



Obama's Boys' Club

Obama's Second Term Cabinet Is Short On Women

OBAMA'S LEADING LADIES

"In An Oval Office Meeting On Dec. 29, 11 Of President Obama's Top Advisers Stood Before Him Discussing The Heated Fiscal Negotiations. The 10 Visible In A White House Photo Are Men." (Annie Lowrey, "Obama's Remade Inner Circle Has An All-Male Look, So Far," [The New York Times](#), 1/8/12)

- **Obama Has Put Together A National Security Team Dominated By Men.** "In the days since, Mr. Obama has put together a national security team dominated by men, with Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts nominated to succeed Hillary Rodham Clinton as the secretary of state, Chuck Hagel chosen to be the defense secretary and John O. Brennan nominated as the director of the Central Intelligence Agency." (Annie Lowrey, "Obama's Remade Inner Circle Has An All-Male Look, So Far," [The New York Times](#), 1/8/12)
- **"Given The Leading Contenders For Other Top Jobs, Including Chief Of Staff And Treasury Secretary, Mr. Obama's Inner Circle Will Continue To Be Dominated By Men Well Into His Second Term."** (Annie Lowrey, "Obama's Remade Inner Circle Has An All-Male Look, So Far," [The New York Times](#), 1/8/12)



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NBC's Andrea Mitchell: The White House Photo Represents That At "Highest Levels Of The White House And In The Cabinet You Have Men." MITCHELL: "Let me just say. That was a White House photo. That picture was taken by the president's photographer and that indicated who was around him when he was dealing with the fiscal cliff negotiations. That's what that picture represented. At the highest levels of the White House and in the cabinet you have men and they are white men. Now, num-- the numbers-- we can play the numbers game but as another Democratic president said during a transition in 1992, you've been counters, you women's groups, so we're, you know, counting heads. I am going to fill these jobs but they were at lower levels." (NBC's ["Meet The Press."](#) 1/13/13)

- **Mitchell: "The Women Are Not Happy."** MITCHELL: "The fact is that men help elect the president. Women voted for the president in the great-- in greatest numbers but the men on his team were the predominant people. You have two women who are the White House deputy chiefs of staff--Nancy-Ann DeParle is leaving this week--but two women and neither of them are being mentioned in any of these trial balloons to replace Jack Lew. And that's why women including women in the White House-- I'm going to tell you, I wrote a story about this, this week. And I did not get one complaint. I get lots of complaints from the White House about things that I say and do and you know, well, sometimes it's correct. Sometimes I have to correct something, but not one person and I talked to several people inside the White House women and they said, no, we didn't have any problem with what you wrote about this week. The women are not happy." (NBC's ["Meet The Press."](#) 1/13/13)

Rep. Charlie Rangel (D-NY): Obama Cabinet Diversity Is "Embarrassing As Hell." MSNBC'S CHRIS JANSING: "The first black president and he's getting questions about diversity. Are these questions fair? Are you concerned?" RANGEL: "Of course, I'm concerned. Any questions are fair and the record speaks for itself. I wonder--- " JANSING: "If the record speaks for itself, what does it say going into this second term?" RANGEL: "It's as embarrassing as hell." (MSNBC's "Jansing & Co." 1/10/13)

The Washington Post's Ruth Marcus: "To Look At The Most Important Jobs In The Government, In 2013, And See Such Lack Of Diversity Is Just So Drearly Disappointing." "To be clear: I've got nothing against white guys. Some of my best husbands are white guys. White guys get to be secretary of state, too, and John Kerry will be the first in 16 years. But to look at the most important jobs in the government, in 2013, and see such lack of diversity is just so drearily disappointing. Especially because it could easily have been so different." (Ruth Marcus, Op-Ed, "Obama News Some Binders Of Women," [The Washington Post](#), 1/9/13)

- **The Washington Post's Ruth Marcus: "It Sends A Disturbing Signal" When There Are No Women In Top Cabinet Jobs.** "The White House will point to women in other Cabinet positions — although one, Labor Secretary Hilda Solis, has just announced her resignation — and to women in sub-Cabinet roles. Okay, but State, Defense and Treasury, along with Justice, are the Big Boy jobs. It matters if some of those boys are girls. It sends a disturbing signal when they're not." (Ruth Marcus, Op-Ed, "Obama News Some Binders Of Women," [The Washington Post](#), 1/9/13)

"It's Evident That He's Going To Have A Less Diverse Cabinet This Term, Possibly Even Less Diverse Than The George W. Bush Cabinet,' Says NYU Professor Paul Light, Who Studies Political Appointments." (Emily Heil, "Obama's Cabinet Diversity In Danger With New Picks," [The Washington Post](#), 1/7/12)

- **Light: Obama Is Missing An Opportunity To Make A "Change In The Culture" Of Washington.** "Light notes that Obama may be missing out on the chance to make dramatic statements by nominating women for positions previously only held by men. 'Nominating a woman to lead Defense would have been a big, big splash and a change in the culture there,' he says. 'A woman at

Treasury would be big.” (Emily Heil, “Obama’s Cabinet Diversity In Danger With New Picks,” [The Washington Post](#), 1/7/12)

THE OBAMA WHITE HOUSE ALREADY HAD THE REPUTATION FOR BEING A “HOSTILE WORKPLACE” FOR WOMEN

In The Obama White House’s “Rough-And-Tumble Environment ... Female Staff Members Often Felt Bruised.” “In this rough-and-tumble environment, the book reports, female staff members often felt bruised. At a dinner with Mr. Obama in November 2009, several top female aides — including Anita Dunn, who was the communications director, and Christina Romer, the chairwoman of the Council of Economic Advisers — told the president about being talked over in meetings by male colleagues or cut out altogether.” (Mark Landler, “Book Details Dissension In Obama Economic Team,” [The New York Times](#), 9/15/11)

- **Dee Dee Myers, Former Clinton Press Secretary: “Women Are Obama’s Base, And They Don’t Seem To Have Enough People Who Look Like The Base Inside Of Their Own Inner Circle.”** “‘Women are Obama’s base, and they don’t seem to have enough people who look like the base inside of their own inner circle,’ said Dee Dee Myers, a former press secretary in the Clinton administration whose sister, Betsy, served as the Obama campaign’s chief operating officer.” (Mark Leibovich, “Man’s World At The White House? No Harm, No Foul, Aides Say,” [The New York Times](#), 10/24/09)

Obama Is “Responsible For A Work Atmosphere That Marginalizes And Ignores Women.”

“Coverage in the Washington Post and a new book by Ron Suskind has focused attention on the frustration of Obama’s female advisers. But the problem has been obvious almost since Obama took office. And while the explanations so far have blamed members of the mostly-departed boys club—Robert Gibbs, Rahm Emanuel—Obama himself is responsible for a work atmosphere that marginalizes and ignores women.” (Amy Sullivan, “The White House Boys’ Club: President Obama Has A Woman Problem,” [Time’s Swampland](#), 9/21/11)

Former Communications Director Anita Dunn: “This Place Would Be In Court For A Hostile Workplace.” (Nia-Malika Henderson, “Book: Women In Obama White House Felt Excluded And Ignored,” [The Washington Post](#), 9/16/11)

- **Dunn: “It Actually Fit All Of The Classic Legal Requirements For A Genuinely Hostile Workplace To Women.”** (Nia-Malika Henderson, “Book: Women In Obama White House Felt Excluded And Ignored,” [The Washington Post](#), 9/16/11)

Senior Advisor Valerie Jarrett Has Admitted “Tensions Over The Role Of Women” In The Obama White House. “Tensions over the role of women in the first two years of President Obama’s White House prompted him to elevate women into more senior positions, senior adviser Valerie Jarrett said in a Washington Post interview.” (Olga Belogolova, Jarrett Confirms Tensions Over Role Of Women In Obama White House,” [National Journal](#), 9/20/11)

Former Economic Advisor Christina Romer: “I Felt Like A Piece Of Meat.” “‘I felt like a piece of meat,’ Christina Romer, former head of the Council of Economic Advisers, said of one meeting in which Suskind writes she was ‘boxed out’ by Summers.” (Nia-Malika Henderson, “Book: Women In Obama White House Felt Excluded And Ignored,” [The Washington Post](#), 9/16/11)

In November 2009, “Several Senior Female Aides” Complained That Men “Enjoyed Greater Access” To Obama. “Friction about the roles of women in the Obama White House grew so intense during the first two years of the president’s tenure that he was forced to take steps to reassure senior women on his staff that he valued their presence and their input. At a dinner in November 2009, several senior female aides complained directly to the president that men enjoyed greater access to him and often muscled them out of key policy discussions. Those tensions prompted Obama, urged on by senior adviser Valerie

Jarrett, to elevate more women into senior White House positions, recognize them more during staff meetings and increase the female presence in the upper ranks of the reelection campaign. ‘There were some issues early on with women feeling as though they hadn’t figured out what their role was going to be on the senior team at the White House,’ Jarrett said in an interview Monday. ‘Most of the women hadn’t worked on the campaign, and so they didn’t have a personal relationship with the president.’” (Peter Wallsten and Anne E. Kornblut, “In Early Obama White House, Female Staffers Felt Frozen Out,” [The Washington Post](#), 9/20/11)

- **Obama “Initially Discounted The Complaints” Of Female Officials.** “Some early efforts to elevate women foundered. The first White House communications director, Ellen Moran, departed quickly, after a rocky tenure. Others never quite fit in, or failed to be ‘in the jet stream’ of the most important events of the day, one official said. According to another official, the president initially discounted the complaints he heard that women, particularly on his economic team, were making.” (Peter Wallsten and Anne E. Kornblut, “In Early Obama White House, Female Staffers Felt Frozen Out,” [The Washington Post](#), 9/20/11)

In His First Term, Obama Had Dinner With Female Workers At The White House To Discuss The Problem Of The “Boys’ Club.” “A dozen women, including virtually all the president’s senior female staffers, were sure the dinner would be canceled. But they gathered anyway for cocktails in the residence, a nice opportunity for all of them to be together, only to be surprised, and delighted, when the president managed to arrive twenty minutes late. Their meeting with him was clearly a priority, and it was not the first time Obama had heard directly about the gender issues. In June, the afternoon of the jobless recovery meeting, Valerie Jarrett told the president he needed to meet with Romer and that a space had been cleared on his schedule. Romer talked about the boys’ club problem for many of the women—the way they were excluded from key meetings or ignored when they attended; the bullying atmosphere that prevailed—as well as the specific issues for her. ‘Have you ever tried to get a word in edgewise when Larry and Tim get going?’ The president was skeptical about there being a problem, but attentive. Romer brought matters full circle to him: ‘If you give power to Rahm or Larry,’ she said, pointedly, ‘you’re responsible for their actions.’” (Ron Suskind, *Confidence Men*, 2011, p. 353)

- **“One By One, The Women Ticked Off Examples And Frustrations. The Problems Seemed To Be Universally Agreed Upon.”** “Before the dinner, Jarrett approached Anita Dunn, saying she was ‘worried people are going to be afraid to speak up. Do you mind saying something to get the ball rolling?’ Dunn said she would be fine doing that. As the women settled into their chairs, Obama set the table: ‘I really want you guys to talk to me about this openly because recently there has been this suggestion that there are some issues here. I’d like to know how you guys feel. Valerie felt this was something we should do, and I want to thank her for putting this together.’ Before Dunn had a chance to chime in, Carol Browner, the director of the White House Office of Energy and Climate Change Policy, kicked things off. ‘Mr. President . . .’ One by one, the women ticked off examples and frustrations. The problems seemed to be universally agreed upon. Obama listened awkwardly, as the women tried their best to present their issues without becoming too personal.” (Ron Suskind, *Confidence Men*, 2011, p. 353)
- **“The President Listened, With A Posture Of ‘Okay, I Hear You,’ Said Another, ‘Though Not Really Offering Much In The Way Of Apology Or Suggestions About What He’d Do.’** “‘And then it ended up being focused around Larry and Rahm, and some Peter. And obviously . . . less about Axe and Gibbs, who were equally guilty but who everybody was terrified of.’ The president listened, with a posture of ‘Okay, I hear you,’ said another, ‘though not really offering much in the way of apology or suggestions about what he’d do.’” (Ron Suskind, *Confidence Men*, 2011, p. 353)

“The Notion That Women Have Long Been ‘The Heart Of The Obama Organization’ Doesn't Necessarily Line Up With The President's Largely Male List Of Political Advisers And Senior Staff.”

(Alexander Burns, “Women For Obama,” [Politico](#), 11/15/11)

- **Anita Dunn: Obama’s Problems With Women Began During His 2008 Campaign.** “Dunn told Suskind that the problems began during the 2008 campaign. At one point she was viewing a television ad with other campaign officials and was shocked to see no women in the spot. ‘There isn’t a single woman in this ad,’ Dunn said. ‘I was dumbfounded. It wasn’t like they were being deliberately sexist. It’s just there was no one offering a female perspective.’” (Nia-Malika Henderson and Peter Wallsten, “Book: Women In Obama White House Felt Excluded And Ignored,” [The Washington Post](#), 9/16/11)