



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on April 4, 2017

Susan Rice Spied on Trump — And CNN Doesn't Care

Before and after the 2016 presidential election, former National Security Advisor Susan Rice (shown) asked for the names of U.S. persons found in what has been described as “raw intelligence reports.” Normally, when U.S. intelligence agencies are surveilling foreigners, the names of U.S. persons who are involved in conversation with those foreigners are “redacted,” or edited out in summaries of the monitored conversations. Instead of using the American citizen’s actual name, the citizen is referred to as “U.S. Person One,” and the like. In this case, however, Rice wanted the real names of the persons. These names were later leaked to media friendly to the Obama administration.



“What was produced by the intelligence community at the request of Rice were detailed spreadsheets of intercepted phone calls with unmasked Trump associates in perfectly legal conversations with individuals,” former U.S. Attorney Joseph diGenova has charged. “In short, the only apparent illegal activity was the unmasking of the people in the calls,” diGenova added. DiGenova said that there was nothing illegal about activities of the Trump associates — diGenova said flatly that they were in “perfectly legal conversations.”

Ezra Cohen-Watnick, the senior director for intelligence for the National Security Council, in the course of a review, discovered that Rice had made multiple requests to “unmask” U.S. persons found in the reports. When he brought this dubious activity to the General Counsel’s office at the White House, he was told to drop his probe.

One unnamed U.S. official noted that the reports contained political information, such as with whom the Trump transition people were meeting, the views of Trump’s foreign policy aides, and what plans were being made for the incoming Trump administration.

Despite the explosive nature of these revelations — that a very high-ranking official within the Obama administration was asking for “detailed spreadsheets” of legal phone calls involving then-private citizen Donald Trump and his aides for political purposes — many in the liberal mainstream media are choosing to ignore the story or downplay its importance.

CNN, in fact, has gone so far as to call the whole story nothing more than a “fake scandal ginned up by right-wing media and Trump.”

Rice denied involvement last month on *PBS News Hour*. “I know nothing about this,” she protested when asked about the issue of unmasking. She added, “I was surprised to see reports from Chairman Nunes on that account today.”

Representative Devin Nunes (R-Calif.), who chairs the House Intelligence Committee, has been the



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subject of much ridicule in the media because he has been investigating the role of the Obama White House in surveilling the Trump transition officials, including even Trump. After Nunes announced that Trump transition officials were surveilled, backing up Trump's earlier allegations of such surveillance, the "guns" of the media were turned on him. But apparently, Nunes has seen actual logs of Rice's multiple requests to unmask U.S. persons — persons who have apparently committed no crimes, and for whom no warrants existed for them to be surveilled.

Fox News reported, "For a private citizen to be 'unmasked,' or named, in an intelligence report is extremely rare. Typically, the American is a suspect in a crime, is in danger or has to be named to explain the context of the report."

None of that seems to be the case here.

Fox News also reported that the unmasked names were then turned over to officials at the National Security Council, the Department of Defense, CIA Director John Brennan, and James Clapper, who was the director of national intelligence for President Obama.

During an interview on March 2 with MSNBC, Obama's Deputy Secretary of Defense Evelyn Farkas said she had encouraged her colleagues to "get as much information as you can, get as much intelligence as you can, before President Obama leaves." When some noted this was evidence that some inside the Obama administration were indeed surveilling Donald Trump (as he had earlier claimed), Farkas tried to distance herself from any potential blame: "I didn't give anybody anything except advice."

It would be a mistake, however, to think that only Rice and Farkas were involved in the Obama administration surveillance of Trump and his associates. Retired Colonel James Waurishuk, who has had stints with both the National Security Council and as deputy director for intelligence at the U.S. Central Command, insisted that others had to be involved. "The surveillance initially is the responsibility of the National Security Agency. They have to abide by this guidance when one of the other agencies says, 'We're looking at this particular person which we would like to unmask.'"

Waurishuk said, "It's unbelievable of the level and degree of the administration to look for information on Donald Trump and his associates, his campaign team and his transition team. This is really, really serious stuff." Waurishuk further explained: "The lawyers and counsel at the NSA surely would be talking to the lawyers and members of counsel at CIA, or at the National Security Council or at the Director of National Intelligence or at the FBI."

Waurishuk even expressed concern that, "We're looking at a potential constitutional crisis from the standpoint that we used an extremely strong capability that's supposed to be used to safeguard and protect the country. And we used it for political purposes by a sitting president," to "spy on the elected, yet-to-be-seated president."

Michael Doran, a former senior director at the National Security Council, was even more direct: "That's a felony," Doran said of the leaking of "signal intelligence," adding, "And you can get 10 years for that. It is a tremendous abuse of the system. We're not supposed to be monitoring American citizens."

Doran charged that "somebody blew a hole in the wall between national security secrets and partisan politics."

Just how high up the chain of command does this go? Obviously, Susan Rice was a person with extremely close ties to President Obama himself. It should be remembered that Obama wanted to make her secretary of state after the resignation of Hillary Clinton. But, after Rice went on five different news



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shows, and insisted that the Benghazi attacks were perpetrated spontaneously by a crowd worked into a frenzy over a video (rather than what it actually was — a planned attack by terrorists), there was simply too much resistance to her confirmation to the top position at the State Department.

Instead, Obama named her to a position — national security advisor — that does not require Senate confirmation. It is also a position that gave her almost daily access to the president. For her to ask for such sensitive information as she did at least causes someone to wonder if she had discussed it with Obama.

In the words of the late Senator Howard Baker regarding the Watergate scandal, “What did the president know — and when did he know it?”

The only “boss” that Rice had in her position as national security advisor was Barack Obama.

But such questions apparently do not arouse any such curiosity at CNN. When reports of all of this broke, the folks at CNN were not just unconcerned, they took on the role of defender of Rice and the Obama White House, with a string of “reporters” downplaying the story. Don Lemon led off *CNN Tonight*, “On this program tonight, we will not insult your intelligence by pretending” the story was legitimate. “Nor will we aid and abet the people trying to misinform you, the American people, by creating a diversion. Not going to do it.”

The chief national security correspondent, Jim Sciutto, was just as adamant, calling it a non-story created to distract from the story of Trump’s tweet that Trump Tower was “wiretapped.” Sciutto told Anderson Cooper, “Again, to senior intelligence officials who work for both Democrats and Republicans, this appears to be a story, largely ginned up, partly as a distraction from this larger investigation,” adding that “someone close to Ambassador Rice” said that such unmasking was “not unusual.”

Sciutto even defended Rice on her claim that she did not even know about the unmasking — when she was the person who was directing it! “From her perspective,” Sciutto lectured, “she didn’t know what specific unmasking Deven Nunes and others are talking about, in part because that is something she asks — or asked during the regular course of her work as national security adviser.”

Another CNN reporter, Alisyn Camerota, even tried to get Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.) to agree with her that the story was unimportant. (Apparently liberal news reporters are used to getting anti-Republican comments from McCain.) “What we’ve heard from the reporting, is that if she saw a masked name that said American number one had these conversations with the Russians at the same time that President Obama had imposed sanctions, wouldn’t that arouse some curiosity on her part?”

McCain deferred a conclusion of his own, other than to say, “I think the circumstances indicate that there’s a possibility that that request could have been politically motivated.” When it comes to talking about “unmasking,” CNN has clearly taken off any mask of objectivity in its zeal to attack the Trump administration, while simultaneously placing itself in the role of defender of Susan Rice — and most importantly, Barack Obama.

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