

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTERVIEW OF: LISA D. KENNA

Friday, August 7, 2020

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held via Webex,
commencing at 8:32 a.m.

Present: Representatives Titus, Perry, and Zeldin.

Appearances:

For the COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

For the COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

For the SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

For LISA D. KENNA:

NICHOLAS MCQUAID

LATHAM & WATKINS

For the U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE:

[REDACTED], OFFICE OF THE LEGAL ADVISER

[REDACTED], OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

HFAC Dem Counsel. Let's go ahead and go on the record. We'll get started.

Good morning. This is a transcribed interview of Lisa Kenna, conducted by videoconference in the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. This interview is part of a joint investigation by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, and the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations into the removal of Steve A. Linick as inspector general for the U.S. Department of State, as well as part of a joint investigation by the same committees into reports of politically motivated retaliation and prohibited personnel practices against employees at the Department of State.

Ma'am, to begin with, can you please state your full name and spell your last name for the record?

Ms. Kenna. Lisa Kenna, K-e-n-n-a.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Ms. Kenna, my name is [REDACTED], senior counsel for the Committee on Foreign Affairs, majority staff. I want to thank you for coming in today for this interview, and we particularly appreciate that you are willing to speak with us voluntarily.

The stenographers already have a list of names and titles for all of today's participants, but for the sake of the record I will now read into the record the names that are on that list.

For HFAC majority staff, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

For the majority staff of the House Oversight
Committee, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]; for the minority staff of the Oversight
Committee, [REDACTED].

Majority staff for the Senate Foreign Relations
Committee, [REDACTED]; minority
staff for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

We also have reporters present.

We'll ask counsel to introduce themselves at the
appropriate time, both for the witness and for the State
Department.

And I apologize, I know that other folks seem to have
joined as I was reading that.

[REDACTED], could you just add if I missed anybody
there?

HFAC Dem Staffer. I think Representative Scott Perry
from HFAC minority has joined. I don't see anyone else, so
I think that covers it. Thank you.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Thank you.

Among these participants are moderators from the

majority staff of the committees who are managing the technical requirements of the Webex platform for this videoconference and who admitted you into the videoconference a few minutes ago.

Moderators will respond as needed to specific cues from attendees who wish to speak; generally manage the muting and unmuting of microphones to ensure audio quality and an orderly process, although speakers will retain the ability to mute and unmute themselves if necessary; and to help troubleshoot any technological challenges that arise.

If anyone inadvertently drops from the videoconference for any reason and you are unable to log back in via the meeting link you originally received, please reach out to the relevant majority or minority staff contacts indicated in the original email. The moderators can then endeavor to readmit you back into the conference as quickly as possible.

Before we begin, I'd like to go over the ground rules for this interview.

To ensure that this videoconference interview can be efficient and manageable, we will proceed in alternating timed blocks designated by party.

The first timed blocks for each party will be 1 hour; subsequent blocks will be 45 minutes each. Democratic counsel will begin with the first block of questioning, offering an opportunity for Democratic Members to ask

questions towards the end of that hour should they wish to do so. The time will then shift to the Republicans for an hour of the same format.

After the first 2 hours, 1 hour for each party, alternating 45-minute rounds will ensue until the questioning is done. If either side does not utilize its full allotted time in a given block, we will proceed directly to the next timed block for the other party.

During the interview we will do our best to limit the number of people who are directing questions at you and any crosstalk in general that can make it more difficult for the stenographers to achieve an accurate transcription. That said, from time to time followup or clarifying questions may be useful, and if that's the case, you might hear from additional people around the table.

For everyone, including the stenographers, we would ask that if you're not attempting to ask a question or raise another issue, that you please turn off your video monitor so that it is less distracting for the witness.

Because we are proceeding virtually, the moderators will also mute everyone other than the witness and the main questioner and then unmute your microphone if and when you indicate a request to speak, which will help with our audio quality.

Requests to speak may be initiated through the

hand-raising function on the Webex platform, and the chair or ranking member or their designee will recognize Members to ask questions through this hand-raising function toward the end of each round.

Ms. Kenna, I notice that you have counsel representing you here in your personal capacity today. Is that correct?

Ms. Kenna. That's correct.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Would counsel for Ms. Kenna please identify himself for the record?

Mr. McQuaid. Yeah. This is Nick McQuaid, M-c-Q-u-a-i-d, from Latham & Watkins, and I'm counsel for Ms. Kenna.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Thank you, sir.

I also understand that there is at least one representative from the State Department here today. Could that individual or individuals please identify themselves for the record?

State Department Counsel. [REDACTED] of the Office of the Legal Adviser.

State Department Counsel. And [REDACTED] with the Office of Legislative Affairs.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Thank you.

Ms. Kenna, do you understand that agency counsel represents the State Department and not you personally?

Ms. Kenna. Yes, I do.

HFAC Dem Counsel. And you are choosing to have agency counsel participate in today's interview. Is that correct?

Ms. Kenna. That's correct.

HFAC Dem Counsel. As discussed with the State Department and in accordance with HFAC's standard procedure, agency counsel will be expected to abide by the following ground rules.

Agency counsel will generally not be expected to speak or answer questions during the interview. If agency counsel believes that a question calls for an answer that can only be provided in a classified setting, he may note that for the record. We'll then defer to you as to whether you can answer the question at a sufficiently high level of generality.

If in a specific instance agency counsel believes it is necessary, he may note for the record that, quote, "The State Department believes that the question calls for an answer over which the White House may assert executive privilege," unquote.

Please note that even if such a statement is made by agency counsel, you have a First Amendment right to answer the question should you choose to do so, being mindful that classified information can only be disclosed in an appropriate setting.

The White House has not indicated to the committee that

the President intends to invoke or has invoked executive privilege, and there are no civil or criminal penalties associated with divulging information that the White House or the State Department may or may not believe is covered by a privilege.

Again, there is a stenographer taking down everything I say and everything you say to make a written record of today's interview. For the record to be clear, please wait until I finish each question before you begin your answer, and I will wait until you finish your response before asking you the next question. The same goes for any other participants who may wish to ask followup questions.

The stenographer cannot record nonverbal answers, such as shaking your head, so it is important that you answer each question with an audible, verbal answer. Do you understand?

Ms. Kenna. I understand.

HFAC Dem Counsel. We want you to answer our questions in the most complete and truthful manner possible, so we're going to take our time. If you have any questions or do not understand any of the questions that you are asked, please let us know and we will be happy to clarify or rephrase our questions. Do you understand?

Ms. Kenna. Yes.

HFAC Dem Counsel. This interview will be conducted

entirely at the unclassified level. It is the committee's expectation that neither the questions asked of you, the witness, nor answers by you or your counsel would require discussion of any information that is currently or at any point could be properly classified under Executive Order 13526.

Moreover, EO 13526 states that, quote, "In no case shall information be classified, continue to be maintained as classified, or fail to be declassified," unquote, for the purpose of concealing any violations of law or preventing embarrassment of any person or entity. Do you understand?

Ms. Kenna. Yes.

HFAC Dem Counsel. If I ask you about conversations or events in the past and you are unable to recall the exact words or details, you should describe the substance of those conversations or events to the best of your recollection. If you recall only part of a conversation or event, you should give us your best recollection of those events or parts of conversations that you do recall. Do you understand?

Ms. Kenna. Yes.

HFAC Dem Counsel. And you can go ahead and -- it may be easier to just leave the mic on. Obviously, if you want to have any conversations with counsel, you can go ahead and turn it off. But I think it may help the flow.

Please note that if you wish to assert a privilege over any statement today, you should clearly state the specific privilege being asserted and the reason for the assertion at the time that the question is asked. Do you understand?

Ms. Kenna. Yes.

HFAC Dem Counsel. If you need to take a break, please let us know and we'll be happy to accommodate you. However, to the extent that there is a pending question, we'd just ask that you finish answering that question before you take the break. Do you understand?

Ms. Kenna. Yes.

HFAC Dem Counsel. During the course of this interview we may show you documents related to this matter. If you need additional time to review a document before answering a pending question please just ask. Do you understand?

Ms. Kenna. Yes.

HFAC Dem Counsel. One final thing. Although you are here voluntarily and we will not swear you in, you are required by law to answer questions from Congress truthfully. This also applies to questions posed by congressional staff in an interview. Do you understand?

Ms. Kenna. Yes.

HFAC Dem Counsel. If at any time you knowingly make false statements you could be subject to criminal prosecution. Do you understand?

Ms. Kenna. Yes.

HFAC Dem Counsel. And is there any reason that you are unable to provide truthful answers in today's interview?

Ms. Kenna. No.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Our timekeeper has turned on the video so that the time is now visible. There is a video that will now show the remaining time in each question block. You could pin this to your screen by right clicking or hovering your cursor over the thumb, over that icon, and then clicking on the thumb tack. If you're on an iPad, it is unfortunately not possible to pin the timer, but it should remain visible on the bottom of your screen in grid view.

We will now begin the timed rounds of questions.

EXAMINATION

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q To start with, ma'am, can you please tell us how you came to become the executive secretary at the State Department?

A Former Secretary Tillerson asked me to take on that role.

Q Did he interview you personally, or did someone reach out on his behalf?

A He interviewed me personally.

Q And once you took on that role, where were you

situated in the chain of command? Did you report directly to Secretary Tillerson or anyone else?

A In practice, I reported to Secretary Tillerson. That's where I'm situated.

Q Okay. Did you report as a practical matter to Margaret Peterlin?

A My interactions worked through Margaret Peterlin and then Deputy Chief of Staff Christine Ciccone.

Q Can you please describe for us what are your job responsibilities as the executive secretary?

A As the executive secretary, I oversee the business unit known as the Operations Center, which is the office that's responsible for informing the Secretary and other senior Department officials of worldwide breaking developments and connecting the Secretary and other officials with foreign interlocutors and other senior U.S. Government officials.

The Operations Center is also the unit that stands up task forces within the Department that handle anything from natural disasters to situations like COVID-19 or threats against our embassies overseas.

I also oversee the unit known as the Secretariat Staff, which is responsible for reviewing all of the written memoranda that go to the Secretary, the Deputy Secretary, and the under secretaries of state for either decision or

for their information and for staffing and planning travel of senior Department officials.

Q And do you also -- can you distinguish for us, just for those that are less familiar with State Department structure, is there a subset of folks within your responsibility that would constitute the Office of the Secretary as opposed to the Executive Secretariat?

A There is the immediate Office of the Secretary that includes a group of special assistants and, you know, the schedulers, the administrative assistants.

Q And does that also come within your purview as the executive secretary to oversee that immediate Office of the Secretary?

A I do not supervise them, no.

Q Do they report to you in any way?

A I interact with them, you know, all the time regarding paper that's going to the Secretary, scheduling matters.

Q So you mentioned that you're also involved in coordinating travel. Can you tell us a little bit more about what your role is in overseeing travel, please?

A When the Secretary or the Deputy Secretary is planning a trip it is our office, my deputies primarily, that work with the regional assistant secretaries and embassies overseas or wherever the travel is planned for to

identify events that the Secretary or the deputy would participate in and then to prepare the paper that they would need to do their work during those events. We also handle the logistical arrangements, arranging for airplanes, hotels, et cetera.

Q And, I'm sorry, you mentioned your deputies. Could you identify for us who your deputies currently are?

A My deputies [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED].

Q And as they, as you said, have delegated responsibility for some of that travel-related work, do you ultimately have final approval on travel-related matters?

A No. The Secretary has final approval on the events that go onto his schedule. And the Under Secretary for Management has final approval for any logistical decisions that involve funding.

Q So if I understand it correctly, your deputies reach out to the rest of the Department. Presumably, as your deputies, they then report to you. And then the only two people above you in that process are the Under Secretary for Management and the Secretary of State. Is that correct?

A For the Secretary's travel. Of course, for the Deputy Secretary's travel, he's the deciding authority for what goes on, his program, and how that gets staffed, how he

is supported.

Q So Secretary Pompeo was confirmed in April of 2018, and when he came on board you remained as the executive secretary. Can you tell us a little bit about how that came about?

A Secretary Pompeo just asked me to stay on in that role.

Q And he asked you personally?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Did anybody else speak to you about whether you would remain in that role at the time that Secretary Pompeo became Secretary?

A No.

Q Okay.

A Not that I recall.

Q As part of the committee's investigation into the firing of Inspector General Linick, Mr. Linick testified that he would typically go through you when his office was requesting documents that were related either to the Executive Secretariat or the Office of the Secretary. Is that correct?

A When the Office of the Inspector General requires documents from the Executive Secretariat, they would submit a request to me, and then I authorize a document search to be done by another party.

Q Okay. Do you then review the results of that search?

A I do not. That process works independent from me.

Q Okay. So what happens after the -- after you authorize the search? How do the documents get to the inspector general?

A I'm not entirely sure. I mean -- I'm not entirely sure.

Q Okay. You've also personally been interviewed by the Inspector General's Office in connection with the investigation of prohibited personnel practices in the Office of the Secretary, including by Brian Hook. Is that correct?

A Yes, that's correct.

Q Okay. And you're aware, I believe, that the three committees here today, the House Oversight Committee, the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, have been conducting their own investigation into politically motivated retaliation at the State Department. Is that correct?

A I'm aware.

Q So today's interview is going to cover those issues as well, some of which may overlap with the firing of the inspector general, some of which may not, some of which may overlap with the report that the inspector general did on

prohibited personnel practices, some of which may not, obviously given that Congress has its own investigative agenda and parameters.

Are you aware that Congress has been seeking your testimony in connection with its political retaliation investigation since February 24th, 2020?

A Yes.

Q Did you ever indicate to the State Department that you were unwilling to speak to Congress as part of that investigation?

A No.

Q And you're further aware that Congress has been seeking your testimony since May 22nd of 2020 in connection with the firing of IG Linick. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q And did you ever indicate to the State Department that you were unwilling to be interviewed by Congress as part of that investigation?

A No.

Q And you understand that our expectation is that you're here in good faith today, that you'll answer our questions truthfully, thoroughly, and without obfuscation. Is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q So you appeared at a hearing recently before the

Senate Foreign Relations Committee as part of your nomination to be the U.S. ambassador to Peru. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q And at that hearing you committed to Ranking Member Menendez that you intend to, quote, "cooperate fully with this interview." Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q And that was an unconditional commitment to testify on matters surrounding the firing of IG Linick and the committee's investigation of political retaliation. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Thank you. And, again, we really appreciate you being here today. We have agreed at the request of your counsel to end this interview today at 2:30 in order to accommodate your counsel's personal schedule.

But as we've discussed with your personal attorney and as he's acknowledged, the committees do reserve the right to call you back for further questioning if we're unable to cover everything we need to within that time period.

Do you understand that?

A Yes.

Q Thank you. And obviously we intend to be as efficient as possible, and we hope it won't be necessary.

With all that --

Mr. McQuaid. [REDACTED]?

HFAC Dem Counsel. Uh-huh?

Mr. McQuaid. I would just note for the record that the decision to schedule this for August 7th was made without any consultation with either me or Ms. Kenna. So to the extent that you're accommodating my schedule, it's on a day that you didn't discuss with me before you set it.

HFAC Dem Counsel. We appreciate that, Mr. McQuaid. The date is one that was offered on several occasions by the State Department, so we are, in fact, accommodating the date that they proposed. But I acknowledge that you and I didn't have that conversation. So thank you.

With all that as groundwork, I'd like to turn it over to my colleague, [REDACTED], from the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

BY Oversight Dem Counsel:

Q Good morning, Ms. Kenna. Thank you for being here.

A Good morning.

Q I want to start with some questions at a more general level on the firing of Inspector General Linick.

So first off, when did you learn that Inspector General Linick was being fired?

A I learned that he was fired after he was fired.

Q And how did you learn that?

A I learned it because the Under Secretary for Management, Brian Bulatao, phoned me after he was fired that evening.

Q And what did Under Secretary Bulatao tell you when he phoned you?

A He simply told me that the inspector general had been fired.

Q Did he provide a justification for the decision?

A No.

Q And did you speak to anyone else about the decision to fire Mr. Linick?

A No.

Q Before that phone call and you learned that, did you hear any discussion from the Secretary or other leadership about the possibility Mr. Linick would be fired?

A No.

Q In your role as executive secretary, did you see any memos or emails or other paper about the performance of Mr. Linick as inspector general?

A No, I did not.

Q And in your conversation with Under Secretary Bulatao, did you ask why Mr. Linick was fired?

A I did not.

Q And why not?

A I don't recall why. I just didn't.

Q Okay. Had you ever heard the Secretary discuss Mr. Linick's performance with others in the -- on the seventh floor?

A Discuss his general performance?

Q Yes.

A Is that your question?

Q Yes.

A The only discussion I recall is -- was concerning the leak of a draft OIG report regarding prohibited personnel practices.

Q And what discussion do you recall about that?

A I recall that there was concern about the leak. It was not, you know, limited to Mr. Linick, this concern about the leak.

Q And were you surprised by the news that Mr. Linick had been fired?

A Yes.

Q Why?

A Senior-level terminations are always surprising.

Q Was there anything else surprising particular to Mr. Linick being fired?

A Not to my knowledge, no.

Q When did you learn that Mr. Linick would be replaced in an acting capacity by Ambassador Akard?

A I don't recall exactly. It was -- I was not part of

any discussions about Mr. Linick's replacement.

Q Okay. And Mr. Bulatao didn't mention that on his phone call with you?

A No.

Q Now, prior to learning of Mr. Linick's termination, had you ever interacted with Ambassador Akard?

A No, I hadn't.

Q And did you hear any discussion of him possibly taking on a different role, such as acting inspector general?

A No.

Q Did Secretary Pompeo meet with Ambassador Akard the week before Mr. Linick was fired on May 15th?

A Not to my knowledge.

Q Do you have any knowledge of him having a phone call or other interaction with Ambassador Akard?

A Not to my knowledge.

Q Did Under Secretary Bulatao meet with Ambassador Akard?

A I don't know. I don't have any information on his meetings.

Q Now, when the committees interviewed Mr. Linick, he told us that Ambassador Akard had told OIG staff that someone had approached him in April about becoming acting inspector general. Does that refresh your recollection on

any discussions on Ambassador Akard being approached about becoming acting IG?

A It does not. This is news to me.

Q And after you heard about Mr. Linick's firing, were you ever asked or discuss with others about Ambassador Akard becoming acting inspector general?

A No. I was not part of discussions about Mr. Akard becoming the inspector general.

Q Do you know who was part of those discussions?

A I don't know.

Q The Secretary was, presumably?

A I don't know. I'm sorry.

Q Do you have any knowledge of concerns, either yours or others, that you're aware of about Ambassador Akard serving as both the director of Office of Foreign Missions and acting inspector general?

A Your question is do I have concerns about that?

Q Do you have concerns or are aware of others having concerns?

A No one has spoken to me about that. It's not a matter that I'm involved in, no.

Q Were you surprised by the choice of Ambassador Akard to be acting inspector general?

A I honestly didn't form an assessment on that. That is a process that I'm not involved in.

Q Okay. Now, after Ambassador Akard became acting IG, after the committees wrote to him as well as the State Department, he informed Congress that he was recusing himself from certain matters, including all matters -- inspector general matters involving the Office of Foreign Missions and the Office of the Secretary. Are you aware of those recusals?

A Yes. I recall reading something about that.

Q Are you aware of those from discussions with Department leadership?

A No, I don't recall discussing those issues with Department leadership.

Q Do you recall any other discussions among Department leadership about Ambassador Akard recusing himself?

A No.

Q It's also now been publicly reported and confirmed by the State Department that Ambassador Akard announced his resignation this week from the Department, including his position within the Department and as acting inspector general. Are you aware of that report?

A Yes, I saw that report.

Q And when did you find out about Ambassador Akard's departure?

A When I saw it in the newspaper.

Q And have you discussed that with anyone since then

at the State Department?

A No.

Q And are you aware of any discussions about Ambassador Akard potentially departing prior to his resignation?

A No.

Q Do you know why he resigned?

A I do not.

Q Are you aware of any discussion or other planning about the future of State IG leadership in light of Ambassador Akard's resignation?

A I am not aware of plans concerning the future leadership of the Office of the Inspector General.

Q Any discussions about that topic since Ambassador Akard's resignation?

A No. I am not part of any discussions on that topic.

Q Are you aware of any discussions on that topic?

A I am not aware of any discussions on that topic.

Q Okay. Now, when Mr. Linick testified in June before the committees, he stated to us that OIG staff had reached out to you about document requests in the investigation into allegations of misuse of Department resources by the Secretary and Mrs. Pompeo. Do you recall communications with OIG staff about that?

A Not on that particular topic. An inspector reached

out to me to request documents. He did not specify that it was with respect to a particular investigation and at no point did he say he was looking into the misuse of government resources.

Q And when did that discussion occur?

A If I recall, he requested the documents in I believe it was March.

Q Of this year?

A Yes, March of this year.

Q And what was the substance of the document request you received?

A That he requested documents related to family travel.

Q Can you elaborate on what documents were requested?

A Those were the documents that he requested, documents related to family travel.

So I authorized the search to be done. And then the investigator provided -- asked also for travel schedules and invitations that had been extended to Mrs. Pompeo to travel and we provided those. This was after -- we provided those documents after the inspector general was fired.

Q Okay. So to confirm the timeline, you were approached, you believe, in March, and then you authorized a search, correct?

A That's correct.

Q And then the search was completed and the documents were provided to OIG at some point after Inspector General Linick was fired, correct?

A To the -- I mean, to the best of my knowledge, there would have been documents provided through the search that proceeds independently from me.

And then, in addition, they -- the inspector requested particular travel schedules and invitations, which I provided. This was, you know, later in May at some -- so, yes.

Q And "later in May" you believe being after May 15th?

A It was 100 percent after May 15th, yes.

Q And besides the OIG inspector, did you discuss these requests with others in Department leadership?

A Yes. Whenever there's a request for documents for, you know, the inspector general, for Members of Congress, for FOIA, you know, we generally let Department leadership know of the request. So I informed my office, I informed the Under Secretary for Management, the deputy, the counselor. I did not inform the Secretary.

Q Okay. So to take those, just to confirm each one, you said you informed folks in your office. Who was that?

A I --

Q Who would that have been?

A Well, as part of the memo authorizing the search,

that memo goes to, I presume, a relatively broad group of people so that everyone knows that this document request is underway. Again, this is a standard process that applies to all sorts of document requests.

Q And then you also informed or discussed this with Under Secretary Bulatao, correct?

A Correct.

Q And with Deputy Secretary Biegun, correct?

A Correct.

Q And the counselor -- that's Ulrich Brechbuhl -- correct?

A That's correct.

Q Did you discuss the request with anyone in L?

A I believe I did, yes. I believe I -- I probably let the legal adviser know. I'm not -- I can't recall precisely, but I would normally advise the legal adviser as well.

Q And do you recall around when you would have informed these different folks about the document request?

A It would have been at some point during, you know, the April, May timeframe. I don't recall precisely.

HFAC Dem Counsel. [REDACTED], if I could just ask one clarifying question.

When you say you informed the legal adviser, you mean you informed Acting Legal Adviser Marik String?

Ms. Kenna. Yes.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Thank you.

Oversight Dem Counsel. And before I turn it back to [REDACTED] there, did anyone talk to you since Mr. Linick's firing, in the now almost 3 months, about why he was fired?

Ms. Kenna. No. I'm not part of discussions about why Mr. Linick was fired.

Oversight Dem Counsel. Okay. I think we'll likely return to some of these topics in more detail later on. Thank you for that. I'll turn it back over to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] from the Foreign Affairs Committee.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Thank you, sir.

Ms. Kenna, just to make sure that we have that answer correct, is it your testimony that since the time that Inspector General Linick was fired on May 15th of 2020, you've not had any conversations with anyone at the State Department about that firing. Is that correct?

Ms. Kenna. I'm not --

Mr. McQuaid. [REDACTED] -- Ms. Kenna, wait for a second -- I assume you're excluding conversations with counsel about that? I think you qualified it by "at the State Department."

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q At the State Department, yes. I'm not asking about

conversations with your personal counsel. Thank you.

A So I have not been involved in discussions about Mr. Linick's firing, I mean.

Q But have you discussed the firing at all with anyone at the State Department since he was fired?

A Oh, I'm sure I have. I mean, it was an issue, yes.

Q And could you tell us which people you recall having any discussion at all with about his firing?

A I cannot recall, I'm sorry, in detail. I mean, it was -- you know, when an inspector general is fired it's an issue. I mean, I'm sure I discussed it, but I can't say with whom or precisely when.

Q Did you ever discuss it with any of your deputies?

A I can't recall.

Q Did you ever discuss it with other staff in S/ES?

A Again, I simply don't recall.

Q Did you ever discuss it with Under Secretary Bulatao?

A I'm sure I did, yes. Yes.

Q Okay. And what do you recall about those conversations?

A We were part of -- I was requested for an interview by this committee and along with Under Secretary Bulatao and the Legal Adviser and others. And so there were discussions that I was part of in conjunction with how to respond to

that.

Q And so you had conversations with Under Secretary Bulatao regarding how to respond to this committee's interest in investigating the firing of the inspector general. Is that -- do I have that right?

A I was part of group discussions, yes --

Q Okay.

A -- on that topic, yes.

Q To take those piece by piece, did you have any discussions with Under Secretary Bulatao about the firing of the inspector general other than in connection with how to respond to requests for your own testimony from Congress?

A Not that I recall. I think it's all connected with, you know, the response to this committee.

Q Okay. And you said that there was group discussions regarding how to respond to the committee's interest in speaking with you about the inspector general's firing. Who else participated in those group discussions?

State Dept. Counsel. I'm sorry, [REDACTED], I apologize. This is [REDACTED].

To the extent that you have a question about discussions that she might have had about the actual firing as opposed to questions about discussions that would have included various elements of the building on how to respond to Congress, that's fine.

But as to elements relating to how we were preparing and developing our accommodation process with you, we believe those are covered by executive confidentiality branch interest, including the membership of those conversations.

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q Ms. Kenna, it may be difficult to disentangle the fact -- what it was that Congress wanted to ask you about from the fact that Congress wanted to ask you about it.

Were there any conversations that you were a part of about substantive questions regarding what happened with the firing of the inspector general separate from how to respond to Congress about that? Did you have any conversations with anybody about what happened with the firing of the inspector general with anyone at the State Department?

A Well, as I said, I was not part of any discussions about the firing of the inspector general. I wasn't, you know, part of the group, you know, whoever that consisted of that decided.

Q And just to be clear, it's your testimony you were never part of discussions on that topic --

A Yes.

Q -- before he was fired, or you were never part of discussions about his firing ever?

A I was never part of discussions about his firing before he was fired. And then after that, you know, what I recall is that, you know, I was requested for an interview and then a deposition and there were discussions about his firing in that context.

Q Okay. So outside of --

Mr. McQuaid. [REDACTED], can you just try to be specific about -- when you keep saying -- you're asking her questions about his firing. That's a very broad framing of it and I think that could lead to confusion.

I think Ms. Kenna has been clear that -- about distinctions between substantive conversations around the decision and questions about a response to, you know, to an inquiry from Congress that included her personally. So just -- I think if you could continue to make that distinction, it could be helpful for the record.

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q Yep. Separate from any conversations about how to respond to the congressional inquiry, did you ever participate in conversations with anyone at the State Department that included anyone offering you an explanation for -- or offering in your presence an explanation for why the inspector general was fired?

A Well, I mean, those conversations would have been held in conjunction with how to handle the response to your

committee.

Q And I understand [REDACTED] objection to be that he would prefer you not to answer specific questions on how to respond. But to the extent that those things were intermingled, my question to you is, regardless of how to respond to Congress about it, did anyone in those meetings offer an explanation for why the inspector general was fired? Let's start with yes or no.

A I'm sure they did, but it's -- you know, I'm sure there was some discussion about the, you know, the -- about the firing, yes.

Q And who do you recall having offered that explanation?

State Dept. Counsel. [REDACTED], I apologize again. I just want to note for the record that your committees are in receipt of substantial written material both from Under Secretary Bulatao and the Secretary where they describe reasons for recommending the firing to the President.

Therefore, almost by definition, Ms. Kenna and others would have seen those or heard about the public reporting of the reasons that those senior officials gave. And I am concerned that the line of questioning is a little confusing given those written records are already with the committee.

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q Thank you, sir. No confusion is intended. We do have those written records.

I think my question, however, is pretty specific, which is things that you personally witnessed, who offered in your presence, regardless of what's in the written record that's been submitted to Congress, who offered an explanation in your presence for why the inspector general was fired?

A I think it would have been Under Secretary Bulatao.

Q Okay. And what did he say?

A I do not recall. I'm sorry. I was worried about myself. I was, you know, requested for an interview on an issue that I had absolutely nothing to do with, no insight into whatsoever before a decision was taken. And I was focused on, you know, myself and, you know, my role in, you know, responding to this committee.

Q So do you have any recollection of anything that was discussed in those meetings other than strategizing on how to respond to Congress?

A No. I mean, that's -- that was my focus, was, you know, figuring out where I would, you know, figure in the accommodation.

Q Okay. Shifting gears for a minute, if I could, I'd like to turn to the topic of political retaliation and prohibited personnel practices in the Office of the Secretary.

Are you familiar with an individual named [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who was on detail to S/P beginning in July of 2016?

A Yes.

Q And what do you recall about [REDACTED]?

A I did not know her personally, but I knew her by reputation as, you know, an outstanding professional officer with deep expertise on Iran.

Q And do you recall where you got that information about her reputation, who might have mentioned her expertise to you?

A I mean, that she was, you know, simply -- you know, people have reputations within the Department about, you know, being professional officers in their areas of expertise. I don't recall, you know, any particular discussions.

Q And prior to early 2017, had anybody -- had you ever heard any concern about [REDACTED]'s capabilities or her performance in S/P?

A No.

Q Okay. And as a staffing matter, would you have generally had involvement in staffing issues in S/P?

A No, I do not oversee staffing in S/P or their personnel decisions.

Q Okay.

A There's a human resources officer that coordinates on those issues.

Q So it wouldn't be your normal practice to be involved in staffing issues that dealt with S/P in your role as the executive secretary. Is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q Okay. When did you first become aware of an issue regarding Ms. Nowrouzzadeh's detail?

A It was when another member of the Policy Planning Staff came to me and asked me to support her request for a fellowship outside of the NEA Bureau, which was where she was to be assigned when her detail ended.

Q Okay. So I want to just take that piece by piece. First of all, do you recall when you were approached about that?

A I do not recall the month. I don't.

Q But would it have been early 2017?

A I'm sorry, I don't recall.

Q Who approached you?

A Is it -- do I need to provide names?

State Dept. Counsel. You may.

Ms. Kenna. Okay. Okay. It was a colleague, [REDACTED], who was a member of the Policy Planning Staff.

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q And that colleague asked you to support -- can you

just give us, again, in your own words, what the request was?

A Yes. She asked me to support [REDACTED], who was returning to the NEA Bureau and wished to do a fellowship. I believe it was at [REDACTED]. And so she asked me to go see the then Acting Assistant Secretary and advocate on her behalf, which I did.

Q And that would be the Acting Assistant Secretary for NEA?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And who was that at the time?

A Stuart Jones.

Q Okay. Was it your understanding that [REDACTED] was seeking to do this fellowship because her detail was coming to an end consistent with the terms of her memorandum of understanding that was signed when she first took the detail?

A No. It was my understanding that her detail had been terminated, and it was going to be then assigned to the NEA Bureau, and she preferred to do a fellowship, which I supported.

Q And so what was your understanding of why her detail was being terminated early?

A I wasn't involved in those discussions.

Q But you just said that you were aware that it would

be terminated early, so --

A Yes.

Q Whether you were involved in the discussions about that termination, what was your understanding about why it was happening?

A My understanding was that the Policy Planning Staff was intending to bring in new personnel and that that was the reason.

Q And where did you get that understanding? Who told you that they were going to be bringing in new personnel?

A I'm sure I discussed it with [REDACTED]. I mean, I now know it from the final OIG report on this issue, so it's a bit difficult to, you know, disentangle.

Q And that would be the same OIG report that concluded that Brian Hook's assertions that he had somebody lined up to replace her were ones that the IG didn't find credible. Is that that same report?

A It was the report regarding the prohibited personnel practices, yes.

Q Okay. So on March 14th of 2017, so this would've been before she was requesting to do the fellowship, the Conservative Review published an article titled, quote, "Iran Deal Architect is Now Running Tehran Policy at the State Department." Do you recall ever seeing that article?

A I recall it now because my counsel shared a document

with me this morning.

Q Okay. And would that be the document that we provided last evening, which is -- has a Bates number on it, State-2019-0500138?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Could we put that up on the screen, please?

A That's fine with me.

Q I'm sorry. That was a question for my tech person. I should have been more specific.

A Oh, sorry. Sorry.

Q And just -- so while we're working to get that up, you have that in front of you, is that right, Ms. Kenna?

A I do, yes.

Q Okay. So this is an email that's dated March 15th, 2017. It's from [REDACTED] to Brian Hook. She flags the article for him, says: "By way of brief background, I am and have been a career civil servant for nearly 12 years." And one of the reasons that she's flagging that for him is that the article characterizes her as, quote, "a trusted Obama aide who had burrowed into the State Department." And the same article had raised questions about why she was being kept on.

In the email [REDACTED] tells Mr. Hook, who is her supervisor: "I'd welcome an opportunity to discuss this once you're back, but in the meantime would welcome your

thoughts on how to approach and potentially correct the record. The author of this piece has previously personally targeted me. If it's okay with you, I plan on pulsing our press folks for their recommended response. Happy to share their thoughts with you once I do. I will also discuss some of my own physical and online safety concerns with DS."

Now, our understanding from our investigation is that Mr. Hook never replied to [REDACTED], but he did forward this to you a couple hours after he got it.

Why did Mr. Hook send you Ms. [REDACTED]'s email in which she talks about this Conservative Review article and the resulting personal, physical, and online safety concerns that were triggered by it?

A I don't know why he sent that to me.

Q Do you recall getting this email?

A I do not recall, no, but I see it here now.

Q Would it stand out in your memory to have a senior Department official like Mr. Hook bring to your attention that one of his employees was concerned for their safety because of something that was written in the media?

A Yes, it stands out to me. Yes.

Q Because that's not something that happens every day, right?

A No, it is not.

Q Okay. So do you have a recollection of this article

and the subsequent concerns that [REDACTED] voiced?

A I do have a recollection of the concerns because, if I recall, that was one of the reasons why she wished to do her fellowship as opposed to staying in Washington, to the best of my recollection.

As I said, I supported her request for a fellowship and went to see the Acting Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern affairs to ask him to support it as well.

Q Did [REDACTED] ever come speak to you in person about her experience in S/P or about this article?

A Yes. Well, she came to speak to me about her request for the fellowship and her experience.

Q What can you recall about that conversation?

A I just recall that I said I would go see Ambassador Jones.

Q Did she tell you that she had concerns for her own safety?

A I mean, I can't recall precisely, but, I mean, I recall the general circumstances and thought that her request for a fellowship was certainly justified, and so I went to see Ambassador Jones.

Q Did she tell you that her detail was being terminated early?

A I can't recall our, you know, conversation precisely, but I -- I just don't recall. I mean, I would

imagine she -- I mean, that was -- part of the issue was that her detail was being terminated, and so she was trying to find a job.

Q And then having refreshed your recollection with this email, do you have any recollection sitting here today of what she may have said to you about why that detail was being terminated?

A I mean, I don't -- I don't precisely recall.

Q Did she voice any other reason for the termination of the detail other than the Conservative Review article and the resulting fallout?

A No. I mean, what I recall is that there -- she was, you know, concerned about this perception and, you know, the risk to her. That's what I recall.

Q When you say perception, that seems distinct to me from what she wrote in the email, was that she had concerns for her physical and online safety. What do you mean by she was concerned about perception?

A That she seemed to be -- I mean, there was the perception that she was not -- I mean, the article suggests that she was, you know, running Iran policy, and, you know, she said that she was personally targeted.

Q And it also said that she had burrowed and made a number of insinuations about her patriotism in light of her parents' heritage. Do you recall that?

A I don't recall that, but it's, you know, obviously inappropriate to write such things.

Q Did you personally have any concerns about [REDACTED]'s performance at the time that she came to speak with you in 2017?

A No.

Q Did you believe she was doing a good job?

A Yes.

Q Did you believe that the allegations in this article were true?

[9:31 a.m.]

Ms. Kenna. That -- which allegations? That she was -- this language about borrowing?

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q This language about borrowing and that she was somehow disloyal or not to be trusted because she had either worked in the Obama administration or because her parents had Iranian heritage. Did you believe that any of those allegations in the article about [REDACTED] were true?

A No. It was inappropriate. I mean, I, too, worked for President Obama. I mean, that's not how we talk about one another.

Q So, other than talking to Acting Assistant Secretary Jones about supporting her request for a fellowship, who did you talk to about trying to correct the record, given that

there were these allegations out there about a career official who had come to you for help?

A I don't recall talking to anyone else.

Q Okay.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Let me just check. I don't believe we have any Democratic Members on the call at this point. Is that accurate?

Hearing none, we'll continue.

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q Ultimately, you know, [REDACTED]'s case was part of the OIG report. When did you first become aware that the inspector general was looking into allegations related to [REDACTED]?

A When they asked to interview me as a fact witness --

Q And when was that?

A -- in conjunction with those investigations.

Q I apologize for speaking over you. Do you recall when that request was made?

A I do not.

Q And did you, in fact, sit for an interview with the inspector general?

A Yes, I did.

Q And did you relay to them any knowledge that you had about [REDACTED]'s detail that we have not already discussed here today?

A No, not to my recollection.

Q Okay. Did the Inspector General's Office ask you, in your capacity as the executive secretary, to provide documents in relation with that investigation?

A I don't recall, I mean, but I -- I suspect they would have. I simply -- I don't recall.

Q Okay.

A It makes sense that they would have requested documents.

Q In his interview with the committee, Mr. Linick testified that, after the initial report was completed, you were the inspector general's point of contact for providing the Department with an initial copy of its report. Is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q Now, before you received that initial copy of the report but once it was known that the IG was looking into those issues, what was the general reaction amongst staff on the Planning floor that there was an IG investigation into this matter?

A The "general reaction" on -- could you be more specific?

Q Sure.

A I mean, do you want to know my reaction, or --

Q Let's start with that, yeah. What was your

reaction?

A Okay. My reaction was that, you know, it was appropriate for the inspector general to look into these issues.

Q Did you have any conversations with Mr. Hook about the fact that the IG was looking into this?

A I can't recall specific conversations, but --

Q Did anyone ever relay to you how Mr. Hook had reacted or how he felt about the fact that the IG was looking into these issues?

A What I recall was, you know, once we got the draft IG report, I passed it to Mr. Hook in a hard copy so that he could consider it. And this was at the request of the inspector general. They asked me to -- for our standard procedure to share it with anyone who would be involved in either crafting a response or, you know, with anyone who was mentioned in the report and may have comments.

Q So, prior to receiving the draft report, when the investigation was ongoing, do you recall having any conversations with Under Secretary Bulatao about the fact that the IG was looking into these allegations?

A No, I don't recall conversations with Under Secretary Bulatao about that.

Q How about Counselor Brechbuhl?

A I don't recall specific conversations with the

Counselor.

Q Do you recall any conversations with either of those individuals that either took place in your presence or that you later became aware of?

A No, I don't recall any conversations that occurred in my presence.

I mean, again, they were -- I was asked by the inspector general, in my role as the executive secretary, to share the report with people who would be crafting a response for the Office of the Secretary. So I shared the report with both of them.

Q And did you have any conversations before the draft report with Secretary Pompeo about the fact that there was this investigation?

A Not that I recall.

Q Did you tell him that the IG had asked to speak with you?

A I'm sure I did, yes.

Q And do you recall roughly when that would've been?

A I don't, but -- yeah. I recall being frustrated that the IG was speaking to me about issues, you know, decisions, personnel decisions, that were not mine. But I cooperated.

Q Did the IG ask you about the email that we showed you today in which Mr. Hook felt that it was important for

you to know about what was happening with [REDACTED] back in March?

A I do not recall the IG asking me about that. The IG focused primarily on the case of Ian Moss.

Q Okay. And we'll come that later.

When the draft report was provided on August 30th, Mr. Linick testified that, per standard procedure, the Department would be expected to provide its comments back to the OIG within 2 weeks. Is that your understanding as well?

A I can't recall specifically, but that doesn't sound unreasonable to me, that that would be an expectation.

Q As we understand it, the Department ultimately didn't submit its comments until late October, so almost 2 months, after the IG had set a 2-week deadline. What took so long for the Department to provide comments on this report?

A I don't know because I wasn't responsible for the response.

Q You have no insight into why it was that the response took so long?

A I honestly don't know. Again, I was not the person responsible for providing a response.

Q But you were the point of contact and you were the person to whom the deadline would've been relayed, right?

A Yes.

Q Did the Department ever ask the IG for an extension of that deadline?

A I believe we did, yes.

Q And when would that have been?

A I do not recall the precise timeline, but I remember asking the Counselor, you know, when a response would be ready, and, if I recall, he asked me to, you know, just advise the IG that they needed more time.

Q And the Counselor, for the sake of the record, that's Ulrich Brechbuhl. Is that right?

A That's right.

Q So did he have the lead on providing the Department's response to this report?

A I mean, in this particular case, he did.

Q Okay.

You mentioned that you provided a hard copy to Mr. Hook. At any time after you provided that to him, did you become aware of how he reacted to it?

A No, I don't recall, you know, precise conversations about his response, I mean, except for, you know, being aware of the actual response.

Q Okay. So you never spoke to him about that?

A I didn't, you know, consult with Mr. Hook on his response, no.

Q I don't mean consult. I mean, did you ever speak to

him about his response in any way?

A No, I did not talk to him about his response, except to ask him to read the report and to provide a response --

Q Okay.

A -- in conjunction with giving his input to the Counselor so we could be responsive to the inspector general.

Q Mr. Linick testified that Mr. Hook was so upset about the report that he went to the IG's Office in person to complain about it. Do you recall that?

A I do not recall that, no.

Q You never became aware, through any source, of Mr. Hook having gone to the IG's Office to discuss this report?

A I did not. No, I'm not aware that he personally visited the IG's Office.

Q Okay.

Ultimately, Mr. Hook did submit a rather lengthy rebuttal to the Office of Inspector General. Do you recall that?

A I recall that he submitted it, yes.

Q Okay.

A To the Counselor.

Q And, ultimately, our understanding, as part of the committee's work on this issue, is that, when that was

transmitted back to the inspector general, you were copied on the transmission by Mr. Hook to the IG. Is that right?

A That sounds right. I can't remember the precise email, but I'm sure we could look it up. Yes.

Q So why would he have copied you on the submission of his rebuttal back to the IG?

A Because that's my role as the executive secretary. You know, I'm meant to be the conduit between, you know, various offices on the seventh floor and other offices within the Department for official communications.

Q I mean, I'm just a little confused because we've asked about document production to the IG, we've asked about other communications, and your testimony largely seems to have been, "I receive it, but I don't know what happens afterwards, and I don't know how the Department responds." You've said that a number of times. On documents, you have said that the response was under Mr. Brechbuhl's responsibility.

As the executive secretary, did you have some responsibility for helping to transmit Mr. Hook's rebuttal to the Office of the Inspector General?

A No, that wasn't my responsibility. But, I mean, he copied me. I don't know why he copied me. I mean, it doesn't seem unusual to me, though, that I would be copied on an official communication.

Q Did the Department ask for any reconsideration of the report in light of Mr. Hook's submission?

A It's been a long time since I've read the report, but either Mr. Hook or the Department, I think, asked for some review, but I can't exactly recall. Again, I wasn't the person, you know, responsible for the drafting of the response --

Q But would you have been copied on any request for the IG to reconsider?

Mr. McQuaid. [REDACTED], can you let her finish her answer?

HFAC Dem Counsel. Yep. Sorry.

Ms. Kenna. I would have been, you know, either copied on the transmission of the Department's response or I would have transmitted it myself, you know, in conjunction with my role. The incoming, you know, came in from the inspector general through me. The outgoing would likely go through me as well. Again, I just can't recall the precise specifics.

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q And last question on this. I realize we're out of time.

It would be your practice, I assume, to actually read and familiarize yourself with those materials if they were going out through you. Is that correct?

A Not necessarily. I review literally hundreds of emails every day to determine whether I have the action or

need to assign action or am simply being, you know, included as a conduit. So, no, I do not read the details of every email or document that passes through me.

Q But for a response to an inspector general investigation in which you, yourself, were interviewed and which you said was a rather unique set of circumstances in which a career official was getting, you know, attacked in the media, would it have been your practice, under those rather unique circumstances, to familiarize yourself with what was being transmitted back to the IG in that circumstance?

A No. I had focused on the inspector general's line of questioning that was relevant to me, which concerned [REDACTED], and I had already reviewed the report's findings in conjunction with that issue. That was my focus. And I was not involved in the preparation of the Department's overall response.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Thank you.

We're out of time. We're happy to credit back the little bit that we ran over. We'll have our folks check the time.

Ms. Kenna, would you like a 5-minute break before we turn this over to our Republican colleagues?

Ms. Kenna. No. I can go ahead.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Okay.

██████████, over to you.

HFAC Rep. Counsel. Hi, Ms. Kenna. Can you hear me okay?

Ms. Kenna. Yes. I hear you loud and clear.

HFAC Rep. Counsel. My name is ██████████. I'm senior counsel for the House Foreign Affairs Republican staff.

HFAC Dem Counsel. I'm sorry, ██████████. Just one sec. I just got the time. We ran over by 2 minutes and 12 seconds, if we could add that to our colleagues' clock, please.

HFAC Rep. Counsel. Okay. Thank you.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Thank you.

EXAMINATION

BY HFAC Rep. Counsel:

Q Ms. Kenna, I want to go back to something you mentioned in regard to ██████████.

A Yes.

Q I believe you said one of the reasons that you advocated for her to take the fellowship that she was requesting was because her detail had ended and she was trying to find a job. Is that right?

A It was my understanding that her detail had ended and she was going to be assigned to the Near Eastern Affairs Bureau in some capacity. It was her preference to take a fellowship. So she came to me to ask for my support, which

I provided.

Q And NEA was her home bureau, correct?

A That was my understanding.

Q So she would've had a job at NEA; she was not going to be unemployed, correct?

A That's correct. I mean, that was the issue, was that NEA was very happy that she was going to be coming back to the bureau because she is an accomplished officer with, you know, great expertise and a great reputation. So they wanted her back.

Q Is it unusual for a civil servant to come to the executive secretary to ask for support for a fellowship?

A I can't really say. I mean, it's -- I mean, people come to me for, you know, advice on occasion or support for jobs.

Q Had anyone come to you to ask for your support for a fellowship before?

A Before that? I mean, I was relatively new in the -- the timeline isn't clear for me, but I'm certain I was relatively new in the job as executive secretary. Before that, I was in the role of Executive Assistant for then-Secretary Tillerson and, before that, for Secretary Kerry. And so that is more of a senior staffer role, and I don't recall people coming to me, asking for support for fellowships, no.

Q I'd like to revisit --

[Feedback.]

Q I'm sorry?

A No.

Q Oh, okay. Sorry. I thought someone was interjecting. Okay.

I want to return to the timeline that you discussed at some length regarding IG requests that pertain to Secretary Tillerson's travel, et cetera. Do you know what I'm referring to?

A The timeline related to, you mean Secretary Pompeo's travels?

Q Yes. I'm sorry. Secretary Pompeo's travel.

A Sure.

Q So I just want to make sure -- I was a little confused, so for my own edification, I want to make sure I understand you correctly.

You said there was an initial request from the IG's Office that came in, I believe you said, sometime in March. Is that correct?

A Yes, to the best of my recollection, sometime in March the IG requested documents from me.

Q And you authorized the search pertaining to that request, correct?

A That's correct.

Q But that process of turning over things that would come about from the search you authorized, you are unfamiliar with what documents are pulled or when those things are turned over. Is that correct?

A That's correct. It proceeds independently from me.

Q There was then a second request, correct?

A Yes.

Q And what was that second request for?

A The inspector requested schedules, a certain subset of travel schedules, and then also invitations that had been extended to Mrs. Pompeo to travel.

Q And when, to the best of your recollection, was the submission of that second request?

A It was sometime in the second half of May. It was after -- I provided the documents -- again, I can't recall specifically, but it was somewhere around the -- I'm guessing -- the 20s of May.

Q Okay. So, sorry, I just want to be really specific here. I don't want to conflate the second request with your production as a result of that request.

A Okay. Okay. Yes.

Q The request itself came in after May 15?

A The request itself would have come in sometime in April, I would guess. Yes. April or early May.

Q April or early May.

A Yes.

Q And then it sounds like what you're saying -- you correct me if I'm wrong -- that you, you personally, provided documents in response to that second request, correct?

A That's correct.

Q And is that process of response to the second request different from how you respond to the first request?

A Well, when -- I mean, it's different in that, when the investigator comes to me and asks for specific documents, then I pull those up, or my assistant does, and provides them.

Q Okay. Okay.

A So, yes.

Q That was something I wanted to make sure I understood.

A Yes.

Q The first request is you authorize it because it's more general.

A Right.

Q The second request is more specific, and so you personally and your staff are pulling documents for the specific second request.

A That's right.

Q And you are doing that for a period of, I guess,

weeks from when the second request came in in late April/early May and then you turned them over sometime in late May?

A Yes.

Q Did anyone in the Department or in the Secretary's Office inhibit or prohibit you from responding to that second request for specific documents?

A No.

Q Were you ever told not to turn any document over to the IG?

A No.

Q Did you ever ask anyone, including Secretary Pompeo, whether he would like any document withheld or turned over to the IG?

A No. I did not discuss the request for documents with Secretary Pompeo, and he did not provide me any guidance on, you know, my production. I told him after I produced the documents that I had turned over the documents. So that was in later -- the second half of May.

Q And, to your knowledge, why did it take multiple weeks to respond to that request for specific documents from when the request came in, late April/early May, to when you turned them over in late May? Was it voluminous?

A Well, it wasn't voluminous, and so -- but we need to be clear here that I'm not able to be precise on the

timeline because, I mean, I don't know exactly when I was requested to provide, you know, the specific travel schedules. I just -- I can't remember the dates. So I don't think we can say that it took a long time. I mean, I'm cooperative. When the Inspector General's Office requests things of me, I'm cooperative. So -- and nobody inhibited me from responding.

Q And you did not delay your response to that second request for any reason, correct?

A That's correct. Yes.

Q Do you recall how many documents you turned over per that second request?

A I don't recall. It was, you know, just a number of travel schedules and invitations.

Q And forgive me if you answered this already, but, again, I'm just trying to make sure I understand clearly. Did you discuss the second request when it came in with others in the Secretary's Office?

A I am sure I did, because I was discussing, you know, as I typically would, you know, the overall request for documents. Again, I let, you know, the office know that we'd been, you know, requested to provide documents and then, you know, my immediate staff who's supporting me and then others who may also have documents.

Q And you were ultimately the person tasked with

responding to that second request, correct?

A That's correct. Yes.

Q And so the date that you responded to the request and produced the documents had nothing to do with the fact that IG Linick was no longer the IG. Is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q Okay.

I want to talk some about your background. When did you join the Foreign Service?

A I joined in 2000. Yes.

Q And did you have any type of career beforehand, or did you come straight out of school?

A No. I was -- I first started working for the U.S. Government right out of college. I worked for [REDACTED] for a number of years.

And then I resigned from government service and practiced law for a few years in New Haven, Connecticut.

And then I joined the Foreign Service after my husband and I had been assigned to Peshawar, Pakistan. So we traveled to Pakistan on his orders, and then I took the Foreign Service exam while we were there and joined and was immediately posted to Peshawar.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

■ [REDACTED]

And after Pakistan, where else did you serve?

A After Pakistan, we served in southern Africa, in Swaziland, and then after that in Cairo, Egypt, for a couple of years.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

And then I returned and worked at the National Security Council, working on Iraq and the Gulf under then-President Obama and Vice President Biden.

After that, I was the political counselor in Amman, Jordan.

And then after that assignment, I worked at the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Elissa Slotkin and Derek Chollet, who were two political appointees; and then began working for former Secretary Kerry and was with him for 2 years as his executive assistant; and then began working for Secretary Tillerson as his executive assistant. And then, in mid-2017, he asked me to take on the role of executive secretary.

Q How is it that you came to work as the Executive Assistant for Secretary Kerry?

A I had been working with the person who was his chief of staff at the National Security Council under then-President Obama and Vice President Biden. And Tom

Donilon was the National Security Advisor, and Denis McDonough was the Deputy National Security Advisor.

And so I became acquainted with a group of people who -- and the person who then became Secretary Kerry's chief of staff. And so he asked me to come back to State to be the Executive Assistant.

Q And what did your duties -- what duties did you have in that role?

A Uh-huh. As the Executive Assistant, I was responsible for reviewing all of the memos that were going into Secretary Kerry to, you know, ensure that they were complete and, you know, represented a range of views, that they were, you know, properly reviewed by the Legal Advisor, as necessary; I provided input into his foreign travel; I accompanied him on most of his travel overseas; and other duties, as required.

Q And you remained in that role under former Secretary Tillerson?

A Yes. That's correct. I was with Secretary Kerry for 2 full years, and then Secretary Tillerson came into office in early 2017.

Q And during your time as Executive Assistant, who do you report to directly?

A Again, I reported to Secretary Kerry but worked very closely with the chief of staff, Jon Finer.

Q And then you said Secretary Tillerson then asked you to step into the role of executive secretary.

A Yes. That's correct.

Q And how would you best describe to someone like me, who's never worked at State, what the difference is between Executive Assistant and executive secretary? Because the one thing that overlaps that I've heard you say is you're reviewing a lot of paper --

A Yes.

Q -- in both roles.

A Yes, that's correct. No matter which of these jobs you're in, you're reviewing a lot of paper, yeah, memos, for a decision and for information.

So I'd say the role of the Executive Assistant is sort of a senior staffer role. The role of the executive secretary is some of that, but then, also, you're -- I'm the -- you know, oversee these other business units: for instance, the Operations Center, you know, where we establish task forces; the Secretariat staff that does the first review of all the paper that goes to the Secretary, the Deputy, and other senior Department officials.

And then I'm also the official point of contact for other agencies. So every agency has an Executive Secretariat. So we are the channel, you know, through which we provide official documents or, you know, make requests of

other agencies and receive them for the Department of State from other agencies.

Q And since you served as Executive Assistant for two Secretaries, I'm wondering if you could describe for us how the job changed from serving in that role under Secretary Kerry and then serving in the same role under Secretary Tillerson.

A Well, every Secretary has, you know, their own leadership style. So it's the job of the Executive Assistant to, you know, adapt to the needs of the individual Secretary.

Q How would you describe Secretary Kerry's leadership style?

A He's a, you know, very hard worker. You know, very committed to advancing U.S. foreign policy. I mean, that was true of Secretary Tillerson as well. You know, they're all hard workers and, you know, working 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, always available. He was approachable, you know, good-natured.

I mean, can you be more specific?

Q Sure. How would you describe his management style?

A His management style. Well, his chief of staff played a large role in the management of the office. But his management style was, he was direct and approachable. He had an open-door policy.

Q And how would you describe Secretary Tillerson's management style in comparison?

A Secretary Tillerson worked primarily through his chief of staff. So I had little interaction with him directly.

Q And did you travel with both Secretary Tillerson and Secretary Kerry?

A I traveled with Secretary Kerry constantly. I mean, it was the exception when I didn't go with him on foreign travel.

I traveled with Secretary Tillerson as his Executive Assistant but then not as his executive secretary. My deputies went on foreign travel with Secretary Tillerson.

Q And did you have any hesitation about taking over the role of executive secretary when Secretary Tillerson approached you about that?

A I mean, it's a senior position, so, I mean, it was an honor to be asked to take on that role. It was a great job.

I had been intending to go to the Near Eastern Affairs Bureau to be the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, which was also a great job. But, in general, you know, when a senior, particularly the Secretary, asks us to perform a job, we say yes. I'm there to serve any Secretary of State.

Q And as executive secretary, you said you have four

deputies, correct?

A Yes. I have a number of deputies. Yes.

Q And were you able to handpick those four folks, or did you inherit them as you took over the executive secretary position?

A No, I inherited a staff, and then the deputies stay for either a year or 2 years. My preference is that they stay for 2 years. So now I've had the opportunity to select my deputies.

Q And those four deputies, of course, report directly to you, correct?

A Yes, they do.

Q What role, if any, do you have in personnel matters in terms of hiring, firing, placement of individuals in the rest of the Department, outside those deputy positions?

A I do not play a role in hiring and firing or personnel decisions beyond my staff in the Executive Secretariat Office.

Q And what policy role do you have as executive secretary?

A I do not have a policy role. My role is to ensure that the memos that reach our senior Department officials are well-explained and complete, representing a diversity of views, and present legally available options. I do not provide commentary on policy. And I do not edit the memos

that go into the Secretary for policy.

Q Did Secretary Tillerson or Secretary Pompeo or Secretary Kerry ever approach you about whether an individual should be hired or fired anywhere in the Department outside the Office of the Secretary?

A No. They wouldn't seek my advice on that sort of decision.

Q So how the Secretaries interact with you in regard to personnel decisions, it has been the same under all three of these individuals?

A That's correct. I'm not part of those discussions.

Q And I want to ask the same question about policy. Has how those three individuals dealt with any policy question with you changed between those three administrations?

A I mean, they're generally the same. You know, my role is not to provide input on policy. We have, you know, a whole range of experts within the Department. Some of them are Senate-confirmed; others aren't. But my job is to connect the Secretary, you know, or the Deputy with the experts, you know, in their fields to ensure that they get the best policy input.

Q And those deputies under you, are they all career civil servants as well?

A They are all career officers, yes.

Q And all Foreign Service officers, correct?

A Yes, they are.

Q Has your experience been that these four career folks, when they interact with political leadership, have been treated with respect?

A Yes. They all travel with the Secretary. I mean -- and, yes, we do our best to treat everybody with respect.

Q Okay.

HFAC Rep. Counsel. Thank you. I'm going to stop there and see if my colleague from the Oversight Committee, [REDACTED], has any questions for you.

Ms. Kenna. Okay.

Oversight Rep. Counsel. Hi, Lisa. My name is [REDACTED]. I work for the Oversight Committee -- Oversight and Reform Committee. I'm on the minority side.

And I just want to start off by thanking you for your career and your service as a Foreign Service officer. My wife is in the Foreign Service. She served overseas. So I understand the life you've been leading, and I think it's wonderful what you're doing. And just thank you very much for that.

And then I wanted to sort of transition into an apology, I guess, for you getting caught up in all of this. You know, this investigation is purportedly about the firing

of Inspector General Linick. You've already told us that you don't know anything about the firing of Inspector General Linick.

And what's really going on here is, you know, for the last 3-1/2 years, the Democrats have tried to take down this President, and they've been unsuccessful in doing so. And now they're sort of using his most successful Cabinet officer, Mike Pompeo, as sort of a proxy, and now they're trying to take down Mike Pompeo. And that's really what this is all about.

You are here because of your senior position in the Department, even though you've already said you don't know anything about this. But that's why they're dragging you in here. You've had a very successful career. You've been rightfully elevated to a very senior role, first by Secretary Kerry, then by Secretary Tillerson. And that's a role that you've had before the current Secretary of State came into office.

I find it rather appalling that the Democrats claim they care about, you know, our men and women who serve overseas, Foreign Service officers, but that doesn't appear to be the case from where I'm sitting, based on how you've been treated here over the last few months.

I'm going to start off by reading you a letter. I would hand it to you if we were in person, but we're not

doing in-person depositions, even though we could very easily be doing this in the Foreign Affairs hearing room, but we're not. So I'm going to start off by reading you a letter and just asking you about that briefly.

So the letter is dated -- it's on congressional letterhead, 116th Congress, U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, 2170 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20515. The date of the letter is June 22nd, 2020. And it's addressed to Lisa D. Kenna, Executive Secretary, U.S. Department of State, 2201 C Street Northwest, Washington, D.C., 20520.

The letter says the following:

Dear, Ms. Kenna. As chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, I write in furtherance of the congressional investigation into the circumstances surrounding the firing of Steve A. Linick as Inspector General for the U.S. Department of State to request your appearance at a deposition on June 29, 2020, at 10:00 a.m.

This deposition will be conducted jointly by the staff of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and the House Committee on Oversight and Reform.

As you know, the committees are investigating whether work being performed by the Office of the Inspector General, OIG, including investigations that touched directly on the conduct of Secretary Pompeo himself, influenced the

Secretary's recommendation that President Trump terminate Mr. Linick as inspector general of the State Department.

Given your involvement in these matters, we believe that you may have information relevant to specific matters under investigation. Please contact staff of the House Foreign Affairs Committee no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, June 26th, to indicate whether you will comply voluntarily with this request.

Sincerely, Eliot L. Engel, Chairman.

So my first question, do you recall receiving that particular letter?

A Yes, I do.

Q Okay. And can you sort of describe where you were, what you were doing when you received that letter?

A I recall receiving it via email. Yes.

Q Okay. And was it emailed --

A It was emailed directly to me, yes.

Q Okay. And who emailed it to you? Do you remember?

A I can't remember exactly.

Q Okay.

A Perhaps it was [REDACTED]. I'm not certain.

Q Okay. And do you know if that is normal protocol, for House or congressional staff members to email senior Foreign Service officers directly, or do those usually go through a legislative affairs -- or do you just not know

enough to form an opinion on that?

A I know that our protocol here on the State Department side is that all of our communications go through the Legislative Affairs Bureau.

Q Okay.

The beginning of the third paragraph in this letter, it says: Given your involvement in these matters, we believe that you may have information relevant to specific matters under investigation.

Can you please describe -- take as much time as you need -- describe your involvement in the Secretary's recommendation that President Trump terminate Mr. Linick?

A I had no involvement in that issue. I mean, I --

Q You had no involvement -- you had no involvement in that issue.

A None. I was not part of any discussions regarding a decision to fire the inspector general. None whatsoever.

Q So you have no involvement in this issue.

A Correct.

Q You received this email from a congressional staff member requesting a deposition in 1 week's time -- 1 week's time.

Are you aware that under House deposition rules that agency counsel is not permitted to accompanying you to a deposition?

A Yes, I'm aware of that.

Q And so agency counsel is not permitted to accompany you to a deposition requested just 1 week ahead of time. Can you sort of walk us through your thought process, things that you did, I guess, to try and -- I mean, did you have a personal counsel on retainer? Is that just something that you have?

A No. I had to find, you know, personal counsel. And my counsel's very busy. He's a very busy lawyer. And so I've now taken up a lot of his time, I mean, just trying to be responsive to this committee.

Q Have you ever been deposed before Congress before?

A I have not.

Q Have you ever been deposed, period?

A No.

Q Can you walk us through some of the challenges that you faced on your end in trying to ascertain counsel, you know, for a deposition on June 29th, 2020, at 10:00 a.m.? Were there logistical -- I mean, had anybody checked with you about that date? Was that date a nonstarter, in your mind?

I assume you want to cooperate with the committees in their investigation, even though you don't know anything about what we are investigating.

Can you just walk us through some of the challenges

that you faced when you received that letter?

Mr. McQuaid. And, Ms. Kenna, I'm sure [REDACTED] doesn't intend for you to go into conversations that you had with me about any substance, so just -- I would just take the question in that light.

Oversight Rep. Counsel. Thank you, Nick.

BY Oversight Rep. Counsel:

Q Obviously, anything subject to attorney-client privilege is not anything that I'm addressing.

A Yes. I mean, just receiving a deposition request is obviously, you know, not something anyone wants. I mean, I have always wanted to cooperate with the committee. I'm here voluntarily.

You know, being told that I can't have agency counsel with me for a deposition, then, you know, requires that I get private counsel. You know, I was -- I have a very busy job. I mean, it's -- and, you know, preparing to respond to this deposition request takes time away from my job.

I'm just -- you know, I'm trying to do my best for the Secretary, as I've tried for every Secretary that I've worked for, and it's been a challenge to navigate the competing demands on my time.

But I'm here voluntarily, and I want to cooperate.

Q Yeah. Thank you very much for that.

So you mentioned you have a busy job, a demanding job.

You know, like [REDACTED], I've not worked at the State Department. During our time overseas, I've been around a lot of State Department personnel, but I've not personally worked there and don't, sort of, have a strong understanding of the inner workings of the Department, especially at the senior levels, for somebody like myself.

So I was hoping you could, sort of, get into more detail about, I guess, the challenges that you face on a daily basis and that this has taken a -- that this has just disrupted you from the preparation for today.

So, just sort of learning more about what you do, I went to the Department's website, obviously, you know, read about the Executive Secretariat. And I'm just going to ask you some questions just so I have a better understanding so I can better understand, you know, what you do on a daily basis, the fact that, you know, you were not involved substantively in a lot of things that transpired.

And so I'm just going to read from the Department's website here: The Executive Secretariat, comprised of the executive secretary, five deputy executive secretaries, and their staff, is responsible for coordination of the work of the Department internally.

So I want to start there. You mentioned your five deputy executive secretaries earlier. I was hoping you could go through and sort of explain what each one does,

since you sort of oversee all five of them and all of their work. Each one individually, I would imagine, is very busy, and then, you know, put you on top of that, and that's just a workload that I, personally, wouldn't be able to handle.

So I was hoping you could kind of take it one by one, each deputy executive secretary, and just describe what they do, it doesn't have to be on a daily basis, but sort of their general roles, so I can better understand the function of the Executive Secretariat.

A Sure. Yes.

So each of the deputy executive secretaries is assigned an oversight role to oversee and interact with individual bureaus and offices within the Department. Their areas of responsibility generally align with their expertise within the Foreign Service.

So, for instance, I have a deputy who, you know, has spent his entire career focused on management issues who oversees all the management functions that are, you know, relevant to our office and the broader Office of the Secretary.

For instance --

Q And --

A That would be [REDACTED].

Q Okay. Thank you.

A Uh-huh.

Q Now, and "for instance"? I'm sorry. I didn't mean to cut you off.

A So I have another deputy, named [REDACTED], who's had deep expertise in the Near Eastern Affairs region and then also south-central Asia. And so he oversees those bureaus and interacts, you know, very closely with the senior leadership from those bureaus, reviewing paper that is, you know, going to the Secretary, the Deputy, or any of the Under Secretaries, you know, on all of those regional issues to ensure that the senior Department officials get good recommendations, good options, all of which are legally available, before they make decisions on policy decisions.

So, again, they're not providing policy input, but they're ensuring that the options are complete and well-thought-through and well-justified on paper.

Q Okay.

A I have another deputy, who's [REDACTED], who has significant expertise in multilateral issues and has spent time as the United Nations staff in New York and other multilateral bodies. So she focuses directly on those bureaus that are involved with multilateral issues, again, preparing for events like the U.N. General Assembly and all their multilateral meetings and issues that are going to be decided within multilateral bodies.

I have a deputy named [REDACTED], who is

currently handling the European Affairs Bureau and then also was handling the African Affairs Bureau and is now focused on Western Hemisphere as well. The portfolios do occasionally change, but, again, you know, the Secretary has done significant travel to all of those regions.

So, in addition to reviewing all the decision memos and memos going to the Secretary just for his information on policy developments in those areas, he, along with his other deputies, would be staffing and planning travel, getting the Secretary good options for events that he would attend when visiting any city, ensuring that they are well-coordinated with the embassies on the ground and are going to advance U.S. foreign policy interests.

And then I have another deputy, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], who has great expertise in the Asia region and was formerly a [REDACTED] in Singapore. And so she's very focused on all the developments with respect to our Asian policy and particularly China and the priority that the administration has placed on that.

So does that give you a sense of what they do?

Q Sure. It does.

You talked earlier, in the first round of questioning, about how you oversee the State Department Operations Center, or the --

A Yes.

Q -- executive secretary does. Is that sort of delegated out to [REDACTED]? How is that -- am I getting the deputies wrong? Is there a deputy that oversees that? Is that a different function within the executive secretary? How does that work?

A I mean, there's a director of the Operations Center. And then [REDACTED] is the Deputy that has primary responsibility for the Ops Center.

I'm, myself, very involved with that group because it is so important to everything that the State Department does and absolutely critical to meeting the Secretary's and the Deputy Secretaries' and the Under Secretaries' needs.

So, obviously, the formation of the task forces, which occurs within the Operations Center, to cope with things like the repatriation of American citizens that found themselves outside the United States when COVID hit and international travel was restricted, that was, you know, launched out of the Operations Center. Other task forces, such as those that respond to threats against our embassies in the Middle East, all comes from the Operations Center.

So I'm very involved in standing up those operations and in working closely with the Ops Center staff to ensure that they have the resources they need to mitigate these crises and to coordinate on behalf of the Department with other agencies as we respond to crises.

Q Is there a group of people that is permanently assigned to the Ops Center, either permanently or, you know, via 6-, 12-, 18-month details? How is that staffed?

A Yes. The Ops Center staff is -- they are typically on 1-year assignments because it's a particularly demanding assignment. I mean, they work on shifts because they are expected to -- they have to be on duty. You know, we staff the Ops Center 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days of the year. So they work, you know, nights, weekends, you know, alternating with one another.

They occasionally will extend for, you know, up to 18 months. That's more unusual.

The leadership of the Operations Center, they work on 2-year assignments to ensure, you know, continuity and to, you know, guide the staff that is -- the senior watch officers and then the operations officers in their work.

But, in general, the assignments are 1 year.

Q So you talked about standing up different task forces in the Ops Center. When a task force needs to be stood up, are there people that are assigned to the Center? Are they plucked from other areas of the Department? Or is it just sort of the core staff in the Ops Center and they're basically reaching out to folks in the different bureaus as needed? How does that work, standing up a task force?

A Each task force is unique, and it depends on, you

know, how we judge the needs and the intensity of the operation.

In general, we work very closely with an under secretary, whichever under secretary is likely to be most involved in the crisis, and then with whatever regional bureau is also involved.

So, for instance, when it comes to the threat against an embassy, we would work with the bureau that was most impacted by that and then with the relevant under secretaries that would play a role. Usually it's the Under Secretary for Management and Political Affairs.

When it comes to, you know, security and regional issues that are cross-cutting, we determine what our staffing needs are going to be, and then I will reach out to senior officials, representatives from the regional bureaus or from other offices that I think have skill sets that are necessary to the proper functioning of the task force, and I will request volunteers be assigned to the task force for as long as we need them.

We generally have very good cooperation between the Operations Center and other bureaus as we work through these crises.

[10:32 a.m.]

BY Oversight Rep. Counsel:

Q So you mentioned the task force could be stood up for, for example, a threat against an embassy. I imagine there is nothing more important, I guess, than protecting the personnel overseas.

You mentioned how you were very involved with the Operations Center, very involved with the task forces. A lot of these times are things, you know, breaking events, where you need to sort of run down to the Operations Center and sort of understand what is going on so you can either report back or start to formulate a team to respond.

Can you sort of walk us through your role in a crisis as it relates to the Operations Center?

A Certainly. I mean, when, for instance, earlier in the year, when we had a threat against our embassy in Baghdad, we became aware of the need for a task force in the middle of the night.

So, you know, we -- the Operations Center staff, you know, decides, you know, when to call me, to wake me up, and which other State Department officials need to be woken up. And then we go into the office. In that particular case, it was 4:30 in the morning.

And we'd stand up sort of a seniors coordination center right there, right next to the Operations Center floor, so

that we can move back and forth between the actual Operations Center, where I have -- you know, we have officers who are coordinating phone calls between the Secretary and other senior government officials and foreign officials and our embassies overseas, and a room where the Secretary is sitting with his senior staff, with the full range of communications that let him talk through policy options, talk through security threats, get updates in real-time on breaking developments.

And I am the liaison or interface between those two groups, ensuring that the Operations Center staff have what they need in order to get the information that the Secretary needs, and then making sure that the Secretary -- questions get answered on a timely basis and that he's updated continually.

Q So in a situation like the Baghdad embassy threat, which you have talked about -- I mean, I don't want to characterize it -- but is sort of time essentially stopped, and then this is a sole focus of what you and certainly senior levels of the Department are working on for a short period of time while that massive threat exists?

A Well, the Secretary doesn't really have the liberty to stop paying attention to everything else in the world. So we are doing our best to give him the resources that he needs to assess information and threats and policy options,

while also being -- updating him on what is going on everywhere else in the world and continuing to get decisions to him so that everything else can keep moving.

Of course, you know, he prioritizes his time to focus on the critical issue of any threats against American citizens. That's always the most important thing. But we do need to continue to update him on everything else in the world as well.

Q Where is the Operations Center in the Department, is it on the seventh floor or is it a different location?

A It's on the seventh floor. It's down the hallway from where the Secretary sits.

Q Okay. And you also sit on the seventh floor?

A I do, yes.

Q And are your five deputies on the seventh floor or are they in a different location?

A We all sit generally sit together, yes.

Q So you're on the seventh floor, your five deputies are on the seventh floor. Who else from the Executive Secretariat staff is also on the seventh floor?

A We are all located on the seventh floor. The Operations Center, the crisis management group within the Operations Center, the Secretariat staff that reviews all the paper is located on the seventh floor. I mean, we work and we have a group called ExecTech, which is our technology

experts that are available to us 24/7.

So we are all located in very close proximity so that we can see one another, support one another, just on an as-needed basis.

Q How many hours a day on a normal day are you usually at the Department?

A It varies. I would say 12 or so. I mean, I am available to the Secretary all of the time.

Q You mentioned ExecTech. Can you describe a little more about what they do and who -- how many people are in that subfunction of the Executive Secretariat?

A This is an office that's unique to -- special for the Office of the Secretary, because his communication needs and the communication needs of the Deputy Secretary and the under secretaries are quite high. They need to have access to classified communications equipment at all times.

And so this office ensures that they have that equipment, whether they're on airplanes, whether they are at their homes and need to be able to speak secure to other senior government officials.

They are available to us to troubleshoot any technology problems that arise 24 hours a day. So it's a group of highly trained experts that are incredibly critical to everything we do at the Department.

Q And the ExecTech team, is that exclusively sort of

for the use of the seventh floor or is there a separate IT department for your run-of-the-mill FSOs, civil service workers, down to HST (ph)?

A The team supports the broader Office of the Secretary, but their services are so good that we have, you know, offices from everywhere in the building who would like to be brought under the umbrella of the ExecTech team because they provide such tremendous service.

They are generally civil servants, Foreign Service, we have contractors, we have fellows, if I recall. But it is an office that blends, you know, experts regardless of hiring authority to provide the best technical support to the Secretary's office that we can offer.

Q I apologize for jumping around. I should have stayed on the topic of the Operations Center when we were discussing it.

But you had mentioned, I think on a couple of occasions, you had mentioned that you spent a great deal of time talking about sort of COVID-19 response, that fell under your purview. You talked about repatriation of individuals from overseas.

Can you talk about the efforts that went into that, and to the extent that you have any metrics off the top of your head of people you were able to bring back from overseas? A lot of our friends across the world are now here in D.C., so

it's great that we get to see them, but they're sad not to be out at post. So thank you for those efforts, on a personal note.

But to the extent you can talk about the COVID-19 repatriation efforts, I think that would be helpful in understanding sort of what was going through your mind and what else you were dealing with as executive secretary in the March, April, May timeframe of the incidents that we are talking about here.

A The repatriation effort that we launched when we saw various countries -- helping international travel was a top priority for the Department. So we went to great effort to ensure that we stood up, you know, a task force, a repatriation task force and coordination center, so that American citizens everywhere in the world could get information on repatriation flights back to the United States, on, you know, how to work with the U.S. embassies in whatever country they were located in, and to guide them on all the logistical arrangements that were involved in getting them home to America.

So it took, you know, a tremendous amount of coordination with our not just colleagues in the Operations Center, but our colleagues in the Consular Affairs Bureau, in the Management Under Secretariat under Brian Bulatao. And we arranged flights, we chartered boats, buses, all

sorts of modes of transportation to help Americans make their way back to the United States. And we are still to this day providing that sort of information to American citizens because it's such a top priority.

Q I know a lot of members on our particular committee were concerned specifically about Peru. And a lot of Americans, college students especially, who were stuck down in Peru, that through your efforts were able to make it back here. So thank you for that. That's something that was of heightened interest to our members over here.

Do you have, just off the top of your head, rough numbers of how many Americans were able to come home through your efforts over the past few months?

A You know, I haven't checked the stats today. Certainly over 100,000. I mean, on Peru specifically I can say that we had I believe it is over 12,000 Americans that requested repatriation assistance from there, I mean, and that is largely because we have such a, you know, a healthy channel of travel, tourism, and trade between the United States and Peru, you know.

Until the COVID-19 crisis hit we had upwards of 580,000 Americans wanting to travel to Peru every year. So it's not surprising that we had so many Americans down there, including students. And so we wanted to be as supportive as possible getting those Americans home to the United States.

Q So these efforts, not necessarily for Peru but around the world, are they still ongoing? Is that what I understand you to say?

A We are still monitoring and providing support for, you know, American citizens who request repatriation assistance, I mean. So, for instance, we still have, you know, these services that are provided at embassies around the world to make sure people are aware of, you know, the threats that may exist and then options for repatriation assistance.

Q And so this is something -- this is an effort that I assume started taking place -- I don't know, was it March or was it earlier than March?

A If I recall, it was in March.

Q In March. So March, March, April, May, June, July. So over 5 months you have been overseeing this effort as executive secretary to bring over 100,000 Americans home from across the world. And that is obviously the focal point of what you have been doing for the last 5 months. Is that right?

A Well, I would say that the Secretary and Under Secretary for Management, Brian Bulatao, are the overall overseers of this effort. So within the Operations Center and the crisis management center we are playing a critical role in that broader Department-wide effort, yes, that is

correct.

Q Well, I only have a couple minutes left. There are several other topics I want to dive into with you.

Let me start in on one topic and I will be interrupted here by the end of the time. And that's okay, we can pick it up next time.

There has been a lot of discussion about various taskers. You talked about how a request comes in and then you write a tasker, and then it sort of becomes opaque to you at that point.

So just generally speaking, the Inspector General's Office asks you for documents. What do you do? Can you walk us through each step that you take when you get a request like that from the Inspector General's Office?

A Yes. When I get a request for a records search to be conducted on a particular subject I will send a memo that authorizes that search to be done. So this is true for any records search.

And then the office responsible for the records within the Executive Secretariat conducts that search on their own independently from me.

And so it's -- I mean, I am sure their process isn't opaque to them. It's just that my role then ends there and the process proceeds independent from me.

And then I am available of course to provide answers to

followup questions regarding records from anyone who asks them.

Q So what is a tasker? Is a tasker a memo to different bureaus saying, "Hey, this is being requested"? Is a tasker as simple as an email? Is a tasker as simple as you hitting the forward button? How does that develop?

A Yes, it would be --I would let the head of our records unit be aware of the request, and then they draft a memo that I sign authorizing the search to be done. So it's a memo so that everyone has awareness of the request for documents.

Q So these taskers occur, they can occur for a request from the IG. Can they occur for a request from Congress for specific documents? Do you create a tasker for that?

A Yes. As our office is requested to provide documents, I will sign a memo that authorizes that search to proceed, yes.

Q And I think I heard you mention something about FOIA. If there are FOIA requests, does that also come through you and then you sort of create a tasker and send it out to the different offices?

A Not for -- for FOIA requests we have an office that handles those requests automatically. They just -- they search our records independent from us.

So, for instance, I don't do my own FOIA searches.

There is a unit somewhere else, removed from me, that pulls documents from my systems and, you know, provides them for FOIA processing.

Q Oh, good, that seems -- that's what I like to hear from an oversight, good governance perspective, that you're not pulling your own FOIA records. So I'm glad to hear that.

Well, let me ask you this. On the -- and, by the way, I don't know how much time I have. I can't see the clock. So, [REDACTED], poke me if I'm over time.

HFAC Dem Counsel. You've got 6 seconds.

Oversight Rep. Counsel. All right. I'll stop there then and we can continue next hour. All right. Thanks.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Thanks, [REDACTED].

Ms. Kenna, would you like a 5-minute break?

Ms. Kenna. Yes, please. Thank you.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Let's go off the record.

[Recess.]

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q Ms. Kenna, thank you.

Just a few points I'd I like to address briefly. We'd note for the record that [REDACTED] made a number of characterizations regarding the focus and the intent behind this investigation. We would note that that was his testimony and not yours and that the committee has been

quite clear about the scope of their investigation.

We'd also note just for clarity on the record we did initially request your presence at a voluntary interview back on May 22nd; that ultimately it was because the State Department made no efforts to interact with the Congress about providing you for that voluntary interview that you were ultimately noticed for the deposition.

You did retain private counsel, who promptly negotiated for it to be a voluntary appearance, and that agency counsel is, in fact, present here today.

Ms. Kenna, on June 20th of 2019, the Foreign Affairs Committee sent a letter to Inspector General Linick asking that his office investigate the May 24th, 2019, emergency declaration by which the State Department chose to force through about \$8 billion in weapon sales to Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia.

When did you first become aware of the fact that the inspector general was looking into that emergency declaration?

A I don't recall. I mean, it was -- obviously it was -- I don't, I'm sorry, I don't recall what month it was.

Q Were you asked to provide documents or to authorize a search for documents in response to that inspector general investigation?

A I -- again, I don't recall. I'm sorry. I'm sure

there was a document search done. But the Inspector General's Office didn't interview me in conjunction with that issue.

Q But you don't have a recollection of whether or not the Inspector General's Office sought records from either the Executive Secretariat or the Office of the Secretary?

A I'm sorry, I simply don't recall.

Q So that emergency declaration related to some precision-guided missiles, among other things, the sale of which Congress had been blocking for more than a year before the May emergency declaration. Are you familiar with the fact that Congress had a hold on those weapon sales?

A Yes, I am.

Q And why did Congress have a hold on those weapon sales?

A I don't know why.

Q You have no knowledge of why Congress held \$8 billion in weapon sales for more than a year? Is that your testimony?

A I'm sorry, I just -- I'm not involved in any of those discussions, so -- and I, you know, it's not my area of expertise.

Q Let me refresh your recollection. These would have been the same weapons whose sale was blocked at the end of the Obama administration after Saudi Arabia bombed a funeral

hall in October of 2016.

A Understood.

Q Does that refresh your recollection?

A Yes. So the concern would have been civilian casualties.

Q That's correct. And we can stipulate for the record, particularly since the hold at issue was put on by Senator Menendez, that civilian casualties were again of paramount concern in why Congress was blocking the sale of this \$8 billion worth of arms during the Trump administration.

Charles Faulkner, a former principal deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, testified that the Trump administration revived the push to sell these weapons, the same weapons that were blocked for humanitarian reasons under the Obama administration, right around the time that President Trump and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman met in the Oval Office in March of 2018 and held up a big poster board touting U.S. arms sales to Saudi Arabia.

When was the first time that you became aware that the Trump administration was going to try to get this particular set of arms sales approved by the Congress?

A I -- again, I can't recall with any specificity. But I do remember a memo going to the Secretary with the proposal for how to handle the arms sales.

Q And when do you recall that happening?

A It would have been, you know, it's over a year ago certainly.

Q And so just to be clear, the arms sales were first notified in April of 2018.

A Okay.

Q The emergency declaration was issued more than a year later in May of 2019.

A Okay.

Q So within that timeline, can you situate for us the memo that you're describing?

A It would have been closer to the May of 2019 when I would have focused on this. When the memo was moving to the Secretary of State, that's when I would have been focused on it.

Q Okay. And what do you recall about that memo when you began focusing on it?

State Dept. Counsel. [REDACTED], as you know, in Mr. Faulkner's interview -- I'm happy to find out about the processes and things. But when you say, remember about that memo, that was by definition a predecisional memo about an executive branch decision. And so I just want to be very careful on a question-by-question basis, because predecisional material we think is still protected by executive branch confidentiality interests.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Thank you, counsel. I appreciate that. I think you'd agree with me that, left to Ms. Kenna's discretion, she can likely still answer the question of generally what she recalls about that in the first instance without getting into content. Is that right?

State Dept. Counsel. I agree. I just wanted -- we're anxious for her to cooperate, as she is anxious to cooperate, but these questions, like some of the ones earlier, get intermingled with things that are perfectly legitimate areas of inquiry and areas that do remain potentially privileged. Thank you.

HFAC Dem Counsel. But to be clear, you're not instructing her to answer this question to the best of her ability. Is that right?

State Dept. Counsel. I -- first of all, I'm not going to instruct her to answer. I'm saying we have no objection --

HFAC Dem Counsel. I'm saying you're not instructing her not to answer. Is that correct?

State Dept. Counsel. That's correct.

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q Okay. Ms. Kenna, take note for the moment of what agency counsel just said.

What do you recall about that memo that you said you started to focus on around the time of the emergency

declaration?

A What I recall was that it was regarding the use of the emergency certification. And the memo was whether that was laying out the argument in support of that. That's what I recall.

Q Okay. Now, Mr. Faulkner testified that he was directly involved in the formulation of that and that his first exposure to that concept came in April of 2019. Does that refresh your recollection as to when you might have seen that memo?

A You know, I would -- I'd just be guessing wildly on the month. I'm sorry, I simply can't -- I can't pin it down by month.

Q But you have no basis for contradicting his testimony that it was in April of 2019?

A No. Certainly not, no.

State Dept. Counsel. I would just note that his testimony has not been appended to this matter as an exhibit. And your characterizing it may or may not actually reflect the transcript of it.

I don't know about Mr. McQuaid, but as agency counsel, since these are agency decisions, if his testimony is part of this interview I want it appended to this transcript.

HFAC Dem Counsel. [REDACTED], as you know, you were in the interview, you have had an opportunity to

review the transcript, and we'll be making it public shortly, but I don't expect that we need to make further reference to that interview.

Mr. McQuaid. [REDACTED], just to echo, there have been a couple of times that you have referenced other witnesses' testimony. And if you could just ask Ms. Kenna the question that you want to ask of her, I don't think she's reviewed any other testimony in advance of this interview. So I think it is more appropriate to ask her a question if you have a question and not ask her --

HFAC Dem Counsel. That's fine.

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q Ms. Kenna, you have no basis for saying that the emergency declaration was not first raised within the State Department in April of 2019. Is that correct?

A I have no knowledge of precisely when the issue came up. My apologies. I simply can't recall the date.

Q Okay. Were you ever involved in any meetings that involved Under Secretary David Hale regarding the arms sales issue to the Gulf?

A I can't recall. I'm sorry. I can't recall.

Q Were you ever involved in any meetings that involved then PM Acting Assistant Secretary Marik String regarding the arms sales issue?

A I can't recall particular meetings. I recall -- I

can't recall. I'm sorry. I don't recall. I recall the drafting of the memo and, you know, the -- and reviewing the memo before it went in to the Secretary and -- yes.

Q And so you read that memo -- substantively, you read it before it went to the Secretary?

A I mean, I didn't pore through the memo. I remember the memo going to the Secretary. I didn't provide any comment on it. I wasn't involved in the drafting. But I was aware that it was going to the Secretary.

Q But you read it carefully enough to know what it was about, you didn't just hit forward, right?

Mr. McQuaid. Hey, [REDACTED], you keep characterizing the way she reviews memos, and I think she has been really clear on that. And so just maybe it would be helpful again to have her remind you what she does to look at memos, which I think --

HFAC Dem Counsel. Yeah. No, I think there is some lack of clarity. I think at certain points in her testimony she has said essentially that she's been a conduit and in this instance she testified that she read it.

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q So, Ms. Kenna, can you tell us in your own words what you mean when you said you read this memo?

A I, you know, I can't recall. It has been, you know, a really long time ago. And I, you know, I recall the memo.

I recall it was -- the purpose of the memo was, to the best of my recollection, was to lay out the basis for the emergency certification. I don't recall if I went through it line by line. I just -- I just don't -- that wouldn't be, you know, that wouldn't be something that I would always do. And I just can't recall. I'm sorry. I don't know what else to say.

Q Is it your understanding that the need for the emergency declaration, the proposal that was being made in this memo, was related to the fact that otherwise there was a congressional hold on these sales and there was an attempt to find a way to nonetheless get the sales through?

A No, I didn't discuss with the Secretary, you know, the reason why he requested that particular memo. I can't remember, you know, if that request came through me or if it went directly to somebody else.

Q But you did just testify that it was a memo that the Secretary personally requested?

A Yes, uh-huh.

Q Okay. And when was that request made?

A I don't recall.

Q Okay. Do you recall who else was involved in the preparation of that memo?

A I recall the offices. The offices would have been, you know, the Legislative Affairs Bureau, and the Legal

Adviser's Office probably, and the Political-Military. I'm not entirely certain. I would have reviewed the memo if I had known --

Q And would you have reviewed the clearance page just to make sure that all the appropriate offices had seen and cleared it before it went to the Secretary?

A That wouldn't necessarily be my job, and I don't remember reviewing the clearance page on this particular one.

So somebody, usually the staff in the Executive Secretariat, will review clearance pages normally. And then somebody either -- you know, in my office will review, you know, normally. I just -- I can't recall with respect to this particular memo how it was reviewed or by whom.

Q And do you recall who the sender was?

A The sender?

Q Yes, ma'am.

A I mean, for something like this, I don't recall. I'm guessing it was the Pol-Mil Bureau, but I'm not certain. I don't recall.

Q And would Pol-Mil also have been the primary drafter if they were the sender?

A Memos like this end up getting input from lots of offices. So --

Q But there is always a line that says who drafted it.

A Yes. I don't know who the drafter was on this particular memo.

Q Okay. Do you recall if Mr. String was involved in drafting the memo?

A I don't know if he was the drafter, but I recall him being involved in this issue.

Q Okay. What do you recall about his involvement?

A I just recall him, you know, being involved in some way. I don't -- I don't recall, you know, any particular meetings, but, I mean, he was in the Pol-Mil Bureau at that time.

Q Is it your understanding that -- scratch that.

Do you have any recollection of which bureau originated the idea of using an emergency declaration to get around Congress for the purpose of finalizing these arms sales? It's a yes-or-no question.

State Dept. Counsel. No, actually the way the question is phrased it has a lot of characterization that would implicate predeliberative matters as to the process and the substantive contribution of named bureaus into proposing something that you characterized in a way that you're free to characterize, but is not the way I have heard that memo described so far. So I consider this question to reach into areas of confidentiality interests.

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q To rephrase, ma'am, do you have any recollection as to which bureau originated the idea of using an emergency declaration, yes or no?

A I do not recall.

Q Okay. So the hold from Senator Menendez was placed on these weapon sales in about June of 2018. In August of 2018 concerns about civilian casualties mounted when the Saudis bombed a school bus in Yemen. Do you recall that incident in August of 2018?

A I do.

Q What do you recall about that?

A It was a --

Mr. McQuaid. [REDACTED], you have been -- [REDACTED], you have been going at this for a while. Are you going to tie it back to the firing of IG Linick?

HFAC Dem Counsel. Yes, sir.

Mr. McQuaid. Could you explain? I mean, it seems like you're --

HFAC Dem Counsel. My understanding -- I'm happy to clarify it, sir.

My understanding from IG Linick's testimony is that this is one of the issues that he had been directly involved in just before he was fired. He testified that Under Secretary Bulatao and Acting Legal Adviser String went to some length to try and dissuade him from looking into these

things. And he also testified that one of the things that was outstanding at the time when he was fired was a request to interview the Secretary personally about these matters.

Mr. McQuaid. And I'm happy to have you ask Ms. Kenna about her knowledge of any of those conversations, but I guess I don't understand how a discussion of the substance impacts that.

HFAC Dem Counsel. It is as a data point. And in terms of what it was that motivated the need for an emergency and what made very clear that Congress was not going to be lifting the hold, the attack on the school bus in August of 2018 is highly relevant.

Mr. McQuaid. Well, look, we have given you a lot of leash to go into the substance of this, which I think is beyond the scope of your request. It's not -- your letters are very clear that you're interviewing Ms. Kenna about a prohibited personnel issue, which is different, about the firing of IG Linick. So if you could just try to tie it back to that more directly we'd appreciate it.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Happy to do so again. I don't think we necessarily agree with your characterization of the scope, but given the time we're happy to move on.

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q Ms. Kenna, do you recall that in May of 2019, May 20th and May 21st, Secretary Pompeo briefed the U.S.

Congress regarding Iran?

A I don't -- I don't recall. No, I don't recall his schedule precisely. A general briefing on Iran?

Q This was a closed door Member briefing, one for the Senate, one for the House, on Iran.

A Okay.

Q And this would have been 3 days before the emergency declaration was issued. Does that help refresh your recollection?

A I don't recall it, but I can't say it didn't happen either. I don't -- I just don't recall it.

Q Okay. Are you aware of the fact that after the emergency declaration was issued Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs Clarke Cooper testified before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on July 12th, 2019?

A I don't recall that either, but I wouldn't be aware of the testimony of various assistant secretaries.

Q So you would not as the executive secretary be aware of a senior official in the Department testifying in defense of this emergency declaration which, as you've already testified, was pursuant to a memo that Secretary Pompeo personally requested, you would have no knowledge that there was Hill testimony on that topic?

A No, that wouldn't be necessarily something that

would come through me, no.

Q I didn't ask, ma'am, if it came through you. I asked if through any source you had awareness that --

A I was not aware.

Q -- of his testimony?

A Sorry. I was not aware.

Q And does that include after he gave his testimony on July 12th of 2019 that you didn't become aware?

A I'm not tracking that testimony. No, I'm not aware.

Q Okay. During the course of that hearing several Members pointed out that they had been in the briefings with Secretary Pompeo and that there was no mention made of any threat from Iran. And yet, the May 24th emergency declaration was entirely predicated on an emergency threat from Iran.

Mr. Cooper had an exchange during that hearing with Congressman Levin and he adopted the following summary of his own testimony at the hearing.

Mr. Levin stated, quote, "So within 3 days" -- in other words, between May 21st and May 24th -- "an emergency was created that required this declaration."

Mr. Cooper replied, "Congressman, yes, yes." That's a quote.

Was there -- first of all, the memo that you recall reviewing, I know you don't recall specific dates, did you

review that memo on the emergency declaration before the emergency declaration was issued on May 24th?

A I don't recall. I mean, my apologies, I simply don't recall the timeline.

Q Had it been sent to the Hill by the time you reviewed it?

A I don't know.

Q Would it be normally your practice that you would review things after they had already been sent out of the building or before?

A No, I would review it before, yes.

Q So can we stipulate then it would have been before May 24th that it -- when it was sent to the Hill -- that you would normally have reviewed that memo at least in the ordinary course?

A In the -- yes. In the ordinary course I would review it before it goes. You know, I would -- yes, before it goes to the Hill, that would be when I would see it.

Q Okay. And do you have any -- to your knowledge, was there a specific change in events or a specific emergency that arose between May 21st and May 24th?

A I don't recall any particular facts around that time, but it's not really my area of expertise either.

So --

Q When was the first time that you heard about the

possibility of promoting Mr. String to become acting legal adviser?

A It was probably when it happened. I'm not involved in personnel decisions or discussions.

Q So you don't recall any discussion about his promotion prior to its announcement to the building on May 24th, 2019?

A No.

Q And we'll stipulate for the record that is the same day that the emergency declaration was sent to Congress.

Do you see any connection between those events?

A No.

Q Do you have any reason to dispute that there is a connection between those events?

A I'm not clear on what your question is. I wasn't part of a discussion about Mr. String becoming the legal adviser.

Q And so you have no knowledge one way or another as to whether or not his involvement in the arms sales declaration played any role in that promotion. Is that your testimony?

A That's correct. I simply wasn't part of any discussions. I don't know.

Q Okay. Do you recall the inspector general asking Secretary Pompeo to sit for an interview regarding the arms

sales investigation?

A I recall a request coming in, yes.

Q Okay. And what can you tell us about that?

A If I recall, the Secretary responded to the questions in writing, I believe. That is what I recall. I don't believe they met.

Q Do you recall that there was ever a request for them to meet in person?

A Yes, I believe the request was for an interview.

Q And how did you come to know that?

A I don't believe it happened, but I'm not certain. I don't -- I don't think it happened. I think the Secretary answered questions in writing.

Q Why didn't the in-person interview happen?

A I don't know why.

Q Did you have any discussions prior to the submission of written answers by the Secretary as to whether he'd sit for an in-person interview?

A No, I didn't discuss that with him. He wouldn't consult me on that.

Q Are you aware of whether Under Secretary Bulatao or Mr. String ever met with the inspector general about his investigation into the arms sales?

A Well, now I've seen press reports, so it's sort of -- it's all sullied in my mind. I wasn't -- I wasn't

aware before I saw the press reports, no.

Q Okay. And those would be --

A Does that answer the question?

Q I'm sorry, I think I heard somebody else.

Those would be the same press reports regarding the fact that Mr. Linick had testified about the fact that Mr. Bulatao and Mr. String tried to dissuade him from pursuing this investigation. Is that the press report that you're referring to?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Did you have any knowledge at the time of any such meetings between Mr. Bulatao, Mr. String, and Mr. Linick?

A No. I'm not involved in discussions regarding the Inspector General's Office.

Q And were you aware of whether or not there were any discussions going on within the Executive Secretariat about the status of that IG investigation into the Saudi arms sales in May of 2020? Do you recall having any conversations with anybody about the status of that investigation in May of 2020?

A No. And nobody from the Inspector General's Office requested me for an interview. I don't recall anything.

Q So shifting topics. One of the other topics that Mr. Linick has testified that his office was looking at, at

the time that he was fired, related to travel issues around Mrs. Pompeo.

When did you first become aware that the IG was looking into issues related to Mrs. Pompeo?

A I was aware that the IG had requested documents related to family travel in March of this year. I was not aware of an investigation per se until I read a press report regarding the then inspector general's testimony saying that there was an investigation.

Q Okay. And I want to clarify, I may have misspoken there. His testimony was that he was investigating allegations of misuse of Department resources. I want to be very clear on that.

You said you became aware of that in March of 2020?

A No. No. In March all I knew was that an investigator requested documents.

Q Okay.

A I did not -- I wasn't aware that there was an investigation into misuse of government resources until I read a press report regarding the -- regarding Mr. Linick's testimony where he made some reference to that.

Q I know you have mentioned this and I apologize, but to have it all in one place, roughly what was requested at that time?

A Documents related to family travel was the first

very broad request. And then --

Q And when you said family travel, that means the Pompeo family?

A Yes. I mean, that was --

Q Okay.

A It was very broad. But, you know, that was, I believe, the search that was done.

Q And you have said that you were responsible for tasking that out, right?

A Yes, that is correct.

Q Would one of the recipients of that tasker have been Secretary Pompeo?

A Well, he would never respond to -- he wouldn't be involved in doing his own document search, no.

Q Let me recharacterize that.

A Okay.

Q You said that the request was for records related to travel by the Pompeo family?

A Yes.

Q So did the record request that you sent out involve collection of records, by anyone, from Secretary Pompeo?

A I don't think I understand the question, sorry. There were --

Q Whether or not he was doing the searches.

A Yes.

Q You said that you tasked out a search for records related to the Pompeo family. Would that include records to or from Secretary of State Mike Pompeo?

A For family travel it probably would not, because he's recused from issues concerning his spouse's travel. Those memos don't go to him on that issue.

Q Was the inspector general asking only for memos or were they just asking for records on the topic?

A He asked for records. So I defer to the experts who do the searches to, you know, determine what they turn over.

Q But is it your testimony then that, because Mr. Pompeo would have been recused from issues related to travel by his wife, that there was no reason to search his records because he shouldn't have had any?

A No, I don't -- I don't have any idea. I'm sorry. Yeah, I have no idea what searches were done, you know, after I made the request. All I know is I made the request for the search to be conducted and then I was asked for specific schedules and some invitations and I provided those.

Q Okay. What is Mrs. Pompeo's role at the State Department?

A She's not an employee.

Q Okay. Has she ever been an employee at the State Department?

A No.

Q So does she have an active role at the State Department?

A In an official role, no, not to my knowledge.

Q I didn't say an official role. I said an active role.

A What do you -- I mean, she attends events when she's invited. I mean, she meets with family members. She does play a role, yes.

Q Okay. Has S/ES staff or other resources been used in the past to support Mrs. Pompeo's activities.

A When Mrs. Pompeo is invited to attend events, you know, then we will ensure that she receives the invitation if it comes through us, our office. When she's invited on foreign travel and it's agreed that she will go, then we will support that, yes.

Q And would that be the only time that staff in the Office of the Secretary or the Executive Secretariat would be used to support Mrs. Pompeo?

A For instance, if she's meeting, you know, with family members at an embassy abroad, you know, we would be involved in coordinating for those meetings. So I can't, you know, speak for the full extent of what others are doing, but I can talk to my particular office. That's how we interact.

Q Okay. I'd like to turn your attention briefly to a memorandum that's dated January 7th, 2019, which was provided to your counsel last evening.

State Dept. Counsel. [REDACTED] this is [REDACTED] again. Just a couple of preliminary remarks for the record.

I have also now been provided this, and I want to note that it was not produced from the Department's records under both Federal and departmental regulations on the alienation of records, including to Congress.

I would also note that there is no evidence that it is a final record of the State Department, if there's redactions that no one I have spoken to yet knows where they came from, that were not conducted by the State Department.

I would also note that it is a prospective. While it deals with a particular matter, it is a predecisional deliberative document, which by its markings under our rules and regulations, particularly the Foreign Affairs Manual, is prohibited from being outside the Department without the Department's permission, and in particular it's prohibited from being public, and also deals with references and advice as to future potential application of its legal advice.

So with that on the record, I am happy to have Ms. Kenna, who is anxious to cooperate, answer certain very narrow questions about her knowledge of the existence of it, but I am going to be quite sensitive to questions that

relate to ongoing or future deliberations that this document could be involved in. And none of my comments and nothing she says either act as a confirmation that this is in fact a Department record or is accurate.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Thank you, [REDACTED]. And for the record, this document is one that was published by a news outlet about a week and a half ago, and that's where we got it, and that's why we would like to ask you about it.

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q So with all that said, ma'am, if you could turn briefly to the second page, the first whole paragraph, you will see a sentence about halfway down that says: For every representational activity there must be a finding by an appropriate official that the expense enables the Department to provide for the proper representation of the United States and its interests.

First of all, ma'am, this memo does indicate that you were one of the senders on January 7th, 2019. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And it deals broadly with authorization to spend money to support travel by Mrs. Pompeo under certain circumstances. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And the sentence that I just read, where it

says for every representational activity there must be a finding by an appropriate official that the expense enables the Department to provide the proper representation, did I read that correctly?

A That's in the document, yes.

Q Okay. And this particular memo was related to a trip to the Middle East that, as we understand it, began the same day, January 7th, 2019. Is that your recollection?

A That's my general recollection.

Q If we could you please mark this as exhibit 1.

[Kenna Exhibit No. 2

Was marked for identification.]

HFAC Dem Counsel. Did the Inspector General's Office ever ask you for this memo?

Ms. Kenna. The Inspector General's Office provided me with this memo when they requested documents related to family travel.

HFAC Dem Counsel. And I apologize, my colleagues have just corrected me. This would be exhibit 2.

So they requested documents related to family travel. Was this memo one of the ones that you had provided?

State Dept. Counsel. I'm sorry, [REDACTED]. Ms. Kenna just specifically testified and told you distinctly that this document was provided her by the IG.

HFAC Dem Counsel. I apologize.

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q Do you recall why the IG provided this document?

A I don't know, they didn't say. I mean, the first time I talked about it with the IG I asked him is there an investigation, and at that point he said no. I don't know why he asked for it.

Q Was he asking for similar memos for other trips?

A He asked for all documents related to family travel.

Q Okay. And this is a document that relates to family travel. Is that right?

A Yes, it is.

Q Okay. And it says that for every representational activity there has to be an appropriate finding.

Do you recall if there were memos similar to this one that were prepared for any of Mrs. Pompeo's other travel?

State Dept. Counsel. I'm sorry, any memos prepared in connection with that travel, by definition, as you can see from this memo, would be predecisional and deliberative, and I believe they're covered by executive branch confidentiality interests. And I am -- I will take the liberty of directing her not to answer that.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Okay. So I'm not asking about the content. I'm asking, do you recall documents of this sort being prepared for any other travel other than trips to the Middle East that's identified in this January document?

State Dept. Counsel. And I appreciate that, but you're also asking about the elements of a predeliberative -- or a deliberative predecisional process, which I believe also are potentially covered by the same confidentiality interests.

HFAC Dem Counsel. And as you're aware --

State Dept. Counsel. If you have a question about this specific trip which occurred, I'm not -- I think there's things that can be asked about that.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Ms. Kenna, you've heard from the agency's counsel, who has been very clear he doesn't represent you in your personal capacity. We're not asking you about the content of any particular document.

Are you refusing to answer the question of whether or not you recall documents of this nature being prepared for any other travel involving Mrs. Pompeo?

Ms. Kenna. I mean, I don't recall, you know, particular memos. I recall -- you know, I don't recall particular memos.

[11:37 a.m.]

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q So you're not refusing the question?

A I just answered to the best of my ability.

Q Okay.

So Mrs. Pompeo accompanied the Secretary on a trip to Brazil and to Colombia, which began around December 31st of

2018. Did the IG ask you to provide documentation related to that trip?

A They asked for the travel schedule, yes.

Q Okay. Do you recall that December 31st trip to Brazil and Colombia being among the things that were on that schedule?

A Yes, I recall that. Yes.

Q Okay. And do you recall whether or not there was a memo, similar to the one we've been discussing here, that you located and produced related to that trip?

A Well, you know, when the Secretary travels, I mean, there -- maybe I'm not being clear -- there are memos where, you know, we provide manifests for the travel to the Legal Adviser's Office, and then they go to the White House --

Q But, to be clear, this is a memo specifically justifying why it's appropriate to spend government resources to support Mrs. Pompeo's travel. Do you recall such a document having been produced to the IG related to this December trip to Brazil and Colombia?

A No.

Q Okay.

How about a trip that she took to the Middle East starting on March 19th of 2019? Do you recall that trip being on the list of those that you were asked to provide documents for?

A I don't recall anyone writing a memo on that trip.

Q Okay.

We understand from a whistleblower disclosure that there were approximately 170 SES staff hours that were spent to prepare staff and Mrs. Pompeo on this trip and that -- first of all, does that help refresh your recollection that there would've been that sort of resource intensity for a trip amongst people in your office?

A On this trip to the Middle East?

Q In March of 2019, yes, ma'am.

A In March of 2019. No, I'm not -- you know, I don't review the number of staff hours involved. But, you know, yes, staffing travel is very intense.

Q Okay.

A But I'm not familiar with that.

Q We've also got whistleblower testimony that there were complaints that what the staffers were doing amounted to planning and staffing her on what Department officials themselves felt was essentially tourism.

Do you recall anyone ever raising concerns to you about staffing Mrs. Pompeo for what amounted to tourism?

A I recall people requesting guidance on the appropriate scope of the staffing. We sought guidance, and then we comply with it.

Q Okay. And just to --

Mr. McQuaid. Hey, [REDACTED], could you just ask the question about what was raised with her? I don't think you need to characterize other complaints against --

HFAC Dem Counsel. And, again, I want to be clear on that. I apologize for misspeaking. These have been protected disclosures. These are not things that were given in formal testimony. I apologize for that, as the clock ticks down.

Mr. McQuaid. Right. You can just ask the question, and she'll answer it.

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q You said you sought guidance on issues related to this. From whom did you seek that guidance?

A I seek guidance from -- we seek guidance from the Legal Adviser's Office.

Q And can you give us examples of issues that arose where you felt that you needed to seek guidance?

A Yes. I mean, it's literally my job to seek guidance. I, you know --

Q Regarding Mrs. Pompeo's travel, to be clear.

A Oh. The guidance we seek is concerning what events are appropriate to provide staff support for and which we should not.

Q Do you recall ever seeking such guidance other than in the preparation of this memo that you sent in January

of 2019 regarding Mrs. Pompeo's travel? Do you recall seeking guidance for any other travel which involved that?

A We seek general guidance, and we have general guidance. And then when we have individual questions, we raise those --

Q And did --

A -- or we encourage people to raise those.

Q And did you ever have individual questions regarding Mrs. Pompeo's travel that you sought guidance on?

A Yes. And we --

Q And when was that?

A -- sought guidance.

Q When was that?

A I can't recall exactly, but we have -- we've received guidance now.

Q Okay. And when did you receive that guidance?

A I can't recall exactly when I received it, but we received general guidance, we went back and asked more specific questions, got further clarity. It's a --

Q Was that in 2019 or 2020?

A Probably both.

HFAC Rep. Counsel. I would just note the time.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Thank you. I just want to make sure that we wrap this up so that we don't lose the train of thought. We're happy to add time to our colleagues' clock

as well.

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q So your testimony is that you sought guidance regarding Mrs. Pompeo's travel issues in both 2019 and 2020?

A I'm not certain. Again, I mean, I -- yes, I'm not certain. I can -- but I sought guidance. You know, we had to -- you know, sought clarity, and we followed the guidance.

Q And did anyone on your staff ever come to you or any of your deputies saying, I'm concerned about the fact that I am being asked to staff what amounts to tourism for Mrs. Pompeo?

Mr. McQuaid. [REDACTED], again, I think this is a topic we've talked about. You're asking a bunch of questions about the substance of this, but could you tie back to how this relates to the inspector general's firing?

HFAC Dem Counsel. Yeah. One of the things that I believe that Ms. Kenna testified to is that she had been asked by the IG to provide documents related to that travel, that she doesn't have a specific recollection of particular documents, but that one of the things that would necessarily be captured by a request for documents related to the travel would be whether or not anyone ever raised concerns with you regarding her travel, which, to the extent you can answer the first question, I'd like to know whether it's documented

and whether or not those were provided to the IG.

So did anybody ever raise concerns with you that the work that staff in SES or the Office of the Secretary were being asked to do on behalf of Mrs. Pompeo either did not relate to official Department business or amounted to tourism?

Mr. McQuaid. And, again, I think you were just saying you were going to relate that to the records request. So would it be whether she provided records on that? Or how does that relate to the records request?

HFAC Dem Counsel. I'd like her to answer the first question to establish whether or not there is a reason to believe that such records exist, and then happy to close out with that.

Ms. Kenna. So staff requested guidance on how to appropriately staff Mrs. Pompeo on her travel. So I'm not exactly sure what records were provided to the inspector general in conjunction with his request. I know that I authorized a broad search, and I know that I also responded directly to the specific request for documents that he made to me.

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q And so you don't know whether or not any of the requests that -- your staff came to you and they asked for guidance. You don't know whether that guidance was ever

memorialized or whether that request was ever memorialized in a document. Is that right?

A I do know that I have now broad guidance regarding how to handle, you know, this set of issues, I mean, on family travel. It is --

Q And happy to get to that in just a second, but just to close this out: So I believe you testified that you had received requests from your staff about how to staff Mrs. Pompeo. Do you know whether those requests for guidance about how to staff Mrs. Pompeo were ever reduced to writing and that there would be documentation?

A I remember, yes, there being, you know, specific questions on how to staff Mrs. Pompeo. Yes.

Q Okay.

A I don't -- yeah.

Q And so that those questions, just to be super-clear, would've come in writing?

A Not --

Q Would've been reduced to writing?

A -- necessarily. I don't recall. I mean --

Q Okay. So do you recall them --

A I just remember getting requests for guidance.

Q And when do you recall getting those requests for guidance?

A I don't recall exactly.

Q You recall --

A I mean, I get requests for guidance, though, all the time on, you know, how to staff, you know, particular trips, whether it's for --

Q But just on how to staff Mrs. Pompeo, can you give me a ballpark of how many times you've been asked for guidance on that?

A Oh, I can't speculate on that. I just know I was asked for guidance, so, you know, we turned to the Legal Adviser's Office to provide guidance.

Q And was there any change in the guidance that you received after about March of 2020 when it was indicated that the inspector general was looking for records on this topic? Final question.

A A change in guidance?

Q Did you receive updated guidance of any sort after March of 2020 regarding how to staff Mrs. Pompeo?

A Oh. I've received guidance after March of 2020. I mean, again, the requests for guidance is -- it's an ongoing one. When I have specific questions on specific trips, I request guidance.

Does that help?

Q So there was updated guidance on how to staff Mrs. Pompeo that was provided to you after March of 2020? I just want to make sure we're clear on that.

A I've tried to answer the question. When I get questions on how to staff Mrs. Pompeo, I seek guidance. As I need clarification, I go back to the Legal Adviser's Office and ask for clarification.

It's an ongoing process. I feel like we have a very open channel of communication. I mean, I'm certainly not trying to ask anybody to do anything inappropriate, and I am trying to comply with the guidance that I've been given. And when I have questions, I ask for clarifications.

Q Thank you.

A Does that help?

Q It does.

HFAC Dem Counsel. I apologize for going over. We'll get the time added back for our colleagues.

Would you like a short break, or should we just turn it over to [REDACTED]?

Ms. Kenna. I'll take a break.

State Dept. Counsel. I think we should take -- yeah.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Okay. Five minutes.

[Recess.]

[12:08 p.m.]

HFAC Rep. Counsel. So, before I ask questions, [REDACTED], I want to ask a couple of questions about some things you said last time. You were referencing some whistleblower testimony. I want to make sure I understand what we're talking about. This was testimony that was provided?

HFAC Dem Counsel. That was -- I misspoke, and thank you for the opportunity to clarify that. This was not testimony. This was a separate written disclosure that we're happy to talk to you about offline.

HFAC Rep. Counsel. Okay. Is this a written disclosure -- keeping the person anonymous, is this a disclosure that we can all see?

HFAC Dem Counsel. Our standard practice, as you know, would be that we would handle those things in accordance with the wishes of the individual and so -- as is appropriate to protect confidentiality. So, again, we're happy to have a further conversation offline about that.

HFAC Rep. Counsel. And I appreciate that. My only concern here is that there was a characterization about what a whistleblower has, I guess, provided you in writing that we all have not seen. So there's just a question of equity here, I think, for us and the witness.

And so I'm just wondering if there's a way that we can all view, while maintaining the anonymity of the

whistleblower, the disclosure that he or she made.

HFAC Dem Counsel. I don't know that, given the time constraints, that's something that we're going to be able to solve right now. But it's a fair point, and we're happy to look into it. And we can -- we'll see what we can do on that.

HFAC Rep. Counsel. Okay. Appreciate that.

With that, I have a few questions for Ms. Kenna.

BY HFAC Republican Counsel:

Q Ms. Kenna, can you hear me okay?

A Yes, I hear you.

Q Okay. Sorry about the technical delay.

So I want to go back to the memo that [REDACTED] was asking you about before we took the break. Can you tell me more, just generally, not about the specifics of this memo necessarily, but just generally your process about when you make a decision that you need to seek guidance on any number of issues?

A On travel and other, you mean --

Q Sure.

A -- kind of guidance? Okay. I mean, I seek guidance all the time on -- for instance, when an outside group requests to give an award to the Secretary -- this came up very recently -- you know, I seek guidance from the Legal Adviser's Office regarding whether and under what

circumstances either the Secretary or the Department can receive that reward. And I'm not exactly sure what their process is for reviewing it, but they then let us know, you may proceed or you may not proceed.

I mean, these things aren't necessarily -- they're not in memo format, but I will make a phone call, they will call me back. Occasionally, there's an email. It's a constant process.

When the Secretary is invited to speak before outside groups, then the same process applies. You know, I make sure that the right people in the Legal Adviser's Office, you know, have a look at that, whatever invitation it is, and then they just let us know to proceed or not to proceed.

So the same applies for, you know, travel, if there are, you know, questions regarding, you know, where the Secretary should be going or under, you know, what circumstances, it goes through, you know, the office that assesses those various stops and the events that he's asked to do.

Q And so, when you decide in your own mind that there needs to be some guidance sought on any number of issues, do you have to run that up the chain, so to speak? Or of your own volition, in your role as the executive secretary, do you just ask for the guidance?

A I just ask for the guidance. I try not to -- I

mean, we try to work things out so that we don't -- I don't, you know, request the Secretary's permission, certainly, before I seek guidance. I just ask for it, so that we try to -- the goal is to comply with the law and make sure we're not doing anything, you know, illegal or unethical. So that's the context in which we are constantly seeking guidance.

And when I ask for guidance, I'm not writing memos, saying, please give me guidance on whether Secretary Pompeo may receive a particular award or, you know, speak before a certain group. It's a constant back-and-forth. So --

Q And so, as part of that back-and-forth, are you sometimes seeking guidance verbally?

A Yes, very frequently it's verbally. Because, you know, it's the specifics of each issue, I think, are unique, and so the offices that provide the guidance often have very detailed questions. And they talk to us about the individual circumstances, and then they will let us know what their recommendation is with respect to, you know, the issue at hand.

Q And sometimes they let you know verbally as well, correct?

A Correct.

Q So you do not always receive a written finding or a written conclusion on every piece of guidance that you

request?

A No. I would say that's rare, I mean, that I would get a memo with guidance.

Q Is it rare for you to seek guidance regarding a Secretary's -- a family member attending a formal official event?

A Well, I mean, there's a process in place whereby the Under Secretary for Management approves, reviews, you know, whether Mrs. Pompeo can accept an invitation for representational travel abroad. So, if that's your question, you know, that's the process, that, you know, Under Secretary for Management reviews, you know, those cases and determines, you know, whether and how she may accept.

There's no -- as I understand it, there was no legal requirement that he make his conclusion, his finding, in writing. So --

Q Is it unusual for you to seek guidance about travel by family members or whether they can attend an event or speak to family members or outside groups?

A Well, with respect to family members speaking to, you know, other employees or family members or outside groups, that wouldn't come through me.

But certainly the issue of family-member travel is something that I refer to the Under Secretary for Management

to make a decision. So, every time there is an invitation to her that involves travel, I get it to the Under Secretary for Management, and he makes the determination.

Q And has there ever been an instance where you've received guidance, on any number of issues, where you have not followed the guidance you've received?

A No. I always follow the guidance.

Q Have you ever been instructed by any Secretary that you've worked for not to follow guidance?

A No. I have not been instructed to ignore guidance.
HFAC Rep. Counsel. Okay. Let me pause there.

██████, do you mind if we take a 10-minute break? And we are happy to take that on our time.

HFAC Dem Counsel. So, just to be clear, break for 10 minutes but keep the clock running?

HFAC Rep. Counsel. Correct.

HFAC Dem Counsel. I have no objection to that.

HFAC Rep. Counsel. Okay. Thank you very much.

So we'll go off the record.

[Recess.]

[12:40 p.m.]

HFAC Dem Counsel. We're good if you are, [REDACTED].

HFAC Rep. Counsel. Okay. Great. Sorry about the technical difficulties.

BY HFAC Rep. Counsel:

Q So, Ms. Kenna, I want to ask you about an individual you referenced earlier; that's [REDACTED]. I believe you said you participated in some discussions or interviews with the IG regarding [REDACTED]. I was wondering if you could tell us a little bit about your experience there.

A Sure.

[REDACTED] was an individual who had been assigned to the National Security Council staff, just as I had been. And he was scheduled to return to the [REDACTED] office at the State Department. And when he returned, his office had been identified by then-Secretary Tillerson to be closed and merged with the Office of [REDACTED].

So, at that time, then-Secretary Tillerson had directed the entire Department to prioritize a FOIA effort to clear out our backlog of FOIA cases. And so we were -- the Secretary's office was advised to create a FOIA team comprised of volunteers from employees who were unassigned or who were otherwise in offices that either didn't have supervisors or were scheduled to be either closed or merged.

So [REDACTED] was among that pool of employees who was

assigned to the FOIA surge.

Q And, to your knowledge, based upon your interaction with the IG, why was the IG asking you about [REDACTED]?

A They asked me if [REDACTED]'s assignment was based on a, you know, prohibited personnel factor.

So I advised them that I was not the decision-maker in terms of [REDACTED]'s assignment but that I did recommend that Ian be allowed, first of all, to work part-time in the Guantanamo office as well as on the FOIA surge, but the then-deputy chief of staff advised that he should focus his efforts exclusively on FOIA.

Then, later, I recommended that [REDACTED] be allowed to transfer to another office where he had found a job. He was very unhappy, and, of course, no one ever wants, you know, somebody on the team to be unhappy in their work. So I recommended that he be allowed to transfer.

So, in the initial conversations with the Deputy Secretary and then-deputy chief of staff the Legal Adviser, the decision was that he should remain assigned to the FOIA surge.

We then had another discussion. I again recommended that he be allowed to transfer. And the political leadership did then authorize his transfer.

Q Were there other people, to your knowledge, who were upset about being assigned to the FOIA surge?

A Yes. There were a number of people who were not happy about being assigned to the FOIA surge.

Q And, to your knowledge, did any of those people also request new assignments?

A There was -- yes. There was -- yes. The answer is yes. I can think of, you know, one individual in particular who requested a detail after a number of months on the FOIA surge. And just like with [REDACTED], the political leadership didn't approve the request for a detail. So --

Q So, in your experience with the FOIA surge, would you say that people were treated pretty similarly?

A In my judgment, you know, the Secretary made the decision that everybody was going to be working on FOIA. So I had very -- one of my, you know, senior deputies who was overseeing FOIA for our office, he's now an ambassador. I mean, it was, you know, a task that no one was particularly happy about doing, but everyone was doing it, yes.

Q And so it's fair to say there were a number of high-ranking State Department individuals who had to work on FOIA as well?

A Yes. That's correct.

Q And that's because the Secretary had determined that that was a priority, correct?

A That's correct.

Q Do you think if one or two people who complained

about the assignment had been given exceptions and given better jobs that that could've had an impact on morale for others who were doing FOIA work?

A You know, perhaps. But, again, these weren't my decisions. It was our political leadership that made the decisions.

But I was honestly somewhat sympathetic to [REDACTED]'s request for the transfer. He was unhappy. And, you know, when people have worked on tasks like this for a number of months, if they're still unhappy, then it's probably best to let them move on. And that was the ultimate, you know, outcome in this case. But --

Q But there were a number of people who were high-ranking who were unhappy, correct?

A Yes. I mean, it was not a pleasant assignment for anyone. But, again, this is not our decision. Secretary Tillerson directed that this be done. We formed our teams. They were comprised of very senior people, you know, people doing, you know, a range of work.

The FOIA searches in the Office of the Secretary are probably the most sensitive in the entire building. They're long, they're complex. So no FOIA work in our particular office is menial, I would say.

But Secretary Tillerson directed that it be done, and so we did it.

Q Right.

HFAC Rep. Counsel. Okay. I'm going to stop there and see if my colleague, [REDACTED], has any questions.

Oversight Rep. Counsel. I do, [REDACTED]. Thank you very much.

And I really appreciate those questions, [REDACTED].

I mean, the stated purpose of why we're here, as Chairman Engel said in his June 22nd letter, which I read earlier, is because of the congressional investigation into the circumstances surrounding the firing of Steve A. Linick as inspector general for the U.S. Department of State. That's why we're here.

When Mr. Faulkner came a couple weeks ago, Chairman Engel made an appearance at the beginning, very briefly, and he stated the exact same thing. That was the rationale for Mr. Faulkner's appearance, and that is what this investigation is all about.

I reviewed Ms. Kenna's testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. And in her opening question-and-answer session with Ranking Member Menendez, the Senator asked her if she would commit to complying with congressional requests, including political retaliation in events surrounding the firing of the IG. Those are close to verbatim, Senator Menendez's words.

[REDACTED], you were just asking about political

retaliation. Thank you for doing that.

During the first hour, [REDACTED], I think, did an excellent job of asking and poking the witness about her knowledge of the firing of the inspector general, of which she has none -- which she has none. And she was very clear about that.

So it would seem to undercut any argument that anybody would make that they would need more time with this witness after today if they are asking about things not related to those two topics, which has been, sort of, the majority of the questions coming from the other side during the first 105 minutes.

I mean, really what this is is it's just a fishing expedition into other areas, into the substance of things the IG is looking at. We all know the IG is looking at these things. The witness has testified to that. The IG told us. The IG said he had these ongoing inspections or investigations or, you know, whatever the words he used were. But this is just a big fishing expedition.

I will say, I'm impressed. You know, we were cruising around the Atlantic Ocean with Mr. Faulkner. But now with Ms. Kenna, we've kind of navigated south around Cape Horn, and now we're in the open waters of the deeper Pacific Ocean, where we're just kind of, you know, dangling our hook, hoping that something bigger will catch. You know,

Ernest Shackleton would be proud.

But that's what we're doing here. And it's just odd that we've explored these other topics, you know, given the 6 hours we have with Ms. Kenna here today.

BY Oversight Rep. Counsel:

Q I'm going to go recap some of the things that I've gotten out of today's interview so far, and please correct me if I'm wrong, Ms. Kenna.

You're extremely busy. I mean, you've testified that you're at the Department upwards of 12 hours a day. Is that right?

A That's correct.

Q You oversee five different deputies, each of who has a very storied career within the Department; otherwise, they wouldn't be your deputies. Is that correct?

A Yes, that's correct.

Q You oversee a massive Operations Center, which responds to crises around the world as they come and requires a great deal of attention when those crises is occurring. Is that correct?

A Yes, it is.

Q You were heavily involved in repatriation of over 100,000 Americans -- 100,000 Americans -- in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Is that right?

A Yes.

Q I did not ask you earlier, do you know how many countries, roughly, how many countries those 100,000 Americans have come back from?

A I don't know precisely, no, but it was a global effort.

Q Okay. All right.

I mean, you testified earlier you go through just a massive amount of paperwork every day, hundreds of emails and papers for clearance. Is that right?

A Yes, that's right. There's lots of paper.

Q Yeah. Just to be clear, you're not a policy advisor to the Secretary. Is that right? That's not your role.

A That's right. I'm not a policy advisor.

Q And so you're generally not involved in policy discussions. Is that right?

A Not unless they involve complicated operational followup that requires me to coordinate.

Q You knew nothing about Inspector General Linick's firing before he was fired. Is that right?

A That's correct.

Q I mean, it seems to me -- we had Mr. Linick in here a couple months ago. Mr. Linick testified that he was called on a Friday night, May 15th, and there were two people on the other end of the line. It was the Deputy Secretary, and it was the Under Secretary for Management.

And they informed Mr. Linick, according to Mr. Linick, that he was being placed on administrative leave and was being replaced with somebody else.

Seems to me that if we were really interested in his removal, we'd be talking to the people who actually removed him. And that's threefold: That's the Secretary, who made the recommendation to the President, and he's testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on this; it would be the Deputy Secretary and the Under Secretary for Management. They're the people who actually removed him. So if we're really serious about finding out what happened and what the rationales are, we'd be talking to them.

Mr. Bulatao has spoken publicly about the rationale, and Secretary Pompeo has also spoken publicly about the rationale.

Ms. Kenna, I'm sorry we are not in person, or I would slide this to you across the table. But we're not. We're doing this remotely. So I am going to read to you a letter, and I'll read it slowly so you can understand what I am saying.

I'm going to read you a letter from May 28th, 2020. And let me just read it to you really quickly. It's on some nice-looking letterhead. It looks like it's Department of State letterhead. It says: United States Department of State, Washington, D.C., 20520. The date is May 28, 2020.

It is addressed to The Honorable -- "The Honorable" is on its own line -- and the next line is: Eliot L. Engel, Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Washington, D.C., 20515.

And here is what the letter says: Dear Chairman Engel, thank you for your letters of May 16, May 21, May 22, and May 27 -- oxford comma is included there -- regarding President Trump's decision to remove Steve Linick from the position of State Department inspector general. The Department is carefully reviewing your various requests for information, records, and interviews with several State Department personnel and is committed to engaging with you in a good-faith effort to accommodate these requests.

Next paragraph: As you make clear in your May 21 letter, the decision and authority as to whether to remove a sitting inspector general is vested to the President, and we note your correspondence to the President on this matter. Subject to the parameters of that authority, the Department will soon be providing a substantive response to your inquiries, as indicated in our interim response sent on May 22. To the extent your requests involve questions regarding ongoing open investigations by the Office of the Inspector General, we believe that it would be more prudent to direct your inquiries to that office.

Next paragraph: In an effort to demonstrate our

commitment to working with you, as an initial step, we are prepared to facilitate a discussion with members of the committee with Under Secretary for Management Brian Bulatao, whom you requested in your May 22 letter to appear before the committee. Once the Department has the opportunity to finalize and transmit its written substantive response to your letters, we request to have a conversation at senior levels with you, Mr. Chairman, to find a mutual accommodation for the Department to respond to your requests for transcribed interviews and information related to this matter.

We do have concerns, however, that you requested six senior State Department officials to participate in staff-led transcribed interviews in June -- and then there's a dash, an en-dash, not an em-dash -- and commit to doing so within 5 days -- another en-dash -- without providing any details regarding their relevance to or involvement in the President's decision to remove the inspector general.

We appreciate the interest among your committee members and other Members of Congress on this issue, and we look forward to engaging with you in further discussions to reasonably accommodate the committee's request.

Sincerely, Mary Elizabeth Taylor, Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Legislative Affairs.

So my first question to you, Ms. Kenna: Are you

familiar with Mary Elizabeth Taylor?

A Yes, I am.

Q And so the letter here from Ms. Taylor, it says: We have concerns you've requested six senior State Department officials without providing any details regarding their relevance to or involvement in the President's decision to remove the inspector general.

You were one of the six senior State Department officials referenced. Do you have any details regarding the involvement in the President's decision to remove the inspector general?

A No, I was not involved in any discussions regarding the decision to remove the inspector general.

Q So you weren't involved in these discussions. We've already talked with Charles Faulkner; he wasn't involved in those discussions. So two people haven't been involved in any discussions whatsoever.

And that goes to Ms. Taylor's concern about taking up your time, taking up Mr. Faulkner's time, taking up [REDACTED]'s time, taking up your lawyer's time, taking up my time from our other duties.

And there have just been no details provided regarding anybody. I mean, there's not a scintilla of evidence that you or Mr. Faulkner or any of these other individuals know anything about the removal of Inspector General Linick, with

the exception of Mr. Bulatao -- with the exception of Mr. Bulatao.

And in the letter I just read you, Ms. Taylor -- and I'll just read it again: We are prepared to facilitate a discussion with members of the committee with Under Secretary for Management Brian Bulatao. She's offering up Mr. Bulatao to come testify.

Do you know if Mr. Bulatao has come and talked to the committee about Mr. Linick's firing?

A It's my understanding that he's not yet spoken to the committee.

Q Okay. Your understanding is correct, he has not, despite an offer from the Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs for him to do so. And for reasons that's beyond me, the committees have not allowed Mr. Bulatao to come up yet. And, I mean, I can speculate to what those are. You know, probably political. But if this were a true fact-finding inquiry, which it does not appear to be, Mr. Bulatao would've already testified.

I have another letter here. And, again, you know, if you were here -- if I were there in person, if we were doing these in person -- because there's no reason we can't be doing those in accordance with the Attending Physician's guidance and the Sergeant at Arms, and we can do this very easily in the HFAC hearing room or the Oversight hearing

room, which we have done before for interviews, and maintain a proper distance.

I have another letter here, and this one is -- I actually like this letterhead a little better. The letterhead, it simply says: The Secretary of State, Washington. That's it. That's the letterhead.

And I'll give you a sneak peek. At the end, it says: Sincerely yours, Michael Pompeo, Secretary of State. So this is a letter from Mr. Pompeo.

And the letter starts off: The Honorable Eliot Engel, Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C., 20515.

And the letter reads: Dear Mr. Chairman --

HFAC Dem Counsel. Hey, [REDACTED], I'm sorry. I know that you had had trouble seeing the clock last time.

Oversight Rep. Counsel. I did, [REDACTED], and I see it this time.

HFAC Dem Counsel. I just wanted to make sure you see it.

Oversight Rep. Counsel. Yeah. Thank you. I'm happy to cut off now. I'm happy to turn it over to you. It's up to you.

HFAC Dem Counsel. If you'd like to conclude, we're happy to have you do that.

Oversight Rep. Counsel. Okay. I'll conclude. I'll

just be a couple minutes. Thank you, [REDACTED].

BY Oversight Rep. Counsel:

Q So the letter reads, Ms. Kenna: You and I share a responsibility to ensure the American people have the full truth about former State Department Inspector General Steve Linick. I hear you've been busy in your district, so let me get you up to speed on what's been going on with your committee.

Next paragraph: Two weeks ago, we offered for Under Secretary of State for Management Brian Bulatao to speak with you and all members of your committee. This week, Deputy Secretary of State Steve Biegun asks to have a call with you to discuss our offer and how to provide you the information you seek.

Next paragraph: Last night, your staff informed us you personally declined to speak to both Mr. Bulatao and Mr. Biegun. Instead, you asked your staff to have this conversation on your behalf. As you stated in your June 10 press release, if, quote/unquote, State Department officials want to refute Mr. Linick's account, they can do so, end quote.

Next paragraph: This is precisely what we've been attempting to do.

Next paragraph: This letter serves as a formal written public offer for Under Secretary Bulatao to voluntarily

testify at a public hearing before the full House Committee on Foreign Affairs. If you, Mr. Chairman, want to hear the, quote, answers to critical questions about why President Trump fired Mr. Linick at the request of Secretary Pompeo, end quote, Mr. Bulatao is prepared to unambiguously refute your incorrect accusations at a hearing on June 22 or 23 in the morning, afternoon, or evening.

Next paragraph: Please let the Deputy Secretary know if you want to afford your members this opportunity by returning his phone call at your earliest convenience. An email from your staff will not suffice.

Next paragraph: I regret that you, someone for whom I have great respect, have let your staff take over this historically significant, nonpartisan committee. Please find enclosed the Department's response to your, quote/unquote, investigation.

And then the ending greeting: Sincerely yours, Michael Pompeo, Secretary of state.

So I'm over time. I'll just ask you two very brief questions about this letter.

Question number one: According to the letter I just read -- which, again, you don't have in front of you. But, according to the letter I just read, did Mr. Biegun, who has firsthand information about firing Mr. Linick, did he make an offer to speak with Chairman Engel sometime before

June 11th about this matter?

A That's my understanding, yes.

Q Okay.

And then, according to the letter I just read, did Secretary Pompeo make a formal written public offer for Under Secretary Bulatao to voluntarily testify at a public hearing before the full House Committee on Foreign Affairs?

A Yes.

Q And do you know if Mr. Bulatao has yet to testify before the committee?

A He has not.

Q Okay.

Oversight Rep. Counsel. And I'm over time. [REDACTED], you've been indulgent. Thank you. I'll turn it back over to you.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Thanks, [REDACTED].

Just a couple points of clarification, and then we'll take a quick break.

But for the sake of the record, the State Department's initial offer, after we requested Mr. Bulatao to give on-the-record testimony, was to give an off-the-record briefing.

When we made clear that that wouldn't be acceptable, they did come back and say Mr. Bulatao would be willing to testify at a hearing before only the Foreign Affairs

Committee.

Deputy Secretary Biegun then reached out to Chairman Engel the night before that hearing and asked to pull down the hearing so that Mr. Bulatao would not come up, because they wanted time to review the IG report on the arms sale declaration.

There has been no further outreach from the State Department regarding rescheduling that hearing.

We've been very clear that we do need to hear from Mr. Bulatao on the record. [REDACTED], I agree with you; I'm glad that you share our interest in that happening. So we did issue Mr. Bulatao a subpoena for a deposition earlier this week so that we can hear from him on the record, which has been our preference all along.

So, with that, let's take a 5-minute break, and then we'll come back.

[Recess.][1:28 p.m.]

HFAC Dem Counsel. So back on the record.

Ms. Kenna, as you know, one of the key things -- one of the key themes that has been the focus of the three-committee investigation into political retaliation is that the Trump administration, often with the support of people outside of government, has had a pattern of attacking and trying to derail or ruin the careers of State Department officials whom they deem to be disloyal for whatever

particular reason, sometimes simply having worked, as you did and as many State Department officials have done, in the administrations of other Presidents.

And, of course, one of the people who was attacked and targeted most directly was former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Masha Yovanovitch.

Do you know Ambassador Yovanovitch?

Mr. McQuaid. Hey, [REDACTED], is this part of your PPP investigation or is this part of the Linick investigation?

HFAC Dem Counsel. This is with respect to political retaliation.

Mr. McQuaid. Okay.

Oversight Rep. Counsel. Hey, [REDACTED], this is [REDACTED]. I'm sorry to interrupt.

Quick question. I notice the clock says 46 minutes and change. That's fine. That takes us to 2:16. I just want to make sure we get equal time. That's all. Also, if we need to chop the round up earlier. That's all. I just wanted to bring that to your attention.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Yeah. And I should have mentioned that. I think the addition was for the extra time at the end of the last round. We're going to go through this as quickly as possible. And with the witness' indulgence, I'm happy to have as much time afforded as possible.

Oversight Rep. Counsel. Right. I just want to make

sure, I think -- do we have a hard stop at 2:30 or not? That's my only question.

Ms. Kenna. We do.

Oversight Rep. Counsel. Yeah. So if we have a hard stop at 2:30, then 46 minutes takes us to 2:16, then we only get 14 -- which is fine, you can have extra time. But that is far beyond, sort of, the 2 or 3 minutes that I went over. So if you went to put like 32 minutes and 30 minutes, that's different than 46. Does that make sense?

HFAC Dem Counsel. I think we should probably just proceed and see where we end up. At the request of your co-counsel, you guys had your clock going for quite some time in the last round without asking questions. So we're just starting when we had an opportunity to start.

Oversight Rep. Counsel. Well, I don't think that's a fair representation. We spent 15 minutes looking at a document that you just shared with the witness.

I just want to make sure that we have equal time. You can get a little more time, of course, that's not a problem. But a 30-minute imbalance of time is too egregious. That's all.

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q Ms. Kenna, do you know Ambassador Yovanovitch?

A I don't know her personally, but I do know her by reputation.

Q And what is your understanding of her reputation?

A She has a superb reputation as an outstanding, professional, long-serving, career foreign service officer, multi-time ambassador.

Q During your confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee you were asked about certain documents that Rudy Giuliani had provided to Secretary Pompeo about Ambassador Yovanovitch and you called those, quote, "deeply disturbing."

You remember that testimony?

Mr. McQuaid. Hey, [REDACTED], again, I think this is totally beyond the scope. We'll allow her -- I'll let her talk to you about -- give the testimony and reiterate testimony that she gave on the Hill at her hearing, but I think after that we should move on.

HFAC Dem Counsel. I think it's rather clearly within the political retaliation investigation, sir, as far -- quite similar to a number of the other witnesses -- other individuals that we've asked questions of where you had career officials who were the subject of attacks from outside the government in ways that ultimately derailed their careers. I don't see how this is different.

Mr. McQuaid. Well, it's different because there was an IG investigation into prohibited personnel practices, that she's testified now about the substance of that, and that

was actually the anchor for the letter that she received for the -- you know, on that topic.

HFAC Dem Counsel. To be clear, Mr. McQuaid, the IG investigation was not the anchor. The independent congressional investigation in which we've been seeking her testimony since February, in which Congress has set its own parameters as to what it is that we're investigating, has been the basis of that.

So while I appreciate that there is some overlap with the IG, I think we've been quite clear from the beginning that they're not co-extensive, and that Congress' interest in the political retaliation question is not simply limited to those that were addressed by the inspector general?

Mr. McQuaid. Okay. Well, I assume that you will then, since the topic is prohibited personnel practices, that you will be focusing on decisions that relate to State Department personnel?

HFAC Dem Counsel. We have questions, as I said, on political retaliation and prohibited personnel practices and the impact on State Department personnel, including Ambassador Yovanovitch, yes, sir.

Mr. McQuaid. Well, if you say impact, that could mean any topic in the world. I assume that you're going to limit to actual actions, to questions that relate to actions taken at the State Department.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Actions that pertain to her tenure as ambassador, the decision to recall her as ambassador, rather similar to what we saw with another witness where somebody had a position that they were ultimately forced to leave from. That would be right in keeping with what we expect to talk about, but it is with respect to those personnel actions. We don't intend to go beyond that.

Mr. McQuaid. Okay. Yeah. If you want to ask her about her role in that, that's fine.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Thank you.

State Dept. Counsel. [REDACTED], I would just note the personnel action as to Ambassador Yovanovitch was a Presidential action only and one that only the President can take. It was not a State Department action.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Thank you, sir.

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q Ms. Kenna, to go back to the question, you testified in front of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that you found the documents that Mr. Giuliani provided to Secretary Pompeo to be, quote, deeply disturbing.

Do you recall that testimony?

A Did I say it was the documents? I think the question was regarding Mr. Giuliani's comments about Ambassador Yovanovitch in general.

Q With your indulgence, I'll just read it into the record. I've got the transcript here.

Mr. Menendez asked: "So as you sat in the Secretary's office, you were aware that Rudy Giuliani was bringing documents to the Secretary not long before Ambassador Yovanovitch was recalled from Kyiv and you thought nothing of it?"

You replied: "At the time, I -- I don't know what the documents were -- did not know what the documents were about."

Senator Menendez said: "Well, what do you make of it now?"

And your reply was, quote: "It's deeply disturbing."

So I'd just like you to unpack that statement for us. I don't want to put words in your mouth. What was it about that situation regarding Rudy Giuliani's communications

about Ambassador Yovanovitch that you found to be deeply disturbing?

A Well, I mean, what I know now is that Mr. Giuliani was saying things about Ambassador Yovanovitch that were not true. And so that was the context for my comment.

Q And what sorts of things are those, ma'am?

A I mean, all I know is what I've seen in the press, of course.

Q Of course.

A Yes. I mean --

Q But you --

A Yeah. It was my understanding that it was material that he provided in, you know, various ways and that was untrue about Ambassador Yovanovitch. And there was, you know, a recommendation that she should no longer serve as ambassador.

Q And why did you find that to be disturbing, ma'am?

A Ambassador Yovanovitch is a deeply experienced career foreign service officer, ambassador to several countries, and it seems inappropriate for somebody outside government to be circulating false information about somebody who's serving in that.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Okay. If we could go, [REDACTED], to the first document that we had circulated, which is a letter dated May 9th, 2018. It's from Pete Sessions, who was then

a Congressman from Texas, and it's addressed to Secretary Pompeo.

[Kenna Exhibit No. 3

Was marked for identification.]

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q And he writes: "I wanted to bring to your attention an interaction that I recently had with individuals regarding the current U.S. ambassador to Ukraine. As you likely know, Marie Yovanovitch is the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine. She previously served in the role as ambassador to the Republic of Armenia and the Kyrgyz Republic. I have received concrete evidence from close companions that Ambassador Yovanovitch has privately -- has spoken privately and repeatedly about her disdain for the current administration in a way that might call for the expulsion of Ms. Yovanovitch as U.S. ambassador to Ukraine immediately."

Ma'am, you've testified a lot today about the processes of being the executive secretary and, you know, that you have eyes on a lot of the paper that goes to the Secretary. Were you ever -- did you ever become aware of this May 19th letter from Congressman Sessions to Secretary Pompeo?

A You know, I recall hearing about this letter. I don't recall that it came through me, though. I don't know how it was delivered to the Secretary, so I can't speak to that.

Q And when you say you recall hearing about it, do you mean you recall hearing about it in or around May of 2018 or that you heard about it in the media at a different time?

A No, I would have heard about it at a different time. I don't recall, you know, this letter coming into the Secretary's hands, though.

Q Okay. Do you recall having any conversations in May of 2018 with anyone regarding allegations that Ambassador Yovanovitch had spoken ill of the Trump administration or that she should be recalled from Ukraine?

A No, I don't recall, you know, any conversations about Ambassador Yovanovitch doing that.

Q Did you ever have occasion to learn who the close companions that Congressman Sessions is referring to in that letter were?

A No, I have no idea.

Q It's been publicly reported that at least two of those close companions are two gentlemen by the name of Mr. Parnas and Mr. Fruman. Do those names mean anything to you?

A I've heard those names in conjunction with the impeachment hearings earlier in the year.

Q And are you aware of the fact that there was a criminal indictment filed against those two individuals for campaign finance violations?

A From the newspaper, yes.

Q And are you aware that Congressman Sessions is reported to have been the individual identified as Congressman-1 in that indictment?

A No. I'm sorry. I'm not briefed on the particulars of the indictment.

Q But at the time that this letter came in you don't recall being aware of it. Is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q Okay. About a year later, in the spring of 2019, there was an envelope that arrived on the seventh floor of the State Department. It was addressed to Secretary Pompeo, and beneath his name was written, ATTN, for attention, Ruth. And the return address of that envelope was reported to have been from the White House.

Do you recall seeing that envelope at some point?

A I recall that we were asked to get the envelope and that it came and it went into the Secretary's office without any one of us opening it. That's what I recall.

Q You were asked by whom to get the envelope, ma'am?

A If I recall, the Secretary had spoken to Mr. Giuliani. And I'm not exactly clear, but somebody from Mr. Giuliani's office, you know, advised us that he had an envelope that needed to reach the Secretary. So we took care of it. This happens a lot. Other offices advise us they have material that we need to get to the Secretary and

it comes.

Q And so -- and we can forego the need, I think, to look at a couple of those other documents, if I understand your testimony correctly, but it sounds like what you're saying is that there was -- that you played a facilitating role in getting these documents from Mr. Giuliani to Secretary Pompeo, correct?

A That's correct.

Q Okay. Who gave them to you?

A Who delivered the package?

Q Yes.

A I don't have any idea, actually, how the package got into the Secretary's office. We have, you know, couriers. There's staff. I don't know.

Q According to documents that have been publicly released in FOIA, and they're among those that were provided earlier, it looks like, on March 28th, Mr. Giuliani also asked to speak with the Secretary.

Do you recall that?

A I can't recall the particular dates of his phone call requests. But, you know -- you know, I'm aware that there were phone calls, yes. I just don't recall the specifics regarding dates.

Q Okay. Did you ever have any conversations with Secretary Pompeo or anyone else regarding what he discussed

with Mr. Giuliani?

A No.

Q Did you ever ask him?

A No.

Q When did you come to learn what the contents of that envelope were?

A Oh, probably during the -- I'm not exactly clear on the timing, but it was probably during the impeachment hearings.

Q Okay. Were you aware of the fact that these documents were ultimately provided during the impeachment proceedings to the Hill by Inspector General Linick?

A I heard about that after the fact, yes.

Q Who did you hear about it from?

A I can't remember. I'm sorry.

Q Do you believe that you heard about it from media reports or other people at the State Department?

A I honestly can't remember. It doesn't make any sense for me to just guess.

Q Do you recall anyone ever making reference to the fact that the inspector general had provided these documents to Congress?

A Not to me, no. I don't recall any comments like that.

Q Not just to you, but in your presence, did you ever

become aware of the fact that there were discussions about the fact that the IG had provided these documents to Congress?

A No, I'm not -- I don't recall any, you know, discussions about that.

Q Okay. Do you have any knowledge of what happened with these documents inside the State Department after they were provided to Secretary Pompeo?

A I don't know, you know, exactly what the Secretary did with them. You know, I know that I did not open this package.

Q So when the inspector general brought these materials to Congress, he said that at some point prior to his providing them to Congress that they had also been provided to Counselor Brechbuhl. Does that refresh your recollection in any way?

A I did not provide this package to Counselor Brechbuhl. I have no recollection of that, yeah.

Q And just to be clear, my question isn't whether you provided them, but did you ever become aware that anyone provided them to Counselor Brechbuhl?

A I don't recall that. I don't -- I honestly just don't recall, you know, what happened to the package. I know, you know, it arrived in the Secretary's office and he got it.

Q You testified also in your Senate testimony that you are aware of, quote, "the vast majority of Secretary Pompeo's calls in your role as executive secretary."

Is that right?

A That's right.

Q Okay. In addition to the calls with Rudy Giuliani, which I believe you said you don't have knowledge of, John Bolton --

A Pardon. I don't -- I didn't say I didn't have knowledge of Mr. Giuliani's phone calls. I said I couldn't remember the dates.

Q I apologize. I believe your testimony was that you didn't have knowledge of the contents of those calls. Is that correct?

A Yes. Or the dates, yes.

Q So moving to a separate call. In his recently published book, former National Security Advisor John Bolton wrote that on April 23rd, 2019, he spoke by phone with Secretary Pompeo about Ambassador Yovanovitch and that Secretary Pompeo told Ambassador Bolton, and I'm quoting from Mr. Bolton's book, quote: "The State Department now had a pile of materials they were sending over to Justice that implicated Yovanovitch and her predecessor in some unnamed and undescribed activity that might well be criminal."

Were you aware that Secretary Pompeo spoke to Mr. Bolton in late April regarding Ambassador Yovanovitch?

A No. I don't have any recollection of the Secretary ever telling me that he was speaking to Ambassador Bolton --

Q Did you ever --

A -- about Ambassador Yovanovitch.

Q I beg your pardon.

Did you ever have a conversation with the Secretary or anyone else about materials regarding Ambassador Yovanovitch that they would be sending to the Justice Department?

A No. No one ever discussed that. I never heard any discussion of materials about Ambassador Yovanovitch going anywhere.

Q Okay. So the day after Secretary Pompeo, at least according to Ambassador Bolton, spoke to Ambassador Bolton about Yovanovitch, Carol Perez, the director general of the Foreign Service, called Ambassador Yovanovitch to warn her that -- and this is from Ambassador Yovanovitch's deposition -- quote: "There was a lot of nervousness in the seventh floor and up the street."

So were you aware in the late April timeframe that there was going to be outreach to Ambassador Yovanovitch by DG Perez?

A I was not aware. I'm now aware because of the, you know, impeachment hearings. But at that time I wasn't

involved in those issues.

Q Were there conversations that you ever became aware of on the seventh floor about Ambassador Yovanovitch in late April of 2019?

A So as I tried to make clear, I was not, you know, aware of or part of any discussions about Ambassador Yovanovitch.

Q But there's never anything that you heard, whether or not you took part in them or people were asking for your input on how to handle the situation? Did you ever become aware of discussions about that?

A No, not at that time. I mean, again, now I'm aware.

Q Ambassador Yovanovitch also testified in her deposition that she got a second call from Carol Perez on the night of April 24th and was told that she needed to be on the next plane back to D.C. and was told, quote: "This is about your security."

Do you have any -- were there any concerns that you were aware of regarding Ambassador Yovanovitch's security?

A No. I was not -- I don't recall ever being briefed on security issues where it concerned Ambassador Yovanovitch.

Q So ultimately, obviously, Ambassador Yovanovitch's career was significantly derailed as a result of these attacks both by Mr. Giuliani and his associates, including

some in the media.

Ambassador McKinley testified that at some point he had approached Secretary Pompeo about issuing a public statement defending Ambassador Yovanovitch against these attacks and he said that you were in favor of issuing such a statement.

Do you recall that conversation about potentially issuing a statement of support?

A I recall a discussion about how best to support Ambassador Yovanovitch.

Q What do you recall about that conversation?

A I recall there were, you know, there was lots of discussion about, you know, how best to support her in what was a very, very difficult time for her, obviously.

Q Did you support the idea of the Department putting out a statement in her defense?

A My role was not to advise the Secretary on, you know, on whether or not to put out a statement. My role was to, you know, ensure that others, you know, gave their input to the Secretary of State, and I'm not comfortable talking about the Secretary's, you know, private discussions with other people.

Q Ambassador McKinley indicated that you were in favor of issuing a statement. Did you ever indicate to him that you thought that a statement in support of Ambassador Yovanovitch was a good idea?

A I'm not comfortable talking about my private conversations with colleagues or, you know, about recommendations that were going to the Secretary.

I think I've said previously that I thought the situation that Ambassador Yovanovitch was in was incredibly difficult and very painful. And, you know, if you're asking for my personal opinion about, you know, I, you know, would want to support her, but I'm not going to talk about internal conversations with the Secretary.

Q But ultimately the decision was made that there would be no public statement on that. Is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q Okay. Shifting topics, coming back to the investigation that Inspector General Linick's office was doing into misuse of government resources right around the time that he was fired.

Who is Toni Porter?

A Toni Porter is an adviser to the Secretary.

Q And what foreign policy issues does she advise on?

A Toni actually does not report to me, so I'm not -- I don't know the precise scope of her duties.

Q Have you ever had occasion to find out what her duties are even if she doesn't report to you?

A I can tell you how I interact with Toni Porter. It's generally concerning items on the Secretary's schedule

and logistics planning for representational events that the Secretary's going to attend.

Q Are there any other issues, other than representational events, where you would normally interact with her?

A That captures it.

Q Okay. And how frequently would you say you interact with her?

A Well, we have a scheduling call, so she would participate on that. So that would be, you know, a regular event.

Mr. McQuaid. Hey, [REDACTED], this seems to be going into the subset of the topic of the personnel issue and not the decision by which Linick was fired.

HFAC Dem Counsel. No, we're happy to pivot on the next question.

Mr. McQuaid. Okay. If you want to ask one more question, that's fine, but --

HFAC Dem Counsel. That's literally the next one.

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q Ma'am, when did you become aware of the fact that the inspector general was looking into Ms. Porter's activities, among other things?

A I'm actually not aware that the inspector general is looking into her activities. I became aware that the

inspector general was looking into misuse of government resources when I read the press report about Linick's testimony.

Q Did you ever receive a request -- I think we had talked about this earlier in the day -- for documents to be produced to the IG regarding potential misuse of government resources?

A No, I haven't.

Q So is the only request the one that has to do with documents discussed earlier?

A To the best of my knowledge.

Q Has anyone ever voiced concern to you about Ms. Porter's activities and whether or not that was an appropriate use of government resources?

Mr. McQuaid. [REDACTED], again, let's narrow the substance that she's going to testify. She's going to be interviewed by the IG. It's not about -- if you have a way to connect that to conversations that would relate to the Linick firing, I'm happy to have her answer, but otherwise I'm going to direct her not to answer.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Yeah, again, our understanding is that this is one of the key issues that the inspector general was looking into at the time that he was fired. Obviously, those concerns would have made their way to the IG through any number of channels.

And without necessarily going far in-depth on the substance of any of that, it seems appropriate just to ask whether or not he ever became aware of concerns considering that those concerns are what sparked the IG investigation?

Mr. McQuaid. Right, but there would be no -- I mean, you can -- if you want to ask her whether she relayed -- I think, again, we've established that Ms. Kenna had no role in the firing of Linick, so the only question would be, did she relay that to others who might have taken action? If you want to ask her whether she relayed concerns to the Secretary or others who were involved in the firing, I think that's an appropriate question.

HFAC Dem Counsel. And I'm happy to do that, but obviously we would just need to have her answer the predicate question first of whether or not concerns were ever expressed and then we can talk about whether they were relayed. It's just a yes or no.

Mr. McQuaid. No, it's not a -- no, you don't have a predicate matter. You can ask her about what conversations she had with other people about those concerns.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Ms. Kenna, did you ever --

Mr. McQuaid. So she can answer -- if she didn't have -- if she never heard those concerns, the answer will be no.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Ms. Kenna, did you ever have

conversations about concerns regarding Ms. Porter's activities and whether they were an appropriate use of government resources?

Mr. McQuaid. [REDACTED], again, you just made a very general question. Conversations at all? It's conversations that would relate to the firing, so it would be with anyone involved in the firing of Linick.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Yeah. I'm fine with that.

BY HFAC DEM COUNSEL:

Q So let's start with, did you ever have any conversations with Secretary Pompeo about concerns regarding Ms. Porter's activities?

A No, I did not discuss with Secretary Pompeo any concerns about Ms. Porter's activity.

Q Did you ever have any conversations with Under Secretary Bulatao about any concerns regarding Ms. Porter's activities?

A No, I did not discuss Ms. Porter's activities with Under Secretary Bulatao.

Q Did you ever have any conversations with anyone -- rather, with Counselor Brechbuhl -- regarding concerns about Ms. Porter's activity?

A No, I didn't discuss Ms. Porter's -- you know, concerns about Ms. Porter's activities with Counselor Brechbuhl. So it's -- yeah. Go ahead.

Q I appreciate that. So if we could go to the third document that we had provided, Samantha. The title on that is, A0, underscore, State, underscore, OIG. If we could go please to page 6.

So, ma'am, this is a document that was recently released by the State Department under the Freedom of Information Act. It is a hotline submission form to the Office of the Inspector General. And it talks about -- this was issued in response to FOIAs around this same topic.

At the bottom, where it says "additional information," it says that redacted names were made aware of these concerns on repeated occasions between a redacted set of dates. To my knowledge, none of them ever took action to resolve these issues and several of them specifically directed subordinate staff to continue facilitating questionable activities after the concerns were raised.

Were you ever aware of whether there were complaints submitted by anyone in your office to the OIG regarding the misuse of resources?

Mr. McQuaid. [REDACTED], again --

HFAC Dem Counsel. I just want to finish this.

[Discussion off the record.]

Mr. McQuaid. I hope I didn't interrupt. I think I was just trying to be heard.

[REDACTED], again, you're asking her about something that

appears to be a whistle -- some kind of complaint submitted to the IG, which may well be the subject of, respectfully, something that Ms. Kenna will be asked about.

And so if you could clarify how you want to connect this to conversations that she had with Secretary -- the Secretary or his staff. Could you explain how this is -- how you're linking that up?

HFAC Dem Counsel. Yeah. Our understanding is that this is a hotline complaint that was submitted to the inspector general by staff on the seventh floor regarding the potential misuse of resources.

And the specific allegation there is that concerns were raised to the inspector general that none of the people to whom these concerns were reported took any action and that that's why this person went to the IG.

What we would like to understand, based on that, first of all, is whether or not there were reactions on the seventh floor where those questions were raised in the first instance and whether the information in this complaint that no action was taken are correct, and then what the reactions were once the investigation itself began.

Mr. McQuaid. So I'm happy, again, I'm happy to have you ask her whether she's aware of -- whether she raised or she's aware of Secretary Pompeo or others on the seventh floor who had a role in IG Linick's firing had any knowledge

of these allegations in this whistleblower complaint. It's a little bit hard since we don't know -- you know, it's pretty diffuse, and you don't even know -- I don't know quite how you're concluding that it was someone who was on the seventh floor or just that they were aware.

But, again, I think we should only limit this to anything she was aware of about the knowledge of Secretary Pompeo or others because that might go to their motivation in the firing.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Ma'am, did you ever become aware that there had been a whistleblower complaint submitted to the OIG around the question of misuse of resources?

Mr. McQuaid. At the time of the firing, correct?

HFAC Dem Counsel. Approximate to the time of the firing, yes.

Ms. Kenna. No. I had no idea there was a whistleblower complaint until I saw this document in the press a couple weeks ago, whenever it was.

HFAC Dem Counsel. And I think -- hang on one second. Sorry.

Did anyone -- after it became clear that the inspector general was going to look into issues regarding the use of resources, did you have any conversations with anyone on the seventh floor about that investigation?

Mr. McQuaid. Again, [REDACTED], I think you're not thinking

back to her testimony. Her testimony was that she only became aware of that when she saw Linick's testimony. So is that what you're -- is that the time period you're referring to?

HFAC Dem Counsel. Mr. Linick -- whether or not that's based on her knowledge of his public testimony would be fine.

At the time that you became aware, ma'am, that there had been an IG investigation into Mr. Linick -- into the misuse of resources -- let me clarify. Is it your testimony that you only became aware of that through press reports?

Ms. Kenna. I became aware of that through a press report about Mr. Linick's testimony. That's when I first heard that there was an investigation into the misuse of government resources. I don't know what the scope is. I haven't yet had my interview with the IG.

HFAC Dem Counsel. And have you had any conversations with anyone on the seventh floor since you learned that there was an IG investigation into the misuse of resources?

Mr. McQuaid. [REDACTED], I'm sorry. I'm going to direct her not to answer. That's well after he was fired, so I don't know how that's going to be relevant to the firing of Linick.

HFAC Dem Counsel. My question is, mainly, did you have anybody approach you and say, hey, this is what we were

talking about previously, before he was fired?

Ms. Kenna. I don't understand the question.

HFAC Dem Counsel. After you learned from press reports that Mr. Linick had been looking into the misuse of resources by Toni Porter, did anyone ever come to you and say, yeah, before Mr. Linick was fired, we had been asking questions or asking for guidance on that? Did learning of that trigger anyone coming forward to you to talk about events that had occurred before Mr. Linick was fired?

Mr. McQuaid. But, [REDACTED], again, it would only be relevant if it was something that had been shared with somebody at the time. So if she knows that that information had been shared with somebody at the time, which I think she's already testified that she was not aware of, then I don't understand the relevance.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Okay. In the interest of time, I'm going to turn it over to [REDACTED].

Oversight Dem Counsel. Sorry. My video back?

HFAC Dem Counsel. Your voice is back.

Mr. McQuaid. I can just see [REDACTED].

Oversight Dem Counsel. If I talk, do I pop up?

HFAC Dem Counsel. There you are.

Mr. McQuaid. There you are.

Ms. Kenna. Yes.

BY Oversight Dem Counsel:

Q Thank you.

So a few final wrapping up matters here, and we appreciate your time and patience today.

So, first off, to return to our discussion at the outset. You did mention -- and with my colleague [REDACTED]'s helpful clarifications -- then you discussed the fact that there were document requests twice in the travel documents discussions. Is that right?

A That's right.

Q And one of those came in March and one came in early April?

A One came in March, and I can't recall precisely when the other one came.

Q Thank you.

And prior to Mr. Linick's firing, did State Department leadership raise concerns about any IG investigations, to your knowledge?

A There was concern about the leak of the IG report. That was what I was aware of.

Q Were there any concerns, to your knowledge, about the IG's investigation into the emergency declaration and arms sales?

A I was not part of any discussions about the IG.

Q Were you aware of any concerns about his performance more generally, separate from specific investigations?

A Before he was fired, no.

Q And after he was fired, are you familiar with Secretary Pompeo's comments to the press that he viewed Mr. Linick's work as essentially outside his lane?

A I've seen the comments, yes.

Q What was your reaction to those comments?

A I mean, this is the Secretary's comments. I mean, it doesn't seem appropriate for me to comment on the Secretary's remarks.

Q You noted earlier that the fact of an IG being fired was fairly notable. Is that right?

A Yes. Senior personnel departures or terminations is notable.

Q When my colleague was talking to you about conversations you had subsequent to the firing regarding Mr. Linick's firing, you did note that an IG being fired was particularly notable. Is that right?

A As I said, it's notable when an inspector general is fired, yes. People notice that.

Q And were there other discussions that you're aware of, separate from what we already went through on leadership, about concerns of his firing or reasons for his firing?

A I was not part of discussions about Mr. Linick's firing or concerns about his performance.

Q Are you aware of others having discussions to that effect?

A I'm not aware of them, no.

Oversight Dem Counsel. Okay. I think that covers my set of questions. We have a couple minutes left, [REDACTED], if you have anything?

HFAC Dem Counsel. Just a couple of wrap-up things.

First, I know we had introduced and discussed the letter from Congressman Sessions. I believe, if I've not totally lost track of things, that that would be exhibit 3. And I think the others we were able to specifically refer to.

Ma'am, I'd just like to close by thanking you for your time and thanking you for your service. We appreciate that you come in here today as someone who has had a long career serving under Presidents of both parties in a number of challenging situations. We are very grateful for your service.

We are grateful for the fact that you came in to answer questions on this issue, which is of critical importance to Congress to understand both the culture of retaliation at the State Department and also the underlying questions of why an inspector general was removed.

We greatly appreciate you simply doing your duty and coming in and answering factual questions on that, and I

wanted to reiterate our appreciation and to wish you well.

And with that, unless any of my colleagues or any other Democratic Members would like to raise any final points, I'd be happy to wrap up.

Ms. Kenna. May I ask a question?

HFAC Dem Counsel. Sure.

Ms. Kenna. Is this transcript going to be in the press at all? Will there be a press release?

HFAC Dem Counsel. I don't know that we have had final plans, but our expectation is that this transcript, like the others as part of this investigation, will be made public as soon as possible.

Your counsel and the Department, consistent with our standard practice, will have the opportunity to review the transcript for errata, and if there is any other supplemental material that we did not discuss here today that you feel should be included in the record, you're welcome to submit a letter to that effect.

Ms. Kenna. I would just ask that, you know, as you're crafting a press release, if you'd just be very careful with your language. There was one a month or so ago where it was mentioned that there was particular interest in exploring my role in the firing of the IG. And saying things like that makes it very difficult for a career foreign service officer to do, you know, to do my job.

It's suggesting something that I don't believe, you know, you have any information was actually the case, and I think I've tried to testify here that I actually had, you know, no -- no role whatsoever in the firing of the IG.

And these press releases, they go everywhere. And, you know, I have family, I have children, and there are implications for what we're doing.

And I'm here voluntarily because I respect, you know, your role, I understand the oversight role. But if we could just be -- we just need to be very careful about what we know and what we're saying.

HFAC Dem Counsel. If I could just respond to that.

We appreciate that, and we will absolutely be scrupulous in terms of any way in which it is discussed. And one of the reasons that we feel it's important for the public to have access to the full text is so that they have the full context and the benefit of your testimony in your own words.

And there's certainly no intention to make life more difficult for you and certainly not for your family.

So we appreciate you saying that, and we do.

Ms. Kenna. Thank you.

HFAC Rep. Counsel. [REDACTED], are we good to ask questions?

HFAC Dem Counsel. Yes.

Ms. Kenna, unless you had anything further on that.

Ms. Kenna. Nothing further.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Over to you, [REDACTED].

HFAC Rep. Counsel. Okay. I'm going to quickly defer, first, to [REDACTED], and then he can throw it back to me.

Oversight Rep. Counsel. Thanks, [REDACTED]. Just a couple things.

One, I said this about 45 minutes ago, we are not getting equal time, anywhere near equal time in this third round of questioning. I understand your questions went 46 minutes and change. Ours will be about 12 based on the time hard stop.

I hadn't really experienced that before. Every interview I've done, which may be in the triple digits now over the last 10 years, has always been equitable on the timeframe. Not here. Point number one.

Point number two, before I ask the witness a couple questions, point number two, I'd just like to note that, you know, the errant press release that the witness was talking about that essentially drove her to tears, you know, exploring her role in the firing of IG Linick.

She's been very clear on multiple occasions today, she had no role. She knew nothing about it. She had no role. No witness we've talked to had any role.

Let's talk to Mr. Bulatao. He's offered to come up

here on multiple occasions. That's been rejected. You know, HFAC majority staff rejected the deputy secretary's overtures to talk with the chairman.

They're not interested in getting information. They're interested in using the power of Congress to bully a current foreign service officer, you know, drive her to tears, the way she's been treated, starting with a deposition notice in her in-box, circumventing the normal channels going through OLA, a direct outreach to her on a deposition a week in the future with just an impossible time requirement.

It's just a sad day for all of us here and I'm very disappointed in how this has all unfolded.

My time's limited. So, Ms. Kenna, I'll just ask you a couple questions.

BY Oversight Rep. Counsel:

Q My first question is, are you familiar with an individual named Victor Vescovo? Victor Vescovo? Does that name ring a bell to you?

A No, it doesn't.

Q No, it doesn't. Well, it didn't ring a bell to me until about an hour ago. And an hour ago, I learned that Victor Vescovo, he's actually an American explorer who last year set the record for the deepest submarine dive down in the Marianas Trench, nearly 7 miles.

And so now our expedition has taken us around Cape

Horn, through the Pacific, and now we're on the outskirts of the Philippine Sea, in the Marianas Trench, just like Mr. Vescovo did.

Do you know what Mr. Vescovo found down at the bottom of the Marianas Trench? Do you know, when he went down there, do you know what he found?

A I don't.

Q He found a plastic bag. He found a plastic bag. And I don't even think we've done that in our investigation. We haven't even discovered a plastic bag. All the lines and hooks that have been cast overboard, we haven't even hooked a plastic bag yet.

I mean, the last 45 minutes of questioning, we've relitigated impeachment. We've read from the Marie Yovanovitch deposition. We've read from John Bolton's book. We've come no closer -- no closer -- to finding out why the IG was removed, none at all.

You know, on a personal note, I picked my 4-year-old up earlier this week from summer camp. Thank goodness it's open. And, you know, he very proudly showed me a picture he had drawn. And I said, what the heck is this? It looked like it was drawn by a 2-year-old. And it was just a bunch of black scribbles. And he said it was a maze.

And I wish I had it with me here today, I'd introduce it as an exhibit, because it's a perfect illustration of

what's going on on the other side. Just everything just going on. Nothing's connecting together. They're just throwing things at the wall. It's more reminiscent of what my 4-year-old has done than a Jackson Pollock painting. And it is just -- it's very disappointing, you know, what's occurring here.

Let me ask you a couple questions.

You know, you worked for Senator Kerry for a couple years, right, as his executive assistant? Is that right?

A That's correct.

Q Do you know if he has any pets, Secretary Kerry, did he at the time he was Secretary?

A Yes, I believe he does have a pet.

Q And how's that your belief?

A I mean, I would see the pet, yes.

Q What do you mean you would see the pet?

A I mean, do we have to talk about Secretary Kerry?
It doesn't seem --

Q Okay. Okay. I can move on. That's fine.

Let me ask you this. Does the Department of State, do they support congressional travel for Members of Congress?

A Yes, we do. We try to.

Q And does that run through the Executive Secretariat or is that sort of another area of the Department that supports congressional travel?

A It runs through the Bureau of Legislative Affairs.

Q Okay. So in terms of supporting congressional travel, is that something that you can speak to in terms of how the Department supports it?

A I mean, you know, as a foreign service officer serving abroad on many occasions I was a staffer supporting Members of Congress, staffers, spouses of Members. You know, they visited us, you know, in countries, in Jordan, in Cairo, and elsewhere.

Q Spouses, you said spouses of Members. So spouses of Members would accompany Members on official trips? Is that right?

A Yes.

Q And do you know if those official trips took place on government-owned aircraft?

A Often they did, yes.

Q And do you have any idea what type of authorization was granted or was required for that type of travel for spouses of Members of Congress to travel?

A I don't know what the, you know, process was for approving those trips. I'm not familiar with it.

Oversight Rep. Counsel. Okay. I'm going to kick my time back to [REDACTED].

Again, thank you for coming in. I know it's been a long day. I know it's been an unpleasant and challenging

day. But thank you very much for your time and answering every question for both sides to the best of your ability.

Thank you.

Ms. Kenna. Sure.

HFAC Rep. Counsel. Ms. Kenna, I have no other questions. Just on behalf of Ranking Member McCaul, thank you for your time and your service, and I hope you make it to Lima very soon.

Ms. Kenna. Thank you.

HFAC Rep. Counsel. [REDACTED], that is all for us.

HFAC Dem Counsel. Okay. And, again, just to reiterate our thanks on behalf of Chairman Engel, Chairwoman Maloney, and Ranking Member Menendez for coming in and cooperating voluntarily as part of this investigation. We very much appreciate it and we wish you well.

Ms. Kenna. Thank you.

HFAC Dem Counsel. We'll go off the record.

[Whereupon, at 2:25 p.m., the interview was concluded.]