

RPTS JOHNSON

DCMN SECKMAN

EXECUTIVE SESSION

BENGHAZI BRIEFING

House of Representatives,

Committee on Armed Services,

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations,

Washington, D.C.

Tuesday, May 21, 2013

Classification Key for General Roberson's Testimony:



UNCLASSIFIED

Noted spelling corrections within General Roberson's testimony:

p. 38, line 14 Namist (Namest)

p. 45, line 2 Marone (Moron)

p. 51, line 5 UCOM (EUCOM)

p. 53, line 8 Gillory (Guillory)

p. 45, line 8 ex word (EXORD)

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 12:30 p.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Martha Roby (chairwoman of the subcommittee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MARTHA ROBY, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM ALABAMA,
CHAIRWOMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

Mrs. Roby. Good afternoon. On September 11th and 12th, 2012, four Americans lost their lives in a terrorist attack in Benghazi, Libya. Chris Stevens, Sean Smith, Tyrone Woods, and Glen Doherty were bravely serving this Nation. And much about the preparation for a possible attack and the specific work of these four individuals is outside the purview of this committee. However, the Department of Defense responded to the attacks in Benghazi. Understanding the specifics of how the Department reacted and identifying potential lessons learned are the topics of today's briefing.

After the Benghazi attack, the Armed Services Committee immediately undertook vigorous oversight. In addition to our posture hearings with the relevant combatant commanders, the committee has held two full committee briefings dedicated to this topic, one full committee hearing, and three staff classified briefings.

Furthermore, Chairman McKeon has sent eight letters to the Department requesting additional information. Chairman McKeon also directed this subcommittee to convene today's briefing.

In writing to the Department of Defense, he called for another opportunity for senior officials to address thoroughly, authoritatively, and conclusively several important matters related to the Benghazi attacks.

Today's briefing will help to allow members to determine what, if

any, part of the Department's response to this attack was deficient and how such deficiencies might be corrected in light of the evolving security environment.

Today our briefers will address several specific topics and respond to members' questions on the following subjects: Armed and unarmed manned aircraft in the region at the time of the attacks; armed and unarmed drones; activities of EUCOM Commander's In-Extremis Force, the CIF; U.S. Marine Corps' FAST teams; Special Operations Forces based in the United States; and United States military posture.

I note that issues related to the Site Security Team, as referenced in Chairman McKeon's letter, will be covered in the future. Our briefers today will not address that topic. Members are further reminded that today's briefing is classified as secret. Members are asked not to take classified notes or handouts out of the room.

However, the Department of Defense has committed to promptly identifying portions of the transcript that are unclassified. And I will ask the staff to ensure that members are made aware of this material when it is received.

We have a considerable volume of information to cover today, and I anticipate many members' questions. Therefore, I intend to ensure that we proceed fairly but expeditiously. Therefore, we will have rounds of 5-minute question periods alternating across the aisle. I will ask the first questions, followed by Ranking Member Tsongas. Chairman McKeon and Ranking Member Smith will go next. Because this is a briefing, staff will add Members to the question list by raised

hand and recognized in this order: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee members, then other HASC members. Then we will turn to Members present who are not on the Armed Services Committee. We will alternate majority and minority for 5 minutes each.

Accordingly, I ask unanimous consent that noncommittee Members be allowed to participate in today's briefing after all committee members have had an opportunity to ask questions. Is there objection?

Without objection, noncommittee members will be recognized at the appropriate time for 5 minutes.

Before I introduce our briefers, I will emphasize that the briefers have been only asked to cover the topics as outlined in my opening statement. Member questions on other subjects are not in order. I am also certain that comity and decorum will prevail.

Our primary briefers today are Mr. Garry Reid, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict. Mr. Reid is the principal adviser to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict. He joined the office of the Secretary of Defense after 28 years of military service in Special Operations.

Major General Darryl Roberson, Vice Director, Operations, on the Joint Staff. Among his other military accomplishments, General Roberson is a command fighter pilot with more than 865 combat hours.

I now invite Ranking Member Tsongas to make any remarks she may wish.

[The prepared statement of Mrs. Roby can be found in the Appendix



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STATEMENT OF HON. NIKI TSONGAS, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM MASSACHUSETTS,
RANKING MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

Ms. Tsongas. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

And thank you all for being here today to discuss the troubling events of September 11 and 12, 2012, in Benghazi, Libya. An attack on one of our ambassadors is no different than an attack on U.S. sovereign soil. And so I believe that it is important for Congress to exercise its oversight prerogatives to help make sure that horrific events like Benghazi can be prevented whenever possible.

The deaths of Ambassador Stevens, Sean Smith, Glen Doherty, and Tyrone Woods are tragic. And I hope that this committee can continue its long and unique history of bipartisanship as we investigate this terrible incident.

While very real concerns have been raised about failures on the part of the State Department and intelligence community, I hope we can remain focused on the Defense Department's operational response to the attacks here today, as it is our subcommittee's prerogative.

We have two uniquely qualified witnesses here today. And I hope today's briefing will bring these repetitive inquiries to a conclusion, because we have had many hearings heretofore, and we are revisiting many of the same issues.

I see our responsibility today as threefold: One, filling in gaps in the timeline of the DOD's operational response and understanding of

the available military assets and options on September 11th; two, helping figure out how to capture the perpetrators of the attacks; and three, working together to determine the best policies and resource allocations for the region going forward.

On this last point, I believe we do need to have a broader discussion about force protection and global posture in the post-Arab Spring world, particularly in this time of shrinking defense budgets. Sequestration is now the law of the land. And at the same time, we are facing a multitude of security challenges across the globe. Certainly the threats which existed in Benghazi on the night of 9/11 were not isolated in the region. The Defense Department was rightfully also concerned about threats in places, such as Cairo and Sana'a. On May 12 of this year, no less of an authority than former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said he probably would have made the same decisions as Secretary Panetta and General Dempsey did on the night of the attack, given the available intelligence and DOD assets in the region. The State Department's Accountability Review Board, which was co-chaired by former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mike Mullen, made similar findings. Both of these assessments lend credence to the commitment and quick reaction of our Commander in Chief, senior DOD leadership, and men and women in uniform on the night of the attack.

However, it is important for us to continue to consider every possible measure to prevent future attacks of this nature and to make sure that the terrorists who committed these vile attacks are held responsible.

I would also note, though, that AFRICOM's light footprint is a continuation of the Bush administration's policy. The command is still in its infancy, and securing basing rights on the African continent has been challenging. I am glad that since 9/11, AFRICOM has stood up its own Commander's In-Extremis Force. I think it is important for this committee to continue stringent oversight to ensure that the command is properly resourced. Thank you, and I look forward to your testimony.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Tsongas can be found in the Appendix on page ?.]

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Mrs. Roby. Thank you.

Chairman McKeon.

The Chairman. Thank you, Chairman. Thank you for yielding. Mr. Secretary, General, thank you for being here today. Recently, there have been a lot of reports and conjecture surrounding the military's role preceding, during, and after the Benghazi attacks. I know there have been misstatements made. I know I made some. At the time, it was during an election, we were getting all of our information from the media. And I know I made statements at the time that I have since learned were not accurate.

Our purpose today is to separate fact from fiction and conjecture from reality. We must get to the bottom of this. There may be some tough questions today. But today is the department's opportunity to provide the committee with definitive answers to these questions. As Chairman Roby stated, and I thank her for holding this hearing, we also seek to apply the lessons learned to avoid future crises of this kind. Therefore, for scenarios that might have happened but didn't, the wrong answer is, that is a hypothetical and I can't answer it.

Gentlemen, you both have extensive military experience. I expect you to answer these questions with your best military judgment. We need to get this behind us, learn the lessons that we can, and move forward. Thank you again for being here today.

[The prepared statement of The Chairman can be found in the Appendix on page ?.]

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Mrs. Roby. Ranking Member Smith.

Mr. Smith. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

As Chairwoman Roby mentioned at the very start of this, HASC has done very aggressive oversight on this. And Chairman McKeon has been a big part of that. This hearing is, at best, redundant. We have asked many questions of you. We have held many hearings. You have answered all of those questions, participated fully in those hearings. And from the very beginning, the Department of Defense has unequivocally provided every little bit of information out there, ran after all kinds of rabbits going down rabbit holes, as the Chairman McKeon mentioned about all these erroneous statements about Marines being available and planes being available and different things being available. No one can say that the Department of Defense from the very beginning of this has done anything but give full, accurate information immediately, and been fully and completely cooperative. And we very much appreciate that.

And it is also clear, not just from former Secretary Gates' comments, but from every analysis of this, that the Department of Defense did everything it could under the circumstances. It is a very dangerous world. And we are present in many parts of that dangerous world. And also, we should remember that in the days before the Benghazi attacks, there were attacks on a number of our embassies that were, ironically, in fact inspired by a video, in Cairo, in Sana'a, in Tunis, in Pakistan, and a lot of other places. The threat environment was very complex and very difficult.

But without question, the Department of Defense did everything

[REDACTED]

they could on that night in question. And some of the charges, some of the allegations, I think there are responsibilities on behalf of all of us as Members of Congress to not simply take what we see on the Internet or in the media and essentially charge people at the Department of Defense, people sitting before us, who take their job to protect American lives as seriously as they take anything else -- and we have seen it on this committee time and time again -- to take that and to call into question their commitment to that very job, based on rumor and innuendo and stuff that turned out to be absolutely untrue is just an abomination.

Now, if this hearing clears up some of that, I guess it will be helpful. But it seems to me that it is just another redundant attempt to mine the Benghazi tragedy in a political way. And it is worth noting, as I thought about this, that in 1983, there were two separate terrorist attacks in Beirut that wound up killing 303 Americans, hit our embassy, hit our barracks, killed 241 Marines. And after that, there were no calls for impeachment. There were no comparisons to Watergate. There were no efforts to make political hay out of it. We investigated it, and we attempted to see what we could do to make sure that it didn't happen again.

I guess it is a sad statement on how much things have changed over the course of the last 30 years that that is not the approach that we have taken here. I hope that we will do better going forward. And again, I want to emphasize that the Department of Defense in this matter has been completely transparent and did everything they possibly could in a very, very difficult circumstance. And I, at least, thank you for

[REDACTED]

that. I look forward to your testimony, to your comments, and for you to explain any further question that comes up.

But I will share the comments of Chairman McKeon, and I believe Chairwoman Roby said it as well, I hope that after this, we can be done with this, learn from it, and move forward. Thank you. I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith can be found in the Appendix on page ?.]

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Mrs. Roby. Real quickly, before we turn to our briefers, I just want to make sure that it is very clear that this has to be secret. And if you have any plans to go higher than that, to TS/SCI, we can make arrangements, if necessary, to move to the SCIF around 3:30. But for now, because of the clearance of those in the room that we have got to make sure that we keep it at a secret level.

And so now, I will turn to you guys, and you can decide who goes first.

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STATEMENT OF GARRY REID, PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
FOR SPECIAL OPERATIONS & LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT

Mr. Reid. Thank you, Chairman Roby and Ranking Member Tsongas. And thank you to our distinguished Armed Services Committee Oversight for joining us here today and calling this hearing -- this briefing, and giving us an opportunity to appear today to offer answers to your detailed questions. I have a few brief remarks, but I will dispatch with them quickly in order to get to your questions and to more detailed comments.

Mrs. Roby. Would you mind just pulling your microphone a little bit closer?

Mr. Reid. Sure.

Mrs. Roby. Thanks.

Mr. Reid. And I apologize, a bit of overlap here with what was already said, but I just want to set the table for our comments today, and reflect on the fact that we were postured for a wide range of contingencies on September 11th of 2012. And although there were threat warnings across the board, there were no specific indications of an imminent attack on facilities in Benghazi. Our posture on that day was based on a continuous evaluation of threats and priorities.

And in the months prior, we had received several hundred reports on possible threats around the world. Although there were no specific or credible threats, we were carefully monitoring the situation at nine

[REDACTED]

diplomatic posts throughout the world on this day.

Upon first notice of the Benghazi attacks, the department began moving forces and assets into position to collect intelligence, to bolster security, to Medevac potential wounded, and prepare for other contingencies. In addition to responding in Benghazi, we were also positioned to respond to breaking events in Tunis, Tripoli, Cairo, Sana'a, and others.

Given the time and distance factors involved, dispatching an armed aircraft to Benghazi was not an option available to us at the time.

[REDACTED]

The nearest military personnel to Benghazi at the time of the attack was a 6-man AFRICOM team in Tripoli. Two of these team members responded quickly to augment other security personnel in Benghazi, while the other four assisted with security in Tripoli, and ultimately treated the wounded as they returned back from Benghazi.

As documented by the Accountability Review Board report, the Department's response to the attacks was timely and appropriate, but there simply was not enough time, given the speed of the attacks, for armed U.S. military assets to have made a difference. The ARB found no evidence of any undue delays in the decision-making or denial of support from the military combatant commanders.

Since the events of 11 September 2012, the Department of Defense has fully supported all follow on inquiries and investigations. We have deployed additional forces and positioned them for accelerated response options in North Africa and the Middle East, in particular. We are also supporting the Department of State to implement all of the Accountability Review Board findings and recommendations, including expanding our Marine Security Guard Program. Madam Chair, thank you again for the opportunity to appear here today, and I stand ready to answer your questions.



[The prepared statement of Mr. Reid can be found in the Appendix
on page ?.]

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[REDACTED]

Mrs. Roby. Thank you.

General Roberson.

STATEMENT OF MAJOR GENERAL DARRYL ROBERSON, VICE DIRECTOR, OPERATIONS
(J-3), JOINT STAFF

Classification Key for General Roberson's Testimony:

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General Roberson. Thank you, ma'am. I think the way that we would like to transition here is to address the questions specifically from the committee and to get into what I would like to refer your attention to as this chart. This has been provided to the committee. Hopefully, you have a copy of this available.

[The information follows:]

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[REDACTED]

General Roberson. If not, we will make sure we get it around. This product has been already handed out to the committee one other previous time that we were here.

Mrs. Roby. Can you hold on 1 minute? We do not have copies of that map in front of us. We are going to go ahead, let you go ahead. To the members, though, we are working on copies, and we will get them to you distributed.

General Roberson. Okay. Then first of all, I apologize that we weren't able to get this ready for you in time. So we will take that one on. What this is, and they are working to get you a copy of it, but it is the lay down of all of the forces in the U.S. military on September 11, 2012, around the whole region. So this includes assets that were up in England, assets that were throughout Europe. These are assets that were afloat in ships throughout the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, and over into the Gulf. And it is assets, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, all of it.

Mrs. Roby. I am going to interrupt you one more time, and I apologize. Is it possible that we wait until we get copies of the map? And then maybe you can address some of the other questions that are on there or modify your testimony. I think it is really important for the Members to be able to see very specifically where these assets were located.

General Roberson. Ma'am, I think it would be great for me to demonstrate the military's ability to adapt and overcome. So I would be happy to do that for you.

[REDACTED]

Mrs. Roby. Thank you.

General Roberson. Yes, ma'am. All right. So that shows the lay down. And we will get that to you and be able to answer questions specifically on those assets.

There are three specific sets of assets that have been in controversy the whole time and that we addressed from the very beginning. And so I will just march down the three of them. The first one is the potential that F-16s from Aviano could have made it to the Benghazi in time. So I am going to talk a little bit about what it takes to make that happen.

The second is to talk about the CIF, the Commander's In-Extremis Force that you talked about, what it is for, why it was where it was at, how it got prepared, how it deployed, why it deployed to where it went. And I will be ready to answer any questions following that as well.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Then it brings up the whole issue about once you are overhead. And I know we have been through this many times. 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

[REDACTED]

are dropping these bombs and who we are going to kill. There was no JTAC on the ground. We had no way of contacting the people on the ground from the airplane, from the pilots' perspective. There was no way to be able to affect -- with weapons on the ground. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We didn't know who was friendly and who was enemy. There was no way that we would have been able to drop weapons in that environment, from a drone or from an airplane.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

All of this, given this environment, was considered by General Ham and dismissed fairly quickly. And personally, from my experience, I believe his decision was correct. I will leave the rest of the F-16 questions for later because I am sure there will be more.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[Redacted]

[Large redacted table area containing multiple rows and columns of obscured data]

[Redacted]

[The prepared statement of Major General Roberson can be found in
the Appendix on page ?.]

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Mrs. Roby. Do you mind, before we go into questions, one of the issues that was included was the unmanned aircraft. Can you talk about that in your testimony now before we go into questions? Because I know there will be questions about that as well.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

But that being said, I think the deeper question is it was 9/11. And why would we have -- why would we not have -- and I understand everything that you said about them being training, not set up for the racks for the weapons and all of that. I get that. But why were these F-16s on training status? And was it considered because of 9/11 that they should be on strict alert?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mrs. Roby. Why was that not anticipated on 9/11?

General Roberson. Again, well, I guess I would add a part, and then I will let Gary jump in. But we actually did an analysis of since 9/11 of 2001, how many attacks that we have actually had on 9/11, the anniversary of 9/11. The answer is one, and it was September 11 of 2012. Prior to that event at Benghazi, there had not been an attack on 9/11 that DOD had to respond to in any way. So we were taking in all of the indications and warning. We were postured as appropriately as we can be and we thought we should be around the world. It wasn't just in Africa, in North Africa, that we had issues. We had issues around the world. Each combatant commander is responsible for analyzing the situation in their area of responsibility and making determinations as to force posture, alert postures, and response. In this particular case, the assets, the way they were laid down were in complete concert with the rest of the assets around the world, based on the indications and warnings at the time.

[REDACTED]

General Roberson. Right.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mrs. Roby. Right.

General Roberson. They ended up moving to the annex. There was a long period in there where there was no activity. And so, again, the mentality of everybody was, it doesn't make sense to launch an F-16 now, given what we know about the situation. Now, in hindsight, 20/20, we know that there was another attack at 5:15 in the morning. But again, given the environment, the circumstances, what these systems are designed to do, the F-16s are not on a mission to respond. It is not like a fire station. We don't have assets to respond like a fire call, jump down the pole and respond for any American that is under fire anywhere in the world. That is not DOD's role. Our role is to support the State Department, whose primary responsibility is for security of their mission.

Mrs. Roby. Can you -- go ahead. I am sorry.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

General Roberson. I am sorry, ma'am.

Mrs. Roby. No, I was going to ask what the status of the AFRICOM
CIF is now.

[REDACTED]

Mrs. Roby. Okay. And it has all of the enablers that it needs?

General Roberson. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. Roby. Okay. And I apologize, I should have said this before
I even asked you one question. Thank you both for your service to our
country. And we really do appreciate all of the sacrifice and
experience that you bring.

And I want to say, from Margaret and George and Riley, we appreciate
the sacrifice of your families as well. It means a lot. And they
certainly are serving their countries as well. So I apologize for not
saying that.

We have copies of the map in front of us now. So, before I turn
to Ms. Tsongas for questions, do you want to brief off of this real
quickly so we have a point of reference? And then I will continue along
the line of questioning in the appropriate order.

Mr. Reid. Madam Chair, before the General goes through the map,
I just want to tack onto that last discussion. And just as a reminder,
not in any way as an excuse, but it is important to note, and these are
discussions we are having with State right now to review this particular
planning model, but the Libyan Government is the provider of security.
The 17 February Brigade was aligned and contracted to respond. It is

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

a 3,000-plus man element. It had responded reliably in our limited experience in the post-Qadhafi Tripoli.

But to your question of, why isn't a jet ready to come in, prior to this event, over many years of embassy security and DOD responding to embassy scenarios, which usually have a build up of a few days, for planning purposes, for 12-plus hours, the host nation force has been in the past assumed to be capable to provide the immediate defense. Because as has been mentioned, unless you are right down the street, it is tough to get there within a few hours no matter how alert you are. So getting back to your question why wasn't -- why didn't we see that, why didn't we think that? What we thought, which turned out tragically unreliable, was that the Libyan security force would provide a defense of our diplomats, as is done around the world everywhere, and that failed. Again, not offering this as an excuse, but just to share our mind set of the time.

Clearly, we have a different mind set today than we had then. And this is a particular part of our workings with State now about how do we approach this problem? And as the General said, we have put some forces in place now while we are coming to a longer term solution. And you know, you see some of the effects of that and some of the discussions on that even in the President's comments about the support for the security. So, again, just wanted to share that mind set with you.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[1:30 p.m.]

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Mrs. Roby. Okay. Thank you. Ms. Tsongas.

Ms. Tsongas. Thank you, General. You've done a great job of sort

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[REDACTED]

of laying out the difficult choices you had and the many constraints you confronted. And I think anticipated a lot of our questions and answered them. I know we are going to be going to a top secret classification at 3:30 and I am going to be curious about hearing about this specialized military unit that was coming from the United States, but I am wondering if you could comment just on the importance of that, that this unit was activated and was making its way, what does that say about how the Benghazi attack was perceived?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. So again that is the kind of details we can give you later, but it certainly should indicate to you that as this event unfolded in the very early stages, the fact that the Secretary recommended and the President approved to alert and deploy this [REDACTED] force goes to the seriousness at which we took the initial reports and the uncertainty of the moment about what we could be getting into. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] So that was the mind-set of the time was to get them in a position for what we were not sure was going to happen next.

Ms. Tsongas. And then another question, we haven't really focused on this so much, but I am just wondering if you can walk us through step by step how DOD and the State Department consult with one another on embassy security. Clearly this was 9/11, I don't know if that meant there were ramped up discussions in general with the State Department about how to secure embassies around the world. What is DOD's role? Do you initiate these conversations or are you captive of the State Department reaching out to you?

We know you can't be 911 for every embassy across the world, so what is it reasonable to expect as we go forward with the lessons learned from Benghazi?

Mr. Reid. I think specific to this topic of how we were interacting at the time of this event in the recent security environment we have -- when this event occurred already increased security in Yemen based on credible threats and attack patterns. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] That is one example of how we approached this in these areas, I am talking again outside of Afghanistan scenario.

On a daily basis the combatant commanders and the Pentagon monitors security. We do have a proactive mechanism for identifying threats. We work those in the deputies committee on a routine basis on the counterterrorism context. We worked those, was mentioned about the

[REDACTED]

9/11 anniversary. I will tell you at every significant date in history whether it is a U.S. holiday, the Christmas bomber scenario, on 9/11 there are deliberate gatherings of deputies and principals level to review threats and consider adjustments, so we worked that back here and we work it forward.

We, as a department, recommend strongly that we take proactive measures and we have shared this thinking with State since Benghazi and as part of the fabric of what we are talking about going forward, is to not look at us as an emergency response force that needs to be there within single digit hours because it is just frankly not that practical and not that assured of a planning model. So where we can we have recommended they increase security as is the case today in Tripoli. We encourage a dialogue of considering the threats and what responses they may be anticipating. We are working with them on identifying post by post right now what we believe to be the case with the host nations security force, do they have the capability and do they have the will to use that capability. And we are factoring that into a post-by-post assessment, this is in progress that out of that process will come more concrete recommendations back up to both Secretaries Kerry and Hagel to see what else could be done.

At the same time we realize we are never going to get it perfectly right and we do need a response capability. And as I am sure many of you are aware and it has been in the press recently, the President talked about it, we have put forces forward. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We have additional forces

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

that have moved closer. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

They are organized in a way in their training and equipping is the right capability to put into some of these scenarios where we want to reinforce embassy security.

As you are also probably aware, we are looking at the Marine security guards and we have made a commitment to increase the coverage of the Marine security guard program to increase the size of certain detachments in high threat areas and other steps that we are taking to build that up.

Again, they are not going to be out on the perimeter chasing bad guys down the street, they are defending the hard line, they are defending within our secure areas, defending our people, defending our diplomatic facilities. But they are also a vanguard of other DOD elements that could come into play and then provide that awareness for us as well on a daily basis.

Ms. Tsongas. I don't know, General, if you want to --

General Roberson. Sure. I would add again we are working with them every day now since this time, but -- I don't know if you want to talk what our relationship was before, because it was robust, we were talking with them every day about threats all across the world. But we have done some things now that we are calling part of the new normal based on the circumstances we are seeing around the world that we think are going to be able to help. The Marine special MAGTF for crisis

[REDACTED]

I guess with regard to the TMF it is hard for me to believe that our DOD did not know where the TMF was, I believe what you tell me. But these guys didn't just get lucky. The TMF, when our ambassador is there, they had to have knowledge of it, they had to know when he was there to do it. Do you think these guys just got lucky or do you think that they knew exactly when to hit it?

General Roberson. Yeah, let me qualify that statement probably, but what I was getting to is DOD institutionally, we do not track the consulates, the annexes especially of our other government agencies. We don't keep track of them and we don't -- now --

Mr. Scott. General, I wasn't questioning your statement.

General Roberson. No, yes, sir, I understand. That sounds a little bit much, but the reality is, of course we had some DOD folks, those six people who were DOD in Tripoli, they knew very well where that TMF was.

Mr. Scott. But I am talking about the people who carried out the attack against us.

General Roberson. Yes, sir.

Mr. Scott. I mean, obviously, that was orchestrated and they knew where the temporary mission facility was.

Benghazi is approximately 400 miles by air to Tripoli. How far is it in a vehicle and how did our people -- you said that two of our people responded immediately, how did they travel to Benghazi? Did they --

General Roberson. Once they received notification in Tripoli

that there was an attack in Benghazi, the two DOD were part of a crisis, a quick response force, and they chartered a plane from Libya to jump on in Tripoli and fly to Benghazi. It took a while for that airplane to be ready, it took a couple hours and then it took an hour to fly over there.

Mr. Scott. Okay. I have two last questions, one is the area where the attack took place. This is, I mean, Benghazi has got over 600,000 people. Did it take place on the outskirts of Benghazi or was it in the heart of the city which would have made it that much harder to use air assets?

General Roberson. Sir, it was in the heart -- I mean, define "heart," but it was in the city, it was not out on an outskirt by itself. Even the annex was.

Mr. Scott. So dropping a bomb would have killed more people?

General Roberson. Without knowing the details the potential is extremely high that we would have had collateral damage associated with that.

Mr. Scott. One last question if I may, Madam Chair. You hit on this issue a little bit the weapon systems of the people that were carrying out the attack. You referred surface-to-air missiles. Did we provide the rebels in their overthrow any weapons systems that could have been used against U.S. air assets that were capable of taking down the plane?

General Roberson. Sir, I don't know that.

Mr. Reid. I just on the DOD side, it would clearly be no and I

[REDACTED]

don't know beyond that. I wouldn't be briefed on it, so I couldn't answer here if I was.

I would add, Congressman, as well, the folks that went to help were part 2 of the six-person team, if I may explain this to you all because it was I don't think clearly explained in some of the televised appearances last week.

[REDACTED]

Mr. Scott. The embassy in Tripoli?

Mr. Reid. So they had two different, slightly different missions, it wasn't an incoherent action on our part, the question was asked publicly why did only two go? Four stayed and provided security, they helped move folks into a secure area and they provided treatment for the wounded.

Mr. Scott. Thank you. Madam Chair, I yield the remainder of my time.

[REDACTED]

Mrs. Roby. Mr. Andrews.

Mr. Andrews. Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank you gentlemen for your patience, and your service, and for answering questions that have been asked and answered, and asked and answered, and asked and answered. We appreciate it.

[REDACTED]

General Roberson. Yes, sir.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mr. Andrews. And the final fatalities occurred about 5:15 in the morning Libya time.

General Roberson. That is right.

Mr. Andrews. So I mean, look my sense of this is that it would be the ultimate in Monday morning quarterbacking to second guess anybody's judgment in the heat of that situation. I think people responded promptly and correctly, and frankly should be commended for their good judgment under very tough circumstances.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mr. Andrews. I understand. If we hold all the other facts constant, if everything else that happened that evening and that morning happened again, and God forbid we had the same thing happen again in Benghazi, what would that do to these timelines? In other words, when would a force be able to arrive on the ground in the heat of the moment?

[REDACTED]

Mr. Andrews. So 2-1/2 hours to Tripoli and then another hour to Benghazi?

[REDACTED]

Mr. Andrews. Which still means, and again I think we have to take some perspective on this, that given the facts of this circumstance the first set of fatalities happened before anybody gets there. We all wish we could have had a thousand people next door, but I don't think we want

[REDACTED]

to have 15 million people in the Armed Forces of the United States and put them in every country in the world. And so I just think that we need to be mindful of the global risk that you were facing, the circumstances of which you were all under, and I think the good job that you did. I yield back.

Mrs. Roby. Thank you. Mr. Conaway.

Mr. Conaway. Madam Chair, I yield to my colleague Mr. Miller for 5 minutes.

Mr. Miller. Thank you Mr. Conaway.

General, just one question. When we had our briefing here back in November I guess it was, we saw this and I asked for the posture for the same day for five-years?

General Roberson. Yes, sir.

Mr. Miller. Six months and I still haven't gotten an answer and I am trying to find out where it is.

General Roberson. Okay, sir. I thought we had relayed the information to you. We went back and looked at what we could get to answer that question, we do not have the information available. We have no database that records where all of our forces were on September 11th for the last 5 years. We change our forces every day.

Mr. Miller. One year, do you have it for 1 year?

General Roberson. Sir, we didn't even have it for one year, to be honest. We looked, we went to AFRICOM and asked them what the forces status was for 1 year, and did not get a good answer. We were not able to accurately show you what the forces arrayed across this whole area

like this. The only reason we were able to do for this to be honest because shortly after it happened, we told everybody to retain all of the information they had regarding this so that we could capture it as we needed. So I am not -- believe me, if we -- we tried to gather the information, we do not have the data available to provide that information.

Mr. Miller. Are you sure that is the answer or is that just what Gillory told you to say?

General Roberson. No, sir. I was the one who asked the combatant commands --

Mr. Miller. I am just trying to lighten the load a little bit. I understand and thank you for your response, I yield back.

Mr. Chaffetz. Will the gentleman yield?

Mrs. Roby. Ms. Speier.

Ms. Speier. Madam Chair, thank you. And thank you both for an outstanding presentation, you added so much clarity to this issue that has been fogged for months and months.

The drones that were put in operation over Benghazi, one almost immediately gave you intelligence. And then there was a second one that was deployed around 5:00 a.m., right before the actual second attack. What kind of intelligence were you picking up that might have assisted or alerted that there was a second attack or a third attack, I should say, that was about to take place?

Mr. Reid.

[REDACTED]

But frankly the asset overhead was of very little use to the folks on the ground. It provided some awareness in the rear headquarters, but not where you could make any operational judgments or provide any real warnings. The mortar attack, as the General mentioned, from start to finish was a period of about 11 minutes. And again, there were no warnings or no tip-offs or indicators of activity. We were also observing the activity at the airport. The team from Tripoli, the Tripoli team of which two were DOD was held up at the airport for some time.

Ms. Speier. Was that because the Libyan government would not give them clearance, or was it because there wasn't transportation, ground transportation?

Mr. Reid. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mrs. Roby. The gentle lady's time has expired. We are going to keep circling back to make sure that all O&I members questions are exhausted, and then we will move to HASC members in order and then non-HASC members from there just to remind everybody about the current procedure.

Real quickly on September 10th, of 2012 the Office of the Press Secretary at the White House released a statement summarizing the President's meeting with senior administrative officials on preparedness and security posture on the 11th anniversary of September 11th. And the office reported, and I am going to read this email, the President heard from key national security principals on our preparedness and security posture on the eve of the 11th anniversary of September 11th. The President and the principles discussed specific

[REDACTED]

measures we are taking in the homeland to prevent 9/11 related attacks as well as steps taken to protect U.S. persons and facilities abroad as well as force protection. The President reiterated that Department and agencies must do everything possible to protect the American People both at home and abroad. That was September 10. So my question is, based on this map, I understand you don't have the data from a year ago or 5 years ago, but did this map look exactly the same on September 10th as it did on September 11th?

General Roberson. Ma'am, I -- I don't know that to be sure, but I would say that the chance is very likely that it is the same.

Mrs. Roby. Very likely, even after the President reported that he wanted to make sure that on -- a lot of questions I have asked have been related to our preparedness in light of the anniversary of September 11th, and the President clearly, by his statement, made it clear he wanted to make sure we had our security forces in place, and so that is why I want to make sure that we are very, very clear. If it was different, I trust you will let this committee know if you learn differently.

General Roberson. Ma'am, the only differences that I know beyond there is the exact position of where the ships are, because of course, they are sailing, so they are moving about. So the numbers and the distances are going to be very, very close. The actual locations of some of the assets might not be exactly the same.

Mrs. Roby. Okay. Thank you. Where is the AFRICOM CIF located right now?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mrs. Roby. Okay. And do they have all the enablers that they need?

General Roberson. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. Roby. Why is it not in Africa?

General Roberson. Because we don't have it any bases in Africa.

Mrs. Roby. Okay. We don't have the ability with the French to have any location in Djibouti?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

■

[REDACTED]

Mrs. Roby. Right.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

General Roberson. Well, see the total time and again what we did on this, the way that this was put together is we reached out to each of the COCOMs after this, and we said, okay, where were your forces? What kind of status were they on? How long would it have taken you to get those forces over Benghazi?

Mrs. Roby. Right.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mrs. Roby. Okay, well there is a clarification. Okay. My time

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

has expired and I will go to Ms. Tsongas.

Ms. Tsongas. Thank you and also even if you had a refueling capacity, there were many questions as to what the situation on the ground was whether the F-16 was the appropriate platform to go in. Is that not right?

General Roberson. That is right.

Ms. Tsongas. I wanted to go back to the issue of what is taken place at the embassy in Tripoli now, I am not sure which one of you mentioned that you are now relying again on Libyan security. And I think we have all seen the film in which we saw the security that was at the consul in Benghazi as the sort of Libyan security forces sort of scattering away. So what has lead to you have greater confidence that they are going to do the job that they need to do in order to protect American citizens who are there?

Mr. Reid. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] As you probably have seen, there have been political turmoil in Tripoli and with the government over the past two weeks that has caused us to look at our security there. We have increased security. We have contracted slightly the size of the staff,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Ms. Tsongas. Thank you. I yield back.

[REDACTED]

Mrs. Roby. Right.

[REDACTED]

Mrs. Roby. Right. One of the things that we are struggling with, and again, I know we can look back on these situations now like you said hindsight is 2020, and these things happened so fast, but at the time we didn't know it was going to be over that quickly. We didn't know everything that we know now. The threat was real and it was happening and there were lives at stake. I mean, there have been situations where we have broken rules in the past and apologized later, you know, the most recent would have been the Osama bin Laden, we didn't ask Pakistan for permission. We told them we are sorry after the fact. We obviously wouldn't have been able to complete that mission. Was there consideration given, even if not at your level at a higher level? Was this run up the chain to say, you know, what this is a really serious situation at which lives are at stake, maybe we should consider breaking the rules?

Mr. Reid. Madam Chair, I don't believe that we reached a point, I certainly haven't been involved in anything in this event where we had a military tactical option teed up for which that decision would

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

have been present. Again, as mentioned in the Secretary and the chairman's testimony, from a military perspective, this was two short attacks. We clearly did not expect the second one.

[REDACTED]

Obviously tragically, the mortar scenario is what got us.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] But for those reasons, and again, the back channeled calms all night with the State Department, even Mr. Hicks, the Libyans said we are going to get in control.

So we weren't sort of in an all-or-nothing scenario. We didn't have a tactical setting to say let's get a military force in there now. We have our force consolidated, we had this question about the Ambassador's situation, and we were working to get the extraction force into the airport to get them out of there.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

By the time our forces were in a position to be able to get into Libya and to do something everything was coming out of Benghazi, everybody was retrograding to Tripoli. And so we were working on getting the wounded out. We knew by then that the Ambassador was dead, and that he was on his way from the hospital to the airfield.

So again, you know, a dynamic circumstance, not an easy situation. I personally believed that the decisions that were made by every person in the Department of Defense were made to have the best effect that we possibly could in the situation that we were seeing.

Mrs. Roby. Thank you. My time has expired and now we will go to Mr. Lamborn.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

General Roberson. And sir, this is one of the those areas that is at the TS level.

Mr. Lamborn. Okay.

General Roberson. And so at 3:30, we will talk in detail about exactly how that happened and why.

Mr. Lamborn. Okay, then I will hold off on that one.

Can you explain to me the protocol, and the lines of authority between the State Department and DOD? For instance, the FAST teams are able to help national assets. When does that include State Department personnel? Could it include Marines going to the rescue of a U.S. businessman who has been abducted, or a group -- a U.S. Chamber of Commerce group that is in Benghazi and has come under fire? I mean, when does the military get involved with State Department and other Americans at risk? Or is it just done as an extremist.

General Roberson. That is a great question, sir, because really, we work with the State Department on security, but the State Department has primary responsibility for the embassy, for members of their teams, and to a large extent, for the security of Americans in the country they

[REDACTED]

are in. Now there are going to be businessmen and single people out there, there will be potentially a McDonald's owner or something that is an American that we do not have responsibility to protect, that is not in our job right now sitting here today. But if something happened, and the State Department called on us to help with something, then we would look at everything that we have available that could potentially help in that scenario. And if you look back from the type Libya fell back in 2011, everything the State Department asked for from the DOD we provided, everything.

Mr. Lamborn. I have no doubt about that.

Mr. Reid. May I add one thing?

Mr. Lamborn. Please.

Mr. Reid. Your question gets into a bit of a counterterrorism context. I was actually pleased to see a couple weeks ago on 60 Minutes an interview with Jessica Buchanan. I don't know if you saw it or not. We rescued her in Somalia. She was a nongovernment organization worker, an American citizen held hostage in Somalia for about 3 months. And our counterterrorism posture always looks at these types of scenarios and these targets and we track them very closely.

To your specific question, when a scenario arises and when the President of the United States gives the order to conduct these operations, within that order, it will be specified where we hand off from the chief of missions responsibilities to a military-led operation, and that comes as you may imagine, with a set of rules of engagement and such that guide and bound that operation. That is the authority

framework.

Prior to that action occurring, we may have forces in a country working in a non military operation, but in military support context, and we recognize the chief of missions authority for the day-to-day operations of all U.S. activity in that country, even though we may still retain a military chain of command, UCMJ, resources and these type of things, but we will respect the authority of the chief of mission in sort of day-to-day setting. But for a military operation, that transition order is embedded within the President's authority to conduct that operation.

Mr. Lamborn. Can the Secretary of State go directly to the Secretary of Defense to say, hey, we need help, or does this have to go to the White House and then come back down?

Mr. Reid. It depends on what kind of help you are talking about. But again, if we are talking about a military operation where with a military objective those orders will come from the commander-in-chief. It is highly collaborative, I don't want to paint this as bureaucratic. We have multiple deputies-level meetings a week on security items and terrorism as its own focus obviously led by Lisa Monaco where we are actively engaged. It isn't that she sends, or he sends a memo over to Secretary Hagel, it is very dynamic process.

General Roberson. And sir, just as an example, we try to do as much as we can proactively before the bang occurs. And one of the forces that is available for the pre bang stuff is the fleet antiterrorism securities, in the FAST team. That team is designed not to go in and

[REDACTED]

rescue hostages, not to go in and save people from being attacked. They are designed to move forward based on indications and warning prior to an event to beef up the security at any embassy or facility that the State Department feels they need help with.

Mr. Lamborn. Thank you both.

General Roberson. Sure.

Mrs. Roby. Thank you. Mr. Lamborn, have you had all your questions answered before we move outside of the committee?

Mr. Lamborn. I actually do have another follow up or two if that is permissible.

Mrs. Roby. Please go ahead.

Mr. Lamborn. Let's see, so back to the example of a Chamber of Commerce group of 20 businessmen, if they were beleaguered and under attack, DOD would only get -- would not even get involved normally speaking, and it would be a State Department issue from the beginning.

General Roberson. Yes, sir. The State Department has primary responsibility for the security of its embassy and those folks that are in the country. We DOD, do not protect every American citizen that is around the world. Now we can be called when something happens to try to help, and of course we do.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

General Roberson. We always have the right of self-defense as a part of Department of Defense. So if they were in Benghazi, and in fact, that is personally I think the only way that we could have helped was to have people actually at Benghazi at the time. But if they are there, and they come under attack, then they have the right for self-defense so they will protect and do whatever is necessary in that regard. But your example of a commerce, a group of 20 businessmen traveling around as a part of the commerce, sir, we don't -- we do not track that kind of activity, and we do not posture our forces, and we do not set our alert statuses based on that scenario.

Mr. Lamborn. Getting back to State Department personnel, an ambassador or other key -- actually any embassy personnel, you would not even get involved there unless you were directed to by order coming from the White House which would be, I assume, sought out by the State Department?

General Roberson. I would say that if there are DOD forces already aligned with that mission, in other words, all the people, like our six-Marine security guards, which is a typical security guard unit for an embassy, their job is to provide in basically two parts: Security for classified materials so that we don't lose any State secrets to anybody else who might be trying to take the embassy. So they will destroy classified materials and make sure nobody else gets a hold of them. They also have a responsibility for security. So they can act as security personnel, but it is all inside the embassy compound. They do not have the authority and we have MOAs, agreements with the State

[REDACTED]

Department on what those Marines can and can't do.

So any time DOD is associated with State Department through either the EXOR that we push out to tell them what their mission is and what their lanes are, or through an MOA, Memorandum of Agreement with the State Department for Marine security guards, they know where their chain of command lies, they know what their responsibilities are, and they know what their authorities are.

Mr. Reid. Congressman, if I could just add, your question is situation-dependent, and as the General said, whether or not we already have established a military operation and that could be a bit hard to see from the outside. We may do the order and put in an advance element and have the other force in reserve. But the point is you have already established this framework to make these decisions about coming in or not.

I also would add we do have in the context of security abroad the no double standard policy in our government, which means every American is entitled to some degree of security, again, under the chief of missions purview. And we are there to be scenarios where Americans were in peril and that ambassador brought that recommendation in, and we have certainly alerted for these many times in my career with NGOs frequently,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] So those scenarios do occur under this no double standard. We can't just evacuate the official presence and say good-bye to everyone else, it doesn't work like that. We evacuated

[REDACTED]

thousands of Americans out of Liberia in 1990, 1991 as a major embassy evacuation. So those kinds of things are, I think, are separate from what you are asking, but I didn't want to mislead either.

Mr. Lamborn. So if I understand correctly and I suspected this all along, but I don't think most Americans actually understand this very clearly, the security of embassy personnel depends on the State Department arrangements that have been made in country ahead of time with the narrow exception of a Marine or half of the Marines who might be stationed at the embassy to protect the embassy from physical attack, either documents or personnel that are coming on to the embassy grounds. So in other words, this DOD wants to be helpful and can and will be helpful where directed by the White House in an instance like this, but otherwise, it is all State Department responsibility. Am I correct in assuming that?

General Roberson. Yes, sir. And I guess I would just add as well --

Mrs. Roby. If the gentleman for a minute, you either continue with another 5 minutes or --

Mr. Lamborn. This is my last question.

Mrs. Roby. Let's just start the clock again and then you can yield back.

Mr. Lamborn. Thank you.

General Roberson. So I would add -- I lost my train of thought there.

Mrs. Roby. I am sorry, I am just trying to keep a quorum.

Mr. Reid. Americans are encouraged to register with the embassy when they are abroad. There is a non combatant evacuation system, if I am telling you something you already know. There is a warden system and everyone has someone that is designated to look after certain populations of registered Americans. If they don't tell the embassy they are present, it is a little harder, but there is a deliberate system that gets at what you are talking about, and clearly under the chief of missions responsibilities, military-assisted evacuation is a part of every embassy's contingency plan, but again triggered by a deliberate process that we talked about here that we have a role in, but we are not the day-to-day primary provider of diplomatic security.

[REDACTED]

RPTS JOHNSON

DCMN SECKMAN

[2:25 p.m.]

[REDACTED]

Mr. Lamborn. Thank you.

Would my colleague from Utah want to have any follow-up questions?

Mrs. Roby. He is next.

Mr. Lamborn. Okay. Madam Chair, I yield back. Thank you so much.

Mrs. Roby. Thank you.

And now we will go to Mr. Chaffetz.

Mr. Chaffetz. Thank you. I thank the chairman. And I thank you for allowing me to participate.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mr. Reid.

[REDACTED]

Mr. Chaffetz. I think we will have some further discussions of that from. From midnight to 2 a.m., which is roughly 2 to 4 hours after the start of the attack, the timeline says that there were basically three things that were put in action by verbal order of the Secretary of Defense, the FAST team, the EUCOM Special Operations Force, and the Special Operations Force based in the United States. Were there any other actions put into place? Were those the three things? Is that the totality of the actions of the Department of Defense, those three things on the timeline between midnight and 2 a.m.? Is there anything else that should be on that list that is not on that list?

Mr. Reid. None that I can sit here and think of as you ask the question.

Mr. Chaffetz. Was there any attempt at any time -- we have talked a lot about air assets and tankers. At what point did you actually try or start and to put into movement military aircraft that could potentially be a show of force, or could potentially be an air tanker

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

in the air? Did you ever even start that process?

General Roberson. Sir, as General Ham has testified, he considered it as a part of his evaluation of the situation and the assets that were available at the time. Now, I don't know if it was between midnight and 2 a.m. I have no idea about that. But I know that he did consider all the assets that were available, and dismissed fighters as being an option because there were none on alert in his -- with his ability to reach out and grab them.

[REDACTED]

General Roberson. We certainly can. It would just take time.

[REDACTED]

General Roberson. That is -- the information that was available on the situation on the ground --

Mr. Chaffetz. I know. But with all due respect, General, my time is very limited.

General Roberson. Yes, sir.

Mr. Chaffetz. Did you start to put assets in the air? Granted

[REDACTED]

it takes time. I understand and respect that. Some of them are very long timelines. And I think this committee Armed Services, is probably going to look at. But did you ever start that process? And the answer is no, correct?

[REDACTED]

General Roberson. No, sir.

[REDACTED]

General Roberson. No, sir.

Mr. Chaffetz. So at no point -- at what point did the military think that this was over? When did you say, whew, that was ugly, but it is over. At what point was it over?

General Roberson. Sir, we never assumed it was over because we kept forces in place for weeks afterwards posturing for any --

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

General Roberson. Yes, sir.

Mr. Chaffetz. And it is embarrassing that you can't get a plane over there and do a low flyover and drop a sonic boom. It is embarrassing.

Mr. Reid, you testified at the very beginning of this that you did everything you could from the first moment to provide medical assistance and to make sure that we had evacuation in process. How can you justify that looking at this timeline? At what point did we actually put into motion somebody to come evacuate those that were wounded and ultimately some that were killed? What time did that happen?

Mr. Reid. That began when we moved the seven-man Tripoli QRF team to --

[REDACTED]

Mr. Reid. The unclassified timeline that we have is distributed notes that the Tripoli team departed at approximately 6:30 p.m. It arrived in Benghazi airport about 1 hour later. This was the force that responded to the annex, provided the medical care. Two members of this force were killed.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mrs. Roby. The gentleman's time has expired. We are going to continue to circle around, and you can follow up with your questions.

Mr. Andrews.

Mr. Andrews. Thank you.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mr. Andrews. How many years have been involved with the F-16 fleet?

General Roberson. Sir, I have been in the Air Force 30 years, and I have been associated with the F-16 most of that.

Mr. Andrews. Is there any operation or mission involving an F-16 you haven't done personally?



General Roberson. Sir, there probably is, but I have done most of them, yes.

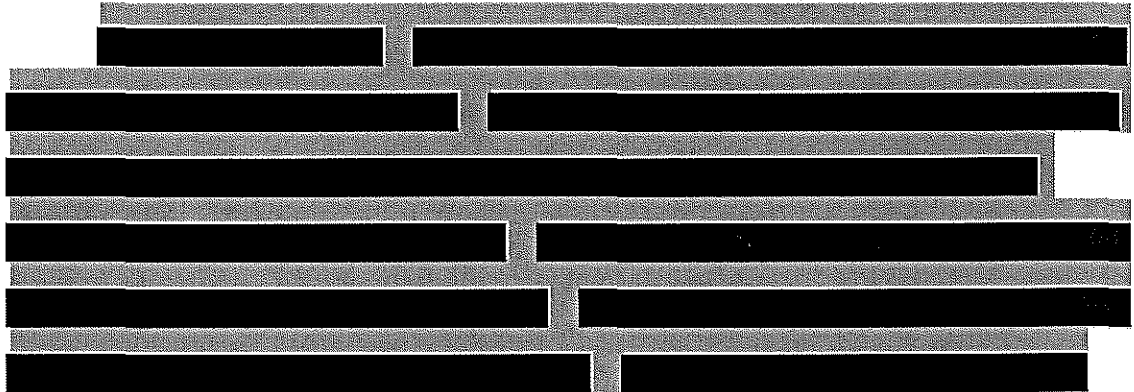
Mr. Andrews. In your best military judgment, was the use of F-16s appropriate, given the state of knowledge and the state of affairs in Libyan time late in the evening September 11th, 2012?

General Roberson. Sir, in my personal opinion, it was absolutely not.

Mr. Andrews. I appreciate that.

I yield back.

Mrs. Roby. I have one quick question. Is there any reason to believe that NATO could have done anything without our support? And the perfect example as was demonstrated in the Libya air campaign?



Mrs. Roby. But from your opinion, because of all of your years of experience, do you think that NATO could have done it without --

General Roberson. No, ma'am, I don't. And I was stationed in Germany twice flying F-16s as well.

Mrs. Roby. Can you expressly state why?

General Roberson. Again, it is a function of -- they don't keep their forces on an alert status. They are NATO forces. They are not



sitting there ready to go to war like we used to be in 1980, ready to run and block the Fulda Gap against the Soviet Union as it was coming across. You know, 30 years ago, NATO had forces on alert. U.S. had forces on alert, aircraft that were ready to get airborne in 5 minutes. That was what we could do. We don't have those forces in NATO, and we don't have those forces in America in Europe right now.

Mrs. Roby. Okay.

Mr. Chaffetz, I am going to give you another 5 minutes. They have called votes. So our plan is I am going to give Mr. Chaffetz 5 minutes, see if there is any follow-up questions.

We will close this out. We will meet you, this is a good chance for you to have a break -- we have been going for a while, and we appreciate the fact that you will need that. We will meet at the SCIF immediately following votes. It should be about 3:15ish, 2337.

So, Mr. Chaffetz, you have 5 minutes.

Mr. Chaffetz. Thank you.

General, following up, I just want to make sure I heard this absolutely right. You said, quote, everything requested from State we provided them. This goes back from 2011 when -- after the air campaign.

General Roberson. Yes, sir.

Mr. Chaffetz. I want to make sure I have got that exactly right. To the best of your knowledge, there was nothing else for the security prior to the attack, prior to the attack, that State Department asked for that you denied.

General Roberson. That is correct.

[REDACTED]

Mr. Chaffetz. That is an important part of this component, Madam Chair, because there have been a lot of allegations that it was because we didn't provide certain funding for the embassy. And I think we find that that argument is totally false and without merit. They simply didn't ask in many ways. And these assets were available and were there previously, but those on the ground were not able to keep those assets.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mr. Chaffetz. Was there ever a consideration to have a FAST team to go into Cairo, where they were going over the walls?

[REDACTED]

Mr. Chaffetz. And again, Madam Chair, we are getting to another part of this story of Benghazi and the embassies that is one of the great shames here, because the ask goes right to the heart of what I believe we also had in this incident in Benghazi. It is consistent with what I heard 3 and a half weeks after the attack from General Ham himself, we were never asked. And this gets to be a pivotal point here.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

General Roberson. Yes, sir. Please, please do not take me out of context.

Mr. Chaffetz. That is why I am asking the question.

General Roberson. Yes, sir, I appreciate it. Because I truly am not trying to mislead. When I say that, obviously, the guys who were in Libya that were familiar in Tripoli and Benghazi knew where -- I mean, in Tripoli, in both places, the annex and the embassy in Tripoli, those guys knew very well where the --

Mr. Chaffetz. But the Pentagon can tell the coordinates of where this thing is looking, right?

General Roberson. That is right. So it wouldn't be hard for somebody to give us the coordinates and pass it to the pilot on the F-16 who is coming in. So don't take me the wrong way here.

Mr. Chaffetz. All right.

General Roberson. What I am getting at is that --

Mr. Chaffetz. I have one more question. I just don't want to run out of some.

General Roberson. As a corporation, as an entity DOD, we do not track --

Mr. Chaffetz. Right. I understand. You don't have these all

[REDACTED]

mapped out. You don't want to have all these other facilities.

Madam Chair, with your indulgence I have one last question.

General, have you ever had experience, have you ever seen in Afghanistan, in other theaters where a show of force has an effect? In Libya itself, in fact, we used a tactic where we would actually fly planes at supersonic speeds to show of force, drop down a sonic boom. We have heard testimony, we have heard other individuals have said that could have -- that might have made a real difference to let the people on the ground know the United States of America is here. Have you ever seen that in your career?

General Roberson. Sir, I have flown many shows of forces. I have done it at 500 feet, at slow speed to show them we are there, and I have done it very fast to make sure they know they can hear us. So there is a potential you could have flown a show of force and made everyone aware that there was a fighter airborne. Would it have changed anything? Certainly, we couldn't have gotten there before the ambassador was dead. We know that. But even if we had gotten there before the annex attack, in my experience, again, it doesn't necessarily stop the fighting, especially if they are conditioned to it. If you have experienced fighters who have seen shows of forces before, then they know what it means. It means, there is no bombs dropping. It just means you are trying to let them know you are there. And so I can't tell you if it would have been effective or not in Benghazi with a show of force.

Mr. Chaffetz. And General, I guess what the shame is, we didn't

even try.

Yield.

Mrs. Roby. Gentlemen, thank you again. We will see you in the SCIF immediately following votes. Thank you.

[The information follows:]

***** INSERT 3-1 *****

[Whereupon, at 2:44 p.m., the subcommittee proceeded to a higher classified session.]