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**THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT'S POSTURE
FOR SEPTEMBER 11, 2013: WHAT ARE
THE LESSONS OF BENGHAZI?**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND INVESTIGATIONS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD
SEPTEMBER 19, 2013



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THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT'S POSTURE FOR SEPTEMBER 11, 2013: WHAT ARE THE LESSONS OF BENGHAZI?

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS,
Washington, DC, Thursday, September 19, 2013.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 4:00 p.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Martha Roby (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

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

Mrs. ROBY. Good afternoon. The subcommittee will come to order. Last week we marked a solemn milestone. Last week we took solemn note of the 12th anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States. This September 11 also was the first anniversary of the terror strike in Benghazi, Libya. That murderous rampage killed four brave Americans serving this Nation abroad. In the first months after the events in Benghazi, the committee held three classified Member briefings, three classified staff briefings, and one hearing.

Chairman McKeon also requested additional written information from the Department of Defense. This spring, in an effort to direct additional dedicated resources to the committee's effort, Chairman McKeon directed the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee to undertake further work on the subject.

In a letter to the Department of Defense, Chairman McKeon made it clear that he intended for the Committee on Armed Services to address thoroughly, authoritatively, and conclusively the Benghazi-related matters within its purview.

In a May briefing, the subcommittee received classified information from today's witnesses about the Department of Defense's actions in connection with the Benghazi attack. We also learned about constraints on deploying other forces, including drones and fighter aircraft. In two subsequent briefings, we heard from flag and general officers and field grade subordinates who were in Libya at the time or were in contact with those who were. We learned about how these officers understood the events as they unfolded and the operational limitations they faced.

In order to understand fully the Department of Defense's response, it has been necessary for the subcommittee's briefings to be held at top secret or higher level. I am certain that Members understand this requirement. I also expect that they recognize that the committee has worked to allow interested Members to hear

these briefings firsthand and to have access to the classified transcripts.

As Chairman McKeon has directed, the subcommittee's Benghazi oversight is continuing. But based upon the information we have collected to date, I don't believe that any amount of heroism during the attacks could overcome the tragic lack of preparedness leading up to it.

It does not appear that U.S. military forces, units, aircrafts, drones, or specific personnel that could have been readily deployed in the course of the attack in Benghazi were unduly held back, or told to stand down, or refused permission to enter the fight. Rather, we were so badly postured, they could not have made a difference or we were desperately needed elsewhere.

I hope to learn in today's hearing that we were far better prepared to face a similar attack this September 11, and today, than we were a year ago. The subcommittee wants to ensure our requirement as members of this subcommittee and as members of this committee is to ensure that the Department of Defense has learned from Benghazi and is taking steps to minimize the chance that a strike like that can be successful again.

This committee's work on this issue has not been, and will not be a political exercise. Majority and minority members alike have asked important questions about our preparedness in 2012, and I expect they will do the same this afternoon.

Before turning to Representative Tsongas, Ranking Member Tsongas, for her opening remarks and my introduction of those, again, at the witness table today, let me review how we will proceed today. Our witnesses are going to make unclassified remarks about DOD's [Department of Defense] posture last week. To the extent that they can do so in this environment, they will describe generally how our forces continue to be deployed. They will also discuss what changes have come about as a result of the lessons learned in 2012.

Immediately after we adjourn, and my understanding is that now votes will not be called until later, so I think we have roughly an hour, hour and 45 to maybe even 2 hours before votes are called, so at some point, when we have exhausted this open, unclassified briefing, then we will move up to room 2337. And at that time, our witnesses will brief us on classified specifics that cannot be discussed now. And I caution Members, please, to raise only unclassified general topics in this room, and to hold off to the classified questions for our later session. And obviously, you, our witnesses, will direct us in the event that it is a question that needs to wait until the later briefing. We are also today joined by committee members who do not sit on the subcommittee but sit on the full Armed Services Committee. And therefore, I ask unanimous consent that nonsubcommittee members be allowed to participate in today's hearing after all subcommittee members have had an opportunity to ask questions.

Is there objection?

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

Before I go to you, Ranking Member Tsongas, our chairman, Mr. McKeon, is here, and so we will ask him if he has any opening comments.

The CHAIRMAN. No.

Mrs. ROBY. Okay. Now I will invite my distinguished ranking member to make her opening remarks.

[The prepared statement of Mrs. Roby can be found in the Appendix on page 25.]

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

Ms. TSONGAS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And thank you all for being here today. We have heard from you before, and in a classified setting, and we look forward to hearing you again today. And I thank you for all that we have been able to learn from you.

The tragedy that took place in Benghazi on September 11, 2012, shocked and saddened the Nation. And that is what has prompted this deep investigation of the circumstances. And we are reminded, with the tragic shooting at DC's Navy Yard, just how vulnerable those who serve our Nation might be, and yet again how vigilant we must be. Since the tragedy in Benghazi, the State Department, DOD, and Congress have worked to figure out what went wrong in an effort to make sure that such a tragedy never happens again.

The State Department's Accountability Review Board released an unclassified version of their findings. Many issues were addressed, and new measures have been put in place. And that was a primary focus on the State Department. Today, we will hear what the DOD has done to make sure that they are postured to immediately respond to threats and/or attacks involving our diplomatic facilities around the world. I look forward to your testimony. Thank you. And I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Tsongas can be found in the Appendix on page 28.]

Mrs. ROBY. Thank you, Representative Tsongas.

Today we are joined again by Mr. Garry Reid, who is the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, and 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 is the vice director for operations on the Joint Staff. Among his other military accomplishments, General Roberson is an Air Force Command fighter pilot with more than 865 combat hours.

Mr. Reid will give this afternoon's statement. He and General Roberson will both respond to Members' questions.

Mr. Reid, please proceed.

**STATEMENT OF GARRY REID, PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, SPECIAL OPERATIONS AND LOW-
INTENSITY CONFLICT, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

Mr. REID. Chairman Roby, Ranking Member Tsongas, and members of the committee, thank you for your continued interest in our overseas posture and matters related to the tragic events of last year. And thank you for the opportunity for allowing us to come over today and talk about where we are on these topics. As the chairman mentioned, a year ago, our government facilities in North Africa and the Middle East came under attack. These attacks took place in a region that was being swept up by revolutions and widespread social upheaval. In Cairo and Tunis, protesters breached the grounds of our embassies. In Sana'a and Khartoum, the protests escalated into attacks, which led to damage to our missions. And finally, as you know, a terrorist attack on our facilities in Benghazi, Libya, resulted in the tragic deaths of four brave Americans.

These events are dramatic examples of the threats and challenges our personnel overseas currently face. The pressure exerted by the United States and its partners has isolated the core of Al Qaeda. As the President has said, the remaining operatives in the Al Qaeda core spend more time thinking about their own safety than plotting against us.

But we now confront a threat from diversified groups, some affiliated with Al Qaeda and others not. The most well known of the affiliated groups is Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, which continues to plot against the United States. But increasingly, new groups of loosely affiliated extremists have emerged. The upheaval in North Africa and the Middle East has contributed to a permissive environment for such extremist networks.

Unlike Al Qaeda core in Afghanistan and Pakistan or Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, these groups are mostly focused on the countries and regions where they are based. They work together through existing familial and tribal networks, and focus on acting locally, as we saw in Benghazi, and at the British Petroleum oil facility in Algeria. And as we strive to work with our partners in the region, we see that political changes ushered in by the Arab Spring present challenges as well. Although many of the governments in the region are friendly to our interests, they struggle to exert a monopoly of force within their own borders.

So although host nations are bound by international law to protect our diplomatic personnel, we must recognize their capability shortfalls and work to offset them. In this environment, the Department of Defense is working hard with our interagency partners to ensure our military resources are best positioned to help protect U.S. personnel and facilities abroad.

The year since the attacks against our facility in Benghazi has been characterized by unprecedented cooperation between the Departments of State and Defense. From Secretaries Hagel and Kerry, down to the staffs on both sides of the river, we are in regular, open communication. The National Security Staff convenes weekly reviews of threat streams and security measures to identify hot spots, anticipate crises, and synchronize our proactive, preventative, and contingency response planning efforts. Our colleagues in

the Intelligence Community provide daily reporting of threat indicators and warnings. And our combatant commanders and chiefs of mission are in regular contact to assess threats and discuss contingency plans.

This improved interagency planning allows us to reinforce the efforts of host governments, which under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, have the lead for overall protection of our diplomats. This leads to a broader point. We believe a proactive approach is the best way to protect our staffs and our facilities overseas. Because once we are in a rescue situation, the chances of a positive outcome for both our diplomats and our military forces attempting to rescue them are already reduced.

To this end, much of our work over the last year has been to place an emphasis on acting before the crisis. One of the most visible measures of security at U.S. diplomatic posts is the Marine Security Guard detachment. We appreciate Congress' expansion of the Marine Security Guard program in the National Defense Authorization Act for 2013, which allowed us to add up to 1,000 Marines into this valuable program.

This increase in personnel underpins a broader expansion of Marine Security Guards. We are raising the minimum size of existing Marine Security Guard detachments at high-threat, high-risk posts from 7 to 13. These increases have already begun, and will be complete next month.

We are fielding 35 new Marine Security Guard detachments to posts that do not currently have them. Three of those detachments have already deployed; seven more will be in the field by the end of this year; and we aim to have the remainder of them fielded by the end of 2014.

The United States Marine Corps has established the Marine Security Augmentation Unit in Quantico, Virginia, which will be able to provide Marine Security Guards on short notice at the requests of chiefs of mission. These Marines are drawn from combat units and have extra training in close quarters battle, trauma, weapons, and tactics. Six squads will be available by the end of this year, and we have already seen the benefit of this approach. At the request of the Department of State, Marines from these units were sent to eight posts in advance of the September 11 anniversary last week.

As we have grown the Marine Security Guard program, we have also enhanced their ability to protect U.S. facilities and citizens. For instance, in July of this year, the Department of State and the U.S. Marine Corps amended the mission of the Marine Security Guards to elevate the protection of people and facilities to be a co-equal priority with the protection of classified information. Just a few weeks ago, the Department of State also approved the use of additional crowd control weapons for Marine Security Guards.

Both of these changes, when combined with the expansion of the program, reduce risks to our citizens and facilities where Marine Security Guards are deployed. At some posts, we need a higher level of security. At many high-risk posts, the Department of State is hardening the facilities or is increasing the numbers of security personnel at the post. The Department of State is using lessons learned to improve physical security and assess the best methods

of providing that security for the Department to conduct U.S. foreign policy objectives. Facility security is focused on delaying mobs and small group attacks, with a tiered defense of physical barriers and protection against bomb-laden vehicles with perimeter anti-ram barriers, crowd access controls, and setback distance.

In places where the threat is high and the host nation's capacity is low or our facility is vulnerable, the Department of Defense can be a bridging solution by either providing temporary forces at post or by enhancing the posture of nearby response forces and assets until those risks are brought to a more manageable level by permanent solutions. Security augmentation forces, DOD security augmentation forces, provide the ambassador with a robust security capability. And we know the presence of a larger force can be a deterrent to those considering an attack against the facility.

In some cases, when a decision is made to reduce embassy staff due to heightened threats, DOD can also assist with airlift and other transportation in support of a noncombatant evacuation. We will discuss the details of how we have done this more recently in the closed session. In those countries where we have willing but less capable host nation security forces, the administration is investing in building the capacity of host nation forces, who are required under international law to be our first line of defense. Although we understand that we cannot be solely dependent on our partners for security, we must encourage and, where appropriate, help them live up to their responsibilities. Through the use of available Department of Defense authorities, such as section 1206 Global Train and Equip and the Global Security Contingency Fund, we will continue to build the capacity of partner forces in the Middle East and North Africa. These and other efforts that allow direct military-to-military engagement provide an opportunity to improve their overall ability to respond to threats against our shared interests, as well as build relationships with their security forces that can be invaluable in a crisis.

Lastly, as Major General Roberson will explain in greater detail during the closed session, I want to underscore that we are more ready than ever to respond to a crisis or attack if one occurs without warning. In addition to realigning our forces around the globe, we have made joint planning between combatant commanders and chiefs of mission at high-threat, high-risk posts a priority task. As a consequence of these efforts, the combatant commands now have a better understanding of the threats and expectations at diplomatic posts. In turn, the chiefs of mission at these posts now have our best estimate of response times to inform their decisions about adjustments to staff presence in times of increased security threats. The President has made clear that we must mitigate risk to our personnel and facilities with preventive, proactive security steps and contingency response plans.

Although we cannot eliminate the risks completely in all cases, I believe we have made significant progress over the last year toward getting the right balance between our needs to deploy personnel into these dangerous areas around the world to advance our security interests, and the risks to U.S. personnel and facilities inherent with those deployments. We are taking prudent steps to reduce the vulnerability of people and facilities abroad, while not

turning our embassies into fortresses and degrading our diplomats' ability to do the critical work that benefits us all.

Madam Chairman, I thank you again for the invitation to be before you and discuss these important subjects. I am happy to respond to any questions you or members of the subcommittee may have. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Reid can be found in the Appendix on page 29.]

Mrs. ROBY. Thank you.

General Roberson.

STATEMENT OF MAJ GEN DARRYL ROBERSON, USAF, VICE DIRECTOR, OPERATIONS (J-3), DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, JOINT STAFF

General ROBERSON. Madam Chairman Roby, Ranking Member Tsongas, and members of the committee, it is my honor to be here today.

I don't need to repeat what Mr. Reid has already said, so I would just like to highlight three main points and then open it up for questions.

First of all, our force posture today is better suited to what we call the new normal. We have added several entities to the list of alert forces, and the Marines have really moved out on this, bringing additional capabilities and strengthening their longstanding relationship with the State Department. We have deployed key response forces abroad and aligned lift to those forces. This has allowed DOD to adjust the location of these response forces, as required or needed, and to reduce their response times. And I will be happy to elaborate on these forces during our classified session following this hearing.

The second point I would like to make is that the cooperation and the progress with the State Department and the whole inter-agency has truly been significant over the past year. Weekly meetings and sometimes daily phone calls have allowed us to synchronize our efforts. And the latest response to the Yemen threat just recently in the last few weeks is a great example that I would once again like to elaborate on during our classified session.

Finally, we have shifted our focus from simply reacting to crises to proactively addressing potential crises. Through better intelligence sharing, engaging our partners, helping to develop host nation capacity, and augmenting our diplomatic facilities with DOD security professionals ahead of a crisis, we have placed greater emphasis on getting in front of the attack.

Madam Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to discuss our progress, and we look forward to your questions.

Mrs. ROBY. Thank you, sir.

And let me just begin, as I don't want to miss the opportunity to tell you both thank you again for your service to our country. And on behalf of my family, thank you to your families who support you and are also serving our country.

And I want to start with, assuming that the changes that you outlined today had been in place on September 1 or even September 10 of 2012, would the U.S. preparation for and the response to the Benghazi attack differed?

Mr. REID. Let me make sure I understood. You said, were these current situations in place a year ago, would the response have been different? Is that the question?

Mrs. ROBY. Right. So all the changes that you have made in preparedness, lessons learned, if those had been in place today, would the response have been different in 2012?

Mr. REID. Yes. The capabilities in place now and in place on the alert status that we had them last week, modulated to the very highest level, would significantly have increased and improved our response capability. Yes.

Mrs. ROBY. In building on that, would a different or more robust mix of forces been available to the Department of Defense once the attack commenced?

Mr. REID. Again, yes. And we can talk the details and lay out for you precisely which types of forces and which positions we have arrayed to address that question.

Mrs. ROBY. And could the forces have responded faster?

Mr. REID. And again, yes. And I would just point out that in this session, we can say that we have modulated—we modulate this with the indicators and warnings and the threats. And you can look back over the past several months, and multiple instances where we take this force to a higher response posture, quicker response posture. Keep in mind, when you talk about an alert response force and you say, you, force commander, detachment commander, your force must be able to get on this airplane and be in the air in 1 hour, or 2 hours, I would say anything up to 4 hours, that is all you can do if you are that person, if you are that element. You cannot go very far from that position. You are basically sitting on an airfield, and the air crew, same thing, accentuated even more because they have to keep the aircraft ready.

So when you take a force and you say I want to be in the air in 4 hours, that is a rapid response. And I think it is hard for folks to imagine, because we are used to 911, and police and fire. But that is not the same thing. So getting that force on that posture, when we put them say at 1 hour alert time, we have to do that in a way that we can manage the time that that takes. Because if you want that over a long period of time, then you have to have multiple sets of that force that can cycle through. And, you know, on a week by week or month by month basis. Then you have to start thinking about training and readiness. Because, again, you can go no further than you can be back and be on that aircraft in that time frame. In many cases, now you have to say, well, what if I want this force to go out and do rehearsals? What if I want them to go to the rifle range?

Mrs. ROBY. Right.

Mr. REID. So it is a compounded effort.

Mrs. ROBY. Of the changes that you discussed here today, is there one or two that is of most significance that you would like to highlight again? I mean, I know you pointed out a long list of changes, but can we drill down and talk about one or two that are of most significance?

Mr. REID. The two I would highlight would be putting tailored response forces in closer proximity to the area of most anticipated need, and dedicating airlift to those assets is, one, highly signifi-

cant. I would point out, though, just to keep the balance here between sort of proactive and reactive, because I always want to bring this back to what we can do ahead of things, the growth of the Marines and expanding the size of these detachments and refocusing them, because this is really the more on-the-scene asset for areas—again, we are talking about Africa, the distance from southern Europe to Mali—

Mrs. ROBY. And in 2012, is it a fair assessment that we were only postured to be reactive, and now these changes allow for us to be proactive? Is that a fair statement?

Mr. REID. But keep in mind, we had Marines at embassies for decades. So we weren't totally reactive.

Mrs. ROBY. But as it related to this attack in Benghazi, it was reactive, rather than proactive, and the changes and the lessons learned are we are now postured to be proactive.

Mr. REID. Yes, Madam Chair. And again, also remember two things. Augmenting ahead of a crisis in some areas where the threat is not perceived to be imminent or the facility is more hardened, adding a smaller force there is substantial. In other places, and we can talk the details, that are very dangerous areas, putting additional forces in there now proactively beyond the capability of Marine Security Guards, I am talking about security augmentation forces of significant numbers, again, that is something we had in some places before the attacks of last year.

Mrs. ROBY. Right.

Mr. REID. But we have added more of those in the area of this interest as well.

Mrs. ROBY. Okay. My time has way expired. So thank you.

Ranking Member Tsongas.

Ms. TSONGAS. Thank you. You have described a sort of DOD to State Department regularized process by which you sort of assess what the threats are out there. Can you describe sort of the structure of it? Where does it reside? How is it implemented? Just to have a sense of sort of how embedded it is in both institutions. I am sorry we don't have the State Department here. It is not our purview. But because it is so co-dependent, really, I would like to hear how this has been structured so that it takes place as it should.

Mr. REID. The linkage, the interagency linkage is provided in this example by the National Security Staff. And within that structure, we have groups that are focused full time on counterterrorism, we have groups that are focused on regional issues, and we have another group that is focused on strategic issues. What we have done in this past year is bring those for the purpose of this threat into a common forum, chaired at a very senior level, with participation at a senior level within our Department at the deputies level. And as the general mentioned, in that context once a week. The other lower level is a daily interaction. But that is where it comes together.

Separately, though, we have direct relations with our colleagues in Diplomatic Security, Assistant Secretary Starr, I believe, who has had a hearing today, Greg Starr is one of our constant colleagues. Deputy Assistant Secretary Bill Miller, which is a position created after the Benghazi attack, is the deputy assistant secretary

for security at high-threat posts. We are in very regular contact. And some of the folks that are here with us today at the action officer level also established these counterpart relationships that are much more robust. The access was always there, but the focus, the intensity, the repetition and the levels at which we do it has been increased significantly over the past year.

Ms. TSONGAS. Would you say the State Department could report a similar sort of structure change so that they have the same feeling that this information is flowing back and forth as you are describing from the DOD's point of view?

Mr. REID. I know this. And at, at least, our weekly meetings, but I do know it happens more often, but at our weekly meetings, all threats are reviewed. Again, these types—there are broad threats everywhere, but this diplomatic security threat in particular, all threats are briefed, all agencies, not just us and the Department of State, all agencies are asked, are there any threats that you know about that weren't mentioned, or are there any threats you just heard about for the first time? And do we need to elaborate? That is one. And the second part of that is, is everybody getting the support and cooperation from the other agencies? The question posed back to us, have we responded to all requests for security? And it is posed back to Secretary Starr and Under Secretary Kennedy in this context.

You know, are all your requests of DOD being met? And that is done at the deputies level every week. But again, we do it every day at a lower level. So I do firmly believe that we would all have the same answer to this question, because we are in the same room frequently.

Ms. TSONGAS. And if there is a disagreement between the two Departments, what is the dispute resolution mechanism, knowing that timing is very important?

Mr. REID. Well, we work problems at the lowest level. We are already operating at a very senior level. So I can't off the top of my head think of a dispute we could not have resolved. But as I mentioned, Secretary Kerry and Secretary Hagel have met separately; they have met on this topic. And they have met with the President on this topic. So, you know, there is no pending disputes. But again, our focus—

Ms. TSONGAS. There are cultures, though, there are cultures within the two Departments that may merit sort of different approaches to things.

General ROBERSON. Ma'am, I would just say that over the past year, you know, we have gotten this down better than we have ever in the past. And I would say that right now, it is as good as it can be. And we continue to expect that that will be the case for the future. So every day, we have people very dedicated to the high-threat, high-risk areas, as well as around the world. And we routinely coordinate. I mean, I pick up the phone weekly, if not daily, with folks over at the State Department.

Ms. TSONGAS. Thank you.

I yield back.

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Scott.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I have just got a couple of questions before we move to the next area. But do you believe, Mr. Reid, I just ask you this, do you believe that the ambassador was the target or do you believe the special mission was the target?

Mr. REID. I believe the United States was the target, the facilities representing the interests of the United States for this attack. I am assuming you are talking about the attack on Benghazi. I believe the United States presence was the target, but my own personal view.

Mr. SCOTT. General, do you believe that the ambassador was the target, or do you believe the mission was the target?

General ROBERSON. Sir, I believe that there were many people in Libya that truly loved the ambassador.

Mr. SCOTT. The ambassador had not been to that facility in approximately a year, if I am reading the reports right. Is that correct? When was the last time—

Mr. REID. I am not aware of the details of his travel.

General ROBERSON. Yes, sir. Same here. I mean, the State Department could answer that.

Mr. SCOTT. Okay. Madam Chair, I guess with one last question. What about the human intelligence on the ground in these other countries? Have we been able to—I know, obviously, we have got a lot of technology, and we can pick up on a lot of things through technology. What about our human intelligence capabilities? Can you speak to that?

Mr. REID. I can speak in general here and in more detail later. I would say that when we talk about building capacity in these countries oriented on these threats, expanding intelligence capacity of our own and of our partners is an element of that.

Mr. SCOTT. I will tell you, I think the ambassador was the target. I think it was an outright assassination. I don't think these guys just got that lucky and got—and hit the special mission when the ambassador happened to be there.

Madam Chair, I will yield the remainder of my time and look forward to the next.

Mrs. ROBY. Thank you.

Ms. Duckworth.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And I would like to take a moment to thank you for your leadership in this hearing and focusing it on lessons learned and what we can do better for our brave Americans who serve all around the world, both in the State Department and in the Department of Defense.

Gentlemen, I had another Benghazi hearing just today actually, earlier today, and one of the things that came to light was the fact that the State Department does not have as much experience in doing risk assessments to the level that those in the military does. You know, even the frontline leader, the buck sergeant, knows how to do a risk assessment and a risk mitigation.

Similarly, General, with aviators, this is in your blood. You do this before every single mission, throughout the mission. One of the things that I am hearing is that the State Department did not do a good risk assessment in deciding to continue to be in Benghazi. I wonder, with the greater coordination between the Department of

Defense and the State Department, if you could talk a little bit more about the interagency coordination process between DOD and the Department of State, and perhaps to some of the lessons learned such as the risk assessment. Have you been able to sort of share some of that knowledge, some of that experience with the folks in the Department of State?

Mr. REID. Absolutely. My own military background, experience, I worked quite a bit with Diplomatic Security in the context of embassy security. And I would first say that I take your point about the general military planning and assessment process. I think we have got that way over-optimized as a cultural item. But on the other hand, assessing risk in terms of physical risk and mitigation measures for a forward-operating base or a fire base is different than doing it for a diplomatic facility. And I think there is an art and science that Diplomatic Security colleagues are much more skilled and capable of applying in that context than we would be. But in the middle of that, and folks that we do provide them to help with these assessments, we have interagency assessment teams. Right after the attacks of last year, we sent DOD special operators out with Diplomatic Security assessment teams to 19 diplomatic locations in the areas of the greatest risk to do an immediate interagency security assessment. That is something we have always done within the combatant commands.

The combatant commands provide survey teams to diplomatic posts in their area. Every Department of State emergency action plan includes a military annex, where we contribute our own assessments into that process. So we have always been joined in that effort. And I think the collaboration where we have gone in the last year is now at an even higher level. We have tasked all the combatant commands to go to every embassy and every chief of mission and dissect that scenario, look at the facility.

You have heard, I am sure, from our State colleagues of the variances in the facilities and the level of construction. And we have gone to detail in every one of those and matched that with our military capability and our military footprint in these areas of operation. This is all the commands, not just AFRICOM [Africa Command]. And where we have to factor in distance and factor in lack of basing, and balance that against the threat, and really do a cooperative assessment so we have a common understanding. And within all of that these assessments and this sharing of how we look at the problem, it happens at every level up the chain to close whatever gap there may be that you are referring to in mind-set or in approach to assessing risk.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Thank you. General.

General ROBERSON. Ma'am, I would just add one point and reemphasize another. The first point is many of the State Department's personnel that are in this business of risk assessment are prior military. So they have that background in many ways as well. And then I would just reconfirm what Mr. Reid has said, in that the State Department has expertise, and they are good at this, too. And we help, whenever they ask, to make these assessments.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Thank you, gentlemen.

I yield back my time.

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Bridenstine.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Just had a couple of questions for the major general. I guess my question is, are you aware of any requirement to have a carrier presence in the Mediterranean and what that requirement might be?

General ROBERSON. Sir, I am very aware of that. Unfortunately, I can't talk about it in this forum, but I would be happy to share that with you in the classified session following this.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Okay. Regarding the host nation in this case, it seemed like the host nation was wholly inadequate at providing security for our diplomats. Would you agree with that assessment?

General ROBERSON. Sir, in this case, in the Libya case for Benghazi, yes.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. In these cases, and certainly there are other cases around the world, is it your assessment that we are currently postured with American forces to provide that security when the host nation can't provide it?

General ROBERSON. Sir, what I would say is this is part of the new normal that I was referring to in the opening statement. And what has happened is even though countries, some countries that are a part of this Arab Spring are willing and want to do this protection of embassy personnel for all of the countries there, they are physically incapable or the capacity doesn't exist. So especially where those circumstances exist, we are working very hard to try to increase the capacity of the host nations.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. So, apart from just increasing the capacity, which is going to take time, and of course between now and then there is a gap, are we currently postured for the protection of those embassies?

General ROBERSON. And the way that I would answer that, sir, is the protection of the embassy as a whole is a layered defense posture. So we work on multiple layers. And again, the State Department has primary responsibility for putting that layered defense together. DOD plays a very specific role in capabilities. We add to that as State Department asks for us. But where we have an identified gap, we are working with the State Department, and DOD is helping to shore those gaps up.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. So that there are currently gaps. And I guess my next question is where those gaps exist, is there a response that would withdraw our diplomatic folks in those areas where those gaps exist?

General ROBERSON. Absolutely, sir. And we have seen recent cases of this. We withdrew personnel out of Beirut just recently due to the circumstances. And in the classified brief, I would like to speak to what we did in Sana'a in Yemen regarding this kind of situation as well. So very definitely, based on the circumstances and the situation, the indications and warning, the threats that we are facing, we all collaborate together to make a determination on the best way to proceed. And one of the pre-bang activities that we look for is evacuating the embassy.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. So, in an unclassified setting, obviously, we can't talk about what the carrier requirement might be in the Mediterranean; can you say if we were adhering to whatever requirement there might be?

General ROBERSON. Definitely, sir.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. We were adhering to that? Is that correct?

General ROBERSON. Are we now?

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. No, were we at that time adhering to the requirement for the carrier presence in the Mediterranean, whatever that requirement might be?

General ROBERSON. Sir, I am not exactly sure why you are referencing the carrier presence. And again, I would be happy to discuss this in the classified environment for, you know, Benghazi of last year. I will just say that we were postured as we thought was appropriate, and we were meeting all requirements at the time that Benghazi happened.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Roger that. Thank you.

Mrs. ROBY. Ms. Speier.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And thank you both for participating today. There was another committee hearing on Benghazi today. We were in Oversight and Government Reform for 6 hours. And there was an interesting point that was raised that—and forgive me if it has already been addressed here—but of the 240 embassies we have around the world, about a third of them are in a similar vulnerable setting as was Benghazi, where they are interim missions. They are not full-out embassies, and that we could potentially have similar issues in about a third of these sites. Can you comment on that?

Mr. REID. I would comment on how—where we fit in on the Defense side and how this contributes to the greater effort, and acknowledging your point, Madam, that all facilities are not created equally as a matter of construction standards and a matter of infrastructure and a matter of host nation and the physical environment. We absolutely agree with that. What we have done in our cooperative assessments with chiefs of mission and with State colleagues back here in Washington is look at each one of these and participate in a dialogue about what could be done, what ought to be done, what should be done.

Ms. SPEIER. So you are alerted to the fact that about a third of these facilities are inadequate in terms of security.

Mr. REID. We have a post-by-post listing of what type—there is three general construction standards. And we have that breakdown and we know which posts are of which construction. We share that with State colleagues. Absolutely.

Ms. SPEIER. All right. So Admiral Mullen said to General Ham that he was inclined to extend the Security Support Team mission, and Ambassador Stevens wanted that mission extended for both security and training purposes, but the State Department official said, quote, “Didn’t want to be embarrassed by having DOD continue to provide security,” unquote. Now, have we gotten to the point where we have addressed someone in State Department’s purview that is reluctant to rely on DOD support because it doesn’t feel right or—I was just very troubled by that comment.

Mr. REID. I am not a firsthand witness to the conversation, but I have read some of the documents pertinent to the security team in Tripoli. And my understanding is that the ambassador was transitioning from a DOD security element to an element comprised of Diplomatic Security agents.

Ms. SPEIER. No, I understand that. But State was kind of driving the train here and basically wanted to shift from DOD to State Department security, I guess. And I am wondering if DOD can trump State if they believe that the security risk is great.

Mr. REID. I would—a bit hypothetical, but I am very confident that right now, if we had a conversation in these interagency and these security meetings that I referred to earlier, and as I said, the dialogue is, is everyone aware of the threats? Is everyone comfortable with the solutions? That conversation would definitely take place today. I can't speak for exactly what conversations took place at the Department of State a year ago. But I would also, again, though, underscore that our team in Tripoli was a temporary solution that was sent there to help get that facility back up and running, and to allow the State Department to transition to Diplomatic Security. That is exactly what the plan was. And as I understand it, that is the plan the ambassador was executing. It wasn't a refusal, or as you mentioned—and I can't speak to the quote you are offering from someone else about was it stubbornness or whatever. From our view, it was always part of the plan.

Ms. SPEIER. One military official was quoted in the press saying that DOD has shifted from being reactive to anticipating and being more proactive against the crisis. Based on what you are saying, you would concur with that.

Mr. REID. If you are referring to events over the past 12 months of how we are approaching this problem, ma'am, yes, absolutely. A proactive approach is our best preferred recommended approach because, again, we are trying to temper expectations that we, I think as then-Secretary Panetta mentioned in his testimony, we are not the fire station down on the corner.

Ms. SPEIER. One last question. Part of the response to Benghazi is to improve intelligence collection. How much progress has the Department made in hiring Arabic speakers and others that would improve our human intelligence capabilities?

Mr. REID. Ma'am, I don't—I am not aware of the details of that, but I would be happy to take that for the record and get you an answer from the Department.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 37.]

Mrs. ROBY. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Mr. Thornberry.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you, Madam Chair.

General, this may be somewhat repetitive, but I just want to try to understand. So a Benghazi-like incident starts to occur in country X today, who makes the decision to put response forces on a heightened alert?

General ROBERSON. Sir, the way that that process works right now is if we have indications and warning of any type beforehand, then we will adapt our forces based on that information. So we will start doing the proactive front side before the bang kind of measures. So we use that indications and warning. We will start to either augment the facility with extra forces. We will draw down the embassy, and this is all in coordination with the interagency. So the answer to your question of who makes it is the situation is dis-

cussed in this environment that we talked about collaboratively, and we make the decision together.

Mr. THORNBERRY. I am really talking about the response forces. Is it the combatant command or the Joint Staff that says, okay, there may be a problem here, we need to put these particular forces on a heightened alert?

General ROBERSON. Yes, sir. The response forces are under the command of the combatant commander.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Okay. And so something starts to happen. Then who decides whether to send those forces into a particular situation? Can the combatant commander—particularly, if there is an embassy under attack, is it the combatant commander on his own? Can he only send those forces in response to a request from the State Department or some other government agency? How does that work exactly?

General ROBERSON. Sir, I would say that it depends on the circumstances and the situation. The commander will, you know, depending on the situation, again, when we get indications that we need to move forces, if we are going to go into another country, then we have to elevate that level of decision all the way up to the President.

Mr. THORNBERRY. So the President would have to—Benghazi happens again. Just like it, you know, essentially, except it happens today, and the President would have to decide to send some military forces into Libya, into Benghazi to assist or to evacuate Americans?

Mr. REID. The approval authority for the military operation rests with the President. That is correct. We can provide ahead of time a framework for—accelerate that in real time. And as you are aware, the President can make a decision and then delegate the timing of that to the Secretary or the combatant commander. All of this in this example would be initiated by the chief of mission in the first instance. And this process we put in place leans as far forward into that as we can. And as you are aware, there are other factors dealing with host nation and these other dynamics because, again, the first effort on the ground, if anything is starting to happen, is to get the host nation on the scene as well. So there is parallel dialogue.

But to the root of your question, launching a military operation into a sovereign country is a decision the President makes.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Okay. Thank you.

I yield back.

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Nugent.

Mr. NUGENT. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And I appreciate our panel today. I think the question keeps coming back, though, is: does DOD have the ability to supersede State Department when there is a specific threat to an embassy or, like, in Benghazi, to that outpost? Do we have the ability, does DOD have the ability to supersede and say, it is just not safe to have our people here?

Mr. REID. Our people being all Americans? You are not referring just to the DOD people?

Mr. NUGENT. Because typically we will have a small presence of DOD personnel there. So those personnel are at risk just like De-

partment of State personnel. But DOD's responsibility, obviously, should primarily be to its personnel. And if they are put in a position because of a decision by the ambassador, does DOD have the ability to overrule that?

Mr. REID. If I could take that in two parts. Clearly, the Secretary has the authority to move DOD people out of a situation. That would be an extreme example, but he certainly has that ability. To the question of should we do something different in a country, I mean, the chief of mission is the President's representative in that country. The engine of this dialogue and decision originates with the chief of mission. In our collaborative forum that we have, if at any level a Defense representative sees a risk or an unaddressed problem, we have the ability to raise that successively up through the chain as high as it would need to go. But I wouldn't put that in the context of an overriding the chief of mission. I mean, the chief of mission is the President's representative.

Mr. NUGENT. It just seems that when you task DOD with a security detail, that, at some point in time, DOD, while I respect the ambassador's position and chief of mission and all that, they don't necessarily have the same experience as whoever you have in charge at a local mission, or at least the DOD representative that may have a little more experience in regards to, hey, listen, we can't defend this compound because of just the physical layout with the number of personnel that we have.

Mr. REID. Again, I fully believe we have a dialogue process. And that has been unfolded in hearings on this with the site security team leaders and the SOC [Special Operations Command] Africa representatives that came here. And I think what you heard is they had a dialogue with the charge or the chief of mission, they worked collaboratively, but they were also connected to their military headquarters. So it isn't one or the other. We are there are in support of the chief of mission. There is a military chain of command that exists through Title 10. The chief of mission isn't necessarily an element of that chain of command. But we put forces out there in support of that chief of mission, and we have agreements, and we have a resolution process to bring up anything that may rise to the level of a disagreement.

Mr. NUGENT. And I guess this is where the American public is somewhat confused in regards to the role of DOD, particularly at security of missions. And I am glad to hear that there is an expanded role for the Marines as they relate, because we were told, you know, last time they are basically there to protect documents and destroy documents, not in protecting people. And I think that was kind of reversed from where it should be. And I am glad to see that that has been reversed. Am I correct on that?

Mr. REID. You are correct. It is an equal priority. And just to add to the previous narrative and perhaps make it even more confusing, but the Marine Security Guards, again, we have an agreement, a memorandum of agreement between the Departments, they are under the direction of the Regional Security Officer. There is a different example of a day-to-day guidance and direction to that element. There is a very complicated dialogue about if there is an act of war that comes on top of that and how we manage that. But that example, they are under the direction of the ambassador

through his Regional Security Officer by agreement between the two Departments for day-to-day embassy operations, which can rise to the point of riots and crises and other things. We have that system in place as well. The augmentation piece we are talking about people coming in is a bit of a different formulation. But they both exist.

Mr. NUGENT. I appreciated your response. I yield back.

Mrs. ROBY. Dr. Wenstrup.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, gentlemen. I appreciate taking lessons learned and putting some things into action. You know, there was requests from Benghazi for increased security earlier than the attack, like as soon as August, maybe even sooner, and you talked about risk assessments being done. So this request was made—there were requests made to the State Department. Was there a risk assessment done by the State Department before the attack when these requests were made for increased security, or an evaluation of the increased threats?

Mr. REID. Yeah, I apologize, but I don't know the details of exactly who or what or when was requested, and I have heard in these hearings other people comment, but I don't feel comfortable saying what they did. I believe and I have heard in hearings about additions and security enhancements, for instance, at the temporary mission facility, so I would assume there was assessments and requisitions and things happening, but I don't know the details.

Dr. WENSTRUP. That may be something we should ask the State Department to see if they did that. Thank you for that.

Is there a protocol more in place today of handling requests for increased security that go through the State Department that will incorporate DOD's input to it?

Mr. REID. Yes, and it is the same process that exists broadly for any interagency request for support. We have received at least two, I could give you the details separately, formal requests for augmentation at diplomatic posts, and so there is a formal request process that goes from Department to Department and there is at that level, and then, obviously, the informal coordination that sorts out all of the details. Typically, receive a request, comes through, we already know it is coming because we work with these folks every day. We would assign that in terms of DOD to a combatant commander or an element of the force. They would link up with the customer, do an assessment, do a survey, figure out exactly what the details are, and then the Secretaries will agree, and off we go.

Dr. WENSTRUP. So, at this point, if there is a risk, both Departments would be involved, both State and DOD, and maybe that wasn't the case before?

Mr. REID. I would say it was the case before. What is different now is we address these more regularly at higher levels within our branches in our Departments, up to the, as I mentioned before, up to national security staff level.

Dr. WENSTRUP. And of course, in the process of coming up with lessons learned and taking actions, you review the incidents that took place and how you can make things better in the future. And

that usually comes from an after-action review. Is there an after-action review that we may be able to see at some point in a better setting?

Mr. REID. The primary after-action review that—for us was the ARB [Accountability Review Board], and at the time, Secretary Panetta ensured that we were linked up with the Accountability Review Board. That is the more formal after-action report that we participated in.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Was there after-action review done by the people involved with the incident, say, within 24 hours, or a week?

Mr. REID. At the military unit level, I think it is a matter of just military operations, and some of you know this, they have an after-action review process internally. And then there is a broader effort across, again, all of the Department in terms of lessons learned and, you know, we have lessons learned databases, and Web sites, and classified lessons learned. USSOCOM [United States Special Operations Command] has an entire effort to do joint lessons learned, and they are all promulgated and proliferated out to everybody.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I guess what I am asking is in the proper setting, would we have access to some of those reviews, especially the most early reviews?

Mr. REID. Sure. I mean, we can talk to specifics if there is something in particular you are asking for. If it is just more general, we could definitely follow up and talk about whatever has been asked. You know, we responded to many of the requests for documents, and we have people that do that that we could link up and figure out if there is any gaps.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Okay, thank you very much.

General ROBERSON. If I could just add, you know, routinely, as a part of the chairman's program, we are still culling lessons learned from Iraq. We are still culling lessons learned from Afghanistan. This is a continual process that we go through, and so this, Benghazi results and all of that will be a part of a process that we will continue to review and learn from.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you, gentlemen.

I yield back.

Mrs. ROBY. Ms. Tsongas.

Ms. TSONGAS. Just as a follow-up, it is my understanding that Admiral Mullen said as part of the ARB process that he did look at all, whatever there might have been, that constituted an after-action review. So that—just to put that into the record.

Thank you.

Mrs. ROBY. Okay, this part is adjourned, and if we would, votes are imminent. If we could please move to 2337, Members only, and we will begin the next part of this up there immediately.

[Whereupon, at 5:04 p.m., the subcommittee proceeded to closed session.]

A P P E N D I X

SEPTEMBER 19, 2013

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

SEPTEMBER 19, 2013

**Opening Remarks
As Prepared For Delivery**

**Rep. Martha Roby
Chairman**

**Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee Hearing
“The Defense Department’s Posture for September 11, 2013: What Are the
Lessons of Benghazi? (Benghazi Oversight Part IV)”**

September 19, 2013

Good Afternoon.

The Subcommittee will come to order.

Last week marked a solemn milestone.

Last week we took solemn note of the twelfth anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States.

This September 11 also was the first anniversary of the terror strike in Benghazi, Libya. That murderous rampage killed four brave Americans serving this nation abroad.

In the first months after the events in Benghazi, the Committee held 3 classified Member briefings, 3 classified staff briefings, and 1 hearing. Chairman McKeon also requested additional written information from the Department of Defense.

This spring, in an effort to direct additional dedicated resources to the Committee’s effort, Chairman McKeon directed the Oversight and Investigations subcommittee to undertake further work on the subject. In a letter to the Department of Defense, Chairman McKeon made it clear that he intended for the Committee on the Armed Services “to address thoroughly, authoritatively, and conclusively” the Benghazi-related matters within its purview.

In a May briefing, the subcommittee received classified information from today’s witnesses about the Department of Defense’s actions in connection with the Benghazi attack. We also learned about constraints on deploying other forces, including drones and fighter aircraft.

In 2 subsequent briefings, we heard from flag and general officers and field-grade subordinates who were in Libya at the time, or in contact with those who were. We learned about how these officers understood the events as they unfolded and the operational limitations they faced.

In order to understand fully the Department of Defense's response, it has been necessary for the subcommittee's briefings to be held at the "Top Secret" or higher level. I am certain Members understand this requirement. I also expect they recognize that the Committee has worked to allow interested Members to hear these briefings first-hand and to have access to the classified transcripts.

As Chairman McKeon has directed, the subcommittee's Benghazi oversight is continuing. But, based upon the information we have collected to date, I don't believe that any amount of heroism during the attacks could overcome the tragic lack of preparedness leading up to it. It does not appear that U.S. military forces, units, aircraft, drones, or specific personnel that could have been readily deployed in the course of the attack in Benghazi were unduly held back, told to "stand down," or refused permission to enter the fight. Rather, we were so badly postured, they could not have made a difference or were desperately needed elsewhere.

I hope to learn in today's open hearing that we were far better prepared to face a similar attack this September 11—and today—than we were a year ago. The subcommittee wants to ensure that the Department of Defense has learned from Benghazi and is taking steps to minimize the chance that a strike like that can be successful again.

This Committee's work on this issue has not been and will not be a political exercise. Majority and Minority Members alike have asked important questions about our preparedness in 2012. I expect that they will do the same again this afternoon.

Before turning to Rep. Tsongas for her opening remarks and my introduction of those at the witness table, let me review how we will proceed today:

Our witnesses are going to go to make unclassified remarks about the Department of Defense's posture last week. To the extent they can do so in this environment, they will describe generally how our forces continue to be deployed. They will also discuss what changes have come about as a result of the lessons of 2012.

Immediately after we adjourn (or following votes) we will reconvene in room 2337. At that time, our witnesses will brief us on classified specifics that

cannot be discussed now. I caution Members to raise only unclassified general topics in this room and to hold classified questions for our later session.

Furthermore, we are joined today by Committee members who do not sit on the subcommittee. Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that non-subcommittee Members be allowed to participate in today's hearing after all subcommittee Members have had an opportunity to ask questions.

Is there objection?

Without objection, non-subcommittee Members will be recognized at the appropriate time for five minutes.

I now invite my distinguished Ranking Member to make opening remarks.

**Opening Remarks
As Prepared For Delivery**

**Rep. Niki Tsongas
Ranking Member
Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee Hearing
“The Defense Department’s Posture for September 11, 2013: What Are the
Lessons of Benghazi?”**

September 19, 2013

Good afternoon, thank you for being here today. The tragedy that took place in Benghazi on September 11, 2012, shocked and saddened the Nation. And we are reminded with the tragic shooting at DC’s Navy Yard just how vulnerable those who serve our Nation might be.

Since the tragedy in Benghazi, the State Department, the DoD, and Congress have worked to figure out what went wrong, in an effort to ensure that such a tragedy never happens again. The State Department’s Accountability Review Board released an unclassified version of their findings. Many issues were addressed and new measures have been put in place. Today, we will hear what the DoD has done to ensure they are postured to immediately respond to threats and/or attacks involving our diplomatic facilities around the world. I look forward to testimony of our panelist.

Statement for the Record
Garry Reid
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict
House Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
Hearing and Classified Briefing on the Defense Department's Posture for September 11,
2013: What are the Lessons of Benghazi?
September 19, 2013

Madam Chairman Roby, Ranking Member Tsongas, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to be here today.

A year ago, U.S. Government facilities in North Africa and the Middle East came under attack. These attacks took place in a region that was being swept up by revolutions and widespread social upheaval. In Cairo and Tunis, protestors breached the grounds of our Embassies. In Sana'a and Khartoum, the protests escalated into attacks, which led to damage to our missions. Finally, as you know, a terrorist attack on our temporary mission facility in Benghazi, Libya, resulted in the tragic deaths of four Americans, including Ambassador Chris Stevens.

These events were dramatic examples of the threats and challenges our personnel overseas currently face. The pressure exerted by the United States and its partners has isolated the core of al-Qaeda. As the President has said, the remaining operatives in the al-Qaeda core spend more time thinking about their own safety than plotting against us. But we now confront a threat from diversified groups affiliated with al-Qaeda. The most well-known of these groups is al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), which continues to plot against the United States. But increasingly, new groups of loosely affiliated extremists have emerged.

The upheaval in North Africa and the Middle East has contributed to a permissive environment for such extremist networks. Unlike the al-Qaeda core in Afghanistan and Pakistan, or even AQAP, these groups are most focused on the countries and regions where they are based. They work together through existing familial and tribal networks and focus on acting locally, as we saw in Benghazi and the BP oil facility in Algeria. And as we strive to work with our partners in the region, we see the political changes ushered in by the Arab Spring present challenges as well; although many of the governments in the region are friendly to our interests, they struggle to exert a monopoly of force within their own borders. So although host nations are bound by international law to protect our diplomatic personnel and facilities, we must recognize their capability shortfalls and work to offset them.

In this environment, the Department of Defense is working hard with our interagency partners to ensure our military resources are best positioned to protect U.S. personnel and facilities overseas.

The year since the attacks against our facility in Benghazi has been characterized by unprecedented cooperation between the Departments of State and Defense. From Secretaries Hagel and Kerry, down to the staffs on both sides of the river, we are in regular, open communication. The National Security Staff convenes weekly reviews of threat streams and security measures to identify hot spots, anticipate crises, and synchronize our proactive, preventative, and contingency response planning efforts. This improved interagency planning allows us to reinforce the efforts of host governments, which, under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, have the lead for overall protection of our diplomatic facilities.

This leads to a broader point: we believe a proactive approach is the best way to protect our staffs and facilities overseas, because once we are in a rescue situation, the chances of a positive outcome—for both our diplomatic personnel and the U.S. military forces attempting to rescue them—are already reduced. Our work over the last year has been to place an emphasis on acting *before* the crisis.

One of the most visible measures of security at a U.S. diplomatic post is the Marine Security Guard Detachment. We appreciate Congress' expansion of the Marine Security Guard – or MSG – program in the National Defense Authorization Act for 2013, which allowed us to move up to 1,000 Marines to the program. This increase in personnel will underpin a broader expansion of the program.

- We are raising the minimum size of existing MSG detachments at high-threat, high-risk posts from 7 to 13. Those increases have already begun, and will be complete next month.
- We are fielding 35 new detachments to posts that do not currently have them. Three of those detachments have already deployed, seven more will be in the field before the end of this year, and we aim to have the remainder fielded by the end of 2014.
- The Marine Corps has established the Marine Security Augmentation Unit in Quantico, Virginia, which will be able to provide MSGs on short notice at the request of Chiefs of Mission. These Marines are drawn from combat units, and have extra training in close-quarters battle, trauma, and weapons and tactics. Eight squads will be available by the end of the year, and we've already seen the benefit of this approach: at the request of the Department of State, extra MSGs from this security augmentation unit were sent to eight posts in anticipation of the September 11 anniversary last week.

As we've grown the MSG program, we've also enhanced their ability to protect U.S. citizens and facilities. For instance, in July, the Department of State and U.S. Marine Corps amended the mission of the MSGs to elevate the protection of people and facilities to be a co-equal priority with the protection of classified information. Just a few weeks ago, the Department of State also approved the use of additional less-than-lethal weapons such as tear gas

for MSGs. Both of these changes, when combined with the expansion of the program, reduce risk to our citizens and facilities where MSGs are deployed.

At some posts, we need a higher level of security. At many high-risk posts, the Department of State is hardening its facilities or is increasing the numbers of security personnel at the post. The Department of State is using lessons learned to improve physical security at our facilities and assess the best methods of providing that security for the Department to conduct U.S. foreign policy objectives. Facility security is focused on delaying mobs and small group attacks with a tiered defense of physical barriers and protection against bomb-laden vehicles with perimeter anti-ram barriers, compound access controls, and setback distance

In places where the threat is high, the host nation's capacity is low, or our facility is vulnerable, DoD can be a "bridging solution by either providing temporary forces at posts, or by enhancing the posture of nearby response forces and assets, until those risks are brought down to a manageable level by more permanent solutions. Security augmentation forces provide the Ambassador with a more robust security capability, and we know the presence of a larger force can be a deterrent to those considering an attack against the facility. We can discuss how we've done this at specific posts in the closed session.

In those countries where we have willing but less capable host nation security forces, the Administration is investing in building the capacity of host nation forces, who are required under international law to be our first line of defense. Although we understand that we cannot be solely dependent on our partners for our security, we must encourage and, where appropriate, help host nations to live up to their responsibilities. Through the use of available authorities such as Section 1206 and the Global Security Contingency Fund, we will continue to build the capacity of partner forces in the Middle East and North Africa. These and other efforts that allow direct military-to-military engagement provide an opportunity to improve their overall ability to respond to threats against our shared interests, as well as build relationships with their security forces that can be invaluable in a crisis.

Lastly, as Major General Roberson will explain in greater detail during the closed session, I want to underscore that we are more ready than ever to respond to a crisis or attack if one occurs without warning. In addition to realigning our forces around the globe, we have made joint planning between the Combatant Commands and Chiefs of Mission at high-threat, high-risk posts a priority task. As a consequence of these efforts, the Combatant Commands now have a better understanding of the threats and expectations at diplomatic posts. In turn, Chiefs of Mission at high-risk posts now have our best estimate of response times to inform their decisions about adjustments to staff presence in times of increased security threat.

The President has made clear that we must mitigate risks to our personnel and facilities with preventive, proactive security steps and contingency response plans. Although we cannot eliminate the risk completely in all cases, I believe we've made significant progress over the last

year toward getting that the right balance between our needs to deploy personnel into dangerous areas around the world to advance U.S. security interests and the risks to U.S. personnel and facilities. We are taking prudent steps to reduce the vulnerability of people and facilities abroad while not turning our embassies into fortresses and degrading our diplomats' ability to do the critical work that benefits us all.

Madam Chairman, I thank you again for the invitation to be before you and discuss these important subjects. I am happy to respond to any questions you or the Members of the Subcommittee may have.



Garry Reid

**Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of
Defense for Special Operations & Low-
Intensity Conflict**



Garry Reid was appointed as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict in June 2012. A career member of the Senior Executive Service, he serves as the principal advisor to the ASD (SO/LIC) for DoD policies, plans, authorities, and resources related to special operations, low intensity conflict and other activities as specified by the Secretary of Defense. He represents the Secretary of Defense on various working groups in the interagency arena and maintains an active liaison with those agencies that have responsibility for national security policy as it relates to the SO/LIC portfolio.



Mr. Reid joined the Office of the Secretary of Defense in January 2007 after 28 years of military service in Special Operations. He has served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Combating Terrorism, Director for Special Operations Policy, the Director for Counterterrorism Policy, and the Principal Director for Special Operations Capabilities. In these roles, he provided advice and assistance to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in the oversight of special operations and irregular warfare activities within the Department of Defense.

**WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING
THE HEARING**

SEPTEMBER 19, 2013

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MS. SPEIER

Mr. REID. Based on information provided by the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, overall, the Defense Intelligence Community continues to face challenges in acquiring linguists at the professional proficiency level. To better understand the challenge faced by the Department in managing linguists, it is important to discern the difference between speakers with tested capabilities and the language tasks to be performed.

Language capabilities are not “one size fit all”—for example, we cannot take Cryptologic Language Analysts skilled in passive language skills like listening and expect them to perform as HUMINT collectors, a mission that demands active language skills like speaking fluency. The Department is continuously balancing these language requirements in order to ensure that we not only increase the overall number of trained linguists, but we also best match language tested capabilities to mission needs. [See page 15.]

