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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WEBSTER).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 24, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DANIEL WEBSTER, to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

THE SEVENTH UNANSWERED QUESTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, today I've come to the floor to raise the seventh in a series of critical but unanswered questions about the terrorist attacks on the U.S. consulate and annex in Benghazi last September 11.

Despite a year of investigation in a number of committees, the American people still do not know the answers to these questions, nor do they know if they have even been asked.

With only 5 legislative days remaining before the Congress departs for August recess, I'm increasingly concerned that none of these questions will be answered by the one-year anniversary of the Benghazi attack.

According to a recent excerpt in the forthcoming book, "Under Fire: The Untold Story of the Attack in Benghazi," which was published in this month's Vanity Fair magazine, Ambassador Stevens made several calls for help after reaching what he believed was a safe room on the consulate compound.

As we well know now, one call was placed to his Deputy Chief of Mission, Gregory Hicks, who was at the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli. In May, Hicks provided powerful testimony about that final conversation with Stevens.

He also called "local militia and public-security commanders in Benghazi, pleading for help."

What I found interesting in the Vanity Fair excerpt is that Stevens also made calls to "nearby consulates" on the BlackBerry of someone on his security detail. Assuming the authors are correct, the government must have the phone records from Stevens' calls to the militia and foreign consulates that night.

This raises the important question of what foreign consulates did he call, and how did these consulates respond?

If Stevens was calling foreign consulates, it also begs the question, did U.S. officials in Tripoli or Washington call any allies with assets in Libya to help respond to the attack?

Furthermore, did the Pentagon connect any NATO allies with military assets in the region that could have provided assistance that night?

Given how close many of the European allies are to the Mediterranean, wouldn't they have planes or response teams stationed in locations in or near by the region that could have mobilized upon a request from Washington?

After speaking of force posture, what have we done to ensure that if another incident were to happen this September 11 that we're prepared to respond?

We're less than 2 months away from the 9/11 anniversary, but the American people don't know whether we're any more capable of responding to an incident in North Africa or the Middle East.

The American people have lost confidence in this investigation. We can help restore it with a bipartisan select committee.

EFFECTS OF THE SEQUESTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I've come to this floor nearly every week since the sequester took effect in March to highlight its dangerous consequences to our national security, its harmful impact on our economy, and the pain it is causing the most vulnerable people in our country.

Now, with the sequester in its 21st week, this Congress has still not achieved the big, balanced and bipartisan solution to deficits that we need to replace the sequester and put America back on a sound fiscal path.

Only such an agreement, Mr. Speaker, can provide a viable alternative to the irrational cuts this sequestration has imposed. Those cuts are already exacerbating the many challenges we face as a Nation.

Later this week, I will be delivering meals to seniors in my district with the Meals on Wheels program, which could be delivering 4 million fewer meals nationwide as a result of the sequester.

One small business owner from my district recently reached out to my staff to say that he was personally impacted by Meals on Wheels when the

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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