



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on March 15, 2011

Obama Seemingly “Absent” During Mounting Crises

President Obama’s former chief of staff, and newly-elected Mayor of Chicago, Rahm Emanuel once said, “You never want to let a good crisis go to waste.” Fortunately for President Obama, he has a number of crises from which to choose, and is being urged by his critics to take charge.



With civil unrest erupting into a war in Libya, natural disasters plaguing a significant owner of U.S. debt, and a federal government operating solely on temporary stopgap measures, many Americans are questioning the thought processes of a President who ignores such important issues and opts instead to provide radio addresses on gender inequality. Fox News reports:

Amid chaos around the world and on Capitol Hill, Obamas Saturday radio address was devoted to Womens History Month and a call to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act, a proposal meant to address the income gap between men and women. Then, the president went golfing at Andrews Air Force Base.

According to Fox News, the radio address did little to assuage the concerns of Obamas critics, who have targeted what they perceive to be lax, cool, and restrained responses to the mounting crises.

Dana Perino, former White House press secretary under George W. Bush, observed, I dont know if they dont realize the disconnect and maybe they dont care but it does matter.

Similarly, former Bush adviser Karl Rove has called for the President to devote more attention to the strife in Libya and the federal budget, two significant matters.

Fox News explains:

Critics note that every time Congress works on a stopgap budget, it risks a government shutdown and does virtually nothing to cut spending, all the while creeping closer to a tricky and potentially disastrous vote on raising the debt ceiling; every day the administration defers to it[s] international partners to weigh the best course of action in Libya, Muammar al-Qaddafi gains ground.

Nile Gardiner of the Heritage Foundation notes that, regardless of the escalating crises, President Obama seems paralyzed.

Of course, how the President should proceed on each crisis ranges depending on the counselor. For example, John Bolton, former Bush Ambassador to the U.N., has called the Presidents approach to the violence in Libya passive and asserts that the United States should play a more leading role.

Democratic strategist Bob Beckel, on the other hand, contends that the Presidents careful approach is the best one. Youve got to approach Libya cautiously. Were already in two wars in that area.



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Similarly, Senator Dick Lugar (R-Ind.), a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, cautions that the United States should carefully consider expanding military intervention and a prolonged U.S. presence in Libya, as it could provoke a rallying cry for the Qaddafi regime.

In regard to the budget, Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) has complained that Obama is absent from this debate. Even Democrat Joe Manchin (W-Va.) criticized the President for his failure to lead on the budget debate.

Likewise, Republican critics bemoaned the absence of Vice President Biden last week who, though he is supposed to be the leading negotiator on the budget debate, chose to travel to Russia in the midst of the discussions.

Oftentimes, the President simply seems distracted or disconnected from the situation at hand. Obama raised eyebrows several days ago when he used the word unshakeable to describe the American alliance with Japan a word fraught with different implications following Fridays megaquake.

The Presidents lax reactions to the increased crises put many Americans in mind of his delayed and seemingly callous reaction to the British Petroleum Gulf [oil spill](#) last year. Even the British publication *The Daily Mail* wrote of it, Barack Obama has been criticized for continuing to play golf while oil spills into the Gulf of Mexico. He has played at least seven times since the Deepwater Horizon rig exploded on April 20, creating Americas biggest environmental disaster.

Similarly, in December 2010, President Obama excused himself from an important press conference regarding the tax cut deal so that he could prepare for a White House party that evening. The *Washington Post* [wrote](#) of the unusual scenario:

The scene was remarkable. Obama introduced [Bill] Clinton [to provide his endorsement of the tax cut deal] and then said he would have to leave shortly for a holiday party. Clinton for a moment feigned deference.

"I feel awkward being here, and now youre going to leave me all by myself?" he said, barely suppressing a smile.

Obama, his arms crossed, stood watching Clinton for a few minutes. Then, as promised, he left.

"Ive been keeping the first lady waiting for about half an hour, so Im going to take off," Obama said.

Critics note that the Presidents lackadaisical handling of significant matters such as the increasing crisis in Libya and the budgetary disputes, may have a negative impact on public opinion, as has been seen in the [past](#), and could potentially play a role in 2012.



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