



Obama Struggles To Rebuild His National Security Team

Controversial National Security Picks Complicate Obama's Plan To Announce His Full National Security Team Today

STRONG OPPOSITION TO OBAMA'S PROSPECTIVE NATIONAL SECURITY NOMINEES FORCED HIM TO DELAY ANNOUNCING HIS DEFENSE PICK

Obama Hoped To Announce Multiple National Security Nominees Today. "President Obama hopes to announce his new national security nominees Friday, but the date depends on the status of the 'fiscal cliff' negotiations, administration officials said." (Karen DeYoung and Anne Gearan, "Obama's Picks For State Department And Pentagon Could Be Announced Friday," [The Washington Post](#), 12/17/12)

- **Instead Obama Will Only Announce Kerry's Nomination, Likely Due To A "Growing Backlash" Against Chuck Hagel As Defense Secretary.** "Obama will announce Kerry's nomination on at 1:30 p.m. on Friday but will withhold any decision on a new defense secretary, senior administration officials said. The president faces a growing backlash from critics of former Republican Senator Chuck Hagel, considered a leading candidate to replace Leon Panetta at the Pentagon." (Matt Spetalnick, "Obama To Announce John Kerry's Nomination For Secretary Of State," [Reuters](#), 12/21/12)

MSNBC's Andrea Mitchell Said The Kerry Announcement Is Not What Was Originally Contemplated By The White House. MSNBC's ANDREA MITCHELL: "After that back at the White House there will be this announcement. It is not going to be what was originally contemplated, the entire national security team, CIA, Defense. It's a big controversy now over Chuck Hagel. The president had been strongly considering Chuck Hagel for Defense secretary and still is we are told. He has not backed off of that. But there is fierce opposition building up, the same kind of lobbying campaign that frankly torpedoed Susan Rice, and there is a lot of thought in Democratic circles outside the White House, particularly, that the president cannot afford to back down twice, two times in a row in the face of Republican opposition. A group of former military and foreign policy officials in support of Chuck Hagel are circulating a letter today and trying to counteract this Republican conservative criticism." (MSNBC's ["Jansing & Co."](#), 12/21/12)

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CNN's Jessica Yellin Confirmed That Sen. John Kerry Will Be Nominated Alone To Avoid Associating Him With Other "Trickier Nominations."

CNN's JESSICA YELLIN: "One thing I can add on the news front, Carol, I'm told that John Kerry will be nominated alone today. Just to be clear, there will not be other nominees announced with him, just some special attention focused on him. Also, wouldn't want to complicate it with some other trickier nominations the president might have to make." (CNN's ["Newsroom,"](#) 12/21/12)

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U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice Took Herself Out Of The Running For Secretary Of State "In The Face Of What Promised To Be A Contentious Senate Confirmation Battle."

"Susan Rice, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and a close confidante of President Barack Obama, withdrew her name from consideration as secretary of state on Thursday in the face of what promised to be a contentious Senate confirmation battle. Rice has drawn heavy fire from Republicans for remarks she made in the aftermath of a September 11 attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya, in which four Americans were killed, including Ambassador Chris Stevens." (Steve Holland, "Susan Rice Withdraws As Secretary Of State Candidate," [Reuters](#), 12/14/12)

Obama's New Choice For Defense Secretary, Chuck Hagel, Has Caused "Discomfort On Both Sides Of The Party Line" For His Opposition To Sanctions Against Iran And Calls For Direct Engagement.

"Most of the discomfort on both sides of the party line centers on Hagel's voting record, during his two terms in the Senate, against tougher sanctions on Iran as a way to curb that nation's nuclear program, which Israel sees as an existential threat. During the George W. Bush administration, Hagel, who did not seek a third term in 2008, repeatedly spoke against a military strike on Iran's nuclear program and called for diplomatic engagement." (Karen DeYoung and Anne Gearan, "Obama's Picks For State Department And Pentagon Could Be Announced Friday," [The Washington Post](#), 12/17/12)