

REINTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTION
TO CREATE A HOUSE SELECT
COMMITTEE ON THE TERRORIST
ATTACK ON THE U.S. CON-
SULATE IN BENGHAZI, LIBYA

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 18, 2013

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, today I have re-introduced my resolution to establish a House Select Committee on the Terrorist Attack in Benghazi to ensure a unified investigation of the attack and the Obama Administration's response. A select committee is essential to combine the myriad existing investigations into a single, comprehensive and exhaustive review. I believe such a combined effort will yield even more information regarding the true nature of these terrorist attacks and the administration's response.

More than four months have passed since the terrorist attack on the U.S. consulate and annex that occurred during the late evening and early morning hours of September 11–12. The attack took the lives of four Americans, including a U.S. ambassador—the first ambassador to be killed in the line of duty since 1979. Yet the American people still have been told little about the timeline of this attack and the administration's response in the hours, days and weeks following. Consider that the American people still haven't been provided answers to the following serious questions:

With the inexplicable release of suspect Ali Harzi by Tunisian authorities earlier this month, why are there no suspects in custody?

Secretary Clinton, Secretary Panetta, Attorney General Holder and DNI Clapper still haven't testified before Congress—what steps did they take during the attack and in the days that followed?

What were the President's activities during the seven-hour period of attack?

Why wasn't the U.S. military deployed to assist? On the anniversary of the worst terrorist attack in American history, after multiple attacks this year on U.S. and Western interests, why were U.S. military units and assets in the region not ready, alert and positioned to respond? After all, two of the four people were killed seven hours after fighting began.

Why do we still not have clear answers on the internal process that produced the inaccurate talking points on which Ambassador Rice relied several days after the attack?

Why were the testimonies of the U.S. personnel who were evacuated from Benghazi on September 12—eyewitnesses who knew there never was a demonstration outside the Consulate—not immediately factored in to the judgments of our intelligence community?

Why wasn't Secretary Clinton interviewed by the Pickering Commission?

Was the White House aware of the FBI investigation of Gen. Petraeus? If not, why not?

There are also serious questions about links of this terrorist attack to the protests at the U.S. embassies in Cairo, Egypt, Tunis, Tunisia and Sanaa, Yemen that same week—where each American compound was breached by individuals allegedly linked to al Qaeda-affiliated groups. What, if any, were the connections between these incidents and the attack in Benghazi?

These questions are too serious—and the consequences too grave—to be brushed

aside. There are critical legislative decisions the next Congress will have to make based on the answers of these questions. But more importantly, the American people deserve answers to these questions—including open hearings and an unclassified report.

The select committee I am proposing should draw from the existing congressional investigations by including the chairman and ranking member of each committee of jurisdiction—Intelligence, Foreign Affairs, Judiciary, Armed Services, Homeland Security and Oversight and Government Reform—as well as five additional Republicans appointed by the Speaker and two additional Democrats appointed by the Minority Leader.

I appreciate the support I have received for this resolution from the original cosponsors, as well as the Heritage Foundation. I also submit for the record a recent op-ed that was published on RealClearPolitics.com by former Senator Fred Thompson articulating the benefits of a unified select committee. Senator Thompson has a unique perspective on the need for this committee given his experience as counsel on the Senate select committee on Watergate.

Mr. Speaker, we owe it to the families of the victims, and the American people, to fully investigate this terrorist attack. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

[From RealClearPolitics.com, Nov. 28, 2012]

INVESTIGATING BENGHAZI: WHY WE NEED A
SELECT COMMITTEE

(By Fred Thompson)

As we fixate on the latest version of Gen. David Petraeus' testimony or the misleading statements of Susan Rice, I suggest that we stop and think about the size of what we are dealing with. The Benghazi tragedy raises questions concerning the protection of our embassies, the performance and capabilities of our military and our intelligence community, as well as the decisions of high-ranking officials in the Department of Defense, the State Department, the White House and possibly the Justice Department.

The scope of the questions that involve an array of officials, and sensitive agencies and departments of our government, is unprecedented. The inquiry into what happened and why, along with who is or should be accountable, calls for a focused, responsible effort equal to the seriousness and the complexities the issues.

I've seen this rodeo before, both in a constructive manner (Watergate, where I served as a counsel) and a less-than-constructive one (Clinton-era investigations, where I chaired a committee that probed at least one facet of the various scandals). On our present course, the prospects for a relatively short but thorough, credible, bipartisan congressional investigation are not good. The prospects for a disjointed, drawn-out mess, replete with partisan bickering, are much better.

It is easy to identify at least eight congressional committees (four in each chamber) with claims of jurisdiction in the Benghazi matter. No committee has jurisdiction over all of it, and several committees have jurisdiction over parts that overlap with the jurisdictions of other committees. Some of the committee hearings will involve classified information and will be conducted behind closed doors. Members of "Committee A" will not know what a witness told "Committee B" in a closed hearing. Gen. Petraeus' recent appearance on Capitol Hill demonstrates how difficult it can be to get a consistent story when the witness is making multiple appearances before even the same committee.

Perhaps not all committees with jurisdiction will have hearings, but if half of them do it will produce competing hearings, with competing staffs and competing press conferences over much of Capitol Hill. It will also take longer than necessary, as government officials shuffle back and forth giving repeat performances. Different committee chairmen and their committees will make different rulings on document production, whether to move for immunity for witnesses who refuse to testify on the basis of the 5th Amendment, and a host of other matters.

This is simply not the most efficient and credible way to proceed. And it is less likely to arrive at the truth. The seriousness of the matter calls for something better. It calls for a select committee that is given a specific mandate, a budget and a cut-off date that can be adjusted if it is agreed upon. It needs to be comprised of members of both parties who have been selected by their leadership because of their proven integrity, reputation for fairness, and expertise in a given area.

In a matter fraught with political implications, it is especially important that Congress accept its responsibility and minimize partisanship as much as possible. History demonstrates that this goal is much easier to achieve with a handful of selected people than it is with many. Since 1789, when Congress investigated a failed military expedition, select committees have been utilized to serve such important and sensitive functions, and the Benghazi matter should follow in that long tradition, whether by means of a joint committee of both houses of Congress or by either chamber.

Most select committees have become historical footnotes. Some, however, are well remembered because of the contribution they made to helping Congress carry out its duties of legislating, overseeing the executive branch and educating the American people as to the operation of their government. Ironically, it is because of the success of these panels that some members of Congress and others oppose the formation of one in this case.

They say that forming a select committee for a matter such as Benghazi, where a consulate and four American lives were lost, would attach too much importance to the investigation. They fear that it would be equating it with Watergate. Of course, if the Watergate standard, as they define it, is now the operative standard for the formation of a select committee, then seldom, if ever, will another select committee be formed.

Critics of the select committee miss the point on several levels. First of all, if indeed a comparison is to be made, one must look at the seriousness of facts and issues presented concerning Benghazi and compare them with the seriousness of facts and issues presented at the times when other select committees, such as Watergate, were formed. So compare the Watergate burglary with what we have here. Can there be any doubt that Benghazi passes the Watergate test?

The wisdom of utilizing a select committee should not just be judged on the outcome of the committee's work; dramatic results are not always achieved or warranted. The select Watergate Committee is a beneficial reference point, not because of the end result of its investigation a year and a half after it was formed, but because of the process Congress utilized to deal with a difficult situation.

At that time, we had a Republican president and a Congress controlled by the Democrats. Yet the Senate voted unanimously to form the committee. Democratic leadership appointed Sen. Sam Ervin, reputed to be the chamber's leading constitutional scholar, to chair the committee. The Republican leader appointed Sen. Howard Baker to be the vice

chairman and leading member of his party on the committee—a senator who was respected on both sides of the aisle. These men protected the legitimate partisan interests of their respective parties and the path was not always smooth, especially behind closed doors, but they understood that their colleagues, as well as the nation, were depending upon them to be responsible and seek the truth. Authority and accountability were clearly placed on the committee, and its members performed accordingly.

Select committees are not perfect creations by any means. A clear narrative is often difficult to produce under any circumstances. However, a select committee is simply much more likely to produce focused and credible results. Soon we will see if the United States Congress is still capable of coming together toward the common goal of getting to the bottom of a very serious matter. Or, are decisions about select committees simply reflective of positions based upon whose ox is in danger of being gored?

HONOR OF JERRY POLONSKY

HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 18, 2013

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, today I have the honor of speaking on behalf of my dear friend, Jerry Polonsky, who on Sunday, December 20th will be celebrating his retirement as acting Commander of the Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America.

I've known Jerry for many years—we are both from the great hometown of Levittown, Pennsylvania. Everyone in town who knows Jerry knows that he has been a great leader in our community. The best way to describe Jerry is a "natural born leader," an advocate for everything that's right and good for this country.

Jerry is a great American story. Earlier in his career, Jerry worked for an insurance company in Philadelphia, while also running his own printing business out of his home. He also served our nation's military proudly during the Korean War in a "classified" position, and has been married to his lovely wife Barbara for over 50 years.

Jerry's earlier career endeavors and military experience don't even begin to sum up his lifelong accomplishments. In addition, Jerry has served as the Commander of the Jewish War Veterans of the United States, and his commitment to their mission is unending. For many years, Jerry has volunteered his time and efforts to the department's cause to ensure that those who have fought our nation's battles receive the treatment and the respect they deserve. With Jerry's help, many returning veterans have received the care they need through the Jewish War Veterans. Also, Jerry has been a strong advocate for the state of Israel, fighting to ensure that peace and prosperity continue to reign true in the Jewish state.

Jerry has devoted his life to helping those in need, and has inspired many of us who have had the great pleasure of knowing him. He is a hero to his community, our country, his family, and to me. Jerry, I wish you and your family all the best. I wish you many more years of happiness and success. It is an honor to call you my friend.

HONORING THE LIFE OF FREDDY CABANAS

HON. JOE GARCIA

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 18, 2013

Mr. GARCIA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a dear friend and legend in the Key West community, Fred Cabanas. An aerobatic daredevil, fourth generation Conch, loving husband, and father, Freddy died this past Tuesday doing what he loved, flying.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest sympathies and condolences to all who knew him, especially to his wife of over 30 years, Susan, and his two children, Kelly and Ray.

Freddy began flying at the age of 16, hanging around airport hangars at Key West International Airport, exchanging plane washes for flying lessons. In time, Freddy became an aviation legend in Key West.

Freddy helped put Key West on the map by opening ceremonies and competing in airshows with incredible stunts, both high in the sky and frighteningly close to the ground. His skill and enthusiasm for aviation were so ingrained in Key West culture that he was named General of the Conch Republic Air Force.

But, Freddy was more than a talented aviator. He was a skilled and generous businessman as well. As the proprietor of Cabanas Aeronautics Unlimited, he enjoyed providing sightseeing tours of the beautiful Florida Keys, thrill rides to the brave-hearted, and perhaps most of all, giving back to others, from mentoring other pilots to flying supplies to earthquake-stricken Haiti.

Mr. Speaker, the skies above Key West are just a little dimmer today without Freddy zooming overhead, but he will long be remembered for his renowned talent, gregarious spirit, generous heart, and the indelible mark he has left on the cultural fabric of Key West.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 18, 2013

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House chamber for

votes Monday, January 14. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall vote 8, "nay" on rollcall vote 9 and "nay" on rollcall vote 10.

HONORING THE HONOREES OF THE ANDROSCOGGIN COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AWARDS

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 18, 2013

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Honorees of the 2013 Androscoggin County Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet Dinner. The Androscoggin County Chamber of Commerce serves the people and business community of the Lewiston-Auburn area, working hard to strengthen economic opportunity throughout the region and the State.

Each year, the Androscoggin Chamber of Commerce recognizes local businesses, business leaders, and individuals who promote and advance a vital and healthy business environment. These individuals and businesses are committed to strengthening opportunity and prosperity in Maine.

This year's award recipients include Barbara Dagley of Carbonite Inc., recipient of Business Leadership Award for a Larger Company; Kurk Lalemand of Next Level Business Coaching and John Stass of Katandin Furniture, recipients of the Business Leadership Awards for Smaller Companies; Larry Raymond of Issacson and Raymond, recipient of Ray Geiger Award; Rita Dube, Julia Sleeper and Kim Pelletier, recipients of the Community Service Leadership Awards; Rick Jones of Jones Associates, recipient of the Poland Business Award; Nick Benoit of Benoit's Bakery and Wine Cellar, recipient of the Lisbon Business Award; Nancy Ricker of Ricker Hill Orchards, recipient of the Turner Business Award; Russ Barlow, recipient of the Education Award; Sherry Spencer of Proctor and Gamble-Tambrands, recipient of the "Cool Chamber Award;" Dick Roy of Mechanics Savings Bank, recipient of the Ken Addition Small Business Advocate Award; Kim Jacques of Revelation Massage, recipient of the 2013 New Member of the Year Award; and Susan Hall of the Vault and Kevin Dean and Emil Clavet of Electricity Maine, recipients of the President's Award.

These recipients are among the best that Maine has to offer. Through their leadership and incredible commitment to their communities and the region, Maine is a better place to live and do business.

Mr. Speaker, please join me again in congratulating the Androscoggin Chamber of Commerce and these individuals on their outstanding service and achievement.