

One More Chance to Get Answers on Benghazi

✘ When then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton appeared at a congressional hearing back in January, our leaders in Washington had a prime opportunity to finally clear up some of the fog that surrounded the 2012 attack on our U.S. compound in Benghazi, Libya. Unfortunately, that opportunity was blown.

Questioners from the Democratic party used their allotted time not to ask questions, but to instead praise Clinton for her overall awesomeness. Several of them went as far as to declare she was the greatest secretary of state in our nation's history, which seemed odd under the circumstances. Odd, but not particularly surprising. After all, Democrats had decided early on that Benghazi was a politically-damaging story to their party's leader, so they loyally toted the administration's line on what happened, regardless of how many kinks were in that line.

The real disappointment, however, came from the Republicans in that hearing. As I wrote in a column back in January, half of them spent nearly their entire five minutes *grandstanding* about the failures of our government to protect the four Americans whose lives were taken. This left them with little or no time to ask actual questions. The individuals that *did* query Clinton did so by piecing about five questions together at once. This tactic let her run out the clock by picking the easy ones (which in many cases, had already been asked and answered earlier in the hearing) and avoiding the tough ones.

It was a joke that the Republicans didn't take the time to come up with a better questioning strategy, especially considering how serious the topic was. And it was serious. Contrary to the famous statement made by Hillary Clinton during the hearing – the one that was widely hailed by the

mainstream media – the details of what happened in Benghazi *do* “matter”.

It *matters* when four American patriots are killed after multiple requests for additional security are denied in one of the most dangerous regions of the world.

It *matters* when such an attack can be carried out for hours without U.S. military reinforcements sent to the scene to assist.

It *matters* when a presidential administration repeatedly tells the American public a B.S. story about who attacked their fellow citizens, and what their motivations were.

It *matters* when our government purposely seeks out a fabricated scapegoat, like an untalented filmmaker in California, to deflect blame onto for four American deaths.

It *matters* when the president of the United States tries to re-write history by claiming he had been upfront and honest about the attack all along, when clearly he had not.

And it certainly *matters* when our media is so protective of a U.S. president, that they will make a conscious decision not to investigate a scandal that could hurt him politically, just weeks prior to a presidential election.

On Wednesday, the Republicans in congress will have one more opportunity to expose the injustices that were committed in the way our government addressed the Benghazi attack – not just on the night of the attack, but also in the weeks and months following. Self-described whistle-blowers from the State Department will be delivering testimony in Washington, and they reportedly have much to reveal.

The Republicans can't afford to screw this up. Unlike the last time, they need to address the hearing with the seriousness it deserves.

They should do two things in preparation for the hearing.

First, they should all read Stephen Hayes' recent piece in *The Weekly Standard*. In it, Hayes does an excellent job of detailing both the timeline of the government's response to the Benghazi attack, and the evolving changes that were made to the related *talking points* delivered to the American public. The Hayes piece is a real eye-opener.

Secondly, they need to check their grandiosity at the door and coordinate their questioning. No one wants to hear long-winded speeches designed to gin up a political base. The topic is too important. The mainstream media may not care about what happened in Benghazi, but a lot of Americans do, and the truth needs to be heard. The Republicans in congress should ask short, concise questions. And if one of them doesn't get all of the information they requested in their allotted time, the next Republican in line should pick up where he or she left off. The grandstanding and political commentary can wait until after the hearing.

If the Republicans can get their acts together and play this straight, we might actually get some long-awaited answers for the families of the victims, and maybe even a little bit of justice for the victims themselves.