

MR. MORELL: Um-huh.

MR. NUNES: GRS or case officers? Who does that?

MR. MORELL: Sir, I don't know exactly how that works.

[Senior CIA official #6]: [REDACTED]

MR. NUNES: So any story that comes out about -- there were never any weapons that left that facility that were sold or got into the hands of anyone. [REDACTED]

MR. MORELL: Correct. Correct.

MR. NUNES: Never any weapons that left?

MR. MORELL: Correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think there is confusion here. [REDACTED]

[Senior CIA official #6]: [REDACTED]

RPTS JOHNSON

DCMN BURRELL

[12:25 p.m.]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]

There may be an

exception, but that was not the rule.

[Senior CIA official #6]: Right. [REDACTED]

MR. MORELL: [REDACTED]

MR. NUNES: [REDACTED]

MR. MORELL: Fully coordinated.

MR. NUNES: [REDACTED]

MR. MORELL: Because we had access to parts of the country that they did not have access to.

MR. NUNES: [REDACTED]

[Senior CIA official #6]: [REDACTED]

MR. NUNES: [REDACTED]

MR. MORELL: Yes, sir.

MR. NUNES: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

MR. MORELL: Correct. Correct.

MR. NUNES: Okay. I yield back.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ms. Sewell?

MS. SEWELL: Thanks so much for your testimony today. As a new member of the Intel Committee, I actually wanted to just go back to the basics, motivation. Is it fair to say that at the time of the writing of the talking points that you all didn't really know what was motivating this attack? Because so many different things came out. Was it the movie? Was it in commemoration of 9/11? And I just wanted to understand at the time of writing of the talking points you were unclear of the motive of this attack?

MR. MORELL: There was some intelligence, there was a couple of intelligence reports that spoke to motivation. I don't know if that, [senior CIA official #1], came in before or after the talking points.

[Senior CIA official #1]: Ma'am, as we wrote in the talking points, we were not clear on the motivations of all of the individuals involved in the attack.

MS. SEWELL: Right.

[Senior CIA official #1]: We did have intelligence reporting. So beyond press, we had intelligence reporting that came in prior to the talking points being written of individuals associated with al-Qa'ida [REDACTED] were going to go join the brothers who were already -- who were taking advantage of a protest --

MS. SEWELL: Right.

[Senior CIA official #1]: -- to commit an attack. We had intelligence of

individuals [REDACTED] were, like had happened in Cairo, they were going -- so we did have [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] But we did not know motivations, nor do we still know the motivations of all the individuals --

MS. SEWELL: I was going to ask you what do we know now?

[Senior CIA official #1]: -- still involved in the attack.

MS. SEWELL: What do we know now? Do we feel like we have a better conclusive reason for why the attacks occurred?

[Senior CIA official #1]: Ma'am, we still, and I believe that we will not know the motivations of those involved until indeed individuals are detained for us to do that effect. [REDACTED]

MS. SEWELL: Right. Well, Mr. Morell, do you know was there any discussion at the Deputies meeting about who would actually be on the Sunday morning talk shows? Like did you know that Susan -- that Ambassador Rice would be the person doing all the talking?

MR. MORELL: So two points here. One is no discussion at the Deputies meeting about who was going to be on the Sunday talk shows. And the second point, which has been kind of lost in this whole thing, is when we were preparing the talking points we had no idea --

MS. SEWELL: Who would ultimately --

MR. MORELL: -- that Susan was going to go on the Sunday shows. And we thought we were just doing the talking points for the committee.

MS. SEWELL: And so there was -- was there any discussion about providing

to Ambassador Rice the same talking points that the committee would have?

MR. MORELL: No, because obviously we didn't know she was going to be on. So, no.

MS. SEWELL: In hindsight being 20/20 vision, you have talked about sort of lessons learned.

MR. MORELL: Yes.

MS. SEWELL: It would be helpful to me just to hear you personally, hindsight being 20/20, would you do the same thing that you did?

MR. MORELL: Yeah. Great question. You know, I am the kind of person who is harder on himself than any boss ever has been. And so I have asked myself this question over and over and over again. And I think institutionally there are things that we could have done differently. And I have talked about some of them. I think the one thing that I would have done differently, looking back on it, is when I got the talking points to edit on that Saturday morning, what I should have done, which is what I normally do, which is get all the experts around my table and go through it line by line by line by line and ask questions like this doesn't make any sense. What does this mean? What does that mean? Why are we saying this? Isn't this classified? I didn't do that. I probably didn't do that because we were in a rush. I probably didn't do that because it was family day, and there were people flowing through my office and I was supposed to be greeting them. But in retrospect, I should have done that. And I think that might have made a difference.

MS. SEWELL: Fair enough. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Mr. Westmoreland.

MR. WESTMORELAND: Thank you. Mr. Morell, on your sequence here of

all the different changes that were made, the last one on page eight, 8:59 p.m. on the 14th, and then if you go to 9:45 a.m. on the 15th, 9/11, you can see the changes there. I have a copy of a 14 September where the changes has already been made. You can see the -- I don't know if you have this. It is actually on page 63 of --

MR. MORELL: Yes. What you are looking at there on page 63 are my, my edits. That is my hand.

MR. WESTMORELAND: These are your edits?

MR. MORELL: That is my hand.

MR. WESTMORELAND: Okay. This is your hand. And I am assuming --

MR. MORELL: Those are the people who I told my Executive Assistant to send it to --

MR. WESTMORELAND: Okay.

MR. MORELL: -- for coordination.

MR. WESTMORELAND: Which does include Ben Rhodes and Jake Sullivan.

MR. MORELL: Yes, it does.

MR. WESTMORELAND: Okay. What time of day was this on the 14th of September? Because this is the final talking points, even though on the 15th it goes through some more changes.

MR. MORELL: Yeah. So the unedited version of what you are looking at was produced late on the night of the 14th.

MR. WESTMORELAND: After 8:59, I am assuming?

MR. MORELL: At some point, yes. But there was still disagreement between State Department and other folks. There wasn't agreement yet. So I got that draft on Saturday morning and I made those edits on the 15th even though it was

a draft from the 14th.

MR. WESTMORELAND: Okay. So you actually made the changes on the 14th --

MR. MORELL: 15th, sir.

MR. WESTMORELAND: -- and you kind of overrode or went along or evidently sent your stuff to the State Department and they said that's fine.

MR. MORELL: I agreed with State Department's concerns, yes.

MR. WESTMORELAND: Okay. But you actually made the changes. It wasn't the State Department. Correct?

MR. MORELL: Correct.

MR. WESTMORELAND: Okay. You mentioned earlier in your testimony that the unclassified talking points matched the classified talking points. Did you not say that?

MR. MORELL: I didn't say matched. I said were consistent with.

MR. WESTMORELAND: Were consistent with. Okay. Well, if you look at the WIRe, and I don't know what the WIRe is, but as of 13 September --

MR. MORELL: Yep.

MR. WESTMORELAND: -- if you look at what it says, it says, "We assess the attacks on Tuesday against the U.S. consulate in Benghazi began spontaneously following the protests at the U.S. embassy in Cairo, and evolved into a direct assault against the consulate and a separate U.S. facility in the city. Extremists with ties to al-Qa'ida were involved in the attacks [REDACTED]." So this is a classified that you sent, but yet the unclassified that we got you had taken the al-Qa'ida out. Correct?

MR. MORELL: Not me personally, but CIA, yes.

MR. WESTMORELAND: But CIA did.

MR. MORELL: Yes.

MR. WESTMORELAND: But you don't know who in the CIA did.

MR. MORELL: It was done in this group coordination session that I discussed earlier with my officers from Office of Public Affairs and Office of Congressional Affairs.

MR. WESTMORELAND: But they had taken it -- they took it out. But on November the 15th, as you testified when we were having a hearing and you were sitting next to Mr. Clapper, you said the reason you didn't say anything is because --

MR. MORELL: I didn't know at that point who took it out.

MR. WESTMORELAND: Okay. So you didn't know at that point?

MR. MORELL: I did not know at that point, sir.

MR. WESTMORELAND: Okay. So it was taken out, and you had gone through this progress of stuff on September 14th, and when al-Qa'ida got taken out you didn't know who had done it. It just happened, although you were the ones -- you were the one kind of making the final decision on what was going to go out.

MR. MORELL: Correct. But I didn't know, I had no idea -- I didn't have this package in front of me that showed all the changes that had been made to that point. I only had that final version.

MR. WESTMORELAND: But you knew that the CIA had made it. You just didn't know who.

MR. MORELL: No, sir, I did not know that the CIA had made it. It could have been any number of folks in the interagency who had coordinated.

MR. WESTMORELAND: Okay. But you don't have any reason why the

people that you sent the classified version to, which is, you know, the classified is supposed to be the real deal kind of thing, why they left out extremists with ties to al-Qa'ida when they were informing the American people what had happened.

MR. MORELL: My officers took out the reference to al-Qa'ida.

MR. WESTMORELAND: For the unclassified.

MR. MORELL: For the unclassified.

MR. WESTMORELAND: The classified had it in.

MR. MORELL: Classified had it in.

MR. WESTMORELAND: So you don't have any idea why when the White House and evidently State Department and all of that had the classified, where it mentioned extremists with ties to al-Qa'ida, that they just didn't want to mention it, or they wanted to use the unclassified talking points?

MR. MORELL: I can't -- sir, I can't speak to sort of what their motivation was.

MR. WESTMORELAND: I understand.

MR. MORELL: Yeah.

MR. WESTMORELAND: But I mean it was classified. So you did believe it. But you wanted to take it out of the unclassified. And I am just assuming that was the reason you wanted to take it out of the unclassified wouldn't have anything to do that you were wanting them to correspond to what the administration or State Department had failed to mention.

MR. MORELL: That is correct, sir. We did not.

MR. WESTMORELAND: I yield back.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mrs. Bachmann.

MRS. BACHMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Morell, for giving us all the information today. One thing I wanted to do, as I was just looking through

some of my notes, and I just wanted to back up what Mr. Miller was saying. When we asked that question about General Petraeus coming in and what we were told as a committee, the events happening on Tuesday the 11th, we had a very, very short brief from someone on the -- it would have been the 13th, on Thursday. We got virtually no information in that brief. That's the first time that we spoke with anyone. There was just nothing. We knew more from watching TV than we did from that brief. Then on Friday, that's when General Petraeus came in and talked to the members.

MR. MORELL: Correct.

MRS. BACHMANN: And I can corroborate what Mr. Miller was saying, that in part of what we were told by General Petraeus is that the video was a part of it. And so that is part of what we heard at that point. And part of what he told us is that some had hijacked the clip. That was the first indication that anyone had. It was the day, September 10th, before the clip was translated into Arabic, it was put on TV, Egyptian TV. On the day of demonstration it went viral with modern social media. So that's part of what we were told. And that's why Mr. Miller isn't just making this up, we were -- this is part of what we were told. We were given a lot of information by the General. But that I just want to say as members, that's information that we received. The strong impression we were given is that it was the video that was pushing this. Because again, if you remember, we were told over and over again that the State Department had issued a statement 6 hours before the protests started in Egypt, and they had issued a statement denying any involvement, denying any U.S. involvement in the clip. And so the clip was given very high priority. It was given a lot of credibility. And so that is something that we took in that we were given, this idea of the clip.

Now, why do I bring that up? The reason why I bring that up is because a report apparently, a work product is written from the Intelligence Community on September 13th, if I recall what you told us.

MR. MORELL: Uh-huh.

MRS. BACHMANN: That you had a work product on September 13th. And in that, you wrote that the attacks on Tuesday began spontaneously following Cairo, and it evolved from there. That extremists capitalized on the Benghazi protest. That seems to me -- let me ask you a question first. When that report was written, did the analysts contact the people on the ground to speak to them? For instance, you know, we had heard testimony from Mr. Hicks, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Nordstrom in the Oversight Committee. Mr. Hicks I believe said he was the first one who answered the phone when he said it was an ordinary day, and he answered the phone, and all the events began transpiring. Did the analysts talk to the people who were on the ground who got the initial call?

MR. MORELL: No, ma'am.

MRS. BACHMANN: Okay. The reason why I ask that is because in the testimony that came out before the Oversight Committee it was very clear, when he was asked the question by members were there any protests on the 11th in front of the mission in Benghazi, no, there weren't. Would you have known if there were any protests out there? Yes, we would. If you would have known about it, would that information have been transmitted to the Ambassador? Yes, it would have. Clearly, the testimony that came across is that -- and again I don't mean to interpret the witness, and I stand corrected if anything I am saying is inaccurate -- but it seemed as what he was saying is there were no protests in front of the mission on September 11th in Benghazi. There was no indication of it. And so that's what we

have been told by the people on the ground. And yet on September 13th there is an intelligence work product that has a very different view of what those events were. And we as a committee are given a very different view as well on the 14th.

So it just seems to me, and I don't mean to use a pejorative term, but it just seems to me that this was an intelligence failure after the fact in the work product, that we were not given accurate information about what happened in the immediate lead up and what happened on that day. And that seems to me important that we do get accurate information. Now, I realize there is a lot of different views and a lot of different opinions. But that seems like it is important information that we should have. And some of this seems like it really has changed and danced around.

And so anyway, I just want to put that out. I think that that's important. Let me also ask, with whatever time I have left, you had said that you learned later, not November 14th when you were here in front of this committee, you learned later that someone removed the words "al-Qa'ida" from the talking points. Do you know now who that person was?

MR. MORELL: I don't know who the person was. I know who -- what the group was comprised of, but I don't know. And it was a group, it was a group effort. So I don't know if it was one person who made the decision or --

MRS. BACHMANN: Did it come from the White House from the national security team?

MR. MORELL: It didn't. It came from --

MRS. BACHMANN: Did it include Mr. Brennan?

MR. MORELL: No, ma'am. No, ma'am. It came from inside this group at CIA.

MRS. BACHMANN: Would you give us the list of who was there?

MR. MORELL: Yes.

MRS. BACHMANN: Okay. I would like to have that. Also, let's see. You said that February 17th Brigade did not deal with your security. Right?

MR. MORELL: We did not have a contract with them for them to provide security services to us. That is correct.

MRS. BACHMANN: Okay. So let me just go back to what I began with when I asked about speaking with Mr. Hicks, Nordstrom, or Thompson. Is that standard operating procedure within the CIA not to speak to the people on the ground who would have direct knowledge of the situation?

MR. MORELL: It is, ma'am. It is. It is. And I think this is important. You know, there is a number of reasons why. The most important being we train our analysts to only use disseminated information in forming their analysis. And there are very good reasons for that. If our analysts pick up the phone and call people and interview them and talk to them, the chances are very, very high that the information that they get is going to be incorrect, slightly wrong. It is very important that officers in the field put their information down on paper. Because when you put your information down on paper it is much more accurate than oftentimes what you say. So that is one very, very important reason. The second reason is I don't want my analysts calling my collectors in the field and asking them questions because my collectors have collecting to do. And if analysts are calling them all the time they are not going to be able to do their job. And then the third reason in this case was that the CIA picking up the phone and calling witnesses to a crime would have put us in a difficult position vis-à-vis the FBI and its investigation.

MRS. BACHMANN: That's informative. It is very helpful to know, and I appreciate it.

Can I just say one thing for the record? And I know we are over. I just want to make one comment for the record. All I want to say very briefly is that it was said in here a little bit earlier that the CIA never said Benghazi was a part of a Cairo protest and of the video. And we were given just the opposite message by the Director of the CIA on the 14th.

MR. MORELL: Yeah. Ma'am, what I -- I don't know what the Director said. But what I do know is what our analysts thought. And what our analysts thought, based on intelligence information, was that some of the people in Benghazi who had stormed the temporary mission facility were inspired by what they saw in Cairo, which were people protesting and going over the fence to our embassy in Cairo.

MRS. BACHMANN: Yes, but again, I want to state that is what the analysts said, but the CIA Director told this committee on Friday something very different, which is that that was a direct contributor.

MR. MORELL: And [senior CIA official #1] told us earlier that that's not [senior CIA official #1]'s recollection of what the Director said.

MRS. BACHMANN: And that is my recollection and Mr. Miller's, and I have contemporaneous notes. And just for the record. And thank you for your patience, Mr. Chair.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Heck.

DR. HECK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Morell, for your perseverance in giving the last man on the totem pole an opportunity to ask questions.

MR. MORELL: You are welcome, sir.

DR. HECK: Look, I have reviewed just about everything there is to review. In fact, I just spent the hour before this meeting rereviewing it. And I will associate

myself with the introductory comments of Mr. Schiff. I see no malicious intent on the part of the CIA in any of this process. And I appreciate the detail that you have revisited the incident. And really I look at it, it is unfortunately I think a tragic comedy of errors that brought us to where we are. And in your goal to be ecumenical in how this process evolved, you actually took what probably could have been very simple talking points for the HPSCI into what we are talking about today. And I think part of it goes to the fact that as you have talked about the changes that were made internally in the CIA, where [senior CIA official #1]'s initial draft were chopped on by Congressional Affairs and Public Affairs, and not folks that are analysts, I think there is a different lens when you are talking about Congressional Affairs and Public Affairs in how you try to word things --

MR. MORELL: Yes.

DR. HECK: -- for public consumption.

Now, we have been over your handwritten edits. And I know your role was clearly underscored in an email from USUN to Ambassador Rice where they reference the SVTC, and quote, "you were going to take a heavy hand in editing." And there was an email from the DI on September 15th at 9:45 asking for internal coordination of your edits. And then an email, I am assuming that you are M-I-C-H-A-E-J-M.

MR. MORELL: Yeah, not any more because -- I was at the time, but that has now been changed because everybody in the world now knows my email address.

DR. HECK: I just wanted to make sure I had the right handle.

MR. MORELL: You got it.

DR. HECK: But your email on September 15th at 11:08 --

MR. MORELL: Yes, sir.

DR. HECK: -- from you to the IC saying, "Per discussions at Deputies, here are the revised TPs for HPSCI. Let me know what you think."

MR. MORELL: Yep, that's me.

DR. HECK: So you have answered the questions already about what went on at the Deputies meeting, that there really was no discussions or conversations, just kind of an after the fact --

MR. MORELL: Yes, sir.

DR. HECK: Now, interesting, the final talking points that were issued were identical to your edits with the exception of a statement saying, quote, "There are indications that extremists participated in the violent demonstration," end quote, that was added at the end of the first paragraph.

MR. MORELL: What happened there was that I inadvertently removed that sentence when I did the editing. And my Executive Assistant came to me and said, "You didn't mean to take this out, did you?" And I said, "No, I didn't. Put it back in."

DR. HECK: Great. So anticipating my question, you are the one who added that back in.

MR. MORELL: I took it out and added it.

DR. HECK: You also stated that you independently made these changes during the course of the day after you got the chop from Congressional Affairs and Public Affairs. So you were unaware of the email that was on September 14th at 2039 hours where Victoria Nuland emailed her concerns about some of these statements implicating State and State's inability, or perhaps setting State up for a fall. So you were unaware of all that at the time?

MR. MORELL: So I was unaware of the emails. I was unaware of the content of the emails. But I was told that State Department had concerns about the

warning language.

DR. HECK: Okay. Now, I just got to say, and I understand a lot of people have referred to their notes regarding Director Petraeus's appearance. I didn't have my notebook, so I didn't take notes. But I did review the transcript.

MR. MORELL: That's good.

DR. HECK: And I can say that in the transcript from the September 14th appearance that Director Petraeus, he stated, quote, "There was no direct link between Cairo and Benghazi protests," end quote.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield back.

THE CHAIRMAN: And just to clarify the record, the meetings that the other members were talking about was an informal session that was not recorded. So you would not have been -- there was no transcript available for review on that particular issue.

Mr. King, do you have any questions?

MR. KING: No, Mr. Chairman. I had to chair a subcommittee hearing. I missed the first part of it and I was not able to add my usual brilliance to the questioning.

THE CHAIRMAN: We would ask you to review the transcript.

MR. KING: I just want to thank Mr. Morell for coming in today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: I too want to thank Mr. Morell. We have a 1 o'clock with the Chief of Station on the day in question, which we would like probably to have the transfer of individuals so that you can get off. I know, Mr. Morell, you would like to stay here for at least another hour. Unfortunately, the clock has run out on your time. But I want to thank you again for your candid testimony and your responsiveness.

And through this whole process you have been incredibly responsive. And I think the ranking member and I would agree that at no time did we ever believe that you had not been fully truthful at any point during the process of this. And I want to thank you for that, and thank you for your attendance today, as well as the individuals who you have brought with you as well.

MR. MORELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 12:53 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]