



# Obama Senior Adviser Speech Under Microscope

***Obama Senior Adviser David Plouffe Nabbed \$100K For Speaking Before A Company With Well-Known Ties To The Iranian Regime***

## DAVID PLOUFFE'S REVOLVING DOOR PASSES THROUGH A COMPANY WITH TIES TO THE IRANIAN REGIME AND REVOLUTIONARY GUARD

**Obama Senior Adviser And Former Campaign Manager Was Paid \$100,000 By MTN Group, A Company Doing Business In Iran.** "David Plouffe, a senior White House adviser who was President Obama's 2008 campaign manager, accepted a \$100,000 speaking fee in 2010 from an affiliate of a company doing business with Iran's government." (Tom Hamburger and Peter Wallsten, "Obama Associate Got \$100,000 Fee From Affiliate Of Firm Doing Business With Iran," [The Washington Post](#), 8/6/12)

- **"MTN Had Been In A Widely Reported Partnership For Five Years With A State-Owned Iranian Telecommunications Firm."** "Since Plouffe's speeches, MTN Group has come under intensified scrutiny from U.S. authorities because of its activities in Iran and Syria, which are under international sanctions intended to limit the countries' access to sensitive technology. At the time of Plouffe's speeches, MTN had been in a widely reported partnership for five years with a state-owned Iranian telecommunications firm." (Tom Hamburger and Peter Wallsten, "Obama Associate Got \$100,000 Fee From Affiliate Of Firm Doing Business With Iran," [The Washington Post](#), 8/6/12)
- **"MTN Executives Denied Violating Any Sanctions But Acknowledged That They Have Been In Discussions With Administration Authorities For Months."** (Tom Hamburger and Peter Wallsten, "Obama Associate Got \$100,000 Fee From Affiliate Of Firm Doing Business With Iran," [The Washington Post](#), 8/6/12)

**In State Department Cables MTN's Iranian Affiliate, MTN Irancell, Was Referred To As Being "Fully Owned" By The Iranian Revolutionary Guard.** "In 2006, Stuart Levey, then undersecretary of the Treasury and the point man on Iran sanction enforcement in the Bush administration — a job he also held for two years under Obama — told Turkish officials that Irancell was 'fully owned' by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, according to a State Department cable made public by the anti-secrecy group WikiLeaks." (Tom Hamburger and Peter Wallsten, "Obama Associate Got \$100,000 Fee From Affiliate Of Firm Doing Business With Iran," [The Washington Post](#), 8/6/12)

- **Iranian Customers Make Up 21 Percent Of MTN's Subscriber Base.** "MTN has a 49% stake in Iran's second-largest mobile-phone operator and derives 21% of its subscriber base from Iran, according to recent figures from MTN." (Devon Maylie, "South African Wireless Firm MTN To Remain In Iran," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 3/7/12)
- **In 2008, The New York Times Reported That MTN Irancell Would Likely Face Pressure From U.S. Regulators Over Sanctions Against The Iranian Regime.** "Having broken off talks with one suitor and quickly found another, the South African mobile phone operator MTN Group could still face obstacles to any deal from an unlikely corner: U.S. regulators, who prevent American companies from facilitating business in Iran, one of MTN's fastest growing markets." (Heather Timmons, "MTN Search For Partner Could Face Obstacles From U.S.," [The New York Times](#), 5/26/2008)

**The Majority Share Of MTN Irancell Is Dominated By A Subsidiary Of The Iranian Defense Ministry, Iran Electronic Industries, Which Is Under Sanction By The EU And US.** "The majority 51% shareholding in MTN Irancell is held by a state-linked consortium that is dominated by a subsidiary, owned by the defence ministry, known as Sairan or Iran Electronics Industries. Sairan is already subject to US and EU sanctions that target proliferators of 'weapons of mass destruction.' Sairan also holds a share in the Arya Hamrah consortium, which owns and runs MTN Irancell's data centre that houses the company's servers and hardware." (Sharda Naidoo, "Obama Order Puts Screws On MTN," [Mail & Guardian](#) [South Africa], 4/26/12)

- **In July 2012, South Africa Suspended Their Ambassador To Iran Over Allegations He Accepted A \$200,000 Bribe From MTN Group To Help Secure Their Iranian Cellular License.** "South Africa suspended its former ambassador to Iran amid allegations he took a bribe from MTN Group Ltd. to help the mobile-phone operator win a license to get an Iranian business license. ... MTN, in 2005, won the second license to operate a mobile company in Iran, beating out Turkish rival Turkcell Iletisim Hizmetleri AS. Turkcell filed a lawsuit in March of this year in the U.S. under the Alien Tort Statute accusing the South African company of using bribery and other corruption, including a \$200,000 payment to Saloojee, to get the license." (Samuel Rubinfeld, "South Africa Suspends Ambassador Amid MTN Bribery Case," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 7/12/12)

## **MTN HAS FACED CRITICISM FOR BEING INVOLVED IN THE IRANIAN REGIME'S CRACKDOWN ON PRO-DEMOCRACY PROTESTORS IN 2009 AND 2010**

**"[MTN] Has Been Facing A Political Storm Over Claims That It Helped The Iranian Government To Spy On Local Subscribers And Assisted The Regime In Its Brutal Crackdown On Protesters In 2009 And 2010."** "MTN owns 49% of MTN Irancell. It has been under immense pressure to exit the Islamic republic, which is under threat of being bombed by the US because of its nuclear weapons programme. Although MTN is refusing to withdraw from the lucrative market where it services 35-million subscribers, it has been facing a political storm over claims that it helped the Iranian government to spy on local subscribers and assisted the regime in its brutal crackdown on protesters in 2009 and 2010." (Sharda Naidoo, "Obama Order Puts Screws On MTN," [Mail & Guardian](#) [South Africa], 4/26/12)

- **MTN's "Shadowy" Second Floor, In Tehran, Is Allegedly "Populated By Military Intelligence Officials, The Volunteer Militia Known As The Basij ('Morality Police') And Clerics ..."** "The M&G recently reported on a shadowy 'second floor' in MTN's Tehran building that was populated by military intelligence officials, the volunteer militia known as the Basij ('morality police') and clerics, who allegedly approached data warehouse staff regularly demanding detailed records for certain individuals." (Sharda Naidoo, "Obama Order Puts Screws On MTN," [Mail & Guardian](#) [South Africa], 4/26/12)

- **“Sources Claimed That Because MTN Irancell And Its Data Centre Were Part-Owned By The Iranian Military, Subscriber Data Was Shared ‘On A Collegial Basis’ With The Intelligence Sector.”** (Sharda Naidoo, “Obama Order Puts Screws On MTN,” [Mail & Guardian](#) [South Africa], 4/26/12)

## **IN JUNE 2012, IT WAS REVEALED THAT MTN GROUP WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR ACQUIRING EMBARGOED U.S. COMPUTER EQUIPMENT FOR THE IRANIAN REGIME**

**MTN Irancell “Managed To Obtain Sophisticated U.S. Computer Equipment Despite Sanctions That Prohibit Sales Of American Technology To Iran ...”** “A fast-growing Iranian mobile-phone network managed to obtain sophisticated U.S. computer equipment despite sanctions that prohibit sales of American technology to Iran, interviews and documents show. MTN Irancell, a joint venture between MTN Group Ltd of South Africa and an Iranian government-controlled consortium, sourced equipment from Sun Microsystems Inc, Hewlett Packard Co and Cisco Systems Inc, the documents and interviews show. MTN owns 49% of the joint venture but provided the initial funding.” (Steve Stecklow, “Exclusive: Iranian Cell-Phone Carrier Obtained Banned U.S. Tech,” [Reuters](#), 6/4/12)

- **MTN’s Parent Company Admitted They Were “Directly Involved In Procuring U.S. Parts For MTN Irancell ...”** “‘There’s nothing you can get in the U.S. or Dubai that you can’t get in Iran,’ Chris Kilowan, who was MTN’s top executive in Iran from 2004 to 2007, said in an interview. He said MTN’s parent company, MTN Group, was directly involved in procuring U.S. parts for MTN Irancell, which launched in 2006 and is now Iran’s second-largest mobile-phone operator.” (Steve Stecklow, “Exclusive: Iranian Cell-Phone Carrier Obtained Banned U.S. Tech,” [Reuters](#), 6/4/12)
- **Reuters Viewed A 89-Page Document From MTN Irancell That Discussed Acquiring Embargoed Products.** “For example, Reuters reviewed an 89-page MTN Irancell document from 2008 that shows the telecom carrier was specifically interested in acquiring embargoed products. The document spells out the requirements of a managed-services contract it ultimately awarded to Huawei Technologies Co, China’s largest telecom-equipment maker. In a section on managing product-support agreements for third-party equipment, the MTN Irancell document states, ‘This should include embargo items.’” (Steve Stecklow, “Exclusive: Iranian Cell-Phone Carrier Obtained Banned U.S. Tech,” [Reuters](#), 6/4/12)

**With MTN’s Approval A Front Company Was Set Up To “‘Camouflage’ Purchases Of Embargoed Equipment.”** “Patsa later won a contract to manage MTN Irancell’s data center, which contains customer information. Kilowan said an Iranian official at the telecom carrier said Patsa could only have the contract if it partnered with MTN’s Iranian partners - Sairan, which is believed to be controlled by Iran’s defense ministry, and Bonyad Mostazafan, which is believed to report directly to Iran’s supreme leader. Kilowan said the three companies then set up an Iranian firm called Arya Hamrah Samaneh Co with MTN’s approval. He said Arya Hamrah was used to ‘camouflage’ purchases of embargoed equipment.” (Steve Stecklow, “Exclusive: Iranian Cell-Phone Carrier Obtained Banned U.S. Tech,” [Reuters](#), 6/4/12)