



# Benghazi Redacted

BY KATHLEEN PARKER

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WASHINGTON — Mistakes were made. This, we are supposed to accept, is the conclusion to be drawn about the terrorist attacks in Benghazi, Libya, despite congressional testimony Wednesday suggesting that significant errors were made to camouflage those mistakes.

As Democrats and Republicans alike know all too well: It's always the cover-up.

Yet in this case, where so clearly the State Department and others in the Obama administration took extra steps to mischaracterize what happened the night Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other Americans were killed, Democrats roll their eyes at any suggestion of such.

More or less, most seem to agree with Hillary Clinton's exasperated assessment during her own congressional testimony in January: "What difference at this point does it make?"



Kathleen PARKER

I get her meaning. Why people decided to attack the American consulate and CIA annex in Benghazi is far less important than preventing another such attack in the future. Clinton, who at that point in the hearing may have felt badgered, was understandably weary. Four years on the road had taken their toll and she was recently out of the hospital for treatment of a blood clot inside her skull. This tedious review of history put her over the edge.

Her interrogators, apparently intimidated by the sight of an angry woman — or afraid of looking like bullies — immediately assumed the position of a dog whose master is fiddling with his belt buckle.

Before moving along, let's clear some brush: Is the Obama administration culpable for what transpired in Libya? No. It isn't possible to prevent all eventualities, though in retrospect, it obviously would have been prudent to provide more security in such a volatile place.

Is Clinton to blame for the deaths of four Americans? Of course not. Bad things happen in bad places.

Should we have sent military assistance? If only life were a movie, we could have saved the day. But our military commanders say we couldn't have gotten there in time. Civilians can speculate that they are wrong, but on what basis?

Still, there is much that should give pause to anyone, regardless of political affiliation. Three essential questions have been answered: (1) Was there advance warning of possible terrorist activities in Libya? Yes. (2) Was a request for more security denied? Yes. (3) Did the Obama administration edit the truth? Yes.

Faced with these answers, Democrats are more will-

ing to give their president the benefit of the doubt. Perhaps he was trying to avoid further inflaming a dangerous situation by refusing to repeat his predecessor's incendiary proclamations against Islamist terrorists.

Or, just as likely, he was too close to re-election to risk contradictions to his campaign narrative: He had killed Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda was as good as dead.

What we now know from testimony and other reporting is that Americans on the ground knew the Benghazi attacks were coordinated terrorist assaults and not a street protest over an anti-Muslim video that escalated. Nevertheless, U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice was sent on a tour of five Sunday morning news shows to reiterate the CIA-approved talking points.

On Friday, ABC's Jonathan Karl reported that a review of emails shows that those talking points were the result of 12 different revisions, orchestrated by the State Department, resulting in removal of any reference to warnings or the al-Qaeda-affiliated group Ansar al-Sharia.

In one email to White House officials, State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland expressed concerns that inclusion of such information "could be abused by members [of Congress] to beat up the State Department for not paying attention to warnings, so why would we want to feed that either?"

These emails directly contradict White House press secretary Jay Carney's remarks in a Nov. 28, 2012, news briefing that the "single adjustment" made to the talking points by the administration was "changing the word 'consulate' to 'diplomatic facility.'"

In another email, Nuland expressed dissatisfaction with some of the tweaks, writing, "These changes don't resolve all of my issues or those of my buildings leadership."

Therein lies a telling clue.

When a "building's leadership" is cited as directing an official narrative, you can be sure that someone is trying to avoid responsibility for something. Otherwise known as CYA (covering your anatomical-posterior).

It is easy to believe that real-time mistakes in Benghazi were honestly made. No one thinks that any president or secretary of state would do less than everything possible to save American lives. But the mistakes made afterward, whether out of embarrassment or political survival, are less easily rationalized. They were, factually and knowingly, dishonest.

And that, Madame Secretary, is what difference it makes.

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## The Rez of the Story

# An Appreciation Of Mothers

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives), I trust that we all took the opportunity to share with our mothers how much we appreciate them on their one day of the year set aside just for them. Linda Poindexter, the American writer, once wrote, "The first time you truly appreciate Mother's Day will be the first time you spend it without one." Truly a word to the wise I would say. In our Dakotah language we call our mother's "Ina," without which Dakotah society would crumble and disappear.

According to our elders the traditional Dakotah family structure (called Tiwahe or Tiyospaye) was a successful strategy for organizing and maintaining clear lines of authority and cooperation. So a family unit included all extended family members and not just the nuclear model of family used by modern society. Yet, you will still see (especially in terms of Tribal political decisions) this loyalty along lineal family lines has survived despite the onslaught of Euro-American efforts to break these familial structures apart.

Of course, central to the Dakotah way of life was the position of women, especially mothers and grandmothers. Many have referred to Dakotah society as a matriarchal society where the women held positions of leadership and were included in many key decisions. Today even though our Tribal leadership is elected, it is not uncommon to see women elected to council and even chairmanships.

Growing up, I observed my aunts, like grandma Aberdeen, to be the moral compass for our family. There are stories about how she made my mother and one of her cousins stay in school. Grandma ostensibly understood and supported the need for education and she enforced it.

My grandfather (my mother's dad) would visit grandma Aberdeen and I picked up on the deep-abiding respect he had for his sister. Indian people, even today, take relationships very seriously. When my uncles and aunts saw a close relative they hadn't seen in a while, they would hug



Vince TWO EAGLES

and cry. Kind of dispels the stereotype of a stoic, unfeeling Indian, don't you think? Our people are very polite and soft-hearted toward one another. We don't like to say no to our relatives making a request; it's disrespectful in a way. Of course, this doesn't apply when someone is drinking or using drugs — all bets are off then.

So mother's should be honored on her day and every day of the year for all their sacrifices and support only our moms give without hesitation. They should be honored and remembered for all the hugs we got, whether we needed them or not. And for all the times they worried about our late comings and goings, the meals they prepared for us and our friends, the bumps and bruises we sustained while playing too hard were kissed away, the times we needed to talk to someone about things we cannot talk to anyone else about and mom was there, the times we felt unsure about ourselves and mom made us realize how important we really are in this world — to these and more, we owe our mother's for the gift of our very lives.

My mother is a great teacher. She always says we are all teachers and students at the same time. Through example and careful direction, she is imparting to her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren the valuable lessons we all will need to make our journey a little smoother and more meaningful.

I have witnessed her suffering and have no question now as to how she attained her wisdom: She earned it along with the gray slowly taking over her once all black hair. I have witnessed her joy while holding her great-grandchildren and when the family gets together at least once a year at our annual family gatherings over the past several years.

Of course, our family all wish her much more joy in her life and hope there will be many more family gatherings we get to share with her and hope the same for all of you. Happy Mother's Day!

And now you know the rez of the story. Doksha (later) ...

I thank God that he was watching over them and kept them. He gave them strength during the time of captivity. I pray that they will have the same strength to overcome that and live productive lives. We need to remember that God is alive and watching over us.

# THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861  
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## OPINION | OUR VIEW

# It's Time For An Online Sales Tax

If you've ever purchased an item online, you are far from alone in this country. And when you think about this consumer nation, that is a very big statement.

And yet, this digital retail domain has remained largely out of reach of state sales taxes that are otherwise charged in other purchases. It's something that the so-called "brick-and-mortar" buildings must do all across South Dakota and Nebraska and every state. But online, the sales are tax-free because there are no clear regulations governing these modern-age transactions.

That's why a bill that is making its way through Congress is long overdue. The measure would empower states to collect sales tax revenue by requiring out-of-state retailers to collect such taxes on any purchases online, through television and radio commercials and with catalogs. That money would then be turned over to the states where the consumers live.

Yes, it's going to be a bit of a pain for those online and/or remote businesses. But it's a pain for the other business that must do this. Everyone should share in that fun.

They should do it because it's only fair.

You're going to hear that word a lot as this bill is discussed, just as you're also going to hear the tired cliché that this bill "levels the playing field" by putting all businesses on the same tax footing. But frankly, it all applies.

The Associated Press reported last week that there was an estimated \$226 billion in online purchases made in the U.S. in 2012, which was a 16 percent increase from the previous year. All those purchases fall outside the sales tax threshold, which results in a significant loss of income for the individual states.

It's been estimated that South Dakota loses up to \$58 million in revenue annually — not one-time money, mind you, but a fairly predictable annual stream (and one that will almost certainly grow) — because of the lack of tax on Internet sales.

It's a "pretty significant loss when you look at our overall state budget," according to Andy Gerlach of the South Dakota Department of Revenue. "The trend is out there. People are using the Internet to purchase. I don't see that going any other direction but continuing to grow."

As pointed out in the opening paragraph of this piece, a lot of consumers use the Internet to make purchases. And Gerlach is right: This trend will continue to grow as Internet commerce continues to blossom. But not applying the same sales tax demands to these businesses that are applied to other venues, it creates an unfair advantage for online enterprises.

Opponents of this measure claim taxing Internet sales is really a tax increase. They also say that an Internet sales tax would be very difficult to implement because of the variety of taxation levels among the states and create a lot of work calculating this information. (It should be noted that the bill would exempt businesses that do less than \$1 million a year, although companies like eBay want to see that threshold raised to \$10 million.)

But fair is fair. Collecting a sales tax is one of the prices that a business pays to do business and to succeed. By allowing Internet sales to be immune from such responsibility, we are allowing Web businesses to operate in a different, more attractive tax climate that hurts other retailers and hurts states that really could use the extra revenue.

Honestly, we cannot say we know anyone who shops online primarily because there is no sales tax. It more likely a question of access and availability of goods. Asking these consumers to pay the same sales tax on these transactions that they would pay on goods bought anywhere else wouldn't be a deal-breaker for them. It shouldn't be a deal-breaker for businesses. Instead, it only makes sense.

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## ONLINE OPINION

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the *Press & Dakotan's* Web site are as follows:

### LATEST RESULTS:

**Do you approve of the job performance of the Yankton school board?**

No	.....	59%
Yes	.....	29%
Not sure	.....	12%
<b>TOTAL VOTES CAST</b>	<b>.....</b>	<b>268</b>

*The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.*

### CURRENT QUESTION:

**Should the U.S. intervene in the Syrian civil war?**

To vote in the *Press & Dakotan's* Internet poll, log on to our website at [www.yankton.net](http://www.yankton.net).

## TODAY IN HISTORY

### By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, May 14, the 134th day of 2013. There are 231 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On May 14, 1973, the United States launched Skylab 1, its first manned space station. (Skylab 1 remained in orbit for six years before burning up during re-entry in 1979.)

**On this date:** In 1643, Louis XIV became King of France at age 4 upon the death of his father, Louis XIII.

In 1796, English physician Edward Jenner inoculated 8-year-old James Phipps against smallpox by using cowpox matter.

In 1804, the Lewis and Clark expedition to explore the Louisiana Territory as well as the Pacific Northwest left camp near present-day Hartford, Ill.

In 1863, Union forces defeated the Confederates in the Battle of Jackson, Miss.

In 1900, the Olympic games opened in Paris, held as part of the 1900 World's Fair.

In 1913, the Rockefeller Foundation was founded in New York.

In 1942, Aaron Copland's "Lincoln Portrait" was first performed by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.

In 1948, according to the current-era calendar, the independent state of Israel was proclaimed in Tel Aviv.

In 1961, Freedom Riders were attacked by violent mobs in Anniston and Birmingham, Ala.

In 1973, the National Right to Life Committee was incorporated.

In 1988, 27 people, mostly teens, were killed when their church bus collided with a pickup truck going the wrong direction on a highway near Carrollton, Ky. (Truck driver Larry Mahoney served 9 1/2 years in prison for manslaughter.)

In 1998, singer-actor Frank Sinatra died at a Los Angeles hospital at age 82. The hit sitcom "Seinfeld" aired its final episode after nine years on NBC.

**Ten years ago:** More than 100 immigrants were abandoned in a locked trailer at a Texas truck stop; 19 of them died. (Truck driver Tyrone Williams was later sentenced to nearly 34 years in prison for his role in the deaths; of the 13 others indicted in the case, two had charges against them dismissed, one who cooperated with prosecutors was sentenced to the three days in jail and the others were given sentences ranging from 14 months to 23 years.) In Chechnya, a female suicide bomber killed 18 people in an

apparent attempt on the life of the Moscow-backed chief administrator (Akhmad Kadyrov). Death claimed actress Dame Wendy Hiller at age 90; actor Robert Stack at age 84; and Basketball Hall-of-Famer Dave DeBusschere at age 62.

**Five years ago:** President George W. Bush opened a celebratory visit to Israel, which was marking the 60th anniversary of its birth. John Edwards endorsed Barack Obama for the Democratic presidential nomination during a surprise appearance at a rally in Grand Rapids, Mich. The Interior Department declared the polar bear a threatened species because of the loss of Arctic sea ice. Justine Henin, 25, became the first woman to retire from tennis while atop the WTA rankings.

**One year ago:** President Barack Obama sought to tarnish Republican Mitt Romney as a corporate titan who got rich by cutting rather than creating jobs; Romney's campaign responded that the former Massachusetts governor alone had helped spur more public and private jobs than Obama did for the nation.

**Today's Birthdays:** Opera singer Patrice Munsel is 88. Photo-realist artist Richard Estes is 81. Former Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., is 71. Rock singer-musician Jack Bruce (Cream) is 70. Movie producer George Lucas is 69. Actress Meg Foster is 65. Movie director Robert Zemeckis is 62. Rock singer David Byrne is 61. Actor Tim Roth is 52. Rock singer Ian Astbury (The Cult) is 51. Rock musician C.C. (aka Cecil) DeVille is 51. Actor Danny Huston is 51. Rock musician Mike Inez (Alice In Chains) is 47. Fabrice Morvan (ex-Milli Vanilli) is 47. Rhythm-and-blues singer Raphael Saadiq is 47. Actress Cate Blanchett is 44. Singer Danny Wood (New Kids on the Block) is 44. Movie writer-director Sofia Coppola is 42. Actor Gabriel Mann is 41. Singer Natalie Appleton (All Saints) is 40. Singer Shanice is 40. Rock musician Henry Garza (Los Lonely Boys) is 35. Rock singer-musician Dan Auerbach is 34. Rock musician Mike Rendon (Plain White T's) is 32. Actress Amber Tamblyn is 30. Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg is 29. Actress Miranda Cosgrove is 20.

**Thought for Today:** "Sometimes there is greater lack of communication in facile talking than in silence." — Faith Baldwin, American romance novelist (1893-1978).

## FROM THE BIBLE

*His name shall be called ... Everlasting Father. Isaiah 9:6.* Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

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## YOUR LETTERS

### God Watches Over Us

Margaret Rahn, Yankton

There are plenty of stories which appear in the newspaper/on TV to make one cringe. In the story about Cleveland with the capture of the three women,