



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on May 7, 2013

Benghazi Failures Show Clinton Unfit for Office, Paul Says

Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's "dereliction of duty" regarding security at the U.S. diplomatic outpost at Benghazi, Libya, should preclude her from holding any office, Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) said in a speech to the Missouri Republican Party last week. The Missouri Republicans released a video of the entire speech Tuesday morning as part of a fundraising effort, the online political publication *The Run* [reported](#).



Questions and accusations concerning security arrangements and the response by President Obama and State Department officials to the assault on the mission last fall that killed U.S. Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three other Americans have come up repeatedly in the weeks and months since the September 11, 2012 attack. During a hearing by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in January, Clinton said she had not read cables from Libya requesting additional security.

"Had I been president at the time" and known the secretary had not read those cables, "I would have relieved you of your post," Paul [told](#) Clinton at the hearing. "I think it's inexcusable." In his Missouri speech last week, Paul said Clinton should be relieved of any future office as well.

"I think her dereliction of duty and her lack of leadership should preclude her from holding any office," he said to enthusiastic applause from the partisan crowd. Clinton is considered the likely frontrunner for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2016 if she seeks it, and Paul has indicated an interest in the Republican nomination. Neither has made any definitive statement about a White House bid.

The attack at Benghazi occurred hours after an anti-American demonstration on the grounds of the U.S. embassy in Cairo, Egypt, where the American flag was torn down and an al-Qaeda flag raised. That event was widely reported as a response to viewing on the Internet of an American-made anti-Muslim movie. The military-style assault in Benghazi was carried out by an estimated 125 to 150 militants with assault rifles, heavy machine guns mortars and rocket grenades. For several days after the attack, U.S. officials were describing it as a spontaneous demonstration that had been taken over by extremists.

"Our current best assessment, based on the information that we have at present, is that, in fact, what this began as, it was a spontaneous — not a premeditated — response to what had transpired in Cairo," U.S. Ambassador to the UN Susan Rice said in a September 16 interview on ABC's *This Week*, one of five talk shows she appeared on that Sunday. "And then as that unfolded, it seems to have been hijacked, let us say, by some individual clusters of extremists who came with heavier weapons... And it then evolved from there."

Gregory Hicks, who was deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli at the time, said it was clear from the start that the assault in Benghazi was a terrorist attack. "I thought it was a terrorist attack from the get-go. I think everybody in the mission thought it was a terrorist attack from the beginning," Hicks said in an [interview](#) with investigators. Excerpts of the interview were aired Sunday on *Face the Nation*. Hicks is one of three State Department "whistleblowers" scheduled to testify Wednesday before a House Oversight Committee hearing on the Benghazi attack.



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The attack occurred during the presidential election contest between President Barack Obama and Republican challenger Mitt Romney, and some Republicans have suggested the administration was reluctant to call it a terrorist attack because that would undermine the Obama campaign narrative that al-Qaeda and its affiliates had been defeated and were on the run.

“Clearly, there was a political decision to say something different than what was reasonable to say,” House Oversight Committee Chairman Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) said on *Face the Nation* Sunday.

At the Foreign Relations Committee hearing in January, Clinton appeared to grow impatient when questioned by Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) over how the attack was characterized in the days after the event.

“Was it because of a protest, or was it because of guys out for a walk one night who decided they’d go kill some Americans? What difference, at this point, does it make?” Clinton [said](#), her voice rising. “It is our job to figure out what happened and do everything we can to prevent it from ever happening again, Senator.” In one of her final appearances as secretary of state, Clinton took responsibility but not the blame for security failures at the Benghazi mission.

“I feel responsible for the nearly 70,000 people who work for the State Department,” she told the committee. “But the specific security requests pertaining to Benghazi, you know, were handled by the security professionals in the department. I didn’t see those requests. They didn’t come to me. I didn’t approve them. I didn’t deny them.” Clinton said about 1.4 million cables come to the State Department every year.

“I don’t think she should read every cable,” Paul said in his St. Louis speech last week. “Maybe from Estonia and Bulgaria an assistant should read it. But from one of the five most dangerous countries in the world, there’s no excuse for her not reading the cables.”



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