

The Saga of the Senators and the Secretary



It was a dog and pony show.

Democrats and Republicans on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee finally got to hear from Secretary of State Hillary Clinton last Thursday morning, four long months after the Benghazi attack that left four brave Americans dead, including the United States ambassador, Chris Stevens. None of them, not the senators or the secretary, should have bothered.

The Democrats fawned all over Madame Secretary and the Republicans didn't do much better. They produced a lot of heat, but not much light. The senators made speeches and asked very few direct questions. When they did ask a direct question, they didn't follow up. Many of the senators are lawyers, but I doubt that I would want any of them representing me in a court of law. When Hillary talked, she didn't seem to know much about much.

The attack happened on September 11, 2012, and it was orchestrated and carried out by a group of murderous thugs, better known as radical Muslim terrorists. Stevens was sodomized and his body was drug through the streets of Benghazi. It wasn't a pretty sight. It was an ugly way to die.

The attack began at 9:40 pm, Benghazi time, and lasted seven hours. During that time, no one came to the aid of the Americans. No F-16s, which were reportedly nearby, were scrambled. Warships were nowhere to be seen. The army didn't show. The marines didn't show. The air force didn't show. The special forces didn't show. The Americans had to go it alone and four of

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them died.

Leading up to the attack, Stevens had repeatedly asked for more security in Benghazi. In cables to the State Department, he pleaded for help. No extra security came. In fact, security was reduced, and Madame Secretary told the senators she never even read Stevens' cables.

Senators, the logical follow-up to that is, "Why did you not read the ambassador's cables? You were his boss. And if someone else read those cables, why weren't they passed along to you? And if they were not passed along to you, why didn't you fire the person who failed to put them on your desk?"

No such luck. Those questions never came and Hillary pretty much ran the show. She danced around the few questions that were asked. She chased rabbits. She avoided providing any details. At one point, she pitched a fit and the tantrum worked well. Many perceived her anger as righteous indignation and she got a pass. She is a lawyer, too, and she knows how to play the game. These senators were light work for her.

Another question that was never answered was, "Where was the president, Barack Obama, while the Americans were spending seven hours under siege?" She didn't seem to know. She was the secretary of state and she claims she did not know where her boss was. Not likely.

Did Obama and Clinton watch the attack in real time? What did the president know and when did he know it? None of these questions have been answered. The president hasn't answered those questions and Madame Secretary did not answer those questions during her appearance Thursday morning.

She doesn't seem to know much about what was going on before the attack. She doesn't seem to know much about what was going on during the attack, and then, she doesn't seem to know much about what went on after the attack. It was as if she was living on another planet before, during and after the attack.

Madame Secretary, why did you and the president and the United States U.N. ambassador,

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Susan Rice, continue to say the attack was the result of Arab anger about an anti-Muslim, YouTube video, long after you knew it had nothing to do with the video? Still, no answers.

The best speech of the morning came from Republican Kentucky senator, Rand Paul. He pulled no punches when it came his turn to address the secretary. After learning Clinton had not read the desperate cables from Stevens, he said, "Had I been president at the time and I found that you did not read the cables from Benghazi, you did not read the cables from Ambassador Stevens, I would have relieved you of your post." In other words, he would have fired the secretary on the spot, no questions asked.

Paul and Republican Wisconsin senator, Ron Johnson, were the only two who displayed real courage in confronting Clinton. John McCain, Republican senator from Arizona, in spite of showing flashes of anger, was not up to the task. He did not have the smarts, or perhaps the desire, to ask short, pointed questions and demand short, pointed answers in return.

The Republicans on that committee were the only hope for people wanting answers about Benghazi and most of the loyal opposition failed miserably.

They, along with Clinton, played a part in one of the greatest charades in American history. No real answers. No one really held accountable. Clinton's reputation and political aspirations are still intact in spite of her shortcomings as secretary of state.

The pundits say she will run for president in 2016 and if she can beat the Benghazi rap she may win the Democrats' nomination in a cakewalk. She, for some unexplained reason, continues to be very popular with the American people. Clinton and her boss, Barack Obama, are still dazzling the electorate with their footwork and sleight of hand.

Nonetheless, 2016 is a long way away and a lot can happen between now and then. What, for example? Maybe, just maybe, some of the survivors of that Benghazi attack will have something to say about what led up to the murders of their co-workers, what happened during the assault and what happened after the loss of human life and the destruction of property. Or, maybe one of her subordinates will decide to write a tell-all book. With all of that in mind, Clinton could spend the next three years waiting for the other shoe to drop.

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Her political ship could end up on the rocks, or, the American people might not even care about Benghazi three years from now. Either way, if she runs for president and Rand Paul runs against her, I already know who I will vote for.

Ed Baswell is the host of "Crossfire Radio," Monday through Friday, 7-9 am, on The Promise, 90.7 FM. The show is streamed live at promisetalkradio.org.