

Unmasked: Multiple Sources Claim This Obama Administration Official Requested the Names of Trump Campaign Staffers

According to multiple news reports Monday, President Barack Obama's national security adviser, Susan Rice, was responsible for "unmasking" the identities of then-candidate Donald Trump's staffers in intelligence intercepts that were later leaked for political purposes to discredit the new president's administration.

Investigative journalist Mike Cernovich broke the story over the weekend with a bombshell report that states the Office of White House Counsel became aware of her actions and immediately notified House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence Chairman Devin Nunes (R-Calif.). He immediately pointed the finger at Rice, and noted that at least one liberal mainstream reporter had been "sitting" on the story for 48 hours in an effort to protect the reputation of President Obama.

[Click here to read the entire report.](#)

That report was backed up Monday morning by Bloomberg's Eli Lake, who reported:

The pattern of Rice's requests was discovered in a National Security Council review of the government's policy on "unmasking" the identities of individuals in the U.S. who are not targets of electronic eavesdropping, but whose communications are collected incidentally. Normally those names are redacted from summaries of monitored conversations

and appear in reports as something like “U.S. Person One.”

The National Security Council’s senior director for intelligence, Ezra Cohen-Watnick, was conducting the review, according to two U.S. officials who spoke with Bloomberg View on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss it publicly. In February Cohen-Watnick discovered Rice’s multiple requests to unmask U.S. persons in intelligence reports that related to Trump transition activities. He brought this to the attention of the White House General Counsel’s office, who reviewed more of Rice’s requests and instructed him to end his own research into the unmasking policy.

The intelligence reports were summaries of monitored conversations—primarily between foreign officials discussing the Trump transition, but also in some cases direct contact between members of the Trump team and monitored foreign officials. One U.S. official familiar with the reports said they contained valuable political information on the Trump transition such as whom the Trump team was meeting, the views of Trump associates on foreign policy matters and plans for the incoming administration.

[Click here to read the entire report.](#)

Rice has yet to respond to the latest allegations. However, she’s already on record as saying she didn’t know anything about the intercepts during an interview with PBS News Hour’s Judy Woodruff immediately following Nunes’ bombshell announcement.

Watch the video above to see the entire interview.

There are only two logical possibilities following these statements:

1. Rice is lying about her knowledge of the surveillance,
or

2. such surveillance was so commonplace in the Obama administration, Rice was actually able to forget she personally requested the unmasking of Trump campaign staffers.

Neither one of those options is very good news for her or for other members of the Obama administration's national security team. As former U.S. Attorney Joe DiGenova pointed out in an interview with WMAL-AM on Monday morning, it's time for Rice and several of her colleagues to "lawyer up."

Listen to his entire interview below.

Here's what we still don't know:

- **Who —**

- requested the surveillance that led to the "incidental intercepts" of Trump campaign staffers?
- authorized the surveillance?
- are the Trump staffers who were intercepted?
- was the target of the surveillance that intercepted the Trump staffers?

- **What —**

- intelligence agency was conducting the surveillance?
- was the nature of the conversations that were intercepted?
- intelligence value was in the conversations that were intercepted?
- did Susan Rice do with the unmasked identities in the intercepts?

- **When —**

- was the surveillance requested?
- was the surveillance approved?
- did the surveillance begin?
- did the surveillance end?
- did Susan Rice become aware of the incidental

intercepts?

- did she request the unmasking of the Trump staffers?

▪ **Why –**

- was the surveillance requested?
- did Susan Rice request the unmasking?
- did Susan Rice say she didn't know anything about the surveillance?

As this story continues to develop, it seems to become stranger and stranger. What is clear is that normal protocols were violated and federal law was at the very least bent—if not broken—to meet a political aim, not national security.
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