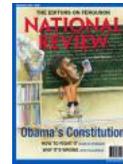


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Benghazi Eight Months Later

What we know and what we still don't know.

By Ted Cruz

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Benghazi compound, September 11, 2012.

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On September 11, 2012, terrorists attacked our consulate in Benghazi, Libya, and murdered four Americans, including our ambassador. Eight months later, we have learned some of what happened, but many questions remain.

This week the House of Representatives will hold a hearing on Benghazi, because we still don't know all the facts about how we responded during the seven and a half hours of attacks, why

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Ted Cruz

we could do nothing to save the lives of Ambassador Chris Stevens, Sean Smith, Glen Doherty, and Tyrone Woods, and what, if anything, we have done to deter future attacks against Americans by holding the responsible parties accountable.

What we do know leads to the inescapable impression that before, during, and after the Benghazi attacks, there was confusion and paralysis at the Department of Defense, the Department of State, and the White House.

Congress has learned that both Ambassador Stevens and his predecessor made repeated requests for additional security during the spring and summer of 2012. Most notably, Ambassador Stevens sent a cable to the State Department on August 15, 2012, expressly requesting additional security because the Benghazi consulate could not withstand a coordinated attack. The requests were denied, but Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, observed in congressional testimony that Defense could have provided all the needed security if State had requested it.

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Strikingly, Chairman Dempsey admitted he “would call myself surprised” that former secretary of state Hillary Clinton testified that she did not know about that cable at the time of the attacks.

We also know that the State Department made no request for additional security from the Defense Department in Benghazi in the weeks leading up to September 11, 2012,

despite knowing that the Red Cross and the United Kingdom had both withdrawn from the city because of the deteriorating security situation — not to mention the obvious significance of the anniversary of September 11, 2001. Worse, we have been told that no military assets were in a position to respond during the seven-plus hours of the attacks. But, as Chairman Dempsey testified, had additional support been requested before the attack, Defense would have provided it, and it could have saved lives.

The attack began at 3:42 P.M. EDT. We know that President Obama received a single 10- to 15- minute briefing on the Benghazi attack from Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta and Chairman Dempsey at 5:00 P.M., during his regularly scheduled briefing. But we also know that the president had no subsequent discussions with either the secretary or the chairman for the duration of the attack.

Seven and a half hours after the attack commenced, at 11:15 pm EDT, sustained mortar fire killed Glen Doherty and Tyrone Woods. Neither the secretary nor the chairman had any discussions with the president at that time, or throughout the remainder of the night. Moreover, the president had no contact with any member of the government of Libya for the duration of the attacks.

We know that during the duration of the attacks, neither Secretary Panetta nor Chairman Dempsey slept; both remained at the Pentagon throughout the night. But neither the secretary nor the chairman knows if the president slept while our people were under attack.

While the president was missing in action, there was confusion among the relevant

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cabinet officers as to who was in charge of coordinating the response from Washington. But we know that from the beginning to the end of the attacks, neither Secretary Panetta nor Chairman Dempsey had any conversation whatsoever with Secretary Clinton.

We also know that in the aftermath of the attacks, the Benghazi compound remained unsecured — and media reporters were able to access confidential documents — for 23 days because the State Department did not request Defense’s assistance in securing the site.

We know from their congressional testimony that according to the secretary of defense, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the director of national intelligence, because the attack on the annex employed rocket-propelled grenades and sustained mortar shelling, there was “no question” at the time that the events in Benghazi were terrorist attacks.

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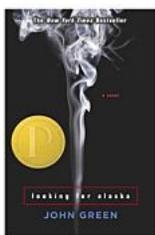
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