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Background Briefing on Libya

Office of the Spokesperson

Background Conference Call With Senior State Department Officials

Washington, DC

October 9, 2012

OPERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for standing by. Welcome to the State Department call on Libya. At this time, all participants are in a listen-only mode. Later, we will conduct a question-and-answer session. Instructions will be given at that time. Should you require any assistance during the call, please press *, then 0.

I'd now like to turn the conference over to your host, [Moderator]. Please go ahead.

MODERATOR: Hey, everybody. Thanks for joining us on such relatively short notice, late on a Tuesday evening. You know that since the beginning, we've been working with Congress on trying to ascertain the facts and convey the facts of what happened on 9/11 in Benghazi. In the last 24 hours and in the next 24 hours, we're going to be engaging with Congress, and we wanted to give you a sense, in the press, of what we've been telling them.

So joining us tonight are two Senior State Department Officials, and this will be on background, and they will be Senior State Department Official Number One, who is [Senior State Department Official Number One]; and Senior State Department Official Number Two, [Senior State Department Official Number Two].

So in any case, thank you for joining us, and I'm going to hand it over to Senior State Department Official Number One. And just a reminder before I do, again, this is on background. Thank you.

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL NUMBER ONE: All right. Let me proceed. I'm going to give you as much information as possible about the events of that night, but I am going to start with a scene-setter.

So let me set the stage. On April 5th, 2011, a small Department of State team headed by Chris Stevens arrives by chartered boat in Benghazi. They set up shop in a hotel. This is at a time when Benghazi was liberated, Qadhafi was still in power in Tripoli, the war was going on, our Ambassador had been expelled from Tripoli by Qadhafi, the Embassy staff had been evacuated because it was unsafe. So Chris Stevens coming back into Benghazi – coming into Benghazi on April 5th, 2011, is the only U.S. Government people in Libya at this time.

They set up shop in a hotel, as I mentioned. A few weeks later in June, a bomb explodes in the parking lot in front of the hotel. The group in Benghazi makes a decision to move to a new location. They move to a couple of places, and by August they settle on a large compound which is where the actual activity on 9/11 took place. So they're in a large compound, where they remain.

The compound is roughly 300 yards long – that's three football fields long – and a hundred yards wide. We need that much room to provide the best possible setback against car bombs. Over the next few months, physical security at the compound is strengthened. The outer wall is upgraded, its height is increased to nine feet. It is topped by three feet of barbed wire and concertina wire all around the huge property. External lighting is increased. Jersey barriers, which are big concrete blocks, are installed outside and inside the gate. Steel drop bars are added at the gates to control vehicle access and to provide some anti-ram protection. The buildings on the compound itself were strengthened.

The compound has four buildings on it, and you guys are going to have to get used to this, because I refer them to – as Building C, Building B, Tactical Operations Center, and a barracks. So Building C is a building that is essentially a large residence. It has numerous bedrooms and it is – it has a safe haven installed in it, and I'll talk more about that in a minute. Building C ultimately is the building that the Ambassador was in, so keep that in your heads.

Building B is another residence on the compound. It has bedrooms and it has a cantina. That's where the folks dine. The Tactical Operations Center, which is just across the way from Building B, has offices and a bedroom. That's where the security officers had their main setup, that's where the security cameras are, a lot of the phones – it's basically their operations center. So I'll call it the TOC from now on.

And then there was a barracks. The barracks is a small house by the front gate, the main gate of the compound. In that barracks is a Libyan security force which I'll describe in a minute. Security on the compound consists of five Diplomatic Security special agents and four members of the Libyan Government security force, which I will henceforth call the 17th February Brigade. It is a militia, a friendly militia, which has basically been deputized by the Libyan Government to serve as our security, our host government security. In addition to all those, there is an additional security force at another U.S. compound two kilometers away. It serves as a rapid reaction force, a quick reaction security team – a quick reaction security team, okay?

Now we're on the day of, and before I go into this discussion of the day of the events of 9/11, I'm going to be – I want to be clear to you all. I am giving you this – you my best shot on this one. I am giving you what I know. I am giving it to you in as much granularity as I possibly can. This is still, however, under investigation. There are other facts to be known, but I think I'm going to be able to give you quite a lot, as far as I know it. I have talked to the – to almost all the agents that were involved, as well as other people.

Okay. The Ambassador has arrived in Benghazi on the 10th of September. He does meetings both on the compound and off the compound on that day, spends the night. The next day is 9/11. He

has all his – because it is 9/11, out of prudence, he has all his meetings on the compound. He receives a succession of visitors during the day.

About 7:30 in the evening, he has his last meeting. It is with a Turkish diplomat. And at – when the meeting is over, at 8:30 – he has all these meetings, by the way, in what I call Building C – when the meeting is over, he escorts the Turkish diplomat to the main gate. There is an agent there with them. They say goodbye. They're out in a street in front of the compound. Everything is calm at 8:30 p.m. There's nothing unusual. There has been nothing unusual during the day at all outside.

After he sees the Turkish diplomat off, the Ambassador returns to Building C, where the information management officer – his name is Sean Smith, and who is one of the victims – the information management officer – I'll just call him Sean from now on, on this call – and four other – four Diplomatic Security agents are all at Building C. One Diplomatic Security agent is in the TOC, the Tactical Operations Center. All of these agents have their side arms.

A few minutes later – we're talking about 9 o'clock at night – the Ambassador retires to his room, the others are still at Building C, and the one agent in the TOC. At 9:40 p.m., the agent in the TOC and the agents in Building C hear loud noises coming from the front gate. They also hear gunfire and an explosion. The agent in the TOC looks at his cameras – these are cameras that have pictures of the perimeter – and the camera on the main gate reveals a large number of people – a large number of men, armed men, flowing into the compound. One special agent immediately goes to get the Ambassador in his bedroom and gets Sean, and the three of them enter the safe haven inside the building.

And I should break for a second and describe what a safe haven is. A safe haven is a fortified area within a building. This particular safe haven has a very heavy metal grill on it with several locks on it. It essentially divides the one – the single floor of that building in half, and half the floor is the safe haven, the bedroom half. Also in the safe haven is a central sort of closet area where people can take refuge where there are no windows around. In that safe haven are medical supplies, water, and such things. All the windows to that area of the building have all been grilled. A couple of them have grills that can be open from the inside so people inside can get out, but they can't be – obviously can't be opened from the outside.

The agent with the Ambassador in the safe haven has – in addition to his side arm, has his long gun, or I should say – it's an M4 submachine gun, standard issue. The other agents who have heard the noise in the – at the front gate run to Building B or the TOC – they run to both, two of them to Building B, one to the TOC – to get their long guns and other kit. By kit, I mean body armor, a helmet, additional munitions, that sort of thing.

They turn around immediately and head back – or the two of them, from Building B, turn around immediately with their kit and head back to Villa C, where the Ambassador and his colleagues are. They encounter a large group of armed men between them and Building C. I should say that the agent in Building C with the Ambassador has radioed that they are all in the safe haven and are fine. The agents that encounter the armed group make a tactical decision to turn around and

go back to their Building B and barricade themselves in there. So we have people in three locations right now.

And I neglected to mention – I should have mentioned from the top that the attackers, when they came through the gate, immediately torched the barracks. It is aflame, the barracks that was occupied by the 17th February Brigade armed host country security team. I should also have mentioned that at the very first moment when the agent in the TOC seized the people flowing through the gate, he immediately hits an alarm, and so there is a loud alarm. He gets on the public address system as well, yelling, “Attack, attack.” Having said that, the agents – the other agents had heard the noise and were already reacting.

Okay. So we have agents in Building C – or an agent in Building C with the Ambassador and Sean, we have two agents in Building B, and we have two agents in the TOC. All – Building C is – attackers penetrate in Building C. They walk around inside the building into a living area, not the safe haven area. The building is dark. They look through the grill, they see nothing. They try the grill, the locks on the grill; they can’t get through. The agent is, in fact, watching them from the darkness. He has his long gun trained on them and he is ready to shoot if they come any further. They do not go any further.

They have jerry cans. They have jerry cans full of diesel fuel that they’ve picked up at the entrance when they torched the barracks. They have sprinkled the diesel fuel around. They light the furniture in the living room – this big, puffy, Middle Eastern furniture. They light it all on fire, and they have also lit part of the exterior of the building on fire. At the same time, there are other attackers that have penetrated Building B. The two agents in Building B are barricaded in an inner room there. The attackers circulate in Building B but do not get to the agents and eventually leave.

A third group of attackers tried to break into the TOC. They pound away at the door, they throw themselves at the door, they kick the door, they really treat it pretty rough; they are unable to get in, and they withdraw. Back in Building C, where the Ambassador is, the building is rapidly filling with smoke. The attackers have exited. The smoke is extremely thick. It’s diesel smoke, and also, obviously, smoke from – fumes from the furniture that’s burning. And the building inside is getting more and more black. The Ambassador and the two others make a decision that it’s getting – it’s starting to get tough to breathe in there, and so they move to another part of the safe haven, a bathroom that has a window. They open the window. The window is, of course, grilled. They open the window trying to get some air in. That doesn’t help. The building is still very thick in smoke.

And I am sitting about three feet away from Senior Official Number Two, and the agent I talked to said he could not see that far away in the smoke and the darkness. So they’re in the bathroom and they’re now on the floor of the bathroom because they’re starting to hurt for air. They are breathing in the bottom two feet or so of the room, and even that is becoming difficult.

So they make a decision that they’re going to have to leave the safe haven. They decide that they’re going to go out through an adjacent bedroom which has one of the window grills that will open. The agent leads the two others into a hallway in that bedroom. He opens the grill. He’s

going first because that is standard procedure. There is firing going on outside. I should have mentioned that during all of this, all of these events that I've been describing, there is considerable firing going on outside. There are tracer bullets. There is smoke. There is – there are explosions. I can't tell you that they were RPGs, but I think they were RPGs. So there's a lot of action going on, and there's dozens of armed men on the – there are dozens of armed men on the compound.

Okay. We've got the agent. He's opening the – he is suffering severely from smoke inhalation at this point. He can barely breathe. He can barely see. He's got the grill open and he flops out of the window onto a little patio that's been enclosed by sandbags. He determines that he's under fire, but he also looks back and sees he doesn't have his two companions. He goes back in to get them. He can't find them. He goes in and out several times before smoke overcomes him completely, and he has to stagger up a small ladder to the roof of the building and collapse. He collapses.

At that point, he radios the other agents. Again, the other agents are barricaded in Building C and – Building B, and the TOC. He radios the other agents that he's got a problem. He is very difficult to understand. He can barely speak.

The other agents, at this time, can see that there is some smoke, or at least the agents in the TOC – this is the first they become aware that Building C is on fire. They don't have direct line of sight. They're seeing smoke and now they've heard from the agent. So they make a determination to go to Building C to try to find their colleagues.

The agent in the TOC, who is in full gear, opens the door, throws a smoke grenade, which lands between the two buildings, to obscure what he is doing, and he moves to Building B, enters Building B. He un-barricades the two agents that are in there, and the three of them emerge and head for Building C. There are, however, plenty of bad guys and plenty of firing still on the compound, and they decide that the safest way for them to move is to go into an armored vehicle, which is parked right there. They get into the armored vehicle and they drive to Building C.

They drive to the part of the building where the agent had emerged. He's on the roof. They make contact with the agent. Two of them set up as best a perimeter as they can, and the third one, third agent, goes into the building. This goes on for many minutes. Goes into the building, into the choking smoke. When that agent can't proceed, another agent goes in, and so on. And they take turns going into the building on their hands and knees, feeling their way through the building to try to find their two colleagues. They find Sean. They pull him out of the building. He is deceased. They are unable to find the Ambassador.

At this point, the special security team, the quick reaction security team from the other compound, arrive on this compound. They came from what we call the annex. With them – there are six of them – with them are about 16 members of the Libyan February 17th Brigade, the same militia that was – whose – some members of which were on our compound to begin with in the barracks.

As those guys attempt to secure a perimeter around Building C, they also move to the TOC, where one agent has been manning the phone. I neglected to mention from the top that that agent from the top of this incident, or the very beginning of this incident, has been on the phone. He had called the quick reaction security team, he had called the Libyan authorities, he had called the Embassy in Tripoli, and he had called Washington. He had them all going to ask for help. And he remained in the TOC.

So at this point in the evening, the members of the quick reaction team, some parts of it, go to the TOC with the Libyan 17th Brigade – 17th February Brigade. They get him out of the TOC. He moves with them to join their colleagues outside of Building C. All the agents at this point are suffering from smoke inhalation. The agent that had been in the building originally with the Ambassador is very, very severely impacted, the others somewhat less so, but they can't go back in. The remaining agent, the one that had come from the TOC, freshest set of lungs, goes into the building himself, though he is advised not to. He goes into the building himself, as do some members of the quick reaction security team.

The agent makes a couple of attempts, cannot proceed. He's back outside of the building. He takes his shirt off. There's a swimming pool nearby. He dips his shirt in the swimming pool and wraps it around his head, goes in one last time. Still can't find the Ambassador. Nobody is able to find the Ambassador.

At this point, the quick reaction security team and the Libyans, especially the Libyan forces, are saying, "We cannot stay here. It's time to leave. We've got to leave. We can't hold the perimeter." So at that point, they make the decision to evacuate the compound and to head for the annex. The annex is about two kilometers away. My agents pile into an armored vehicle with the body of Sean, and they exit the main gate.

Here it's a little harder to understand because I don't have a diagram that you can show – that I can show you. But in a nutshell, they take fire almost as soon as they emerge from the compound. They go a couple of – they go in one direction toward the annex. They don't like what they're seeing ahead of them. There are crowds. There are groups of men. They turn around and go the other direction. They don't like what they're seeing in that direction either. They make another u-turn. They're going at a steady pace. There is traffic in the roads around there. This is in Benghazi, after all. Now, they're going at a steady pace and they're trying not to attract too much attention, so they're going maybe 15 miles an hour down the street.

They come up to a knot of men in an adjacent compound, and one of the men signals them to turn into that compound. They agents at that point smell a rat, and they step on it. They have taken some fire already. At this point, they take very heavy fire as they go by this group of men. They take direct fire from AK-47s from about two feet away. The men also throw hand grenades or gelignite bombs under – at the vehicle and under it. At this point, the armored vehicle is extremely heavily impacted, but it's still holding. There are two flat tires, but they're still rolling. And they continue far down the block toward the crowds and far down several blocks to the crowd – to another crowd where this road t-bones into a main road. There is a crowd there. They pass through the crowd and on – turn right onto this main road. This main road is completely

choked with traffic, enormous traffic jam typical for, I think, that time of night in that part of town. There are shops along the road there and so on.

Rather than get stuck in the traffic, the agents careen their car over the median – there is a median, a grassy median – and into the opposing traffic, and they go counter-flow until they emerge into a more lightly trafficked area and ultimately make their way to the annex.

Once at the annex, the annex has its own security – a security force there. There are people at the annex. The guys in the car join the defense at the annex. They take up firing positions on the roof – some of them do – and other firing positions around the annex. The annex is, at this time, also taking fire and does take fire intermittently, on and off, for the next several hours. The fire consists of AK-47s but also RPGs, and it's, at times, quite intense.

As the night goes on, a team of reinforcements from Embassy Tripoli arrives by chartered aircraft at Benghazi airport and makes its way to the compound – to the annex, I should say. And I should have mentioned that the quick reaction – the quick reaction security team that was at the compound has also, in addition to my five agents, has also returned to the annex safely. The reinforcements from Tripoli are at the compound – at the annex. They take up their positions. And somewhere around 5:45 in the morning – sorry, somewhere around 4 o'clock in the morning – I have my timeline wrong – somewhere around 4 o'clock in the morning the annex takes mortar fire. It is precise and some of the mortar fire lands on the roof of the annex. It immediately killed two security personnel that are there, severely wounds one of the agents that's come from the compound.

At that point, a decision is made at the annex that they are going to have to evacuate the whole enterprise. And the next hours are spent, one, securing the annex, and then two, moving in a significant and large convoy of vehicles everybody to the airport, where they are evacuated on two flights.

So that's the end of my tick-tock.

MODERATOR: Great. Thank you so much. Given the length of that tick-tock, I would just ask before we turn it over to questions that you keep your questions very concise. And again, a reminder that this is an on-background briefing.

So, Operator, go ahead and open it up for questions.

OPERATOR: Certainly. Ladies and gentlemen, if you would like to ask a question, please press * then 1. You'll hear a tone indicating you've been placed in queue, and you may remove yourself at any time by pressing the # key. If you are using a speakerphone, please pick up the handset before pressing the numbers. Once again, if you have a question, press * 1 at this time. And we will limit you to one question, and you may re-queue after that. It'll be just one moment.

First question is from the line of Anne Gearan with the *Washington Post*. Please go ahead.

QUESTION: Hi. You said a moment ago that there was nothing unusual outside, on the street, or outside the gates of the main compound. When did the agents inside – what – excuse me, what did the agents inside think was happening when the first group of men gathered there and they first heard those explosions? Did they think it was a protest, or did they think it was something else?

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL TWO: The agent in the TOC heard the noise, heard the firing. Firing is not unusual in Benghazi at 9:40 at night, but he immediately reacted and looked at his cameras and saw people coming in, hit the alarm. And the rest is as I described it. Does that help?

MODERATOR: Great. Next question?

OPERATOR: The question is from Andrea Mitchell, NBC News. Please, go ahead.

QUESTION: Hi. When did you finally find Ambassador Stevens? And do you know now how he got to the hospital? Was it definitely Libyans? Were they the militia, the February 17th militia? What can you tell us about it?

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL TWO: We do not know exactly how the Ambassador got to the hospital. That is one of the issues that we are – that we hope to resolve in the ongoing reviews and the information we are still seeking. We know he got to the hospital at some point. The hospital picked a cell phone out of his pocket, and we believe just started calling numbers that were on the cell phone that had received calls, and that is how we got the information that he was there.

MODERATOR: Okay, next question.

OPERATOR: The next question is from the line of Michael Gordon with the *New York Times*. Please, go ahead.

QUESTION: Yes. Could you tell me, please – and I know you mentioned this – when was the Tripoli reinforcements requested? How long did it take them to get to Benghazi, how many of them were there, and did it represent all of the available security personnel from Tripoli?

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL NUMBER TWO: The calls were made to Tripoli at the moment that the – at the same time the agent in the TOC sounded the alarm and then proceeded to make calls. I'm not going to go into any details about the number of security personnel who moved.

MODERATOR: Okay. Next question, please.

OPERATOR: The question is from the line of Eli Lake, with Newsweek's Daily Beast. Please, go ahead.

QUESTION: Hi, thanks so much for doing this. Do you have any response from the charge from Erik Nordstrom, the Regional Security Officer who left this summer, who is set to testify tomorrow to say that it was a mistake to begin to normalize security operations and reduce security resources in accordance with an artificial timetable? That's from a letter he sent earlier this month to the oversight committee.

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL TWO: I don't know what Erik is going to fully testify on tomorrow. That's something that will come out in the hearing. We could have a different discussion about all the security measures we had taken, but that's a different question.

MODERATOR: Okay, next question, please.

OPERATOR: The next question is from the line of Margaret Brennan, CBS News. Please, go ahead.

QUESTION: Hi, thanks for doing this. The timeline here begins around 8:30 p.m., but we had heard in response to some reports where reporters had found paperwork documents on the grounds of the compound that secure materials, that confidential paperwork had actually been secured earlier in the day, therefore there wasn't any compromised material found at the compound. When did that occur? At 8:30 at night? When were those documents secured or shredded or burned or whatever?

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL TWO: Because of the – this was a post and not a – and we – this post held no classified documents. They had computer communications with Washington, but the material would arrive on the screen and you would read it on the screen, and then that was it. There was no classified paper, so there was no paper to burn.

MODERATOR: All right, thank you. Next question, please.

OPERATOR: The next question is from the line of Brad Klapper with AP. Please, go ahead.

QUESTION: Hi, yes. You described several incidents you had with groups of men, armed men. What in all of these events that you've described led officials to believe for the first several days that this was prompted by protests against the video?

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL TWO: That is a question that you would have to ask others. That was not our conclusion. I'm not saying that we had a conclusion, but we outlined what happened. The Ambassador walked guests out around 8:30 or so, there was no one on the street at approximately 9:40, then there was the noise and then we saw on the cameras the – a large number of armed men assaulting the compound.

MODERATOR: Okay, thank you. We're ready for the next question, please.

OPERATOR: The next question is from the line of Toby Zakaria with Reuters. Please, go ahead.

QUESTION: Hi. Do you know what the threat level for Benghazi was the day before the attack? And also, did anyone suggest to the Ambassador that it might not be prudent to go to Benghazi on 9/11?

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL TWO: Taking your questions in reverse order, ambassadors travel, ambassadors must travel, ambassadors must get out and meet with a variety of individuals, especially in countries that have multiple centers of energy or power. That's just – it just must happen.

But secondly, as Official Number One said earlier, the Ambassador did events in the city on the 10th. He had plans to do events in the city later in the week. But on the 11th, he remained in the compound.

As in terms of the – of any kind of security threat, the – both ODNI spokesman and the DNI have been correctly quoted as saying that there was no actionable intelligence of any planned or imminent attack.

MODERATOR: Okay. Thank you. Next question, please.

OPERATOR: The next question comes from the line of David Lerman with Bloomberg News. Please go ahead.

QUESTION: Hi. Did the Ambassador – before the attack, did the Ambassador request that security be increased in Benghazi? And if so, did anything ever come of it?

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL NUMBER TWO: The – when the Ambassador traveled to Benghazi, he traveled with two additional security agents over and above the complement of three who were assigned to post. So there were five agents with him there rather than the two who are normally assigned there – the three who are normally assigned. So they were up two.

MODERATOR: Okay. Thank you. Next question, please.

OPERATOR: The next question comes from the line of Jo Biddle with AFP. Please go ahead.

QUESTION: Thank you very much. The two people who died in the compound – in the annex, excuse me – were they part of the five security agents you've mentioned, or were they separate to that? And how many people did you have to evacuate that night from the annex?

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL NUMBER TWO: Because – since unfortunately we couldn't fit everything on one compound, we had two – the principle compound and the annex. We had – therefore, had our security professionals divided between the two compounds.

MODERATOR: Okay. Thank you. Time for just a few more questions.

OPERATOR: The next question comes from the line of Jonathan Karl with ABC News. Please go ahead.

QUESTION: Yeah, hi. Just two quick follow-ups – I want to be clear on one thing. You said as soon as they heard the noises outside, they went to look and saw armed men assaulting the compound. That was the very first thing that they saw after hearing the noise outside?

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL NUMBER ONE: They heard noises, firing, and an explosion. The agent in the TOC looked at his camera and saw people coming through the front gate.

QUESTION: Okay. So there was --

MODERATOR: Okay. Thank you. Next question, please.

OPERATOR: The next question --

MODERATOR: Sorry, we're trying to keep it moving along here.

OPERATOR: -- from the line of Kim Ghattas with BBC. Please go ahead.

QUESTION: Yes, thank you for taking the call. I just wanted to clarify a little bit whether – with the rundown that you just gave us, whether it is possible to now say clearly that this was very much a preplanned attack, and if so, whether you can explain why there was no actionable intelligence.

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL NUMBER TWO: This – that subject is now under review by both the FBI and potentially the Accountability Review Board based on whatever information the FBI or the intelligence community collects.

MODERATOR: Right, okay. Thank you. Just a couple more questions.

OPERATOR: The next question is from the line of Shaun Waterman, *Washington Times*. Please go ahead.

MODERATOR: Shaun? Let's go to the next question, and maybe Shaun can go next. Maybe he's not off mute.

OPERATOR: The next question is from *Dion Nissenbaum* with *Wall Street Journal*. Please go ahead.

QUESTION: Thanks for taking the call. I was – just wanted to get a little more clarity about the annex attack and when the attack started on the annex. Was it before the convoy arrived or as they arrived or --

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL NUMBER ONE: It started after they arrived and went on intermittently for several hours.

MODERATOR: Okay. Thanks. I think we have one more question, then. Time for one more question.

OPERATOR: Certainly. Our next question is from the line of Chuck Todd, NBC News. Please go ahead.

QUESTION: Can you at least explain the process by which if a request for more security comes in, how that's – how you go about determining resources, so in the instance of the reports that more security was requested by the folks in Libya, can you sort of walk through how that process works?

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL NUMBER TWO: Certainly. The – this is sort of an iterative process, a discussion between the field and Washington, back and forth; the field identifying what their needs are, Washington working very, very closely with them. We always attempt to mitigate our risk. We cannot eliminate them. Sometimes the post – any post in the world might come in and say, “We need A, B, and C,” there would be a dialogue, and instead of sending them A, B, and C, we would send them B, C, and D because in this discussion process, we go to functionality, and when we determine the functionality that gets us the maximum – a maximum possible security, then we – that is what we deliver to the post.

MODERATOR: Okay. Thank you. I feel like I just ignored Shaun. I know you dropped off. If you're still on, you get last chance here, buddy.

OPERATOR: And our last question does come from Shaun Waterman, *Washington Times*.

QUESTION: Hello?

MODERATOR: Yes, Shaun. Go ahead, buddy.

QUESTION: Oh, hey. Okay. Thanks, man. So could – I mean, just in view of what you are now saying about the attack and the intensity of it and the numbers of people involved, what – can you say what kind of security presence might have been needed to repel an attack like that? I mean, what – I mean, if the criticism is there wasn't enough security, how much would you have needed to protect the compound from this attack?

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL NUMBER TWO: It is difficult to answer hypothetical questions, but let me just put it this way. The lethality and the number of armed people is unprecedented. There had been no attacks like that anywhere in Libya – Tripoli, Benghazi, or elsewhere – in the time that we had been there. And so it is unprecedented. In fact, it would be very, very hard to find a precedent for an attack like that in recent diplomatic history.

MODERATOR: Okay. Thank you, and glad we got that question in. Thanks to all of you for joining us so late this evening. We do appreciate it, and we will keep in touch with all of you as we move forward. Again, thank you.

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