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EXECUTIVE SESSION

THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT'S FORCE POSTURE IN
ANTICIPATION OF SEPTEMBER 12, 2012

(BENGHAZI OVERSIGHT)

House of Representatives,
Committee on Armed Services,
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations,
Washington, D.C.

Thursday, October 10, 2013

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:01 a.m., in
room 2212, 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 morning and welcome. This is Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee's fifth briefing on the Department of Defense actions related to September 12th -- excuse me, September 11th, 2012 attacks in Benghazi, Libya. As members know after the Benghazi attack, this committee immediately initiated vigorous oversight activities of the Department of Defense's related actions. Furthermore Chairman McKeon directed this subcommittee to address thoroughly, authoritatively, and conclusively, all matters related to the Benghazi attacks. Our briefing today offers the opportunity to hear from the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff about his understanding of the Benghazi events including the prelude and aftermath of the attack which killed four Americans.

General Dempsey can address his perception of the threat environment in Libya in the months before the attack, discussions he may have had with senior civilian officials and other military officers about this, and the security posture that may have been dictated by the threat environment in Libya.

Before we hear from General Dempsey, there are several important procedural items that I must address. First, General Dempsey must conclude at noon. Second this briefing is being conducted at the TOP SECRET level. However if the answer to a

member's question requires a higher level of classification, General Dempsey will indicate this and at about 11:30, we will move to 2337 Rayburn to receive any information that is classified higher than TOP SECRET,

On the other hand, if there have been no questions necessitating a higher classification level, we will remain here and conclude at noon or earlier in this room. Third, because of General Dempsey's limited time and the special perspective he provides, and I want to emphasize this, I ask members to limit questions to those relevant to today's briefing topic. Fourth, as has been our usual practice we will have rounds of 5-minute questions, 5-minute question periods. I will ask the first questions followed by Ranking Member Tsongas. Other oversight and investigation subcommittee members will have the next opportunity followed by HASC members.

Then if we have sufficient time we will turn to members who are not on the Armed Services Committee. Accordingly I ask unanimous consent that non-Armed Services Committee members be allowed to participate in today's briefing, time permitting after all committee members have had an opportunity to ask questions. Is there objection? Without objection non Armed Services Committee members will be recognized at the appropriate time for 5 minutes.

Now, I would like to invite my subcommittee colleague, Ranking Member Tsongas, to make her opening remarks.

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

Ms. Tsongas. Thank you, Chairwoman Roby, and thank you, General Dempsey, for being here today with us on this very rainy morning. As you heard from our chairwoman, it is our fourth -- fifth hearing on the events of September 11th and 12th of 2012 in Benghazi. Now while this is your first time in front of this subcommittee, it is not your first time answering questions from Congress on the circumstances surrounding the attacks that evening and the subsequent morning. We have heard from several witnesses and to date, have learned about the DOD posture prior to 9/11/2012, the chain of events from the perspective of the operational commanders, the lessons learned and implementation of many new measures and the preparation and DOD posture for this past September 11th.

Today I am hopeful that we can bring closure to this investigation after hearing your testimony so that we can continue to move forward with the lessons learned from that very tragic evening. I thank you again for being here and I look forward to your testimony. Thank you, I yield back.

Mrs. Roby. We now turn to our briefer, General Martin E. Dempsey serves as the 18th chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Prior to becoming chairman, the General served as the Army's 37th chief of staff. Past assignments have taken he and his family across the globe both during peace and war from platoon leader to combatant commander.

General Dempsey, let me personally just say thank you to you for your service and sacrifice, but also to your family and their service to our country. And with that we look forward to hearing from you in your briefing.

STATEMENT OF MARTIN E. DEMPSEY, CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF,
UNITED STATES ARMY

General Dempsey. Thank you, Madam Chair. I am honored to be here today to continue this important conversation about the events of September 11th, 2012, as well as to discuss the measures we have initiated since our diplomatic mission in Benghazi was attacked.

Ever since our Nation was first attacked in 2001, the military law enforcement and the intelligence communities have continued to endeavor to remain alert to the possibility of terrorist incidents on the 9/11 anniversary and posture our forces and raise force protection measures accordingly.

Leading up to and throughout the day of the attack in 2012, I had received reports of possible threats to U.S. interests including in Sana'a, Khartoum, Islamabad, Peshawar, Kabul, Cairo

[REDACTED]

and Baghdad. I didn't receive any specific reports of imminent threats to U.S. personnel or facilities in Benghazi. Soon after I received the initial reports of the Benghazi attack, I discussed the situation with the Secretary of Defense, Leon Panetta, and with President Obama in a meeting that we had already scheduled that day on another topic.

The President instructed us to use all available assets to respond to the attacks to ensure the safety of U.S. personnel in Libya and to protect U.S. personnel and interests throughout the region. Because threat streams increased in a number of locations simultaneously, we postured our forces to respond regionally as well as specifically to the events in Libya.

In response to events in Benghazi, we deployed a Marine Fleet Antiterrorism Security team, or FAS, team as you probably know it. Prepared a second FAS platoon to deploy and moved the special operations force that was training in Croatia to a staging base in Italy. We also deployed a special operations force from the continental United States to an intermediate staging base in southern Europe.

The Accountability Review Board lead by Ambassador Pickering and Admiral Mike Mullen concluded that the interagency response was timely and appropriate, but there was simply not enough time given the speed of the attacks for armed U.S. military assets to have made a difference. They did, however, identify areas that required our further attention. We have applied the lessons

[REDACTED]

learned from this incident to adapt to what has been described as a new normal of violence in the Middle East and North Africa. Specifically we have improved our ability to secure our diplomatic missions by assuming a more proactive posture. Our first line of defense is, and will, of necessity, remain to reinforce host nation security forces. We contribute to our own security by further developing their capabilities.

We are evaluating conditions in real-time and have enhanced information sharing between the Department of Defense and the State Department to improve both our understanding of the threats to our diplomatic post as well as our military response times.

Our Department of State counterparts prioritized and designated 27 posts as high threat, high risk. We have concentrated our immediate efforts on those 27 posts. We are increasing the minimum size of our existing Marine security guard detachments and adding 35 additional Marine security detachments at posts which do not currently have them. We have also forward deployed additional forces in southern Europe and placed them on higher alert levels as necessary to respond to crisis.

Our collaborative planning efforts have actually paid off. Since April of 2013, for example, the Department has adjusted alert levels of response forces approximately 85 times in response to threats, and in addition, we have actually relocated some of these quick reaction forces approximately 26 times to put them in a place of greater proximity.

Although we will never possess absolute certainty about threats to our embassies, we are better postured today than ever before to secure our Nation's diplomatic missions. I will continue working closely with this committee as we further strengthen our ability to respond to security threats abroad, and now I'll be happy to take any questions you may have.

Mrs. Roby. Thank you, sir. Secretary Panetta and General Ham visited Libya in December of 2011. Before or after that visit, did you discuss with Secretary Panetta his assessment of the security situation in Libya?

General Dempsey. Yes, following their trip to Libya, the SECDEF came back and back briefed all of us to include his staff on his visit to Libya, and primarily we spoke about how to build security forces in Libya to stabilize the situation on the ground. Not anything specifically about the embassy or the temporary mission facility.

Mrs. Roby. So was it at that time that you talked about the possibility of sending FAS team?

General Dempsey. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Mrs. Roby. So in -- okay, so in August of 2012, the Site Security Team, the SST that you just referenced the 16-person team assigned to the embassy in Tripoli was reduced to four personnel

[REDACTED]

at the State Department's request. And General Ham briefed this subcommittee that AFRICOM offered the State Department to retain a larger force. Were you aware of that at the time or is that something that you learned about in reviewing the events after the attack?

General Dempsey. No, I was aware of it at the time. In fact, we extended it twice previously for 90 days, and subsequently for 120 days. And the way that forces are repositioned around the globe is under the authority of the Secretary of Defense in a process we call the SDOB, the Secretary of Defense Orders Book, where he literally signs off on the deployment, extension or redeployment of forces whether they be Naval forces, ground forces or air forces. And so we had in several orders books presented to the Secretary of Defense the extension of the SST and then ultimately, when we were requested to reduce its size from 16 to 4, that process took it back to the SECDEF and he signed off on it.

Mrs. Roby. Admiral Tidd has informed the committee that in the period between the reduction in the SST and the attacks the J-3 did not receive any requests for additional forces in Libya. Do you have that same recollection?

General Dempsey. I do.

Mrs. Roby. And did you ever discuss that with Admiral Tidd or others the possibility of sending additional forces even absent that request from the State Department?

[REDACTED]

General Dempsey. I did, both with Admiral Tidd and with General Ham.

Mrs. Roby. And what was the -- can you relay that conversation?

General Dempsey. Yes, the conversation was about whether the State Department intent to transition from us providing security to them providing security through their normal processes, which is to say that the RSO, whether that was on track. And the State Department's guidance to us was that that process was on track and therefore the DOD resources were no longer needed.

Mrs. Roby. So the conclusion was from ya'll's perspective that DOD forces were not needed at that time the 16-member team?

General Dempsey. Well, you know, the conclusion was that given the report of those on the ground responsible for security, which is the resident security officer of the Department of State under chief of mission control.

Mrs. Roby. Right.

General Dempsey. That their conclusion was they no longer needed the Department of Defense resources based on their assessment of the threat, their confidence level in the local security militias that they had begun to employ for external security and that they were bringing on additional contracted -- contracted is probably not the right word, but under their diplomatic security protocols, they were bringing on additional people that our security team was no longer needed.

[REDACTED]

Mrs. Roby. Did you agree with that or weigh in, what was that conversation like?

General Dempsey. We ultimately always have, let's call it a collaborative discussion with the Department of State whenever we are responding to a request from them. And on the issue of diplomatic security, we are responsive to the Department of State. So we had a back and forth, mostly -- not mostly, but with General Ham and the chief of mission on several occasions on the topic of security teams and the conclusion drawn and accepted was that this transition would occur.

Mrs. Roby. Okay, thank you my time has expired. Ms. Tsongas.

Ms. Tsongas. Thank you, General. I actually would like to sort of follow up on that issue because I think it is something that's become ever more clear as we have had these hearings, and that is just how much the Department of State and the ambassador who tragically lost his life, how much they really are in the driver's seat. I think as we heard from General Ham as he offered a new -- reiterated the desire to extend and maintain the 16-person Site Security Team, that that was rebuffed, and in deference to the role and the importance that the State Department plays, so I would like you to sort of talk through just in general how that works so we are very clear as to, despite what your concerns might have been, despite what anybody in the chain of command's concerns might have been, really the State Department

[REDACTED]

was at that point.

Now we have heard in subsequent hearings how this has not necessarily changed a little, but there is a better understanding sometimes of the need to cooperate and perhaps defer to a DOD analysis of the situation, but at that time, that was really what the state of affairs was. And I would like you just to sort of walk us through that.

General Dempsey. Thank you. It is a matter of roles and responsibilities actually. On the issue -- anything that happens in any nation on the planet actually, happens with the consent of the President's representative in that nation who is the ambassador. I mean, they fundamentally have both the right of request and the right of refusal. And then on behalf the ambassador generally, security is overseen and assessed by the RSO, the Resident Security Officer who will make requests through procedures, the executive secretary of the interagency if they feel they need any additional levels of support.

And that's true whether we are talking about Tripoli or today in Sana'a or in Tunis or anywhere else. And so as they assess the capability of the local security forces, who ultimately are responsible for the external security of our diplomatic missions and their own internal security, they will make formal requests of the Department for additional resources or for the redeployment of those resources. It's a process that existed pre Benghazi. It's the same process that exists post Benghazi. I'd suggest to you,

though, that I think the reality of the instability in Mid East North Africa has probably heightened their awareness of some of the potential challenges.

Ms. Tsongas. So traditionally, the role of the militia or the host nations security services would provide primary support for the security at an embassy, and that was true in Benghazi as well, except as we saw, they certainly did not do their job as much has changed in the aftermath of that in the way we rely upon host nation militias, is that the case?

General Dempsey. That is the case.

Ms. Tsongas. Thank you, I yield back.

Mrs. Roby. Mr. Conaway.

Mr. Conaway. Thank you, Madam Chairman. General Dempsey, thank you for being here. There was no Marine detachment as I understand it, there was no Marine detachment at the embassy in Tripoli at that point in time, yes or no?

General Dempsey. That's correct.

Mr. Conaway. Whose decision was that to not have a normal Marine complement at an embassy?

General Dempsey. The way I would -- first of all, again, it's the ambassador's decision on how he assesses, or she for that matter, assesses security and then makes requests either internal to the Department of State or externally to us.

So and I think what we probably would have to agree on is that the mission in Libya was in a state of transition, you know,

post conflict and pre whatever it was about to become. And the chief of mission, that's how we ended up with the 16-man Site Security Team in there. But there seemed to me to be a desire to transition to some degree of normalcy sooner rather than latter.

Mr. Conaway. That normal thing would have been a normal Marine complement.

General Dempsey. That's correct.

Mr. Conaway. Going back to the, I guess, evening and afternoon of the 11th year from your perspective as Chairman of Joint Chiefs was there any restrictions placed on whatever it is that you thought needed to get done to respond to whatever was going on in Benghazi at the time? Were there any outside influences applied to you and your team that says I want to do X and someone in the administration said no, you can't do that?

General Dempsey. No, I was aware of no restrictions whatsoever. The only restrictions we face that I think are pretty well documented are time and distance.

Mr. Conaway. And then we faced often the accusation, or the allegation which so far has been unfounded, that members who were there or people who were there are being coerced into not testifying or being punished for having said what they have already said or they are being encouraged not to testify or ordered not to testify. Are you aware of anything like that? Did you order or tell or suggest anybody not talk to Congress?

General Dempsey. No, sir. I -- let me assure you that you

there's nothing more heart wrenching and frustrating than to watch something unfold someplace and not have the ability to do anything about it. So we have endeavored vigorously to learn lessons and that's why we postured ourselves differently. But I can assure you that I've never been made aware of any order to, in any way, discourage anyone from being anything other than completely forthright with this committee and many others.

Mr. Conaway. Okay. The word order has a certain definition, there are suggestions or implications -- innuendo and all the kind of things that would lead someone who was a subordinate to say you know, I better listen. You are not aware of any kind of attempt whatsoever --

General Dempsey. I honestly can tell you that we have tried to take exactly the opposite approach, whether by order, suggestion, body language or innuendo to encourage people to learn from this.

Mr. Conaway. Thank you. In response later to the overall issue, you talked about augmenting existing Marine assets with additional Marine people, Marine personnel those kind of things. Given the shrink and Marine Corps itself driven by sequestration and all the other nonsense we put you guys through, where are you getting though bodies and what are they not going to do that they would have otherwise done?

General Dempsey. That's a very good question, Congressman, and the commandant and Marine Corps is working through that. The

total additional force is just over a 1,000 and the additional cost is a couple tens of millions of dollars, and the Marine Corps is finding it challenging to do that. To answer your question, it will -- we don't have any additional head space, we don't have additional authorized end strength.

Mr. Conaway. You're losing end strength.

General Dempsey. We are losing end strength. So this will affect the composition of the Marine expeditionary units.

Mr. Conaway. Thank you, I yield back.

Mrs. Roby. Ms. Duckworth.

Ms. Duckworth. Thank you, Madame Chair. Thank you so much for being here, General Dempsey, it is good to see you again. I would like to speak a little bit to the risk assessment process. I would assume that the SST on the ground were probably conducting their own risk assessment process, either on some sort of periodic basis, daily or weekly, would that be correct?

General Dempsey. Yeah, they generally take -- any embassy in the world, as you're very familiar, has emergency action counsels, they have mission security plans. And the team, because it was there under chief of mission authority, would have been a participant in that process and then they would do their own force protection assessment for themselves.

Ms. Duckworth. So when the ambassador and the State Department decided to reduce the number of the DSST personnel from the 16 down to the 4, that would have been with that information

[REDACTED]

from any risk assessments either conducted by the State Department themselves or by members of the SST, would that be correct?

General Dempsey. Well, first, you know, first I have to make sure we are consistent on the fact that this SST was in Tripoli, and so the force protection risk assessment that would be -- in which they would be part, was for Tripoli, but yes, they would have had a voice in that.

Ms. Duckworth. Has that process changed or been enhanced since this post-Benghazi in terms of the DOD personnel that would be on the ground even if they are, under the jurisdiction of the chief of mission in terms of the risk assessment process, has that been enhanced, changed, anything like that from lessons learned, anything like that from Benghazi?

General Dempsey. Yeah, I am told that the State Department has adapted its processes for the preparation and activity related to risk assessments, but again, we would be part of that because of the authority of the chief of mission.

Ms. Duckworth. With the new force posture that you're now maintaining in order to respond more quickly if needed, depending on the situation and the environment, how long can you sustain that?

General Dempsey. That's a very -- that is a question that only a former helicopter pilot could ask. Because as you know, keeping forces at elevated readiness postures is -- it consumes readiness, you don't grow it. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Ms. Duckworth. And --

General Dempsey.

MS.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Ms. Duckworth. And under the current force posture, and under the current on number of troops you have, and then the upcoming funds, especially under sequestration, are you going to have the resources do that?

General Dempsey. Well, frankly I think what this budget challenge is causing us to do is to prioritize things. So it doesn't seem to me that the current environment in the Middle East and North Africa is going to allow us to lower our alert postures. So that will be among counterterrorism. Homeland, defense counterterrorism protection of diplomatic posts and U.S. citizens and the Mid East North Africa, we will have to prioritize. What that means, though, is our other capacity and capability further down, for example, for conducting the conventional war plans that we have on the shelf will diminish.

Ms. Duckworth. Thank you very much, General. I yield back.

Mrs. Roby. Thank you. General Dempsey, will you help me go back to your testimony? You talked about a meeting at the White House. What day was that?

General Dempsey. That was actually on the day.

Mrs. Roby. That was on the 11th?

[REDACTED]

General Dempsey. It was.

Mrs. Roby. So I want to talk about on September 10th the day before.

General Dempsey. Okay.

Mrs. Roby. The White House issued a statement saying that, "Earlier today the President heard from key national security principals on our preparedness and security posture on the eve of the 11th anniversary of September 11th." Do you recall that meeting?

General Dempsey. It was actually a conference call, but I do recall it.

Mrs. Roby. Okay, okay. And was Secretary Panetta on that call?

General Dempsey. He was.

Mrs. Roby. Was that conference call convened solely for the purpose described, or was it a meeting -- or a call on a variety of topics and this was just one of them, or was it specific to the anniversary?

General Dempsey. It was on this specific topic of threat streams related to the 9/11 anniversary.

Mrs. Roby. Okay. On September 10th, 2012, the White House statement also said, "During the briefing today" -- I guess the conference call -- "the President and the principals discussed specific measures we are taking to prevent 9/11-related attacks and to protect U.S. persons and facilities abroad."

[REDACTED]

So you already referenced that you remember that being part of the discussion. Was there conversations specific to the U.S. persons and facilities in Libya?

General Dempsey. I don't remember Libya coming up specifically, no. I do remember Tunisia, Egypt and Sudan in that conversation.

Mrs. Roby. And then also in the September 10th White House statement 2012, they state, over the past month assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, John Brennan has convened numerous meetings to review security measures in place. Were you -- do you recall whether were you consulted by John Brennan in this period as described?

General Dempsey. John was convening meetings at his level which were the deputy's level, if you will. And so generally speaking, my J-3, my vice chairman, sometimes the J-5 depending on the topic would have attended, but there is a prep session to prepare them for that, and I am a party of that. And then there's always a report out when they come back from the meeting about issues discussed. So I was aware of what was going on, but I don't recall being part of it personally.

Mrs. Roby. And this is one of the statements that we have talked about numerous times in this committee included in that same release was about the White House basically said we believe that U.S. persons will be safe on the anniversary of 9/11, obviously that wasn't the case based on what happened in Benghazi.

[REDACTED]

Can you elaborate a little bit for me about the discussions even though you said Libya was not specifically mentioned, how that conclusion was reached in light of where our posture that day?

General Dempsey. I can. First of all, the way these conversations generally go is inside out. So the first thing we discuss is threats to the homeland, and there's always a handful. In fact, just overnight last night -- every morning I get a report of what the intel community assesses to be credible threat streams. That doesn't mean this is the only body of threat, it's the ones that we deem to be credible against U.S. citizens and facilities generally abroad, but sometimes inside the homeland. Last night there was 7, the night before there were 12.

You probably heard, but in the period 6 months prior to the Benghazi, I think the number was 281 credible threats. So the conversations generally go inside out, what is threatening the homeland and how are we postured to deal with it? That conversation is generally lead by the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security with us in support. And then when we get outside into overseas threats, the conversation generally drifts to the CIA and the DOS and DOD. And on -- in this run-up for this conference call I mentioned that it was Tunisia, Sudan and Egypt because those are the most credible threats, so these were the ones we addressed. And then we addressed, in general, our force posture both in the Gulf and in North Africa.

Mrs. Roby. And just quickly, in the discussion about the

force posture, was there concern about, as you mentioned before, you know, the timing that it would take in order to get to some of these places based on where our posture was? My time has expired, but when we come back around we'll revisit that. I am trying to set a good example. Mr. Andrews.

Mr. Andrews. Thank you, Madam Chair. I apologize for coming in late. I want to thank General Dempsey, Chairman Dempsey for his incredible accessibility to members. I had the privilege of being with the General and the Secretary a couple of weeks ago to have very in-depth discussions, it is characteristic of your transparency. Thank you.

General Dempsey. Thank you.

Mr. Andrews. Let me ask you this question: If we gave you the ability to get response teams to anywhere in the world within 2 hours when they have a problem, how many more people would you need? How much more material would you need? What would it cost?

General Dempsey. Well, I'd be reluctant to answer that without a little more analysis. But I would say, even if you did that, even if you gave all the CV-22s, which tends to be a pretty unique and important platform because of its range and its vertical lift, and all the people that man it, I would still face the problem of access, which is to say host nation access, because it is a longstanding practice and convention that you enter sovereign nations only with their permission. So I'd still have that challenge, and that's actually one of the real challenges we

have in west Africa notably is basing.

Mr. Andrews. I asked the question somewhat rhetorically because if you boil this incident down to its essentials, my understanding is that while the attack was ongoing, if I am not mistaken, there was a conversation that involved Secretary Panetta, yourself and the President in the White House; is that right?

General Dempsey. The -- I'd have to go back and look at the actual chronology. I think the attack on the annex -- I am sorry, the attack on the temporary mission facility was complete, but it was prior to the attack on the annex.

Mr. Andrews. I think that's right, it was between the two during that -- when I say the attack, I mean the entire I guess 12-, 13-hour saga.

General Dempsey. Uh-huh.

Mr. Andrews. And my understanding is there was a decision made to deploy whatever needed to be made somewhere in that window, that between the conclusion of the first attack and the onset of the attack on the annex. So, I mean, I honestly think that a criticism of the administration for not making a decision quickly enough is just without any basis in fact.

The next question I move on to as well, did you have the appropriate response, and from what I have heard with these discussions that had gone on, is you did the best you could with what you had, and I don't know that anybody could dispute that.

And then the third question you have to ask is well, did you have enough? Could you be everywhere in the world that you needed to be a few hours away and be able to do something about this, and I think that's kind of impractical. So agree or disagree with this statement, it is not meant to be a point that you can't disagree with. I see the proper response here is to assess maybe the way we rank threats in our intelligence assessment.

Maybe we got this one scored too low, maybe we didn't, but isn't that really the core of this that at the end of the day, if we had had perfect intelligence, we might be able to do something about this, we didn't, and address why those imperfections exist?

General Dempsey. I do think it is a combination of intelligence, I&W we call it, intelligence and warnings, our posture. But importantly, the degree to which the State Department assesses the capability of host nations to protect its facilities, you can't be in a country, frankly, unless you assess that they can provide the security that they and only they can provide. We can provide internal security, but the external security has to be provided by host nations.

Mr. Andrews. In your opinion, just your professional opinion, do you think the State Department asked for adequate protection in Libya in the days leading up to this attack?

General Dempsey. Well, I think it is important to distinguish between Tripoli and Benghazi in that regard. I think that probably in Tripoli, they were well postured, but obviously

given the events that occurred in Benghazi they were not.

Mr. Andrews. From the perspective of what they knew before the attack, do you think they asked for everything they should have?

General Dempsey. You know, I've -- we have had many opportunities, lessons learned, hearings to turn and twist that question. And given what we knew -- given the threat streams that we had and their lack of specificity, I think the ambassador probably did what he thought was right, but the militias out in western Libya or eastern Libya had a vote.

Mr. Andrews. I respect his memory, wish he was here to talk to us about it frankly. Thank you very much, I yield back.

Mrs. Roby. Mr. Conaway.

Mr. Conaway. Thank you, Madam Chairman. General Dempsey, the FBI is leading the efforts at finding and fixing the folks who did this and perpetrated these actions. Can you walk us through what DOD's assistance to those efforts are and what role given experiences over the weekend we might expect in terms of if, in fact, the FBI can't find these guys or CIA can find them, or you can find them. What's ya'll's role?

General Dempsey. Our role is exactly as you described it, Congressman. We are in support -- the Department of Defense in support of law enforcement so they are -- we are supporting them with intelligence gathering as well as transportation to and from sites at their request and security of the teams at their request.

Mr. Conaway. Okay. But can you talk to us a little bit about what we may expect out of the Department of Defense if, in fact, the FBI fixes and finds the guys that did it?

General Dempsey. Well, first of all, the individuals related in the Benghazi attack, those that we believe were either participants or leadership of it are not authorized use of military force. In other words, they don't fall under the AUMF authorized by the Congress of the United States. So we would not have the capability to simply find them and kill them, either with a remotely-piloted aircraft or with an assault on the ground. Therefore, they will have to be captured, and we would, when asked, provide capture options to do that.

Mr. Conaway. Thank you. Yield back.

Mrs. Roby. Ms. Tsongas.

Ms. Tsongas. I would like to sort of address the issue of just the nature of the threat because we have heard in many -- in all these hearings really that the nature of the threat assessment they knew sort of an unstable situation but there was no specific threat. So that that seems to drive the posture decisions when you can't identify something specific. As opposed to, you say Tunisia, Egypt and Sudan, so were there specific threats there that you're aware of that drove your decision making?

General Dempsey. Yes, Congresswoman, there were.

Ms. Tsongas. And so is that the distinguishing feature as you're gathering intelligence, you need to know of something very

specific in order to marshal the necessary resources to respond to it?

General Dempsey. Well, it is a combination of the intelligence community collaborating across agencies to gain a consensus on the threat, and then to prioritize. Then again, if the chief of mission, who gets the same intelligence that we get, if the chief of mission assesses that they don't feel they are postured adequately to address the threat, then they make a request. And we -- and by the way, my staff just passed me a note just to be clear the number of threat streams overnight, it was seven, the day before the Benghazi attack was 15. So they wanted -- they are very persnickety about facts.

Ms. Tsongas. As they should be. So where there is a specific threat, it still is the decision making around the kind of security that is needed still lies with the State Department?

General Dempsey. That's correct.

Ms. Tsongas. Thank you. I yield back.

Mrs. Roby. So as you know, after the Benghazi attack Admiral Mullen cochaired the Department of State Accountability Review Board, and in his testimony last month before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Admiral Mullen was asked, "Within the Department of Defense, was there an after action review or report and did you read it?" And he replied, "there always is," but he noted I haven't seen it.

However, when a DOD briefer was asked about the after action

review last month in the briefing from this subcommittee he said, "The after action review for us was the ARB." Excuse me, continuing explaining that Secretary Panetta insured that the Department had been linked up with the Accountability Review Board. So were there one or more DOD after action reports compiled before the ARB was completed?

General Dempsey. Let me ask -- let me suggest to think about the after action review process in kind of three tiers.

Mrs. Roby. Okay.

General Dempsey. Near term, midterm and long term. So the near-term effort as directed by the Secretary of Defense was to fully support the Department of State Accountability Review Board. So we put all of our energy into supporting them, and as they worked through to draw their conclusions which you're very familiar with. Then midterm we entered into a collaboration with the Department of State on a white paper that you've heard referred to as the new normal. And that new normal white paper is a document that made some recommendations on which we collaborated on how to improve the response to what now is clear, clearly a much more unstable mid eastern North Africa, so that was the midterm effort.

And then each subordinate command will always generate an after action review. And so in May, this was the longer term issue, in May, I tasked my J-7 who is responsible for lessons learned to reach out across the entire enterprise and gather all

[REDACTED]

of the lessons learned from our subordinates, and those have begun to come in, and I should have that effort completed by the end of October.

If you think of this way, Madam Chair, we wanted to make sure that today's leaders learned lessons as rapidly as possible and adapted. And then also this longer term effort is so that future leaders can also learn.

Mrs. Roby. And you said that your estimate is October when you could report these findings to this subcommittee?

General Dempsey. Of the subordinate. So there's the lessons learned at the institutional level are done through the ARB and the white paper. This is to find out the tactical lessons learned.

Mrs. Roby. Okay. And ARB --

General Dempsey. By I way, I should mention just so we manage expectations, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] -- that's the kind of tactical lesson learned that we are looking for, where was the sand in the gears of our activities?

Mrs. Roby. Right. The ARB's public report concluded, "There simply was not enough time given the speed of attacks for armed U.S. military assets to have made a difference." And that's consistent with your testimony in the outcome of Benghazi. Were you interviewed by the ARB members and/or staff?

[REDACTED]

General Dempsey. I wasn't formally interviewed by the ARB. Admiral Mullen reached out to us and I -- as I mentioned earlier, we told the staff to be cooperative, collaborative, supportive in every possible way.

Mrs. Roby. And do you know that whether the ARB in reaching their conclusions, was that the reaction from the time the attack was initiated or from some other point in time?

General Dempsey. Well, based on the recommendations pertinent to DOD it is clear that they looked at our posture prior to the event and made some conclusions about it. So they did look at, from the DOD aspect of it, they did look at our alert force posture and our position of resources prior to the event.

Mrs. Roby. And that's from a conversation that you had with them that you know that that's --

General Dempsey. No, it's from reading the report.

Mrs. Roby. Okay. And do you have an understanding of the extent to which the ARB considered the broader questions of the global force posture prior to the events September 11th, 2012?

General Dempsey. Yeah, I -- well, given that one of the recommendations was the identification of these 27 high-threat posts, which are, in fact, considered globally, it's my conclusion or my understanding that they did take a global approach.

Mrs. Roby. Okay. Thank you. My time has expired.
Ms. Duckworth.

Ms. Duckworth. Thank you, Madam Chair. General, I'd like to

go back to lessons learned from Benghazi and how do we make sure this doesn't happen again. And really, just the sustainability of the this effort. Could you speak a little bit about just the nature of the force right now in terms of do we have enough folks? I spent some of the happiest and most terrifying time in my life in the gentlelady from Alabama, the chairwoman's district in Fort Rucker, Alabama. Do we have enough folks going through flight school? Do we have enough Marines learning to fly Ospreys, do we have enough folks going through SEAL training? Is that pipeline there as we are trying to sustain this force that's ready to respond to Africa as we are shifting also our focus to Asia, do we simply have enough personnel and equipment to do this?

General Dempsey. The service chiefs have done a remarkable job, in my view, of sustaining a level of readiness that allows us to meet our current requirements. But if you're asking me do I have concerns about our ability to sustain it, I absolutely do have concerns. We are in fact -- there's fewer pilots in the pipeline, few rotary wing pilots, and it is well-documented, there's squadrons of aircraft grounded. Some of them got back to flying minimums at the end of the fiscal year because there's always some latency in funding at the end of the year. Last year, as you know, we were looking, we had to find \$35 billion. This year it appears it will be \$52 billion, so there will be readiness impact.

Ms. Duckworth. Talking about southern and western Africa,

[REDACTED]

this committee had a briefing not too long ago where we saw the ability to respond should there be need for military support. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Can you speak a little bit about that and what would you need to have in order to shorten the time period, the response rates for western and southern Africa?

General Dempsey. Yeah, in fact, as you look at -- it is actually northern and western Africa where the high threat areas are. There's three ways you can deal with those threats. One is you build the capacity and the capability of the host nation; secondly, you thicken your defenses actually at the embassy, whether it's by infrastructure or additional manpower; and then the third is these response forces. But as you correctly point out, the tyranny of distance on the African continent is rather remarkable. Most Americans have no idea, you could stick the continental of the United States on the top third of Africa with room to spare. The time and distance is overwhelming.

So ideally we would work to build host nation capability and we are doing that. Secondly, we would thicken the ranks and we are doing that. The response forces, at some level, will eventually rely upon basing. Now some of that -- for example, if we had a threat that we thought was credible and dangerous today for Nigeria, we probably would have to float some amphib capability off of west Africa to deal with it because we don't have any basing rights in Africa.

[REDACTED]

Ms. Duckworth. This sort of goes into my next question, which is looking at the Navy's capabilities with the reduced number of ships that they have that are now on cruises that are at sea. That would be something that if they were able to increase a number of ships that they had out on cruises, they would -- you could move those around, around the world; is that correct?

General Dempsey. That is correct. Although I am dressed like an Army officer, I have become rather fond of the Navy -- more of Navy's amphib capability, than actually -- I know this is an anathema to a Naval officer, but more than the carrier fleet because the amphibians are very versatile, they can serve as a float staging basis for a CH-53, aircraft CD-22 Ospreys. So, and in the Navy program, by the way, are several additional afloat staging bases, and I think that's an investment we should make.

Ms. Duckworth. Is there anything else you would like to add about just the capabilities that you may need? I have about 40 seconds left in terms of looking forward to make sure this doesn't happen again.

General Dempsey. Yes, by the way I do want to make sure I don't suggest we could ever entirely prevent this. Not this, but these kind of attacks are best dealt with prior to with proactive or preempted decision making, which is why we really need the help of the State Department to do that.

And then just in thinking about capability plus capacity, the capability is the amphib in this case; capacity you could think of

[REDACTED]

the rule of thirds. There is always about a third of the force out there, there is about a third of it of just back, and there is about a third of it getting ready to go. And where we are running some risk right now is in a third of it getting ready to go.

Ms. Duckworth. Thank you. I yield back.

Mrs. Roby. Mr. Scott.

I think this is my last set of questions, and then we will see if the other side before we open it up to non HASC members. The subcommittee was briefed in June by Army Lieutenant Colonel Gibson who lead the four-person embassy flight security team at the time of the attack. And Lieutenant Colonel Gibson briefed that he intended for the team to go to Benghazi to render assistance once the embassy in Tripoli was secured. However, this subcommittee was briefed that Lieutenant Colonel Gibson was ordered by higher authorities to stay, to remain in Tripoli to continue providing aid and security there.

Earlier, the deputy chief of mission in Tripoli, Gregory Hicks, testified elsewhere in the House about his observations of this action, and this lead to some confusion about Lieutenant Colonel Gibson's orders. Although this confusion was later clarified by the briefing by Lieutenant Colonel Gibson and others before this subcommittee. Before Gregory Hicks testified in May, were you aware of Lieutenant Colonel Gibson that he had been ordered to stay not -- as his testimony was not to stand down, but remain in Tripoli to provide security there rather than proceed to

[REDACTED]

Benghazi?

General Dempsey. No, I was not.

Mrs. Roby. And do you have any understanding of the extent to which the ARB members or staff were aware before Gregory Hicks testified in May that Lieutenant Colonel Gibson had been ordered to remain in Tripoli to provide security there rather than proceed to Benghazi?

General Dempsey. Yeah, I don't know whether they knew that or not, but my instinct suggests probably not given the way that was made clear.

Mrs. Roby. I am going to yield back my time. And Mr. Andrews.

RPTS JOHNSON

DCMN CRYSTAL

[10:55 a.m.]

Mr. Andrews. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

General, if it were your decision alone to make, what strategy would you use in terms of military presence at State Department facilities around the world? What criteria would you use in allocating personnel and how would you do that if you had a completely clean slate to write on?

General Dempsey. To some extent, Congressman, that's the exact process in which I was engaged with the Department of State post-Benghazi in this white paper, which was to say let's accept -- the premise was that the Mideast, and North Africa in particular, had become so unstable that we needed to take a fresh look at threats and then address them in the three ways that I mentioned to the Congresswoman, with either hardening infrastructure, adding manpower, or placing response forces.

Mr. Andrews. In cases where the host country is either incapable or not totally cooperative, so, you know, that strategy has limitations, what kind of strategic considerations would we have there? Let me say what I mean by not -- they are not hostile, but they are not really going to have the capability or the willingness to do the things that need to be done.

General Dempsey. Yeah. Well, I used the phrase earlier preemptive decision making. And there is always a bit of

friction, but friction isn't pejorative, there is always a bit of friction between the Department of State's desire to maintain its diplomatic presence in certain places and our concern that if it were to go badly we would have a very difficult time either extracting them or protecting them. So this really does require a very careful country-by-country approach.

Mr. Andrews. And do you feel like you have the resources within the Department of Defense to give you advice on that country-by-country approach? One of the things I have noticed across our government is that we have deemphasized the soft sciences a little bit, that we love engineers, I do too, we love technicians, I do too, but there is a role for economists and historians and anthropologists and people who understand the culture in which we are operating. Do you feel like you have access to that kind of good advice from the resources we have given you?

General Dempsey. I do. Though the -- I do. And I also think the State Department probably even has greater access to those kind of resources, the soft power aspect of it. But I do have -- you know, the combatant command regional format of our unified command plan, which is to say we have a regional or geographic combatant commander responsible for X number of countries around the world, is actually, that's one of the great benefits of it, is they can immerse themselves, they can draw that kind of expertise to them. So in this case, the standup of

AFRICOM several years ago I think was a very good thing.

Mr. Andrews. As a generic proposition, do you think that we leave our personnel in those areas, you know, regionally, do we give them a regional focus for too long so they get stale, or not long enough so they don't know enough, or do you think that we have hit the right spot on that in terms of our rotation of people in and out of region?

General Dempsey. No, it is a fair question and one that in terms of our leader development we wrestle with frequently.

Now, I will tell you, this won't surprise you, but over the last 10 years we have had to move people in and out of Iraq and Afghanistan at a pace, which in order to sustain the force -- you know, as you know, we were down to a one-to-one boots-on-the-ground dwell ratio, which meant you are home 1 year, you are in Iraq or Afghanistan a year. So we didn't have the opportunity over those years --

Mr. Andrews. We all have a lot of constituents who have told us that story. We have heard it.

General Dempsey. Yeah. Now, we are beginning now to develop the kind of regional expertise around the rest of the world that you suggest.

Mr. Andrews. Thank you very much. I yield back.

Mrs. Roby. Mr. Chaffetz, you have 5 minutes.

Mr. Chaffetz. Thank you. It is an honor to be with you.

And I appreciate your service.

[REDACTED]

So 13 months later there is no after-action report. Is the short answer to that yes or --

General Dempsey. No, I don't -- I disagree with that characterization. As I said, the ARB is in effect an institutional --

Mr. Chaffetz. Is there ever an instance where the military had the State Department lead the effort to do an after-action report? Can you give me any other example?

General Dempsey. The ARB process was actually put in place from previous problems, and we have participated with them in those efforts as well.

Mr. Chaffetz. I think we will continue on with that discussion, but it is implausible and stunning for me to understand that. Certainly when we asked Admiral Mullen, he said there always is. And I am looking 13 months later, Senator Graham and I have sent a letter to the Department of Defense, and as far as I could tell there is no after-action review.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

General Dempsey. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mr. Chaffetz. Then why is it that it took over 23 hours for them to arrive in Tripoli?

General Dempsey. The reasons have been, I think, pretty well documented, sir. They include the fact that the aircraft for

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

which they depended were in Ramstein and were delayed in reaching their forward-basing location. Secondly, there was some difficulties with the host nation on whether they could arrive in uniform or out of uniform. And thirdly, there was discussion about whether to push them to Benghazi or Tripoli.

Mr. Chaffetz. My understanding, from lots of testimony, is there was never a request of the Libyan Government. And do you really -- when we got people down do you really have -- do you really actually let somebody push the military around and say, well, you are in the wrong uniform? Is that really a reason to delay the FAST team coming in to protect Americans, that they are not wearing a t-shirt?

General Dempsey. Well, I appreciate the question, Congressman. [REDACTED]

Mr. Chaffetz. They would have made it, because -- well, they were going into Tripoli. They were not there and designed to go into Benghazi.

General Dempsey. That's right.

Mr. Chaffetz. But I don't understand why it took 23 hours for them, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] And you are right, they were delayed because they were told to change out of their uniforms. There is a reason why we have them wear

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

uniforms.

I want to -- let me keep going. I want to explore that more at some point. The CIF, the EUCOM CIF, they are supposed to be operating on an N plus what?

[REDACTED]

Mr. Chaffetz. Then why is it that they didn't take off until 4:17 p.m. Benghazi time the next day? Why did it take so long to them actually get in the air?

General Dempsey. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] And furthermore, the mission for which they were to be employed had not been -- we were using the FAST teams. These individuals --

Mr. Chaffetz. But the FAST team was never intended to go to Benghazi. My understanding is there is two FAST teams stood up, one to go to Benghazi, one to get ready to go to Algeria or some other country if need be. Nobody was supposed to go into Benghazi on the FAST teams. That is not what they are designed for. It is not what they are trained to do. But the CIF, why is it that it takes so long to get them in the air?

General Dempsey. Well, the reasons are as I suggested. They were in a training exercise.

Mr. Chaffetz. Okay. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

General Dempsey. Could I answer that, Congressman?

Mr. Chaffetz. Sure.

General Dempsey. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mr. Chaffetz. But they weren't there to go into Benghazi potentially.

General Dempsey. No, that's right.

Mr. Chaffetz. And that's one of the concerns. This is a firefight that's going on, our wounded aren't extracted for nearly 25 hours. And they finally do get into the air, but it's like 19 hours later. And again, when you say, well, they operate at an N plus whatever, it looks to me on a piece of paper like it is 19.

Madam Chairwoman, I am out of time, but I got a lot more questions. Yield back.

Mrs. Roby. General Dempsey, can you clarify? Because the question was asked then. And I asked it earlier, and I am not sure that I made myself really clear. You mentioned October that

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

we would get -- this subcommittee could actually get the lessons learned after-action?

General Dempsey. As the Congressman stated, I am in receipt of a letter from Senator Graham to forward tactical-level after-action reviews. And I should have those accumulated by the end of October.

Mrs. Roby. What about your lessons learned? That's what you are saying?

General Dempsey. The lessons learned at the institutional level reside in the ARB and the white paper, "The New Norm," I described. And the tactical lessons learned will be accumulated by my J7 by the end of October.

Mrs. Roby. Okay. Thank you for clarifying that.

Ms. Duckworth, did you have additional questions?

Ms. Duckworth. Just a really quick one.

Let's get back to this response rate. The N plus one, N plus four, N plus six, whatever that is, that is to get them back to their staging base, correct? So that they could be off duty, sleeping at home. Is that what the N plus means?

General Dempsey. It is.

Ms. Duckworth. So the N plus does not actually mean that from the time that you call them that that's when they show up on the ground in Benghazi, for example.

General Dempsey. No, not at all.

Ms. Duckworth. All right. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

General Dempsey. Yeah. I have actually got a slide that I think has actually been distributed previously about the posture prior to the 11 September 2012.

Ms. Duckworth. Could you speak a little bit to when you are on that N plus one, N plus four, N plus six, you get recalled to your base, you get there, and then that's when the planning process begins. Can you talk a little bit how that planning process is adjusted? You may be listening and waiting for further instructions from the folks on the ground in Benghazi or in Tripoli for more information as you are making that decision process, that mission planning that's going on?

General Dempsey. Yeah. While the troops are being recalled the leadership begins its planning process given whatever mission they are given. And if the mission was to go into Libya, then they would begin to assemble the intelligence.

You are familiar with mission, enemy, terrain, troops available, and time, which then turns itself into an order, which is issued to subordinates. Then they mate themselves with ammunition -- because of course they wouldn't normally be carrying ammunition -- with aircraft. Mission briefs for the aircraft. Tankers in place if the distance exceeds the legs of the aircraft. And then host nation clearances.

Ms. Duckworth. So that MDMP process, the process of rehearsals, everything, are you constantly getting information

[REDACTED]

from the folks who are down range, the folks who are on the ground, the chief of mission that's there as you are going through that process? And are you adjusting the planning as it is going along?

General Dempsey. Yes. It is a dynamic planning process.

Now, prior to an event the team would generally be given an area of likely employment. So I mentioned that the threat stream leading up to September 11th of 2012 did not include Libya as a potential deployment area. So that prior planning would not have been accomplished for that particular mission.

Ms. Duckworth. Thank you. And so are you, General, satisfied that in all of the reviews that we have conducted, was there any way that military troops could have gotten there any faster than what the reality was?

General Dempsey. Regrettably, not.

Ms. Duckworth. Was there anyone that was trying to stop you from going there if there was any way you could get there in time?

General Dempsey. Absolutely not.

Ms. Duckworth. Have you used those lessons to plan for what will happen in the future in what you are doing now so that we have better responses across North Africa or western Africa?

General Dempsey. We are better postured today, but the risk is higher today. And so I remain concerned that events of this nature, unless there is a threat stream that allows us to prepare, or if those responsible on the ground in the Embassy can take

decisions early enough to either let us thicken the ranks or withdraw them, we remain at risk.

Ms. Duckworth. Has the State Department become more or less responsive to your inputs? Has that relationship evolved in terms of the defense at these missions?

General Dempsey. No, they are very clearly more responsive. They also have closed a couple of diplomatic facilities over the past year that, frankly, I think, prior to that they may not have chosen to close.

Ms. Duckworth. Thank you very much. I yield back.

Mrs. Roby. Mr. Scott.

Mr. Scott. Thank you, Madam Chair.

General, I guess the one question I have, which gets along to Congressman Chaffetz's question, is the notification times. And when you were going into September 11th, there were meetings at the White House discussing the fact that we were going into September 11th. Did we actually shorten any of the times? Did we move anybody from, say, an N plus six to an N plus four, knowing that the September 11th anniversary was coming up?

General Dempsey. Do you have that slide? Let me take a look at that slide.

I don't recall directing that from the national level. Now, there were, as you know, the combatant commanders have the authority to do that based on their assessment. So there was no direction to do that from me or the SecDef.

Mr. Scott. Do you anticipate that September 11th being the date that it is, going forward that we would drop those notification times?

General Dempsey. Let me just check my slide here. Recall that in the runup to September 11th, the threat streams took us other places other than Libya. They took us to Tunisia, to the places I mentioned, Yemen. And in fact we put additional forces on the ground in response to that.

Mr. Scott. Madam Chair, while they are looking for that, I am going to yield the remainder of my time to Congressman Chaffetz.

Mr. Chaffetz. Thank you.

The FEST, the Foreign Emergency Support Team, which is headed by the Department of State but is embedded with people from Department of Defense, Department of Energy, the Department of Justice, do you see any value in them? They were never called up in this action. This is a tool, a lever I think that the President of the United States has at his disposal, but they were never called into action, never put into the air. Is there any value in them? Should we just get rid of them?

General Dempsey. You know, Congressman, I don't know why they weren't used in any particular place. As you note, they are under the authority of the Department of State. The concept is certainly valid. I can't speak to its employment.

Mr. Chaffetz. And I guess that is one of the questions,

Madam Chair, is why they were never called into action. And again, there is a DOD component to this that I think I would hope that this committee would look at, certainly Oversight Committee will.

My understanding is that none of our NATO partners were ever called to ask for any sort of assistance along the way. Why not ask for help from somebody who is our partner who helped us with the bombing campaign over Libya?

General Dempsey. I don't -- I would like to take that for the record, because it is not my recollection that no outreach was made to our NATO partners. But I would want to check with the commander of AFRICOM.

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

***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

General Dempsey. My recollection is that we did pulse the community, the military community to see what resources were available.

Mr. Chaffetz. And I would like to follow up with you on that because, it was, I believe, the testimony and the discussion I have had with General Ham that NATO was never called. We never called our Libyan -- the host nation to ask for any sort of permissions for either flyovers or any of these other questions that were out there. The idea that we had to change uniforms I don't believe was at the request of the Libyan Government, I believe it was at the request of the State Department. And I think that is something that we need to clarify. And you are probably in a better position to help us clarify that. But that was a State Department request, not a Libyan request.

One of the things I am deeply concerned about is the exfil. We got people down. We got people killed. We got people injured. What I don't understand from the Department of Defense timeline is why at 6:05 a.m. it says, AFRICOM orders a C-17 aircraft in Germany to prepare to deploy to Libya to evacuate Americans. At this point we have four people dead, we have one that has bled out, we have another one who is literally putting on his own tourniquets, the two medics we have are dead. How is it at 6:05 we order the aircraft, it doesn't even take off until 2:15 p.m. local Benghazi time, and certainly doesn't return back to Germany until 10:19 p.m.

And one of the shortcomings of the response that I've -- the lack of response that I see from the Department of Defense is an understanding of how long and -- in my words, not somebody else's, my words -- pathetic the response is when somebody was down. I just don't understand why it takes so long to get help there and have people respond to get our men and women out of there. I don't understand that. Please help me understand that.

General Dempsey. Is the question specifically on the C-17?

Mr. Chaffetz. The overall lack of response to the number of people that are dead and that are dying and that are injured. That plane takes off and goes back to Tripoli. It doesn't go to Italy. It would have been shorter to go to Italy. And why it takes that C-17 so long to get to Libya itself. It is a fairly short flight. I don't understand why it takes so long. And why they didn't even start the process until 6 a.m. The fight started at 9:40 p.m. You would think somebody would be leaning forward at that point.

General Dempsey. Well, Congressman, as I have testified, in my judgment we were leaning forward. The situation on the ground was incredibly uncertain. We were marshalling resources not just for Libya, but for the broader region. And I can give you an answer on the specific C-17 timeline, but I would like do that in writing.

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

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[REDACTED]

Mrs. Roby. And the gentleman's time has expired.

Thank you again, sir, for being here. I would like to afford you the opportunity to add anything at this juncture based on the questions that you have heard today. If there is anything you want to add we would love to hear it.

General Dempsey. No. I meant what I said at the beginning, I do welcome the opportunity to discuss and add some context, I think, to what sometimes can be a very clipped conversation about a very important topic. It is, as I said, tragic beyond words that we lost four Americans in Benghazi. I have concluded, based on much analysis and soul searching, that we did what we could. I also believe that we have made some adjustments in the aftermath of that -- I am talking about the Department of Defense, but as well the State Department, although you will have to speak to them separately -- to posture ourselves better.

But I want to make it clear, finally, and again, that we can't prevent this from occurring. We can possibly, with preemptive decision making, we can take our diplomats. But beyond diplomats there is businessmen, there is schools, there is workers all over these countries. And I think if we carry away nothing, it is that at a time of such instability, if we intend to be engaged in places like the Middle East and Africa, then we have got to find a way to pass this readiness challenge that I have been placed in.

Mrs. Roby. Yes, sir.

[REDACTED]

I just want to remind the members that these slides and any notes that you may have taken need to stay in this room because of the top secret level.

And so again, thank you, sir, for being here. And that concludes our hearing.

[Whereupon, at 11:18 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]