

# I Take Full Responsibility – Now Leave Me Alone!

☒ Now that Benghazi is back in the news with a Senate report saying the deadly attack was “preventable” and blasting the State Department for lax security that led to four Americans being murdered, I’ve been wondering: Where is Hillary Clinton? Why isn’t she out there commenting on the report? It’s like she’s disappeared.

Then it hits me how unfair I am. Why should Hillary have to say anything about the report? She’s already put the matter to rest. Over a year ago she told CNN she takes “full responsibility” for the security failures in Benghazi.

And then she resigned in disgrace. Just kidding. After taking “full responsibility” she did absolutely nothing, just like a lot of other pols who “take full responsibility” and then go about their business as if nothing happened. Taking “full responsibility” and “suffering consequences,” apparently, have nothing to do with each other.

Of all the terms and phrases in the English language, I think, “I take full responsibility” just may be the most meaningless.

When no one could log onto the government website to sign up for ObamaCare, the president courageously took “full responsibility” for making sure the website gets fixed. And what if it doesn’t? What if, as some contend, the site isn’t secure and may be a goldmine for hackers? Will President Obama resign? Just kidding.

So in the goofy world of American politics, saying “I take full responsibility” isn’t the first step to paying a price for the problem. It’s a statement used to avoid paying a price. Orwell must be smiling.

As the scholar Thomas Sowell put it: "Don't you love it when a politician says, 'I take full responsibility'? Translated into plain English, that says, 'Now that I have admitted it, there is nothing more for me to do (such as resign) and nothing for anyone else to do (such as fire me).' Saying 'I take full responsibility' is like a get-out-of-jail-free card in the Monopoly game.'

Not always. Anthony Weiner took "full responsibility" for texting his wiener to young women, but at least he had the decency (sorry, wrong word) to resign from Congress. And right after he resigned he announced he would run for mayor of New York City. But hey, he took "full responsibility" for what he did, right?

Back in 1993, Attorney General Janet Reno took responsibility for what some called the "federal massacre" of the Branch Davidians at Waco, Texas.

"I'm accountable. The buck stops with me," she told Ted Koppel on Nightline. But when Koppel told her that in many European countries a Cabinet minister would resign as a way to accept responsibility for a major failure, Reno said: "If that's what the president wants, I'm happy to do so." In other words: "Let's get something straight Bozo, I'm not going anywhere unless someone kicks me out."

At the time, Mickey Kaus, noting how meaningless her claim to "accountability" was, wrote this: "[S]he made a disastrous decision that resulted in the loss of more than 70 lives. Then she accepted 'responsibility.' In a bizarre bit of political alchemy, this somehow protected her from suffering any of the consequences that normally attend disastrously handled responsibilities. Far from restoring accountability, Reno seems to have hit on the formula for avoiding it. Make a dreadful mistake? Go immediately on Nightline. Say the buck stops with you. Recount in moving human terms the agony of your decision. And watch your polls rise."

When Hillary announces that she's running for president I hope some journalist reminds her that she took "full responsibility" for the "preventable" debacle in Benghazi and then asks her what consequences she's prepared to suffer for her mistake. Along the same lines, I also hope I win the lottery.

I tried my best to get everything right in this column but if I didn't, believe me, I take full responsibility. Now get off my back.

\*\*\*\*\*

What does "I take full responsibility" really mean when the words come out of the mouth of a politician? Funny replies wanted.