

5 Reasons Benghazi Still Matters

Today, Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton will testify before the House Select Committee on Benghazi. The last time she testified before Congress she defiantly asked, “What difference, at this point, does it make?”

Benghazi matters. It matters for more than political talking points. It matters for more than emails (though they matter too). It matters because it was one of the worst terrorist attacks by radical Islamic jihadis on American citizens—on the anniversary of the worst terrorist attack in our history.

It matters for a number of reasons, but it matters because, without the truth, history can and will repeat itself.

1. Four Americans Died

On Sept. 11, 2012—the 11th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks—radical Islamic terrorists attacked our consulate in Benghazi, Libya. They mercilessly slaughtered four brave Americans.

First and foremost, these courageous American heroes deserve to be remembered:

The four Americans who died during that attack were: U.S. Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens; information management officer Sean Smith; and two security officers who were former Navy SEALs, Tyrone Woods and Glen Doherty.

Ambassador Stevens was the first Ambassador killed in the line of duty since 1979. Woods and Doherty fought valiantly in an attempt to save the ambassador, running head-on into a death trap—because it was the right thing to do.

But why did these four Americans have to die? Why was Ambassador Stevens' security so woefully inadequate in a warzone? Why were there no reinforcements?

The families of the slain and the American people as a whole deserve answers to these questions. The memory of these four brave Americans—who gave the last full measure of valor for their nation—must not be forgotten.

Attempts by the Obama administration and their allies in Congress belittle the threat, berate those who dare demand answers, and bury the truth, dishonoring the memory of these four murdered Americans.

2. America's Solemn Duty to Never Leave a Man Behind Is Shaken

Not only did four Americans die, they were abandoned. For hours, wave after wave of terrorists attacked the U.S. consulate in Benghazi. Within minutes of the first jihadi gunshots being fired, the State Department and CIA were notified of the attack, yet no help came. Within hours, President Obama was meeting with the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, yet no help came. The hours went by, and still no help.

There are accusations that an order was given to "stand down," preventing a possible rescue attempt. But whatever the reason, whatever the order, no help came. There was certainly no order given to take whatever steps necessary to protect our diplomats.

It is the solemn promise that America has made to those who risk their lives for our country that we will never leave a man behind. This sacred duty was broken that day. Whether four lives could have been saved, whether even one could have been saved and even whether more could have died in the attempt to save these four is unknown. But America always tries.

The stories of valor and bravery of American soldiers in every

war America has ever fought have been passed down for generations. The very idea that these brave Americans were left behind in Benghazi to suffer and die at the hands of Islamic terrorists is repugnant to every American. They deserved better and the American people deserve answers. It must never happen again.

3. President Obama's Awful Foreign Policy has Consequences

I've written many times about the deadly consequences of the Obama administration's failed foreign policy. While Russia and Syria are stealing headlines today, let us remember that the events that unfolded in Libya in 2012 were precipitated by the Arab Spring, once heralded by the Obama administration. It was in fact the Obama administration that ended the Qaddafi regime, killing the Libyan dictator.

Yet in the wake of the deposed dictator in a war-ravaged region, our diplomatic mission was compromised, lacking desperately needed security. Time and time again President Obama's unthinkable underestimation of radical Islamists (even calling ISIS a "jayvee team") has led to our woeful unpreparedness.

How could this administration not think, with the Middle East in flames, that U.S. diplomatic personnel in a warzone—on the anniversary of 9/11—could possibly be in harm's way? It's ludicrous, but it's exactly what happened.

The Obama administration's willful blindness to the truth only exacerbates the situation. The failures compound. And those failures have consequences. Benghazi and the four brave lives lost there is just one more reminder.

The consequences of these failures will only continue unless we learn the truth and take corrective action for the future.

4. President Obama Still Refuses to Confront the Threat of Radical Islam

What turned the murder of four brave Americans from a tragedy to a travesty was the Obama administration's dogged denial that the terrorist attack was carried out by radical Islamic terrorists.

The reality on the ground did not fit the administration's narrative for how the Middle East was developing. The way to deflect attention from these obvious failures was to shift responsibility, blaming the Benghazi attack on a video.

Yet the administration knew within three hours of the first shots being fired who was responsible for the attack. At 12:07 a.m. on Sept. 12, 2012, as the terrorist onslaught on the consulate continued, "The State Department sends an email to the White House, the Pentagon and the FBI indicating the Islamic militant group Ansar al-Sharia claimed credit for the attack."

President Obama's intractable refusal to name the enemy we face has been a recurring and deadly theme throughout his presidency. We face radical Islamic terrorists bent on destroying America. It was a terrorist named Nidal Hasan who killed American servicemen at Fort Hood, Texas, not workplace violence. It was Islamic terrorists not a video that murdered four Americans in Benghazi. It was radical Islamic terrorists who bombed the Boston Marathon, not "extremists."

This has not changed since 2012. And today, it matters even more. Unless we acknowledge as a nation the threat we face from radical Islam throughout the world (and in our own nation), we certainly can't defeat it and we won't be able to keep our American diplomats safe in the future.

5. We Still Have Ambassadors and Diplomatic Personnel in Dangerous Areas

The world—and the Middle East in particular—is no more safe today than it was in 2012. We still have diplomatic missions in dangerous places. Are our diplomats safe? Will we take the

necessary security measures to protect them?

If Benghazi doesn't make a "difference, at this point," then our diplomats could expect the same fate as Ambassador Stevens. The fact is Ambassador Stevens was left behind long before the first shots were fired outside our consulate.

As *Fox News* reports:

Two months before the fatal 2012 terrorist attack on the U.S. compound in Benghazi, then-Ambassador Chris Stevens requested 13 security personnel to help him safely travel around Libya, according to a cable reviewed by Fox News—but he was turned down.

In the July 9, 2012, cable, Stevens reported that, "Overall security conditions continue to be unpredictable, with large numbers of armed groups and individuals not under control of the central government, and frequent clashes in Tripoli and other major population centers." The cable said 13 security personnel would be the "minimum" needed for "transportation security and incident response capability."

But a congressional source said Patrick Kennedy, a deputy to then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, turned down the request.

Ambassador Stevens recognized the danger, the threat on the ground in Libya, and requested help two months before the attack and was turned down.

That makes a difference. It made a deadly difference for the ambassador then, and the breakdown in threat assessment and unwillingness to confront the reality on the ground could make the difference for hundreds of brave men and women in our diplomatic corps in dangerous areas of the world today.

Why was his request turned down? Have we learned from this deadly decision and corrected it? The answer to these

questions could save lives in the future.

In the end, what difference does it make? It could be the difference between life and death for American diplomats and civilians throughout the world.

If this really is a war of ideologies, the truth can be a powerful weapon.

Today, hopefully we will get one step closer to the truth. The American people are demanding it (and you can join them).
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