



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on June 5, 2013

Susan Rice to Replace Tom Donilon as National Security Advisor

National Security Advisor Thomas E. Donilon will resign his post next month and will be replaced by U.S. Ambassador to the UN Susan E. Rice (shown), White House officials announced on June 5. [The Washington Post](#) and other news sources reported that Donilon's resignation will become effective in early July.



A report in the [Los Angeles Times](#) noted that Donilon has been a member of President Obama's national security staff for four years and replaced Gen. James Jones as Obama's national security advisor (officially called the assistant to the president for national security affairs) in 2010.

The *Times* reported that Donilon helped to formulate the Obama administration's policy for drawdown in Afghanistan and that he advised caution in the U.S. raid conducted to kill Osama bin Laden.

Donilon was a former chief of staff to Secretary of State Warren Christopher, during the Clinton administration. In one of his last official acts, he traveled to Beijing in May to help lay the groundwork for the president's upcoming summit with Chinese President [Xi Jinping](#).

An AP report carried by the [Boston Globe](#) recalled that Rice, described as "a close Obama confidante," came under intense criticism from Republicans during investigations into the deadly attack on a U.S. compound in Benghazi resulting in the deaths of the United States Ambassador to Libya J. Christopher Stevens and three others. Relying on incorrect information provided by the intelligence community, Rice said in television interviews that the attacks were likely spontaneous, which was later proven incorrect.

The president had proposed Rice as a possible replacement for retiring Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, but her mixed and sometimes inaccurate statements concerning the Benghazi attack made her a lightning rod for criticism. On November 19, 2012, 97 House Republicans sent a letter to President Obama saying that Rice's statements about Benghazi were "misleading" and that she should therefore not be considered a candidate to succeed Clinton as secretary of state.

On December 13, 2012, she announced that she was withdrawing her name from consideration saying that if nominated "the confirmation process would be lengthy, disruptive, and costly."

Obama then submitted the name of John Kerry for the cabinet position at State and the well-known former chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee won easy confirmation.

Unlike the secretary of state post, the position of national security advisor does not require Senate confirmation.

The *Post* report observed that some of Rice's toughest critics have indicated that they are prepared to



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cooperate with Rice in her new position.

“She’s going to have her plate full, if she’s chosen,” said Senator Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) “I will not be petty. I will put my differences on Benghazi aside and work with her.”

The *Globe* article reported that Obama will also nominate Samantha Power, a graduate of Yale University and Harvard Law School identified as “a human rights expert and former White House adviser,” to replace Rice at the UN.

Power won a Pulitzer Prize for her book, *A Problem From Hell*, about the U.S. response to genocide. The *Post* reported that she served as a senior director for multilateral affairs and human rights on the National Security Council during Obama’s first term, continuing into the beginning of his second term.

She wrote in an article critical of the Security Council in *The New Republic* in 2003: “The U.N. Security Council is anachronistic, undemocratic, and consists of countries that lack the standing to be considered good faith arbiters of how to balance the stability against democracy, peace against justice, and security against human rights.”

The position of ambassador to the United Nations will require Senate confirmation.

The president’s decision to replace Donilon with Rice continues a long-standing practice among presidents of both parties in recent decades to move members of the internationalist Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) into top position. Both Donilon and Rice are CFR members.

A look at previous national security advisors also turns up a heavy dose of CFR members, including: Stephen Hadley (2005-2009), Condoleezza Rice (2001-2005), Samuel R. Berger (1997-2001), Brent Scowcroft (1989-1993), Colin Powell (1987-1989), Frank Carlucci (1986-1987), Robert C. McFarlane (1983-1985), Richard V. Allen (1981-1982), Zbigniew Brzezinski (1977-1981), Henry Kissinger (1969-1975), Walt Rostow (1966-1969), McGeorge Bundy (1961-1966), Gordon Gray (1958-1961), and Dillon Anderson (1955-1966). The first National Security Director, Robert Cutler (1953-1955 and 1957-1958) wrote an article for the April 1956 issue of *Foreign Affairs* (the CFR’s official publication) entitled “The Development of the National Security Council.”

Photo of Susan Rice: AP Images



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