know or can't remember, that's okay, just say so. And if you have an idea or who might be able or better suited to answer that question, just please let us know. Please don't guess or speculate if you don't know the answer.

Please understand that although you are not under oath today, you are required by law to answer questions from Congress truthfully, including questions posed by congressional staff in interviews such as this. Do you understand this, sir?

General Breedlove. Absolutely.

Mr. Tolar. Is there any reason why you are unable to provide truthful answers to today's questions?

General Breedlove. I am absolutely able to provide truthful answers.

Mr. Tolar. Thank you. Again, we appreciate your attendance this morning. We will endeavor to proceed as expeditiously as

[REDACTED]

possible. Along the way, some questions may appear to be basic. Please understand I'm trying to flesh out a detailed record of the events surrounding Benghazi, and appreciate your patience with that.

At this point, I'm done. Shannon, do you have anything?

Ms. Green. Sir, on behalf of the Select Committee minority staff, we appreciate you being here, and we'll wrap this up in short order, hopefully.

General Breedlove. Thank you.

Mr. Tolar. I've got 12:59. Let's start the clock for the first round, please.

#### EXAMINATION

BY MR. TOLAR:

Q Sir, if you would, please walk me through your billets as a flag officer.

A Okay. So the first billet as a flag officer was as the -- I was selected to be a flag officer when I was the military assistant to the secretary of the Air Force. I was in the building on 9/11 when it was hit, with the secretary.

I left there to Luke Air Force base, where I pinned on brigadier general and my first in that wing command. Then I went from Luke Air Force base after a full 2-year tour to Aviano Air Force base, and served as the wing commander as a 1 star. It should have been a 2-year assignment. I was selected, during that assignment, for promotion to major general.

So they moved me to, Ramstein, where I was the military -- I was

[REDACTED]

the vice commander of the numbered Air Force there, which encompassed all of the forces, the Air Forces of Europe in the 16th Air Force, which was later renamed 3rd because of historical points. I served there until I was selected to go back to the Joint Staff to be the deputy J5 Plans and Policy as a 2 star. I served there for 2 years, and was selected for my third star.

I went from the director -- vice director of the Joint Staff back to Ramstein to be the commander of 3rd Air Force. I served there until -- that's a 3 star position. I served there until I was selected to go back to the Pentagon to be the A3, which is the operations director of the Air Force. I ran operations and requirements as the A3 in a 3 star role.

As I was the A3, I was selected for a fourth star and became the vice chief of staff of the Air Force. I served a full tour of 2 years as the vice chief of staff of the Air Force in my first 4 star assignment. I was then selected to go back to Ramstein to be the USAFE commander, and that's where I was during the time of the Benghazi incident.

I served about half of a tour as commander of USAFE, and that's when I was selected to be the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, commander of U.S. European Command, and I have been in that position for about 2 years and 11 months.

Q Talk to me briefly about the mission of USAFE. Just a big picture, big picture.

A Yeah. So at the time, USAFE was responsible to both the EUCOM commander and the AFRICOM commander to provide trained and ready

[REDACTED]

forces and to supervise the conditions of training, conditions of living of all of the Air Forces assigned to USAFE in Europe, realizing there were Air Forces also assigned to Special Operations Command and others. We would provide care and feeding and basing for them, but those forces were not assigned to me.

Q Did that mission at USAFE include supporting lift requirements for CIF and FAST?

A Could, yes.

Q Talk to me a little bit about the responsibilities of USAFE and how they differed from what TRANSCOM does.

A Right. So USAFE is a broad warfighting command and serves as a component, an air component, and a JFACC, Joint Forces Air Component Commander, to two separate COCOMs, EUCOM and AFRICOM. And in that role, USAFE broadly has all manner of Air Force elements, meaning fighters, airlift, tankers, a very small ISR, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance capability, but it is a microcosm of the larger Air Force. It has also command and control facilities that would grow to be a full-fledged warfighting JFACC, Joint Forces Air Component Command, if required.

But essentially, USAFE is the air component across all manner of assigned European Command Air Force units. TRANSCOM, of course, is a combatant commander, a functional combatant commander, and has responsibility for airlift all around the globe. In USAFE's capability, we have C-130s assigned at Ramstein. Of course, TRANSCOM has every lift and tanker capability that assigns all around the globe.

[REDACTED]

Q Talk to me briefly about the mission of 3rd Air Force.

A So 3rd Air Force is that step of command and control just below the 4 star commander, and they are more focused on the care and feeding of the assigned aviation forces. So it would probably be easier for me just to draw an example of a difference.

3rd Air Force is about the training and employment and warfighting capability of the wings assigned to USAFE. USAFE is about roads and grounds, budget, policy, et cetera, et cetera. So it is -- the 3rd Air Force is the warfighting command subordinate to USAFE.

Q And at the time of the attacks in Benghazi, Lieutenant General Gorenc was the commander?

A Gorenc.

Q Gorenc, thank you. Is that correct?

A That's correct. Well, yes. I had two. Franklin and then Gorenc, and I'm pretty sure it was Gorenc, yeah.

Q Talk to me a little bit about operations. When it comes to the 31st Fighter Wing conducting operations, who's planning that? Is it them? Is it 3rd? Is it USAFE?

A The answer is yes, and I'm not trying to be obtuse, but all three levels have responsibility for some part of mission planning. And I will try not to build you a watch, but at the wing level, they are issued a responsibility, say a target, and they are given desired results, and they are issued rules of engagement to include things like collateral damage estimates, et cetera, et cetera.

So at that level, young aviators, which I wish I still was, take

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

that and do the weaponeering and the mission planning to at that level effect the mission they've been given done -- been given.

At the next level up, at the operational level, the 3rd Air Force level, some things will be done for them like trying to coordinate airspace overflight, tankers, et cetera, et cetera.

At the level of USAFE, we are primarily accepting guidance from a combatant commander, translating that guidance into the rules of engagement and sort of the policy level directives, and issuing the policy level attributes of what we're trying to effect, and so each layer has a bit of a responsibility for any given mission.

Q Just to project ahead a little bit, we all want to come back to that and then get in the weeds about that planning the night of the attacks.

A Uh-huh.

Q But we'll come back to that in a minute. Talk to me, let's see, briefly about again -- you may have covered it all, but the 31st Fighter Wing, you were also the commander of that. Talk to me briefly about their mission, per se.

A So the 31st Fighter Wing, at the time it was Scott Zobrist, and you've already talked to him, the 31st Fighter Wing is, at the time, what we call a Block 40 F-16. Let me just wind the clock a little bit.

That was not our newest F-16, but it was the F-16 that is optimized for precision weapon delivery and especially optimized for night precision weapon delivery. And so both of the Block 40 squadrons there were optimized via what we call LANTIRN navigation and targeting pods,

[REDACTED]

et cetera, et cetera.

So it was a wing that was designed around precision delivery of conventional weapons.

Q As an F-16 combat fighter pilot, are you qualified in any other airframes?

A No.

Q How many flight hours did you have?

A About 3,500.

Q All right. I'm a grunt here, so is that a lot?

A That's a lot.

Q That's a lot. Thank you. Did you perform CAS missions as a pilot?

A Yes.

Q Did you do it in an urban environment?

A I never actually delivered weapons myself in an urban environment, but our wings and people just like me have done that.

Q At the time of the attacks, you were the USAFE commander as well as the -- and let's for the record real quick here, when we talk about USAFE commander, that is synonymous with the U.S. AF --

A AFAFRICA commander as well.

Q That's one and same?

A That's correct.

Q Okay. So when we say --

A Same human being.

Q There you go. When we talk about USAFE, that also implies

we're also talking about that other billet?

A That's correct.

Q Thank you, sir. At the time of the attack, would you just talk to me about kind of what your role was as the commander? I mean, you mentioned it a little bit earlier, but if there is something else you want to flesh out, please do.

A Well, the role as the commander is to obviously enable my command to meet the requirements of the combatant commander. So my combatant commander translates mission to me, and I make that mission happen through my operational level command, 3rd Air Force, and the wing commands who own the aircraft. But really that's when something is happening.

The day-to-day role of the combatant commander, both the AFRICOM commander -- I say combatant commander. The component commander, that's what I was then. Correction, please. The component commander, the air component commander to both AFRICOM and EUCOM is -- you've heard these words before -- is to organize, train, and equip the forces that are assigned so that they can meet the requirements of the combatant commander.

Q And in terms of your chain of command, you actually had two chains. Talk about that briefly.

A So I answer to Jim Stavridis, the SACEUR, my predecessor in my EUCOM chain of command because the SACEUR, as you know, is dual hatted as the Supreme Allied Commander Europe and the commander of U.S. European Command.

[REDACTED]

So in my European Command hat, I answer to Jim Stavridis. In my commander U.S. AFRICOM, I answer to Carter Ham in my AFRICOM hat.

Q And going back to your role as the commander for USAFE, you mentioned earlier that you had limited ISR assets. Talk to me about what ISR assets you had direct control over through your food chain going down.

A On that day?

Q Yes, sir.

A None.

Q Literally?

A That's correct. We have no ISR assets assigned to USAFE. We occasionally are apportioned assets from other parts of the Air Force to fly specific missions, but there are no Predators Or Reapers or U-2s or combat Rivet Joints or any of that stuff assigned to USAFE.

Q Do you know if that has changed since the events of Benghazi?

A It is the same. We have transient forces that are assigned to us for specific missions, but ISR is not part of our force set.

Q Is there a reason it's not part of your force set?

A It is, as you know, what we describe in the military, ISR, we call it LDHD, low density, high demand. There is very little of this in a grand sense, and so it is typically held in places like CENTCOM or Afghanistan or North Africa, where there are more intense ISR requirements.

Q In the summer of 2012, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] due to complaints from Libyans. Do you recall

[REDACTED]

that, sir?

A I do not. It doesn't mean it wasn't a fact. I just don't recall that.

Q I'm going to show you an email here, if you don't mind, please, sir, and if you'll just take a second and look at it and see if that refreshes your recollection at all.

As I was -- let's come back to that in a minute.

A Okay. Good.

Q Just to clean up something here. Prior to today, have you ever been interviewed by any committee in the House or Senate about the evens in Benghazi?

A No.

Q Do you know what the Accountability Review Board is, the ARB?

A I'm not terribly familiar. Sorry.

Q Is it fair so say that you weren't interviewed by the ARB?

A I do not believe I was interviewed by anything called an ARB.

Q Have you ever been to Libya?

A No, not physically.

Q Let's go ahead and start talking a little bit about the sequence of events. Talk to me a little bit about September 10th. What I'm particularly interested in is just having you walk me through kind of what kind of briefings, discussions you had that day given the unrest in the AOR, and then any guidance you may have disseminated to

[REDACTED]

your subordinates on September 10th.

A Right, so that's the day prior.

Q Check.

A I can't remember any real specifics. I would say that that day was a day like many others where there were things happening in multiple places around the AOR, and that much like today or many other days between then and now, there were numerous threat streams out there that were being monitored in places from Europe to Iraq, Afghanistan, and North Africa.

Q Was there anything that got your attention that you were looking at closely?

A I do not recall any specific one thing.

Q Did you issue any guidance to your subordinates, given that it was the anniversary of the 9/11?

A No. Well, the whole -- I think the whole military apparatus around the world were sort of cognizant of the fact that occasionally people do things on anniversaries. But there was no, that I recall, any specific guidance. I do not believe we raised our FPCOM or anything like that.

Q And what is FPCOM?

A Force protection control measures.

Q And what was it at the time?

A That would be a guess. I'm pretty sure it was probably Bravo, but I do not know that for sure. Bravo was the normal condition for us.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[Breedlove Exhibit No. 1

was marked for identification.]

Q Yes, sir. Sir, I'm going to show you what we're going to label as Deposition Exhibit 1, and it's an email that was sent on August 17th of 2012. And for all intents and purposes, it's about the request or the challenges associated with having to suspend these ISR flights, Predator flights specifically, over Libya -- over Benghazi and Tripoli.

A Good.

Q Thank you.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. We'll just note for the record, I think you just misspoke there. It's not a deposition. It's a transcribed interview.

Mr. Tolar. I know what it is. Thank you.

General Breedlove. Good. Thanks. Thanks. I do not recall.

BY MR. TOLAR:

Q Having looked at exhibit 1, do you recall now the issue?

A I do remember that we had conversations about the flights. I do not actually, honestly, recall this level of detail about the concerns of stopping them. I mean, clearly we were flying them in order to try to keep contact with what was going on there on the ground.

Q Do you remember about when it was resolved? If it was resolved, how it was resolved?

A I do not. I am missing these details.

Q [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A I am sorry. I am not dodging your questions.

Q Okay.

A I just don't have these memories.

Q Let's move on. That's fine.

Going back to September 10th, anything else you want to add about your activities that day, guidance extended, did you receive any guidance about 9/11 to share, et cetera?

A Right. So I do not recall that we made any, what I would call, very special preparations, et cetera, et cetera. We were at a general state of understanding, again, that people occasionally use these anniversaries for events, and what I -- as I think back about this, preparing for today, the way I remember this is much like a lot of other days where we had a lot of activity around the AOR, and there was none that stood out extremely special.

Q Sure. Let's turn to September 11th.

A Uh-huh.

Q Where were you on September 11th?

A I was there and --

Q Where is "there"?

A At Ramstein, I'm sorry. At Ramstein.

[Breedlove Exhibit No. 2

Was marked for identification.]

Q Okay. When were you first made aware of the attacks? Do you -- let me -- just again to help refresh your recollection --

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Sure.

Q -- I'm going to show you exhibit No. 2. This is a timeline provided by DOD.

A Right.

Q Are you familiar with that timeline, sir?

A I think I've seen this particular document, yes, but let me look at it.

Q In case you want to reference it at some point.

A Thank you. Yes, I have seen this document.

Q Do you recall when you first became aware of the attacks in Benghazi?

A So we were -- it was early in the morning, and I do not know the exact time, but it was some amount of time after the actual attack. Our AOC, Air Operations Center, the current watch cell was notified by AFRICOM, I think their watch cell, that this had happened. And so what happens in all these cases, when something big happens, we start what's called a recall roster, and you notify the senior people and get them headed to work.

And so I went from being at home in bed to throwing on clothes and heading towards the AOC.

Q And did you direct the recall of your senior staff at that time?

A That had already happened. I was part of that recall.

Q Who made that decision?

A I'm pretty sure it was the watch cell running their

[REDACTED]

checklist.

Q And that recall only pertained to senior officers and staff?

A That's correct. It's a selected thing where they bring in the right kind of people that they need to make decisions.

Q Sure. So just kind of, if you will, just kind of walk freely what happened over the next few hours as this thing developed.

A So we responded, and as usual now, we're -- the intel folks are spinning up and trying to give us the best idea of what's happening. I recall that it was a fairly confusing picture, and what -- about a half an hour after I got to the AOC, I listened to a recommendation of our senior leaders, and we decided to begin to stand down our C-130s in case we needed them.

Q I apologize. Whose senior leaders? Your subordinate senior leaders?

A Right.

Q I'm sorry. Thank you. That's correct.

A Yes, I'm sorry. My staff.

Q Sure.

A 3rd Air Force commander, the operations staff, the AOC staff, et cetera. And they made a recommendation to me, which I thought was the right recommendation. We figured that we would probably be well served by being ready with our C-130s if they were required, so we started taking actions to get crews ready and get aircraft ready.

Then we went through a period of time --

Q Stay with me here, sir. So the attack happened at 9:42,

[REDACTED]

you get recalled. Any idea when you got back into the office?

A It was well into the morning, because we weren't notified immediately of the attack.

Q So it was after midnight before you got back to the office, you think?

A I think so, yes, and it was -- we didn't go to the office. We went to the Air Operation Center --

Q Yes, sir.

A -- to where we thought where we would execute missions if we had to.

Q Yes, sir. Can you give an approximation of when, based on your staff guidance, you initiated a full recall of all your airmen in order to prep airplanes for deployment?

A So I wouldn't use any of the terms that you just used. What we did was we directed the wing, which is where you would do what you're talking about, we directed the 3rd Air Force and the wing to begin to assemble crews -- and that will get to another subject I'm sure we're going to talk about in a minutes -- and to look at and begin to prepare aircraft. That decision was made within about a half of an hour of us arriving at the AOC.

Q I believe that's between midnight and 2:00 a.m.?

A It's closer to 2:00 or 3:00 a.m.

Q Okay. And when you say "assemble," does that mean recall?

A So the wing will do what they have to do to do what we task them to do. They are not going to recall the whole wing. They will

[REDACTED]

recall the right kind of people that it takes to -- the word we use is "generate" aircraft, prepare them for mission. And they will also begin to find out what crews they have that are in crew rest, which is what we normally seek is someone who has the appropriate crew rest. And they begin to assemble, try to put together those capabilities so that we could fly, if we had to, respond if we had to.

Q At this point, have you received any guidance from above?

A I have not received any guidance to generate or to create.

Q This is all based on your initiative as the commander?

A Well, let's don't give all the credit to me. As I mentioned before, the staff has looked at this problem, and they made a good recommendation to me which I thought was exactly right, and that is that while we don't have any tasking yet, it would be appropriate to be proactive at this point.

Q So you all have initiated assembling aircraft?

A Generation of --

Q Generation. There you go. I'm sorry. Simultaneously or -- so that process is being done. At that point, had you directed guidance to come up with courses of action? Is that also happening simultaneously?

A No.

Q Okay.

A So of course, we have -- we, at this point, we had no tasking from above, and we were -- I was trying to prepare what are the long lead term items.

Q What does that mean?

A Just it takes a long time to generate aircraft and to assemble air crews from a standing dead stop, which is where we were. We were in a, as you know, but I will say for the record, we were in a completely peacetime configuration. We had -- we are tasked for and had no aircraft on alert at that point. So we're taking aircraft from a normal daily training and execution schedule and now bringing them up to a higher status and putting them on alert, if you will, or beginning to put them on alert.

So we were in the process of doing these long lead time items, preparing aircraft, and trying to assemble and ready crews.

Q And again, you previously mentioned C-130s. Those are the specific planes we're talking about?

A In this -- at this particular moment.

Q Okay. All right. Kind of continue on with the events of the evening, sir, if you don't mind.

A So we had continuing now to get more intelligence and get a little better picture of what had happened, because a lot of it had already transpired. And we were looking at the generation progress of our C-130s. We came to a point where there was -- when you're flying what we call days, meaning a normal schedule, you usually fly people and then they go home and they go into rest, and 12 hours later they are available again.

So we were in a normal day flying schedule, and during the night we saw that we had -- did not have crews that we could bring in

immediately and fly because they had not had the appropriate amount of crew rest. And so at one point we made the decision to look at waiving certain amounts of crew rest to get the right kinds of crews, make them available. And we took those decisions in the middle of the night.

Q Talk about that for a minute, please, sir. We previously spoke with Admiral Winnefeld.

A Uh-huh.

Q He mentioned that he did speak with you --

A Uh-huh.

Q -- that evening that you had already waived crew rest.

A Right.

Q Do you recall when you made that decision to waive crew rest, approximately?

A It was really pretty close to when we got notified because we knew --

Q Okay.

A It was pretty close to that 28 minutes or 30 minutes after notification when we started generating airplanes. It's pretty straightforward that you're in a day schedule and you may have to fly at night, people are not going to be in crew rest.

Q Right.

A So we made the decisions we needed to put some people in crew rest to be able to man the aircraft. And Sandy calling -- it's all fairly simultaneous that we're -- you know, we're having this

discussion, Sandy calling and talking to me, and I said: We've already taken these actions and we're putting -- we're getting the right kind of people to the aircraft.

Q And just to flesh out a little bit. It sounded like you said selective crew rest. Who specifically did you waive that for?

A I don't know the names.

Q No, no, no, I'm sorry. You made -- my impression was perhaps it wasn't all the C-130 crews?

A Absolutely. No, you're not going -- you're only going to alert and prepare enough crews to man the aircraft that you're generating. We weren't generating every C-130 we had. We generated a certain number of C-130s, and then we were generating crews to mate with those airframes.

Q How many C-130s were you trying to generate?

A If you have it --

Q I don't.

A -- you could help me. I don't.

Q More than five?

A I would be guessing. Yes, I think it is.

Q What C-130 squadron was there at the time?

A We only really had one squadron at Ramstein. It was a pretty -- it was a little bit larger than normal, but we had one squadron. I think, at the time, 12 airframes. That's a --

Q So that squadron had approximately 12?

A Yeah.

Q You think you generated half of them?

A About.

Q Okay. And let's get in the weeds a little about just helping me understand crew day and crew rest.

A Uh-huh.

Q First of all, as the USAFE commander, do you have the authority to waive crew day?

A Yes. Actually, one level below me can do that.

Q That's my followup question.

A My staff.

Q As the USAFE commander, do you have the authority to waive crew rest?

A These are not as distinct as you talk about, but yes. The answer is yes.

Q And does the 3rd Air Force commander have that authority?

A I think that that authority is held at what we call the A3 of USAFE. You remember I told you I was the A3 of the Air Force, the operations director of USAFE. I think that's where that's held, but again, I'm just synapses.

Q Sure.

A But that's one level sort of above -- in the command chain, you have the commander, you have the commander of 3rd Air Force, and then you have wings, but between the commander and here, you have staff functions that hold certain authorities. And I believe that is held at the A3 level of the USAFE.

Q Is it possible -- could the wing commander waive crew rest?

A No, not in that situation.

Q Okay. Well, let's do this. Just for my own edification, talk about crew day versus crew rest. What's the difference? Is there?

A So I'm going to disqualify myself right now a little bit because I'm a fighter pilot, and fighter pilots don't have this distinction. There is a distinction in the airlift community, and rather than get -- try to explain it, I'll get it exactly wrong probably, but there is a difference.

Crew rest is typically how long you have between when you last flew and when you can next fly, and that's almost always 12 hours.

Crew day is the amount of the length of the day you can have once you started. So in a -- I have zero experience virtually in crewed airplanes. I've flown a single-seat airplane all my life. But in a crewed airplane, if you have certain type of experience, your crew duty day is normally 12 hours long. But in a crewed airplane, under certain situations, you can extend that crew day once you've started it, or you can approve it ahead of time if the situation warrants.

If you have a certain kind of crew, and what we call an augmented crew, meaning an extra pilot on board, you again can extend the crew duty day. Remember, that's a fighter pilot explaining to you an airlift concept so --

Q And circling back to your waiver, is it accurate to say that when you waived crew rest in order to generate approximately six

aircraft, that included crew day -- that included both?

A No. That would probably not be correct because what -- remember, what we were worried about is these crews had flown the previous day. They had gone home and gone to bed, and we were going to need to bring them in before they had their allotted 12 hours rest. So I was waiving crew rest to bring them in so that they could be available to fly. Does that make sense?

Q It does. Thank you. So you did that for both the maintainers and the pilots?

A Maintainers have -- it's not the same type of rules.

Q Got you.

A This is aviators we're talking about.

Ms. Clarke. I just had, General, just a question. When you were talking about the fact that you had gone ahead and proactively began to waive crew rest, at what point in time was that? Was that prior to or after notification or tasking from above? Do you recall?

General Breedlove. So the decision to generate aircraft and the decision to waive crew rest were almost simultaneous, because you don't generate airplanes just to let them sit. You have to put crews on them.

Ms. Clarke. Yes, sir.

General Breedlove. That all happened about half an hour after we were notified.

Ms. Clarke. Okay.

BY MR. TOLAR:

Q So let's continue on with the evening, sir. You got people

spinning up. What's going on? Walk me through the morning.

A Well, so the morning continues to bring more intelligence and a better picture. Probably the next significant emotional event that I remember is that the -- again, we had -- still had no tasking, but we got a query from AFRICOM about the ability to generate fighters, if needed. So we got no tasking, but we got a query about that.

So again --

Q Would that have come from the J3 to your A3 typically?

A My guess, typically, when we are in that configuration, it would have been from what we call the JOC battle captain at AFRICOM to the JOC battle captain or the AOC battle captain at my place.

Q Thank you, sir. Please continue.

A So we got this query. And again, my staff, we looked at each other and said call back and ask if we have tasking. There was no specific tasking. It was a query. So we made the same decision at that point about fighters that we made about C-130s. Let's begin the generation of fighter aircraft. So we directed the Aviano wing to begin to generate fighter capability. Again, the number is rather small, but something that we could use if it became required.

And one more time, this was -- we were not tasked. We just thought it prudent to begin this process because it takes longer to generate a fighter than it does to generate a lift aircraft.

Q Talking about that real quickly. General Zobrist indicated that at 9:05 a.m. he was tasked by the 3rd Air Force commander to generate four aircraft, two spares. Does that sound accurate?

[REDACTED]

A That sounds about right.

Q That was 9:05 a.m., though.

A Right.

Q Is it fair to say that you would have tasked 3rd Air Force to task 31st Air Wing?

A Well, 3rd Air Force is sitting in the room. You know, at AOC, when we're in this configuration, it's not a table a whole lot bigger than this, and I, as the commander, is sitting there, and my 3rd Air Force command staff is right there with me. This is, we're sitting together, and you know, along the other side are those staff functions I talked to you about that, the A2, which is intelligence; the A3 which is operations; the A4, which is supply and logistics, et cetera.

Q So is it accurate to say that once you all made that decision to ramp up some fast movers, that word was passed almost immediately or immediately to the 31st?

A It would have happened pretty quickly.

Q And again, that was prior to receiving any kind of tasking from your higher headquarters?

A That's correct.

Q Thank you. All right. Keep talking about the day, sir, if you don't mind, please.

A So the rest of the morning we're monitoring what's happening. The intelligence comes in. We're monitoring the generations of capabilities. And then we begin to get -- talk to about

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

the possibility of launching the C-130s to mate up with Marines to head south. And so we started checking to make sure that aircraft were available for when directed we would do that. And we just continued to monitor what I would call the situation on one hand and the generation of some capability should we be tasked on the other hand.

Q Do you recall at what point you all would have been tasked to provide lift for the FAST team?

A I do not have those times in my head.

Q How would that tasking be generated or provided to you?

A It would come to us from AFRICOM.

Q Is it your recollection at this point that as of the time you all took the initiative to spin up the 31st Air Wing, you had still not received a tasking to spin up the C-130s to provide lift for the FAST team. Is that accurate, what I'm saying?

A So I don't know exactly how to answer your question because what happens is, when we start generating aircraft, we make sure that our superior headquarters know we have aircraft available.

Q Sure. Okay. At what point did you receive -- what was the mission that you ultimately -- or the tasking you ultimately received from AFRICOM and/or EUCOM? First of all, let me back up.

A Yeah.

Q Given the location of the incident, was EUCOM at all an issue for you that night? Did you have any communication with them or reason to have it, or was it solely with AFRICOM?

A It's pretty much with AFRICOM.

[REDACTED]

Q Thank you. So what was your mission or taskings that you ultimately received from AFRICOM generally?

A Let me go back so we can be very specific, because I don't want to mislead or -- the lines are a little blurred when you're the same person wears two hats. But AFRICOM is not going to call Italy or someone else for overflight to get to say Libya.

EUCOM deals with Italy, Spain, France, like so. So in our EUCOM hat we would have had folks talking to nations about overflight. If you remember when we talked about how we plan at the wing level, you do the tactical weaponeering, at the next level up you're starting to do these more operational levels, and between the 3rd Air Force and USAFE, you would be doing things like talking about overflight rights, DIP clearances and all those things.

So to try to be as precise as possible, we would have been wearing our EUCOM hat when we called Italy and others, but we are, in effect, working with AFRICOM. We are wearing our AFAFRICA hats and working with AFRICOM for the great portion of what we're doing.

Q So do you recall the taskings or missions that you ultimately received from AFRICOM, generally speaking?

A Well, eventually we were tasked to fly the C-130s to go mate with the Marines.

Q Were you ever tasked to go pick up the CIF in Croatia?

A The CIF in Croatia, if I remember correctly, had its own airplanes there with them, and those were Special Operations aircraft, not USAFE aircraft.

Q But did you have any kind of tasking to go pick them up?

A I do not recall any.

Q Did you have any tasking to provide lifts for any other unit, organization, et cetera, at that time?

A Not that I recall.

Q What was your understanding of the mission, big picture mission that day? Was it we're rescuing an ambassador? Are we sending people to Benghazi? What was your understanding at the time?

A So because of when we were notified, a lot of what was happening on the ground had happened. And for us, it was, I think, to -- our thoughts at the time were to be ready to do any number of things, go pick up those who had fallen, to go provide medical care if we could get that capability to them, to be ready should there be more. And again, in the absence of specific tasking, we were trying to be proactively preparing capability such that if that capability was required, we could say yes to the question.

Q Did you do any contingency planning for sending aircraft directly into Benghazi or to Benghazi?

A I am not aware of that.

Q At the time, were you aware that there was a C-17 and crew on alert status at Ramstein?

A At the time, I'm not sure I was. I am now because I think you all have talked to TRANSCOM, and you know, the -- we're a little bit bifurcated in what those airplanes do and who reports to who, but I am aware that there was a C-17 there. I do not think at that time

I was aware. We should be specific.

Q Throughout the evening, as things developed, how did you stay abreast of developments? Were you in the COC or JOC?

A I went there. When something like this is happening, you go as the commander, and you are in position. Now, later in that next morning, you know, you go home, you shave, you get some rest, and you get back to work.

Q Did you communicate with General Ham at all?

A I never personally talked to Carter because he was busy, and we had constant contact as -- the headquarters, when they're in these modes, the JOC captains are talking, the 3s are talking, the 2s are talking, and so the individual running the floor, the operation, they're talking, the intelligence folks are talking, the operations folks are talking. To some degree, the logistics folks are talking.

Q But you never talked with General Ham back here at the Pentagon?

A I do not recall talking to Carter, no.

Q Admiral Leidig was back in Germany with you all.

A Uh-huh.

Q Did you ever speak with him personally that night or the next day?

A My DCON and the 3rd Air Force commander did talk back and forth with him, but I did not.

Q Did you communicate personally with anyone at a higher headquarters level other than Admiral Winnefeld, which we already

[REDACTED]

discussed?

A So I'm trying to think. I do remember talking to Sandy. I do not remember talking to anyone in EUCOM. I -- no. Most of my communication was with 3rd Air Force, Mildenhall, and Aviano.

Q Did you have a conversation with General Repass at SOCEUR?

A No. Mike, I don't think I talked to him specifically.

Q On the morning of the 12th, do you recall approximately what time you went back to your quarters and took a break? Was it before lunch? After lunch? Any idea?

A I think I went back well before lunch, showered, shaved, and got on uniform, and went back to work.

Q Did you participate in any kind of conference calls on the night of the 11th or the morning of the 12th with any higher headquarters as a listener?

A Boy, I cannot recall. I'm sorry. I don't have that detail.

Q One of the challenges for us, sir, is trying to flush out the timeline, and frankly, why it seemed to take so long to get aircraft to the FAST team and CIF in order to get them in the air.

The FAST team, as you're aware, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] They were ready. Yet they sat on the tarmac for some 6 hours before their lift arrived. Can you talk a little bit about -- I guess in order to back into that, we need to understand exactly what was required at your end to get those planes up.

A Uh-huh.

[REDACTED]

Q And did it take a long time to do that and why did it take so long? Help us understand what was going on to generate those aircraft and why it wasn't until --

A So I think you probably have the details, I don't. I'd have to look at these to determine when the decisions were actually made to fly the aircraft. Before that, when you generate an aircraft, there's a lot to it. You don't just walk up and turn the keys and take off.

So when you are in -- when you're not in an alert status, which we were not in an alert status on the 10th, you have to go to the aircraft that are on your ramp and you, if they are set up for training mode with either training, cargo, drop kits, whatever they're doing that next day to train, and you have to take the training piece off of the aircraft, download whatever's going there, then you have to do what we call all of the function checks for making sure the airplane is fit to go on alert.

You then do the preparation of the aircraft for whatever the mission might be, and you know, loading defensive measures, if it's countermeasures if it's required, et cetera. So you go through those uploading of stuff you will need for whatever your mission is tasked to be. And you know, then you get the airplane to a position where it's inspected and said mission ready.

Simultaneously, you're working two other problems. One of those is, as we talked about, generating air crew, getting the right people that are in crew rest or waiving crew rest to get people into that

[REDACTED]

position. And then, typically, somewhere in the wing, a parallel set of people will be doing all of that tactical planning that we talked about that is done down here.

So you have three problems you're working all at the same time. Air crews, getting them ready, planning the mission, and then generating an aircraft. Generating the aircraft sometimes goes rather quickly. If you fire up the mission control computer and it works perfectly, you don't have any fault lines or anything like that, this might go relatively quickly. If you start having issues with hydraulics, electronics, whatever, you begin to work the aircraft, or you choose to begin on another aircraft, et cetera.

So it is a process that we sort of have in general times for kind of airplanes, but they sometimes come in quicker and they sometimes come in a lot slower if you're having maintenance problems.

Q Generally speaking, for a C-130, how long would it take to generate it for lift or to turn it over to the pilot?

A So again, I'm not -- that's not my area of expertise. I think we -- you know, we advertise in our operational capability statements from a standing rest [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] It can be done faster. If you have maintenance problems, it can take longer.

Q Do you recall any specific or unusual challenges that you faced that night trying to generate those half a dozen or so aircraft?

A I do not. And I must say that that kind of detail would

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

not typically be something a 4 star would be dealing with. He's sitting back saying: How's the generation going in the 86th? And they would say: It's going good, or we're having a couple of problems. But it's not typically a detail that the 4 star would be tail-by-tail worried about.

Q And what is the 86th?

A That's the wing. That's the wing at Ramstein.

Q That owns all the C-130s?

A That's correct.

Q Who was the commander at the time?

A I cannot recall. I was trying to do that earlier today.

Q Once those aircraft were generated, do you recall if that at that time you had yet received a tasking to provide lift?

A I would be guessing at that. It is my general impression, and the way I remember it, that we had aircraft available when we were tasked.

Q Would the 86th commander be able to confirm that, you believe?

A I think yes. I think this is all a matter of record.

Q When you say a "matter of record," what do you mean?

A I mean we all -- that level of person would be tracking when they had airplanes ready and when they got the call saying we need to be ready to launch airplanes.

Q Is that typically something that is documented for historical purposes or record purposes, that you know of?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A I don't know for sure, but it would not surprise me. I mean, this is --

Q Do you know if the maintenance records for those aircraft would indicate when they are ready for lift?

A Yes, they were.

Q They clearly indicate when they took off, but would they indicate when they were ready?

A Absolutely. It's a part of the generation.

Q What's the generation?

A That's when we -- how we take an airplane from not being on status, to generate it, to being on status.

Q So that maintenance record, in theory, would say -- would it say the first time an airman put a wrench on it and turned it, for all intents and purposes, that level of detail?

A For all intents and purposes, that's correct. It starts really with a records review. You pull out the record and say -- all aircraft have a certain list of things that are not -- we call them delayed discrepancies. They are small things that we know are incorrect about the aircraft that will get fixed over time that are not critical for the next day's flight. But the record that -- the records review, you would say, now, if I'm considering sending this aircraft into combat, you look at the condition of the aircraft and decide this is a good candidate, or if it's not, we go to the next tail. But typically it starts with a records review.

Q The C-130s in the 86th Air Wing, do you recall if they had

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

the capability to be the refueled in air?

A I believe so. The C-130Js, I think so. We should get someone to check that.

Q Thank you. Let me do this. Just to --

A Yeah.

Q I probably didn't do that right. We've been informed that they were Slicks.

A Uh-huh.

Q And that accordingly, they could not be refueled in air.

A Okay. This is a detail beyond my current experience level.

Q No worries, sir. It's all good.

A I mean, that's all --

Q Do you happen to recall the approximate flight time from Ramstein to Rota where the FAST team was located?

A I would be guessing.

Q Okay.

A Probably two and a half hours, but somewhere in that nature, somewhere in that area.

[REDACTED]

[1:57 p.m.]

BY MR. TOLAR:

Q Let's turn to this real quick. It is our understanding that at some point during the evening someone generated three courses of action for the 31st Air Wing or for fast movers, in general -- I'm assuming that's the 31st Air Wing -- and that those courses of actions included phase one, a high-speed pass at 8,000 to 10,000 feet; phase two, drop flares over that Special Mission Compound in Benghazi; and phase three, shoot some kind of kinetic device or ordnance into a field adjacent to the Annex.

Were you privy to discussions, preparations associated with those three courses of action?

A I would describe it differently. Those are all kind of what we call show of force as opposed to applying a kinetic capability. I think you've heard testimony before about the problems of applying real kinetic force in that crowded area.

At our level, these are the discussions that people were worried about. If we are tasked to go deliver kinetic capability, how do we do that without a JTAC on the ground, without a spotter of some sort.

And I think what you're referring to is the discussion matured to a point where they were looking at these non-kinetic show of force type of options. And I was not involved in that level of conversation, being that's happening at the wing. I would have been involved, and was, in thinking through can we do a show of force? Can we apply kinetics? What are we going to get asked to

do?

Q I guess that is my point. Would the wing generate those courses of action? Would it come at the third numbered Air Force level or would it come at a component level? Who would have generated those courses of actions?

A So, what probably would have happened, the way this works is we don't -- and I'm going to use words that sound condescending; I don't mean them to be -- we don't tell a fighter pilot how to suck eggs. We tell him what we want, what is the result of what we want. And then we allow the weapons officers, who are Ph.Ds. in planning and execution, to sit down in their wings and they come up with the options of how to do this business.

Q Were you aware of these specific courses of actions being discussed that night?

A I am aware that they were discussing non-kinetic show of force options.

Q But not these three specific ones per se.

A I don't recall those three, but they are typical.

Q Talk to me just, again, for our understanding -- the significance of doing a pass, dropping flares, and dropping rounds, why that constituted a show of force. Explain the significance of that.

A Sure. Sure. So, a show of force is a technique that is used in other areas of operation -- and sometimes are used to great effect -- but they are typically more effective in an area like

Afghanistan or Iraq, where an enemy combatant hears an airplane and the next thing that happens is a bomb goes off. Two days later, he hears an airplane and a bomb goes off. Three days later, he hears an airplane and a bomb goes off. All of a sudden he hears an airplane. What is he expecting? So it can cause an effect on the ground. When the combatants have not been sort of prepared, it can sometimes work, and then sometimes it might not work.

Does that make sense?

Q It does. Talk to me -- I tell you what, our first hour is expired. Let's go off the record for a minute.

[Discussion off the record.]

Mr. Tolar. Let's take a 10-minute break, sir. Thank you.

[Recess.]

Mr. Tolar. Let's go back on the record, please. It is 2:07.

BY MR. TOLAR:

Q Sir, previously we were talking a little bit about the various courses of action that were employed. And you mentioned that you were aware of those three courses of action that had been discussed.

Ms. Sachsman Grooms. I'm going to object. I don't think anyone was discussing various courses of action that were employed the night.

In addition, Mac, if you're going to talk about various courses of action -- and you seem to be representing that three specific courses of action were considered that night -- I think you should identify the source of that. Because that is not information that has been provided to the committee in any of our transcribed interviews or in

any documents.

BY MR. TOLAR:

Q Sir, if you think about show of force activities over Benghazi that could have been conducted that night, talk to me briefly about challenges associated with doing those missions at nighttime, in Benghazi, without a JTAC, et cetera. Talk about the significance of that, what limitations that may or may not have presented.

A So, if I could, if you would allow me to disassociate from that specific situation and talk in general, would that answer --

Q That's fine. Absolutely.

A So, in general, as I explained before, a show of force is typically going to be more effective when you have conditioned the combatants that you're trying to affect. If they've seen their buddies be hit by bombs or if they know they are going to see bombs hitting the ground when they hear the roar of an F-16 or F-15E, or whatever, you generally get a better result.

But at night, shows of force are challenging for a couple of reasons. One, honestly, the show of force is usually better the lower you can go. Because it's dramatic. Noise. They may even see the afterburners. It is more dramatic, the lower you go.

I think what you used there was talking about 10,000 feet. I do not remember that number, but 10,000 feet is pretty high. And that is going to lessen the impact of the noise, the visual, et cetera, et cetera.

Things that are tough at night are, one, you can't see poles, high wires, obstacles. You have a little less capability to determine, ascertain where the threats are that you might encounter, et cetera, et cetera. So night brings a little tougher situation. It makes it a little harder for you to pick out what your specific objective is, et cetera, et cetera.

Again, the things that make a show of force more effective is lower, faster, noisier, preconditioning, et cetera, et cetera.

Is that what you were getting at? Does that answer?

Q Yes, sir. I just want to -- again, this is more just for background information for the record, but to make sure we appreciate the challenges.

Had an F-16 been on a 1-hour strip alert, had a tanker been in the area and readily available, would you still have launched them? Was there a mission they could have done that night that was viable?

A As we discussed before, if you're talking about a kinetic mission, where you really want to put ordnance on the ground, there are huge challenges. Because you need someone to tell you what you're bombing.

Q The JTAC.

A If you have a JTAC or some other way to spot the ordnance. The real concern is that collateral damage and involving noncombatants and the effects of what you bring. Even in a confusing urban environment, you may be able to pick out what your target is, but you may not be able to control the collateral damage because of that

confusing operation on the ground.

So there's a lot of challenges. When you generate the airplane, you're generating it to go do a specific mission, which will determine what size and type of weapon you're going to carry, what type of fusing, which controls the effects, and then the weaponing of how you deliver it.

All of that is designed to maximize your ability to do the mission you've been given while causing the absolute least possibility of collateral damage.

If you have something on alert, and you take off, you have the weapon that you were sitting on alert with. It may not be the one optimum for what you're doing. When you have a tasking, and you generate to that tasking, you will be able to put on that aircraft the appropriate weapon -- size, type -- appropriate fusing -- size, type -- to best effect. So there's tradeoffs if you have an airplane on alert versus if you generate one. Clearly, we understand the difference between the two.

Q I want to put a real fine point on this. Knowing what you know now, and based on your experience, is there any role an F-16 could have played in support of a response to the events that night?

If you could hand pick what armament on it, what weapon, what fuse, is there anything it could have done in a perfect world, if you could hand pick that?

A If you would allow me, again, to disassociate from that specific event, because I don't know what was going on on the ground

there at that point.

Q I'm saying today, knowing what you know now.

A We put aircraft on alert now, as you know, to be ready for this mission, because there are roles that aircraft can play.

Q So talk to me briefly about that then. The aircraft that are on alert now, how are they generally preconfigured for that alert in terms of their capabilities?

A Changes based on what we think might be the threat and the location. Again, if you're going to generate an aircraft for a task, you want to generate it with the best ordnance, the best fuse for what you think your task may be.

The other thing is -- so that I don't leave you with a misconception -- we are on what I would call a breathable alert. Based on the threat that the higher headquarters sees, they will put aircraft on anything from a 16-hour alert down to a 2- or a 3-hour alert. And the more short the alert, the higher the impact on the wing to generate it and sustain it.

Q Let's talk a little bit about Aviano and the 31st Air Wing. You mentioned you commanded that --

A Return with honor.

Q There you go.

Can you talk to me a little bit about the F-16, Block 40s they have and their specific missions for specific direct kinetic armament as well as night ops? Is that accurate?

A Yes. So, as you know, the F-16 is a multi-role aircraft,

[REDACTED]

and the pilots are capable and prepared for all manner of missions, but every wing we have sort of specializes. We have wings like the one at Spangdahlem, which we've changed recently, that is about suppression of enemy air defense. We have other wings that are more about precision delivery of munitions. We have wings that are about air-to-air, to do that sort of thing. The F-16s at Aviano, the Block 40s, their mission is primarily delivering precise ordnance, day or night.

Q So if there was going to be a night response requiring ordnance, those Block 40s would be the best aircraft for that mission, in theory, irrespective of where it is?

A I don't want to sound goofy here, but you're breaking my heart because I'm an F-16 guy. And my answer is no, the Strike Eagle is probably a better aircraft. It has longer range, it has two people in the cockpit, which gives you more capability over the target. But absolutely, if you let any of my fighter pilot friends read this transcript, you and I will have to have words.

Nothing from the back row, by the way.

Q Does the Air Force conduct a lot of close air support in urban environment-type missions, though?

A I don't think I would categorize the words "a lot." It is a capability we have. You have seen it in Afghanistan. You have seen it in Iraq. It is something that we can and have done.

Q We learned a little bit about this from General Zobrist and the transcript he provided to another committee. But talk to me a

[REDACTED]

little bit about the significance of a USO/NATO IG inspection, what that does to an organization, how that impacts their readiness, et cetera.

A Sure.

Q And, again, I apologize. General Zobrist touched on this, but I want you, given your experience, to flush it out.

A If he said USO --

Q I'm sorry, U.S./NATO requirements inspection.

A Got it. Now we have it.

Q Thank you.

A We typically call these ORIs, in more general terms, Operational Readiness Inspection. It is a major event for a wing. A wing has to spin up and train and certify. And then, U.S. wings are evaluated at a very high standard for the capability to meet their DOC requirements -- Dedicated Operational Capabilities -- requirements. And each wing has a DOC statement that they should be able to generate a certain number of airplanes to do a certain type of missions. The pilots are tested via paper. They are tested via simulators. And then they actually go out and fly. The entire wing is a part of an ORI.

And I don't want to build you a watch, but the support group has to be able to defend the base, the security forces. They have to respond to fires, to chemical attacks, et cetera. The hospital has to be ready to take care of wounded. The maintenance group has to be able to build and assemble weapons, mate them with the aircraft, and get the aircraft into the air.

And then the pilots, at the end of all of that -- after all these other people do their job -- the pilots have got to go out and put the cross-hairs on the target and deliver the weapon inside the parameters basket. It is not like TV, where you can just hit the button and it happens. They have to be in the parameters basket on speed, altitude, those kinds of things, hit the weapon, and then have -- most importantly and toughest sometimes in an urban environment -- put the cross-hairs over the right spot.

So you asked a question I really didn't answer. It is a major muscle movement to prepare a wing for an ORI, to get all of that working together at the same time and meet the very high standards that we hold of ourselves. This is something that the wing will start preparing for 10 months out, maybe even more.

Q And is it safe to say it involves every aspect of the wing?

A It does.

Q And what impact does this have on their ability to respond to an in extremis situation? For example, is this the one point in their 2-year, 5-year-period where they are the least -- prepared isn't the right word -- but it is broken down as far as you can break it down. Does that make sense?

A Yeah, I would actually cast it the other way. They may have been working very hard. And so, to some degree, the wing, in certain proficiencies, is going to be either at its best or approaching its best. It's wherever they are in that preparation ladder.

And we do a similar preparation ladder, by the way, for

[REDACTED]

deployments, when we are going to Afghanistan, Iraq or whatever, to arrive at maximum combat readiness right before deployment.

So depending on where they are in that ladder, they may actually be ramping up their skill levels. The risks, of course, are you are working your aircraft out very hard. You are putting a lot of load on the maintenance community, the supply community, and you might find yourself, because you are riding them hard, in a situation where you have more or less airplanes than you would on a normal day available.

Q Any other general comments you want to make about the impact of said inspections on the 31st or any other wing's ability to respond? Anything else about that?

A [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q We don't have to talk about that. I appreciate that. But, yes, sir.

A [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q I guess what I'm trying to appreciate is, the fact that they were in the middle of that inspection, do you have an opinion as to whether or not that made it easier or more difficult to spin up to provide the request that you made?

A The answer is yes. And it would have made it immensely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

harder for them to pass their eval to get such a huge distraction in the middle of it, too. But, to a degree, the pilots and the proficiencies is probably good. If they have been riding those airplanes hard for 2 or 3 days in an exercise, the maintenance piece is going to be hard.

Q Going back, one followup question to the different scenarios in terms of response. Would you ever launch a single F-16 as a show of force?

A No, no. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We fly in twos or fours or eights. It is a flight. You have a flight lead and a wing man.

Q If you were doing a mission like Benghazi, would you, in your judgment, would you launch a two-plane sortie?

A Yes.

Q Are you comfortable with that?

A Yes.

Q Thank you.

A You could do that. You would want to launch more. And here's how you do two. You launch three to get two so that after you get airborne, if you have a problem with one of them, that one falls out and the other one flies in. So you always -- we call them spares.

Q All right. Given that, why would there be a task for four planes to prepare instead of six? I mean you had four plus two. Does that make sense?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A That's six. That's is the two spares.

Q Thank you. Talk to me briefly about, based on your experience dealing with the Italians, the challenges, if any, associated with getting clearance in an in extremis-type situation, both to fly routes as well as to fly routes with arms.

A So, I think my recollection of this night is we had no problems getting the clearances that we needed from the Italians.

On a day-to-day basis, on just peacetime flying, they are a sovereign nation which is in control of their sovereign airspace. You may remember in history that we used to fly very freely in Italian airspace. And then an airplane from a service -- not mine -- cut a cable and killed some people, and the Italians changed the paradigm of flying in Italy. So our access to Italian airspace is very different. But I do not think we had an issue with the Italians and airspace that night.

Q Talk about if you wanted to launch an aircraft armed, what challenges -- let me do this. Do you know if you all discussed trying to launch an aircraft -- let me back up. When you tasked the 31st Air Wing to prepare four aircraft and two spares for deployment, did that also include them being armed?

A Yes.

Q What is required to get permission -- how long does it take to get permission from the Italians to launch aircraft that are armed?

A On a day-to-day basis, I don't know the number, but it is a longer process. But when there is an in extremis -- and again, my

[REDACTED]

recollection of that night is we got what we needed fairly quickly.

Q To include arming of the aircraft.

A That's correct.

Q Okay.

A I do not recall that that was in any way a limitation to us.

I might also add that, in the middle of an exercise, you're arming and de-arming airplanes constantly, all day long.

Q Check.

A The signature would not change.

Q You previously talked a little bit about the clearance issue. Talk to me, to the best of your understanding, about how that works in terms of seeking clearance, whether it was for 31st Air Wing or the 86th, et cetera. How does that work? Do your people do that work? Is it the Defense attache? Who's doing the work to get the country clearance both for the air flights as well as to enter other countries?

A Yes. It is all that team. So, as you remember, there is the three stages of planning. The wing is doing that very tactical stuff. And typically, they are going to tell 3rd Air Force that we're going to need this kind of overflight, this kind of clearances. And 3rd Air Force and USAFE are typically working with the nations, and EUCOM might actually be involved, as I explained to other earlier, with working with the nations. It becomes an all-hands-on-deck approach to things.

I guess you could accept that in some nations you have relationships where you pick up the phone and you can call and get what you need. And others, it is a more formal process, et cetera, et cetera.

The guys at the wing are not typically doing that. It's the guys above the wing that are doing those kind of overflight rights and stuff like that.

Q Were there any challenges that night getting country clearance to fly into Libya?

A I am not -- to fly into Libya.

Q Into Tripoli. Into Libya, in general.

A I do not know that answer. What I do know is I don't think we had any problem with getting out of Italy into international airspace. I'm sorry, I just don't have that recollection.

Q Do you recall if country clearance issues impeded your ability to launch your aircraft at any point?

A I do not recall. I am saying I do not recall that that was a limitation.

I need to be precise in my language. I do not think we had a problem with that.

Q Thank you. I want to talk real briefly about heightened alert status, what that means, et cetera. Talk to me about it in terms of how that impacts a squadron in terms of readiness.

A Sure.

Q And define readiness.

[REDACTED]

A Sure. So it may be best to start with readiness. Readiness is a combination of several things. It is, first and foremost, the people, maintenance, munitions people, aviators, intelligence, all of that team that is the people piece. They all have to be ready to do their job and qualified to do their job, and, frankly, not worn out. Not having just come back from a 12-month deployment to Bagram, or something. So readiness first is people.

Second, I would say readiness is about the aircraft. Aircraft are just like other capital assets. You may own 11 carriers, but you may not be sailing but three of them at any one time because you have some aircraft in long-term maintenance, you have some aircraft in short-term maintenance, you have some aircraft that are being fixed overnight with things that will make them ready the next morning, and then you have some airplanes that are just ready because they finished the day with no discrepancies.

So, the aircraft readiness is about can we meet our DOC statement tasking. If the DOC statement says you have to have 12 aircraft within 24 hours, then your readiness is judged against can you get 12 aircraft ready in 24 hours.

Q And the DOC statement is established by the component commander?

A The DOC statement is actually established by the U.S. Air Force, a larger entity.

Q Thank you. Go ahead.

A So, the readiness of the aircraft fleet at the base, in terms

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

of how many and how many are ready to go, the readiness of the people. You put that together and say a unit is C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, whatever.

Q How does a heightened alert status impact that readiness?

A So when you take an aircraft or you put say, for instance, let's just use the example of that night, if you tell them that you're required to get four, they're going to take six to do that so that when --

Q Six?

A Six to do that. You do six to do that. Because we will typically, if you're tasked to get four in the air, you will launch six so that two will follow them to a point of no return and they say we're all four good, they keep going and these two return.

So actually, you'll have one or two other spares on the ground that you're preparing in case any of those six fall out. So what I'm am trying to paint a picture, is when you just say four airplanes, it is a lot more than four airplanes.

Secondarily, when you put an airplane on a short alert, the airplane will go on alert. You can't use it for training, you can't use it for anything. It sits there. And most airplanes, depending on the air frame, can sit on alert, 2, 3 days before you know we need to go in there and generate another one because we're not confident now that when we crank it, it'll be perfectly ready to go. Airplanes fly better when they flight a lot, not when they sit still.

So in an airplane sense, you're pulling a certain number of airplanes out of your training regimen and they're not available for

[REDACTED]

██████████

either training or real word. And when you go back to that some are in long-term maintenance, some are in short-term maintenance, and now you take a plug out to do something, you can sometimes put a pretty significant tax on the unit and their ability to train to maintain the readiness of the pilots and the crews and the maintainers, et cetera. That is item one.

And then the other one, if you have a long leash readiness, you can have aviators and maintenance people in their normal sleep-rest cycle, normal locations, et cetera, et cetera. When you tighten this down to 2 or 3 hours or less, you have people sitting at the ready in a ready room, burning crew rest, and you're cycling people to keep the right number of people on crew rest. And you consume bodies to do that.

So short alerts are very good tools when you know you need it, but they are very costly to the unit over time.

Q In terms of some specific impacts, would that be like air-to-air capabilities, nighttime ops?

A All of that. You're not training because you're sitting and waiting.

Q Sir, talk to me a little bit about tankers. You owned some tankers in Mildenhall?

A That's correct.

Q What's the unit that was there?

A The Mighty Hundredth, I think; Square D.

Q Do you recall who the commander was at the time?

A I do not.

██████████

Q When you tasked, did you make similar taskings for those guys to prepare for operations as you did the 86th?

A I didn't do it with the C-130s, but any time you alert fighters, you're going to also start alerting tankers. Because the fighters don't go anywhere without hitting tankers.

Q So once you all started generating C-130s, the tankers were not being generated at that time yet.

A I think that to be correct.

Q Generally speaking, the requirement to generate a tanker, is it discernibly different than generating a C-130 or is it basically the same concept?

A For those kind of airplanes, it's not terribly different. I mean it's a different mission set. There are fuel bladders. There's some different equipment. But large aircraft are sort of alike and fighters are sort of alike.

Q I apologize. Did you speak with the commander that night or the following day yourself, personally?

A The tanker commander?

Q Yes, sir.

A No.

Q Do you recall if there were any issues with generating tankers?

A I do not. To be precise again, I don't think there were any problems generating. I do recall. But I did not.

Q And I keep getting these words wrong, but is it the

in-service collective systems, select process?

A Okay. I know what you're talking about.

Q What are the correct words?

A That's heavy stuff. I've used both of those sets of words that you used. In-service select means that they're pulling airplanes off of other missions as they're airborne. And that is one of the tools that TRANSCOM uses.

Q Is that a TRANSCOM tool -- does that apply to you?

A Not really, no.

Q TRANCOM's doing an in-service select --

A Right.

Q -- can they say: Hey, USAFE, I want that C-130 now; give it up?

A That's not an in-service select because it's on the ground. If I had an airplane airborne, flying somewhere, they then could call and say: We'd really like to turn your C-130 around. But they would have to come to us and ask.

Q But, again, that is a TRANSCOM policy.

A Right.

Q Thank you.

A They are extremely flexible and wonderful with that. I would love to tell you how well they did getting our people out of Turkey here last week by using just that capability. No specifically tasked aircraft. All in-service select aircraft to make it work.

Q This is timely, given your current billet. Talk to me a

little bit about NATO assets. As the Supreme Allied Commander for NATO, talk to me about what it would take for U.S. to generate a request for NATO allied support, what that entails, how long would it take, et cetera, in an in extremis type of situation.

A Sure, I know exactly what you're asking. Generating the ask can be fairly quick. Again, in some nations it is different than others. You know, in some nations you pick up the phone and you call the Chief of Defense and you say: Can you help me?

But what we have to remember is that almost no nation is going to make that kind of decision without first a PAL/MIL cut. So you are going to talk to the President, the prime minister or the parliament the next day. They're not going to make those -- if you're talking about using their assets to go do something for you, that is not going to happen fast. If you're talking about flying through their airspace and things, sometimes that happens fast.

Q I'm talking about them doing a mission for you.

A That's not going to happen fast.

Q What does that mean? Is that 2 days, 24 hours? For example, let's say we wanted the Italian Tornados to come down and support us in an in extremis situation. How long do you think it would take to make that happen, notwithstanding we don't know what the mission is, per se?

Mr. Kenney. We are talking about today, Mac?

BY MR. TOLAR:

Q Just generally speaking.

[REDACTED]

A That's not going to happen in hours. It may be days. This is a political thing, not a military thing. But they would have to do the same thing we would do, which is generate their aircraft. The same thing, they're not going to be sitting on alert.

Q Are you familiar with, I guess, it's the U-28, some kind of little prop plane -- single-engine prop plane. Are you familiar with that aircraft.

A This is an aircraft that Special Ops flies.

Q That's right. Generally, are you familiar with it, basically?

How about this. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Perfect. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A I asked that question today, in trying to prepare for this. I do not have the answer yet.

Q [REDACTED]

A I do.

Q Tell me what it is.

A [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Out of my league.

Q No worries. Let's pass.

I want to talk about drones for a few minutes, please.

A I call them RPAs -- remotely piloted aircrafts -- because they are uniquely piloted.

Q That's exactly right. So, you mentioned earlier that you didn't own any Predators.

A That's correct.

Q [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Talk to me briefly about how Predators specifically operate. You mentioned it's remotely piloted. Talk about that. Who's on the ground and who's flying them?

A So have you a thing called the LRE: launch and recovery element. And that is a group of people that sort of do the maintenance and the taxiing and the fixing and the gassing and get the airplane on the runway.

They launch the aircraft until it establishes line of sight to

[REDACTED]

the appropriate constellation of satellites. Then it is handed off to someone that is flying, typically for the task force, either out of Indian Springs or out of Creech, we call it out now -- out of Creech or out of Cannon Air Force Base, somewhere like that.

And an individual that is specifically trained to do task force works take it is out to its operating area, it does what it does. They fly it back home. They get it to a point where it can make direct line-of-sight contact with an LRE -- maybe the one that launched it, maybe not -- and then they fly it to a position in the sky where the LRE can take it and land it and regenerate it.

Q Is Indian Springs, is that the same thing as Creech?

A Creech, that's correct. Sorry.

Q Can you spell Creech?

A C-R-E-E-C-H.

Q Where is that located?

A About 24 miles north of Las Vegas.

Q And you mentioned another.

A Cannon Air Force Base in New Mexico.

Q In terms of the pilots, it's my understanding there's a pilot, a sensor operator. Have you seen those guys work before?

A I have.

Q Talk to me about how that happens. What is going on?

A Yeah, so you have got an aviator who's flying the airplane.

Q He's a pilot.

A He's a pilot, currently. We will soon begin to train

non-pilot people to fly. Actually, I think we already are doing that. I've been out of the Air Force for a few years now, but I think we're already doing that.

But you've got an aviator that's qualified to fly the machine. And that's what that person does. Then you've got another individual whose sole job is sort of the mission package, be that sensors or weapons. And that person doesn't have to worry about flying the airplane. And they are managing the array of sensors because they are different, as you know, on some missions. And then if there's a weapon, they are the weapon employment person.

Q Would the Predator have maintenance records like an aircraft?

A Absolutely.

Q Would those maintenance records typically indicate who the pilot was?

A That is probably unlikely because the maintenance records, my guess, are going to be located with the LRE. Because our maintenance records -- we call them 781s. If you were an aviator, you understand there are things about history, time, delay discrepancies, maintenance issues. It is a fairly standard book for every aircraft. It stays with the maintenance unit. And the maintenance unit is a part of the LRE -- launch and recovery element -- which is forward. The aviators, as you know, are on the other side of the world. Can be.

Q But surely those maintenance records are in some computer system.

[REDACTED]

A I have no idea.

Q Okay. So maintenance records, you don't believe they would indicate the pilots.

A I do not.

Q Thank you. But surely they would indicate launch time, recovery time.

A Yes.

Q Thank you. Do you happen to know whether -- if Cannon and Indian both fly Predators or if it's one or the other?

A So, I do know that at Creech they fly both Predators and Reapers. They will eventually go to all Reapers. I can't speak for Cannon. It's a smaller operation. I don't know what they're flying there.

Q Do you know what else is going on at Cannon Air Force Base?

A It is a Special Operations Command Air Force Base.

Q Thank you.

A The 27th Special Operations Wing, I believe. I commanded the ops group there when it was an F-16 fighter wing before it converted to Special Operations.

Q In terms of that pilot and that sensor operator, what kind of records would exist to indicate who they were?

A I don't know, because I have never been in a Predator-Reaper thing, but we do keep records typically in all manner of aviation devices of who's in charge. And those would be with that operational squadron, whoever was flying that mission. This might be a better line

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

of questioning for someone in Special Operations. They know how they do it better.

Q Is it safe to say, then, that was the 27th SOC that was operating those Predators?

A No, no. What I said was it was either Creech or Cannon.

Q Check.

A One of the two was flying it. Because I think at the time that is where all of the Special Operations Command-qualified aviators. Not every Reaper pilot can fly for Special Operations Command. They get a special level of training, et cetera, et cetera.

Q We're having trouble tracking down the pilot and the sensor operators. Do you have any advice or thoughts on how we can locate them?

A Did I understand you're going to talk to Mike Repass in the future?

Q Yes, sir.

A I would ask Mike.

Q Thank you so much. I don't want to get into the woods on this, but talk to me, to the extent that you understand, about ISR capabilities of a Predator. What are those?

A In general, they are all going to fly with some sort of a visual. They have a ball on the front of it. And that ball typically has at least two types of sensors in it, an IR -- infrared -- sensor for night, and a high-definition camera sensor for day. Then, less so the Predators, more so the Reapers, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Obviously, a Predator has the ability to be armed.

A Both the Predator and the Reaper, yes.

Q Just talking about the Predator, though.

A Okay. Got it.

Q What kind of capabilities can it have?

A Typically, we put on a Predator one or two Hellfire missiles. We have two or three different kinds of warheads that, depending on the expected mission, they would load.

Q Explain how a Hellfire might be employed, what its capabilities are, what it would be used for in terms of targeting.

A [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q Is that a precision armament?

A The ability to hit a target is pretty precise.

Q Does it generate a lot of collateral damage, generally?

A It can.

Q The night of Benghazi, do you have an understanding as to whether or not the two Predator aircraft that were utilized, were they

[REDACTED]

armed?

A I do not know. [REDACTED]

Q It is our understanding they were not.

A I do not know.

Q Do you know if they could have been armed?

A That is beyond my scope.

Q Were you monitoring the video feed of the Predator that night or was the JOC?

A No, we weren't. In fact, I followed up on this just to make sure. Occasionally, we will watch snippets of something at our level, but I've got to tell you, most of the time -- for the four-star staff I don't like -- we call it eye candy. You put up a Predator feed and everybody is watching the Predator feed rather than doing their job. So I don't like Predator feeds in my AOC.

Q Did you have the capability to monitor the feed?

A I don't know that answer because it was a Special Operations Command mission, and sometimes those transmissions are in different channels than our broader capabilities. So I'm not dodging your question, I just don't know about that night.

Q The fact that -- did you have any control, authority over those Predators at all?

A No.

Q Thank you. This is a little after -- I apologize. Once you got to SHAPE, in the summer of June 2014 -- we evacuated the Tripoli

[REDACTED]

Embassy in June of '14. Were you aware of that evacuation?

A Yes, I'm pretty sure I was.

Q What is your recollection of that operation?

A I have almost none, because as the SHAPE commander, I'm focused on NATO and a different path. When you move up from USAFE to EUCOM, you now fall off of the AFRICOM.

Q Did you have any understanding -- I'll withdraw the question.

A I had my hands full with Putin.

Q It's been -- as you can imagine, there is crazy allegations -- but one of the allegations, sir, we've been investigating is that an airman located at Aviano said he was jerked out of bed in the middle of the night and told to prep a plane to fly.

Other than the 31st Aircraft Wing and the 86th -- let me back up. Do you have any thoughts on the credibility of that statement by this person? Allegedly, he was at Aviano, he was part of the 31st, and he was pulled out of bed in the middle of the night and told to prep planes. He's disseminated this on Facebook and we've got to run it down and deal with it.

Do you have an opinion about that, the veracity of that statement?

A Well, I think it's really sad that we have guys getting on Facebook to talk about something that I would call classified and not something that needs to be splashed on Facebook. In fact, that disappoints me. Because we talk to them about specifically not doing that.

[REDACTED]

But it doesn't surprise me that a young man got pulled out of his bed to go generate aircraft, because that's what we did.

Q I understand. But this is the conflict here, because obviously General Zobrist got the call at 9 a.m., not in the middle of night. I've got to ask.

Looking back on the events in Benghazi, knowing what you know now, Monday morning quarterback, is there a decision that you made that you think you would have made differently?

A In my cockpit at USAFE as the Africa commander?

Q Yes, sir.

A So, I think we made good and prudent decisions. I think twice as a staff we leaned forward to generate lift and we leaned forward to generate fighter capability when we were really not tasked yet to do either. And I thought long and hard about this many times, but my staff will tell you that I am a lean forward, not aft person. And I think I had some really good people advising me and I think that we did well.

Q Anything you would have done differently, though, looking back?

A I don't think so.

Q Obviously, we talked a little bit about the fact that the 86th Wing Commander probably can provide more specificity about the preparation of those aircraft, et cetera. Is there anyone else that you think it might behoove us to speak with that can help provide additional information about -- especially with regard to the Air Wing

issues?

A No, I think if you just walk yourself down that calendar. And I can't help you with the names; it just escapes me. I know the fighter guys, because those are the people I grew up with, Zobrist and others. The wing commander, the vice wing commander, or the operations group commander being the people that know what you need to know.

Q Say that again for me, please.

A The wing commander, the vice wing commander or the operations group commander.

Q Those are all at the 86th?

A That's correct.

Q Thank you. Let's go off the record, please.

[Discussion off the record.]

Ms. Green. We will take a 10-minute break.

[Recess at 2:59 p.m.]

[3:10 p.m.]

Ms. Green. We can go back on the record?

BY MS. GREEN:

Q Sir, we just have a few questions, and then we'll let you get on your way.

At the beginning of the conversation today, my colleagues handed you an exhibit, exhibit 1, and questioned whether we had clearance to fly drones in Libya. To the best of your knowledge, was that clearance ever revoked?

A Let me read this again. As was evident in the first series of questions, this was detail that slipped away from me, and this is my -- this email is from one of my political advisers actually -- not political, but State Department advisers. Do you mind if I read it real quick?

Q Of course not. No. Just so you know, so the answer is not in this exhibit.

A Yeah. I've got to tell you, I'm not dodging your questions. This particular detail has escaped me, as I talked about earlier.

Q No problem, sir. We have exhibit 2, the unclassified timeline provided by the Department of Defense. And that shows that on Tuesday, September 11th, 2012, at 9:59 p.m. Eastern European Time, an unarmed, unmanned surveillance aircraft is directed to reposition overhead the Benghazi facility.

A Uh-huh.

Q So it appears that we had drones operating. Is that

[REDACTED]

correct, sir?

A [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Q There has been a lot of discussion by my colleagues about fighter aircraft.

A Uh-huh.

Q And a number of hypotheticals have been presented to you about employing fighter aircraft in Benghazi. We've heard testimony from a number of uniformed military about this issue, and I just want to see if your perspective is in line what we've heard previously.

A Uh-huh.

Q Admiral Winnefeld --

A Uh-huh.

Q -- testified to this committee --

A Uh-huh.

Q -- adamantly that fighter aircraft would not have been appropriate in Benghazi.

A Uh-huh.

Q Major General Roberson --

A Roberson.

Q Roberson also testified before the Armed Services Committee, and he said, quote, "There are many factors that go into employing weapons on the ground. And having flown in Afghanistan and Iraq, it is absolutely critical that we know where we are dropping these

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

bombs and who we are going to kill. There was no JTAC on the ground. We had no way of contacting people on the ground from the airplane, from the pilot's perspective. There was no way to be able to affect with weapons on the ground. We didn't know who was friendly and who was enemy. There was no way that we could have been able to drop weapons in that environment from a drone or from an airplane," end quote.

Do you agree with Major General Roberson's --

A Yeah.

Q -- assessment?

A I do. And we talked about that earlier. If you don't have a way to spot the weapon so that you know what you're hitting, we're not going to drop into a confused environment.

And then the second piece is, it's not only can we hit the right target, but do we understand and accept the collateral damage that could occur. Those are all big problems with dropping into a confused situation without JTACs or some form of spotting.

Q We've also heard testimony that unsecured MANPADS presented an additional threat to air assets. Was that your sense as well, sir?

A That would align with what we talked about earlier, that the - [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q And you mentioned General Carter Ham earlier, sir. And I believe he's testified at least seven times before Congress on the Benghazi attacks. He was very clear that he did not believe fighter

[REDACTED]

aircraft were the right tool for that mission.

A That's correct.

Q Do you agree with General Ham?

A His was the same discussion -- his was the same decision that many made. And I generated that capability just so that it would be available should a different decision be made. But I agree with his decision.

Q And you never received a tasking from him --

A I did not.

Q -- that actually --

A That's correct.

Q -- laid that out? And you didn't disagree with General Ham not giving you a tasking. Is that right?

A I completely agree with the judgment not to use kinetic weapons via fighter aircraft in that environment.

Q And sir, despite 3 and a half years, and this is now the eighth congressional investigation, some continue to criticize the military for failing to employ close air support in Benghazi on the night of those attacks. I'm not sure you have anything new to say, but is there anything we can do to sort of quell these allegations?

A I would rather not speculate or try to extrapolate or anything. I would just say that based on the time of notification, the time to generate an aircraft and fly the aircraft there to try to effect change and what happened on the ground that night, the physics don't match.

Q And why didn't you order assets to deploy from Aviano Air Base that night?

A We didn't have any tasking to deploy. I can't unilaterally decide to employ weapons on aircraft. Yeah.

Mr. Kenny. Even if you had received such a tasking, with specific respect to the assets located on Aviano Air Base, is it your sense that had you received such a tasking, that any assets would have been available to effect a difference in Benghazi that night?

General Breedlove. Well, I think I just answered that. The physics of the timeline of tasking plus generation of aircraft plus physically flying, et cetera, et cetera, they would not have changed anything to do, unfortunately, with the ambassador or others.

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

Q And you spoke just now to the fighter aircraft. There was a long discussion the last round about the challenges with a show of force.

A Uh-huh.

Q Was it also your determination that a show of force would not be -- did you agree essentially with the determination that the show of force would not be the appropriate thing to do that night in Benghazi?

A I cannot -- I would rather not make that judgment because I think it's speculative. Remember what we said before, show of forces sometimes work and sometimes they don't. In a battle zone like Afghanistan or Iraq, where the enemy associates the sound of fighters

with bombs going off, it will have an effect.

BY MS. GREEN:

Q Just going back, sir. General Ham determined that that would not have been --

A Right, that's correct.

Q -- the right asset to employ. And do you agree with that assessment of General Ham?

A Let's go back to the other piece, which is there was not a physical timeline that could have put the show of force over the target in time to effect any change for what happened to the ambassador or that house.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q And can you just -- and I appreciate the indulgence. Can you just help explain further -- for instance, if the F-16 platforms, given the distance, did they require any additional support such as --

A Tankers --

Q -- refueling?

A -- there and back.

Q Okay. And we talked a little bit about tankers in the previous rounds. I'm not sure we discussed your understanding of the alert posture of that -- of those aircraft, which fell under your area of responsibility. Did you have an understanding of their alert posture that night?

A So as I mentioned before, when we put fighters on alert, we always either find available tankers or begin to generate tankers.

Q Okay. And on the night of the attacks, the capability --

A We had no tankers, no 130s, or no F-16s at all. There was no aircraft on alert in USAFE at the time of the attacks.

Q Okay. And for the tanker specifically, do you have a specific recollection of what the response time would have been? I know we discussed response time in generating the C-130s. How long --

A It's about the same for the C-130s, but they have to fly from Mildenhall, an extra hour-and-a-half or so, to get to Ramstein, so you would add about an hour-and-a-half to any response time.

Q In the flight time. So I think in the last round you discussed, as a general matter, 72 hours at the long end. It could be shortened to perhaps 14 hours for the C-130. Is that correct?

A Yeah. I think I said it differently. Let me restate it. Seventy-two hours is a number that is often put in a statement saying you must meet this. Seventy-two hours is probably not a realistic number when you are in an extremis moment. I think what I said before is 14, 16 hours, something like that.

Q Okay. And so for the tankers then, 14 to 16 hours, plus an additional one and a half hours of flight time that would have to be added in order to have tankers into the area where they'd be able to support any fighter aircraft?

A No. The math is really 14 hours to generate.

Q Okay.

A Then there is flight time added to that. The statement about the extra one and a half hours is that the tankers are further

north --

Q Correct.

A -- than the C-130s.

Q Right.

A The tankers fly faster than the C-130s. It's not a huge amount, but they do.

Q Okay. But irrespective of the actual time it would have taken, just generally, would the tankers have been able to -- from Mildenhall, would they have been in position to respond on the night of the attacks to support F-16s for a show of force had that been the tasking?

A The same physics apply that I mentioned before. From a standing dead stop of peacetime, no aircraft on alert, I do not think that we can physically make the timeline from ready, set, go when we were alerted to being overhead Benghazi in time to make any difference for the ambassador in that particular moment.

Q And how about for the evacuation of the personnel from Benghazi?

A So we did do that. I mean, our aircraft, we had a C-17 go down. We actually launched, as you know from the record, a C-130 ahead of the C-17, but because of the speed of the C-17, it actually beat the 130 there, picked up the folks, and was headed back.

Q Okay. So our understanding, sir, is that the personnel were evacuated from Benghazi back -- retrograded back to Tripoli.

A That's correct.

Q And that the C-17 --

A Picked them up there.

Q -- picked them up there.

A That's correct.

Q In terms of you mentioned not being able to effect a difference with respect to the ambassador. I just was asking the question a bit more broadly.

A Uh-huh.

Q Would it have made a difference or affected the outcome with respect to the other personnel in Benghazi, the other State Department and other U.S. Government employees?

A So I would have to do that math. I do not think that it would have made a difference vis-à-vis what the evacuation that you saw was.

Q Well, so -- and if I could just direct your attention, and I won't --

A Yeah.

Q -- ask you, sir, to do any math on the spot, but exhibit 2 is the unclassified timeline that's been prepared from DOD. And on the second page, you'll see, sir, at 7:40, Libyan local time, which is the right-hand column.

A Uh-huh.

Q Under Wednesday, September 12.

A Right.

Q First wave of American personnel depart.

A Uh-huh.

Q At 10 a.m. the second wave depart.

A Uh-huh.

Q So given the timeline that you had outlined for us before, 14 hours, 16 hours, plus flying time, plus perhaps an additional one and a half hours flying time coming from England, is it your opinion, sir, that tankers could have been in position in order to support fighter aircraft from Aviano in order to affect the difference in Benghazi?

A Okay. Let me see if I can figure this out. So if we were able to meet a 16-hour generation, about a 3-and-a-half hour flight time, plus the extra hour out of Mildenhall from our notification time, that would have been the next day, but that's 3:30 a.m. here. The tankers would -- I do not think would have been available for these two time lengths.

Q Okay. So they wouldn't have been available to assist with a mission in Benghazi?

A Not to meet that time length.

Q Okay. And I just had a --

A That's math in public here.

Q I understand, sir. On the record, it will look instantaneous.

A Got it.

Q So I thought I heard you say, with respect to the F-16 platform, that General Ham's decision was the same decision that was

made by others. And as far as we understand, the way the National Command Authority works, from the President to the Secretary of Defense to the combatant commander, when you say same decision as others, do you mean sort of to say recommendations would have been put forward to General Ham?

A So I really cannot -- this is a place where I just don't have knowledge of what Carter was doing with the Chairman, with Marty Dempsey and what was happening up there as far as that goes. The general conclusions that General Ham came to matched the recommendations of my staff, and that is, this is not appropriate for kinetic action, and a show of force will be limited because we will be at such an altitude, et cetera, et cetera, that it may or may not have effect, especially since the local population had not been conditioned.

Q Okay. Thank you.

BY MS. GREEN:

Q Sir, you mentioned that your staff began -- that you directed your staff to proactively spin up once you heard about what was going on and --

A Actually, it was the chief of the AOC, the JOC -- the AOC director that started the spinning up the 24/7 crew that was there, and then they started running the recall that eventually got me headed to the AOC.

Q And during the course of those events, as they are preparing, did anyone ever tell them to slow down or stand down in their

efforts to sort of spin up?

A No.

Q Did anyone ever slow down their efforts for any reason?

A That's not in our DNA.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q I would just like to ask a few follow-up clarifying questions, sir, and I do appreciate the indulgence. I know some of these questions can be a bit granular, and we are more than --

A Sure. Go ahead.

Q -- a few years removed from the facts, so I we appreciate it.

Just to talk a little bit about where you sat on the night of the attacks. I think I heard you say an AOC?

A Uh-huh.

Q Can you define for us what that is, sir?

A Air Operations Center. So you're probably most familiar with the big one at Al Udeid that does the grand war for Afghanistan and Iraq. In the European theater, the 603rd AOC is our Air Operations Center there at Ramstein Air Base.

Q Okay. And so is that a separate facility from what's referred to as the Joint Operations Center, the JOC?

A The JOC is actually at a combatant command headquarters where you have a joint team. The AOC is also joint, but it is a uniquely an Air Operations Center.

Q Okay.

[REDACTED]

A For instance, just to clarify, for EUCOM, the JOC is in Stuttgart at the EUCOM headquarters, and the AOC is in Ramstein at the Air Force headquarters.

Q Okay. Now, that's helpful to understand --

A Yeah.

Q -- because they are separate and distinct facilities?

A Absolutely.

Q Is the JOC that belongs to AFRICOM, is that even in a separate facility?

A No, it's in Stuttgart as well, but two different locations in Stuttgart. You have a headquarters for AFRICOM and a headquarters for EUCOM.

Q Okay. And you had mentioned discussions occurred at the staff level. You referred to a series of staff level codes, J codes, A codes.

A Uh-huh.

Q Was it your sense, sir, at the AOC, that your staff were engaged with their counterparts in the EUCOM JOC or the AFRICOM JOC on the night of the attacks?

A There would have been a very light involvement with the EUCOM staff because, again, EUCOM would have been purely in a supportive role, trying to help with country clearances and things where they have a better relationship with the European countries. The staff would have been more demonstratively engaged at all levels with AFRICOM staff.

[REDACTED]

Q Okay. And that's helpful. So it sounds like the AFRICOM JOC was the primary node?

A Absolutely.

Q Okay.

A Yeah, this is an AFRICOM AOR.

Q And then as far as the crisis response, the crisis response planning --

A Uh-huh.

Q -- would that primarily occur within that AFRICOM job?

A Yes, that's correct.

Q Okay. And --

A Well, you know, let's be intellectually honest. Much like I described the three levels of planning in the air operation, the COCOM staff at AFRICOM would do certain types of plannings, but they would push out to their components other kinds of planning.

Q Sure. And you had mentioned to us earlier that shortly after you arrived in the AOC, you received a request for information specifically with respect to air assets at Aviano. Is that correct?

A No, it was later. What happened almost immediately was that we made a decision, again, based on the wonderful recommendations of my staff, to begin generating C-130s, generating air crews to mate up with the C-130s. Then we had a period of time where we got a query from the AFRICOM staff about fighters.

Q Right.

A No tasking, but a query. And it's at that time the staffs

have been talking, and my staff again recommended it's time for us to start generating fighter aircraft, to which I completely agreed.

Q Sure.

A And we tasked through the 3rd Air Force to the wing at Aviano to begin to generate.

Q And that's certainly appreciated, sir.

A Yeah.

Q I think you described the process of leaning forward. With respect to the AFRICOM JOC, when you receive a request like that, does that suggest or indicate to you that there are at least discussions, however preliminary they may be, occurring within the AFRICOM command with respect to whatever asset that inquiry is about?

A Yeah. I think you could certainly infer that, but I do not know that clearly, you know. The staffs are talking. They do that.

Q Sure.

A Then you --

Q And I just --

A Yeah.

Q So did you have -- what was your level of visibility then into the discussions, the planning processes within AFRICOM at that point?

A So we are again sharing intel, sharing discussions of that intel, and the staffs are talking like they always do. The head of operations is talking to the head of operations at AFRICOM. The logistics guys are talking about where is our gas, where are our

weapons, you know. Everybody is sharing.

Q Okay.

A And so in the conversation of that sharing, the subject of fighters comes up. No tasking, staff's talking, we decided to lean forward and start generating fighters.

Q Sure. And was there sense that there was -- the level of information sharing that was occurring that night, was it your sense that the bubble was being leveled, so to speak, with respect to the different --

A The two staffs were connected.

Q Okay.

A Yeah.

Q And I think you also mentioned that it took about 30 minutes for you to arrive on site after you first received notice to the AOC?

A No. The 30 minutes after -- actually, I think it was 28 minutes after, but about 30 minutes after we were notified, we took the decision to start generating C-130s. I went straight to the AOC with a beard, which is not good in uniform, but you don't -- this is not the kind of thing you get pretty for. You get into your flight suit, you put your boots on, and you go to work.

Q Right. Okay. And that's helpful. What I guess I'm trying to understand is it took -- you received notice.

A Uh-huh.

Q You're at your quarters.

A Right.

Q And you go to the AOC.

A Right.

Q In that time period, is it your understanding your staff had already been engaged in a dialogue with AFRICOM?

A They're talking already, and they were ready to give me that recommendation at 30 minutes or so, that we needed to move out.

Q So when we talked before about the alert posture of different aircraft, whether we're talking about C-130s or tankers or F-16s, is that information that would have been widely available or shared within AFRICOM? Would AFRICOM be aware of that information?

A Everybody knows the status. We again were at a peacetime stage with no aircraft on alert.

Q So AFRICOM wouldn't then need to send a formal tasking or request for information for that information from your AOC. They would essentially already know that information or their staff may have retrieved it at an earlier point?

A I don't want to answer that because I don't know the answer to -- I can't answer for what Carter Ham's staff did as far as our status. I can answer for what I do --

Q Sure.

A -- in my job now, and I would have been aware of the alert status of the airplanes. I get briefed on it every morning.

Q Sure. And we understand that the AFRICOM actually activated or set up what's referred to as the focal point operation center.

[REDACTED]

A Uh-huh.

Q Was that something that you had visibility into those discussions that occurred within the FPOC?

A Okay. You are using terms that mean two different things to me. A focal point center is -- focal point is a very distinct control of certain classified information, and now you're mixing that with an FPOC. I don't -- I'm not -- I can't speak to those two things.

Q Okay. So maybe we'll focus on --

A Focal point is not a -- those words mean something very specific to me.

Q Okay. How about FPOC?

A The FPOC. Yeah, I don't know what his FPOC stands for. I don't have the same thing in my headquarters, but --

Q Okay.

A -- he will have -- the way we generally do things -- let me describe how I do it, and my guess is it would have been similar, but I cannot say how Carter did his headquarters. You have a JOC is the larger description, Joint Operations Center, and if you were having a distinct issue, quite often you will segue away a certain number of officers with certain kinds of skills to be a very focused cell to deal with that. While the whole -- because remember that AFRICOM is still worried about the rest of Africa as well. So it wouldn't surprise me if he had a small separate group. I think that's what you're asking me.

Q Yes. I'm just wondering -- we understand that there was

[REDACTED]

something that was an FPOC that was stood up, It was a higher classification operation center within AFRICOM.

A Now you're talking about focal point, the first side, and now you are making sense, yeah.

Q Okay. So we'll go back to the first, sir, and thank you for the clarification. So the focal point, and I was -- you were asked in an earlier round whether you had communications with Admiral Leidig, Admiral Landell -- or perhaps, I don't think you were asked if you were having communications with Admiral Landell. Do you recall --

A No.

Q -- discussions with him?

A So let me try to describe to you how this worked. As you know, General Ham was back in D.C. And he was dealing directly with the Chairman and others. And so he was in a communication loop there. I'm forward, and my staff is dealing with AFRICOM. And what we don't typically do is the big elephant, talk to people below in the staff. That's kind of not appropriate.

So since Carter was in the United States talking directly to the Chairman, most of my staff was doing the interaction with AFRICOM's staff at the commensurate levels, talking to each other peer to peer. And then I was getting briefings from my staff.

It would have been inappropriate for me to call over and start putting my fingers into Carter's staff. Does that make sense?

Q No, perfectly, sir. I appreciate the clarification.

A Yeah.

Q Just in terms of planning, you described, at various points today, a sense of waiting to receive a tasking, that you were leaning forward in some respects, but also waiting for an official or a formal tasking. And I just didn't -- I'm not sure, I don't want to have a misimpression that somehow anybody was sitting around, waiting around, sitting on their hands, and not doing anything.

A I wouldn't describe it the way you're saying it. We were busy generating capabilities should they be required. We weren't sitting there going: I wish we had a tasking; when are they going to call us with a tasking.

Q Right.

A I'm not trying to be willy-nilly here.

Q Right.

A We had work to do, and we were generating our aircraft. My job was to have capability and capacity ready. We talk about, as a subordinate commander, to offer solutions to our superior commanders, and I was generating the kind of force that would allow me to do what I thought he or she might ask me to do.

Q Okay. Thank you. And we --

BY MS. SACHSMAN GROOMS:

Q And as you were generating those and people were working and moving forward --

A Uh-huh.

Q -- was the information and the updates being shared back with --

[REDACTED]

A Oh, absolutely. It's like I said, they're going to know -- they'll start tracking our generation as well. Yeah.

Q So it wouldn't, at that point, be necessary for someone to tell you to start doing it. They would know you're already doing it, and then they would just be keeping up and know that when you were in fact at the point that you were ready to go or getting closer to ready to go, that's when they needed to send specific instructions. Is that --

A Well, it's sort of like you are describing. Once they realize we are generating force, they are going to watch what force we have available at what times.

BY MS. GREEN:

Q General, I'm going to ask you a series of questions that we ask every witness. It's our understanding that while many of these questions have been answered by a previous reports and investigations --

A Uh-huh.

Q -- our colleagues in the majority continue to pursue them. So I just want you to bear with me. And I'm asking for here not an opinion but whether you have firsthand information.

A Uh-huh.

Q And if you don't, we'll just move on the next question.

A Sure.

Q It has been alleged that Secretary of State Clinton intentionally blocked military action on the night of the attacks. One

[REDACTED]

congressman has speculated that, quote, "Secretary Clinton told Leon Panetta to stand down," end quote, and this resulted in the Defense Department not sending more assets to help in Benghazi.

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

A No.

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

A No.

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

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

A No.

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

A No.

Q It has been alleged that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risks posed by Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for military operations in Libya in the spring of 2011.

[REDACTED]

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

A No.

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

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

A No.

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

A No.

Q A team of CIA security personnel were temporarily delayed from departing the Annex to assist the Special Mission Compound, and there have been a number of allegations about the cause of, and appropriateness of, that delay.

The House Intelligence Committee issued a bipartisan report concluding that the team was not ordered to stand down, but that instead

[REDACTED]

there were tactical disagreements on the ground over how quickly to depart.

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

A No.

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

A No.

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

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

A No.

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

A No.

Q Let me ask you this question also for documents provided

[REDACTED]

to Congress.

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

A No.

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

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

A No.

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

A No.

Q It has been alleged that Ambassador Susan Rice made an intentional misrepresentation when she spoke on the Sunday talk shows about the Benghazi attacks.

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

A No.

[REDACTED]

Q It has been alleged that the President of the United States was, quote, "virtually AWOL as Commander in Chief," end quote, on the night of the attacks and that he was missing in action.

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

A No.

Q It has been alleged that a team of four military personnel at Embassy Tripoli on the night of the attacks who were considering flying on the second plane to Benghazi, were ordered by their superiors to stand down, meaning to cease all operations.

Military officials have stated that those four individuals were instead ordered to remain in place in Tripoli to provide security and medical assistance in their current location.

A Republican staff report issued by the House Armed Services Committee found that, quote, "There was no stand down order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi," end quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict the conclusion of the House Armed Services Committee that there was no stand down order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that the military failed to deploy assets on the night of the attack that would have saved lives. However,

former Republican Congressman Howard "Buck" McKeon, the former chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, conducted a review of the attacks, after which he stated, quote, "Given where the troops were, how quickly the thing all happened and how quickly it dissipated, we probably couldn't have done more than we did," end quote.

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

A No.

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

A No.

Ms. Green. My colleague, I think, has another question for you.

General Breedlove. Sure.

BY MR. KENNY:

Q Sir, just one housekeeping matter here, and I think it's -- we think it's clear in the context of our discussion today, but just so that the record is absolutely clear, I recorded in my notes, when we first were having a discussion about the C-130s, and I thought I heard you say that as soon as you arrived at the AOC, that you ordered the stand down of the C-130s in case we needed them, and I just wanted to offer you the opportunity, sir, if you used the term "stand down" with respect to the C-130s?

A Yeah, that's actually kind of an accurate term because

[REDACTED]

that's the first thing you do when you begin to generate aircraft. You kind of stand that fleet down, you pick out the right ones, and you begin to build up the right ones to be put on alert.

We were in the middle of the night, none of them were flying, so stand down is kind of an inappropriate term, but that's kind of -- that's just language we use.

Q Okay.

A So the bottom line is if you have a fleet doing stuff and you now have a contingency, you say stand down and get ready for the contingency.

Q I understand.

A Does that make sense?

Q Thank you, sir.

Ms. Green. That concludes our questions, sir. We can go off the record.

[Discussion off the record.]

Mr. Tolar. Back on record, please.

BY MR. TOLAR:

Q Sir, does USAFE at the time, did you have a liaison officer at AFRICOM in the JOC?

A I do not know that answer. I would expect, but I can't answer it. I'm sorry.

Q Do you believe you probably did?

A I probably did.

Q And if you did, would they not be keeping AFRICOM informed

[REDACTED]

of all your activities, in theory?

A They, and I think the routine interaction of the staffs would keep them involved, yes. That's what staffs are supposed to do, yeah.

Q And I apologize if I misunderstood, but again, would maintenance records for a C-130 indicate when that plane was prepared or ready for handover to the pilot or launch, pick your word?

A Yes.

Q Thank you. Once an aircraft is prepared by the maintainers, I may need you to explain this process, but basically it's hand over to the pilot and he says, I got it, he looks at it, explain to me what happens once the maintainers have it ready, what the pilot does, and typically how long that takes.

A So when an airplane of any kind goes through a generation, it comes to a specific status where maintenance says it's pilot ready or crew ready. The crew is brought out to the airplane. The crew does its own records review of what we call the 781 -- 781 is just a stupid number.

The crew does a review of the 781. Some of the crew in a big aircraft go inside and begin to do the pre-flight checkout. Other of the crew, typically the crew chief and one of the aviators, do a visual inspection to make sure that the aircraft is truly ready to go.

You have to -- if you're going to go fly an airplane, you want your eyes to have looked at it. So once the aircraft is quote-unquote crew ready or pilot ready, a crew goes out and accepts the aircraft.

██████████

And that is, as I said, first a document review and then a visual inspection.

Q Typically, how long would that take for a C-130, recognizing that's not your platform?

A I --

Q Ten minutes? Is it an hour?

A Oh, it's not an hour. It's 15, 20 minutes, I guess, yeah.

Q Once they do that, are they at that point ready to get in the bird and take off, assuming they are told by the tower to take off?

A They will go on status.

Q On status?

A That's correct.

Q And so what does that mean?

A That means they are ready, if tasked.

Q Okay. Got it. And --

A I'm using fighter terms. It will be approximate in a airlift world.

Q Yes, sir. I want you to talk to me just for a minute, sir, about the recall of your generators. And what I'm trying to do is flush out the fact that it takes a little while to do this, all right. I'm assuming this.

A Sure it does.

Q Especially at Ramstein. I'm assuming folks don't live on base.

A That's correct.

██████████

Q So when your staff started that recall, talk about where your people live, how long it takes them to get there. Once they get there, can you start doing something when three guys show up, or do you need the whole crew there? Kind of walk me through that.

A So it would be almost the same as if you did a recall of the Congress, you know. The Congress lives all around this area in different places, and you all live in different places. People are going to come from 15, 16 different directions to respond, and they will report to their work centers, check in. They get a very quick security brief, et cetera. They get put on task.

Those that can start early work, begin it. Those that have to wait until they have an entire crew assembled, do that. A weapons load team is three people. They don't start with one. When they get three, they start, et cetera.

So it is a process of assembling. It is not immediate. It is tied to all the same physics that would be a recall here in the Washington, D.C. area from disparate locations, directions. Some of them are going to go by and have to drop children off at someone's house. They always have a plan for, you know, if they're a single parent or whatever, what they have to do with their kids. It is a process, and it takes time.

Q As the component commander, do you dictate how much time your supportive organizations have to effect a recall?

A For things like we were talking about, for ORIs and things, you have --

Q For what, sir?

A ORIs, operational readiness inspection that we talked about, you have certain targets that you're supposed to hit, yes.

Q Do you recall what the requirement would have been for the 86th?

A I do not know what our lift wing does.

Q Air Force has some Special Ops guys, PJs?

A Uh-huh.

Q Did you own any PJs? Who owns -- let me do this. Who owns PJs?

A They belong to the Special Ops Command.

Q The Special Ops Command.

A That's correct.

Q An AF Special Ops Command or SOCEUR?

A Yes, because AFSOC contributes force to SOCEUR.

Q You don't have any command or control over those guys, the PJs?

A Not directly, no.

Q All right. Thank you. Any thoughts about -- obviously, since 9/11, DOD has implemented the new normal?

A Uh-huh.

Q Any thoughts about how that's been implemented? What positive changes have manifested or come about as a result of the new normal? Just talk about how we're better off today, if you feel that way?

[REDACTED]

A We are. No, we are. We are. And we need to be, again, intellectually honest.

We have aircraft that are on alert. And as I explained earlier today, that has a price in readiness and training. We breathe that alert. When we are not seeing something very disturbing, the alert will be longer, and when we see things that are more concerning, we breathe the alert in, and it's closely tied to the same sort of alert breathing on the land, response forces, et cetera.

So we are in a better place. But let's remember, and I don't mean to be preachy, but physics is physics, it takes a certain amount of time to fly from Rota to any place in Africa. A lot of people in this world don't realize you could put three-and-a-half of those Americas in Africa. It's a big, big place.

Q And last question. If you will, just kind of talk about as we think about where we are today and how we can better prepare ourselves, what responses, talk about the necessity of forward-basing assets, things of that nature.

A Well, I was just going to say location, location, location. Physics. The closer you are to the objective area, the better off you're going to be.

The nations along the northern Mediterranean are invaluable to us, and our forward basing in those nations is invaluable. And I would just throw a point of conversation out there. We move forces around in these nations now on extremely short notice with the approval of these nations. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Pick some nation. How do you think it would work if they showed up in the United States and they said: We're going to Florida with this force today; 2 days later, we want to be in Texas; 2 days later we're going to Arkansas. How good are we going to be at that?

We've got some pretty good allies who provide us a lot in the Mediterranean that allow us to best position and react to what we do. I don't think they get enough credit for it, quite frankly.

Q Are there places where you think it would behoove us to have more forward bases?

A Well, I think there has been -- I will not postulate there. I would just say that we have to make and think about where our forces are.

Q Outside of our forces in thinking about the new normal, is there anything else, any other recommendations that we need to be thinking about to better posture ourselves for the future?

A Well, I continue to testify to and talk about, as you just mentioned a few minutes ago, the absolute need and the value of forward-based forces. It's not just about the physics. It's about the relationships. We talked about earlier, as the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, I can pick up the phone and call Claudio in Italy and normally make things happen pretty fast. Why is that? Because I've commanded Aviano Air Base, I've flown in Italy for half of my adult life off and on, and I have relationships with these people.

Forward-based forces bring relationships and trust. And you

[REDACTED]

cannot surge relationship and you cannot surge trust. You either have it or you don't. So forward-based forces build these relationships and these trust relationships that are very important, as well as the physics of being forward.

Q And would that include things like mil-to-mil programs generated by the AFRICOM J5 throughout Africa?

A All of our programs that allow us to interact with and build partnership capacity are important.

Mr. Tolar. Shannon?

Ms. Green. We're finished.

Mr. Tolar. Sir, on behalf of the committee, Chairman Gowdy, I appreciate your time, appreciate your service, and have a great day. We are off the record.

[Whereupon, at 4:02 p.m., interview was concluded.]

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Certificate of Deponent/Interviewee

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

██████████

*Errata Sheet*

**Select Committee on Benghazi**

Department of Defense counsel on behalf of the witness reviewed the accompanying transcript, certified its accuracy, and declined to provide corrections to the transcript.