



Would Obama Have Spoken There?

The White House Is Defending Plouffe's Gig At A Company Tied To The Iranian Regime – Is That Where Obama Stands?

The New York Times' Peter Baker: *"The White House defended President Obama's senior adviser on Monday for taking \$100,000 in speaking fees before joining the government from a subsidiary of a company working with the Iranian government."* (Peter Baker, "Aide's Fee Draws Critics and, Then Defenders," [The New York Times](#), 8/7/12)

PLOUFFE'S ACTIVITIES BEFORE JOINING THE WHITE HOUSE SHOULD HAVE RAISED RED FLAGS WITH A PRESIDENT WHO WAS SUPPOSEDLY GOING TO CHANGE WASHINGTON

ABC's Jonathan Karl To Press Secretary Jay Carney: "President Obama Came Into Office Talking About A Higher Standard. Is There Any Concern About This Kind Of, You Know - \$100,000 In Nigeria To A South African Company." ABC'S JONATHAN KARL: "President Obama came into office talking about a higher standard. Is there any concern about this kind of, you know - \$100,000 in Nigeria to a South African company. I mean it was widely reported, it had been reported even in The New York Times that they had business dealings with Iran. Is there any concern at all about this?" (White House Press Briefing, Washington, D.C., 8/6/12)

- **FLASHBACK:** The 2008 Obama Campaign Referred To Then-Sen. Hillary Clinton As The Senator From Punjab For President Clinton's Post-Presidency Speaking Fees. "2006: Bill Clinton Collected \$300,000 From Cisco In 2006. Hillary's personal financial disclosure forms indicate that Bill Clinton gave two speeches to Cisco Systems, each for \$150,000 on 5/18/06 and 8/17/06. [Hillary Clinton 2006 Financial Disclosure Report; 3,4]" ("Hillary Clinton (D-Punjab)'s Personal Financial And Political Ties To India," [Obama For America](#), June 2007)
- **FLASHBACK:** Obama In 2007: "When I Am President, I Will Make It Absolutely Clear That Working In An Obama Administration Is Not About Serving Your Former Employer, Your Future Employer, Or Your Bank Account - It's About Serving Your Country, And That's What Comes First." (Senator Barack Obama, "Taking Our Government Back," [Manchester.NH](#), 6/22/07)

Craig Holman Of Public Citizen: "Anytime You Start Talking About \$100,000, Red Flags Should Have Gone Up Right Away ..." "Anytime you start talking about \$100,000, red flags should have gone up right away," said Craig Holman, government affairs lobbyist at Public Citizen, an advocacy group in

Washington. 'He'd have to think about why is someone giving him that kind of money for a speech.'" (Margaret Talev, "White House Defends Paid Speeches By Plouffe Amid New Questions," [Bloomberg](#), 8/6/12)

- **Holman: "You Either Have A Real Lot Of Money To Burn Or You're Trying To Do Influence Peddling ..."** "Plouffe's other paid speeches also raise questions about what influence groups are seeking with the administration, Holman said. 'You either have a real lot of money to burn or you're trying to do influence peddling,' or both, he said of the groups hiring speakers such as Plouffe." (Margaret Talev, "White House Defends Paid Speeches By Plouffe Amid New Questions," [Bloomberg](#), 8/6/12)

Salon's Glenn Greenwald: "Obviously, A Nigerian Company Like This MTN Affiliate Is Not Paying Plouffe A Six-Figure Sum To Bask In His Profound Wisdom And Penetrating Insights About Their Industry." "Obviously, a Nigerian company like this MTN affiliate is not paying Plouffe a six-figure sum to bask in his profound wisdom and penetrating insights about their industry. Indeed, as the Post noted, 'a video posted on YouTube shows that Plouffe delivered a generic talk about the role of the Internet in Obama's 2008 victory.'" (Glenn Greenwald, Op-Ed, "David Plouffe's Speaking Fees," [Salon](#), 8/6/12)

- **Greenwald: "They're Paying Him In Order To Purchase The Only Thing Of Value Which Plouffe Has To Offer A Company Like This: His Political Access, Influence And Connections In The Obama White House."** (Glenn Greenwald, Op-Ed, "David Plouffe's Speaking Fees," [Salon](#), 8/6/12)
- **Greenwald: Plouffe Ran Obama's Populist 2008 Campaign "Yet Look At How He Has Parlayed His Role As Obama's Campaign Manager In Order To Enrich Himself ..."** "He also led Obama's 2008 populist campaign (which vowed to change the way and for whom Washington works, even as it was fueled by vast amounts of money from the banking industry). Yet look at how he has parlayed his role as Obama's campaign manager in order to enrich himself, and which parties are responsible for his newfound, substantial personal wealth." (Glenn Greenwald, Op-Ed, "David Plouffe's Speaking Fees," [Salon](#), 8/6/12)

THE WHITE HOUSE HAS DISMISSED CONCERNS AS "POLITICAL CRITICISM" BUT IT SHOULD RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE JUDGMENT OF THOSE AROUND THE PRESIDENT

White House Press Secretary Jay Carney Referred To Plouffe's Questionable Conduct As "Political Criticism." "'This is political criticism after the fact that's clearly designed to score some points,' Carney said during his daily briefing, responding to a Washington Post report that Plouffe -- before joining the White House but after serving as Obama's 2008 campaign manager -- was paid \$100,000 in speaking fees by a subsidiary of South Africa-based MTN Group, which has for the last five years done business with a state-owned Iranian telecommunications firm." (Jennifer Epstein, "W.H.: Attacks On Obama Transparency 'Clearly Politics,'" [Politico](#), 8/6/12)

Before Plouffe Took The Speaking Engagement, "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)

Prior To Plouffe's Decision To Speak At MTN, U.N. Investigators Suspected That MTN's Liberia Subsidiary, Was A Continuing Source Of Income For Convicted War Criminal Charles Taylor. "They

have pressed in Liberian courts for information about the entwined companies PLC Investments and Lonestar Communications, suspecting they could be a continuing source of income for Mr. Taylor. Lonestar, the nation's leading cellphone company, was essentially a monopoly for four years, controlled by two Taylor financial advisers through PLC, a holding company, a U.N. report says. They sold 60 percent of Lonestar to a Lebanese group, Investcom, which in turn was acquired by a South African cellphone company, MTN Group, in 2006." (Doreen Carvajal, "As Liberian Stands Trial, Investigators Lose Scent In Hunt For Missing Millions," [The New York Times](#), 6/6/10)

- **Charles Taylor's Former Vice-President Testified That Taylor Became A Secret Part Owner Of MTN's Liberian Subsidiary.** "Mr. Taylor's former vice president, Moses Blah, and other former ministers testified before the government's Truth and Reconciliation Commission that Mr. Taylor became a secret part owner in Lonestar and granted it an exclusive license to run a mobile network, dismissing officials who urged an open market." (Doreen Carvajal, "As Liberian Stands Trial, Investigators Lose Scent In Hunt For Missing Millions," [The New York Times](#), 6/6/10)

MTN Is Suspected Of Being "Fully Owned" By The Iranian Revolutionary Guard. "MTN is in business with Irancell, which according to a 2006 American government cable obtained by the group WikiLeaks is 'fully owned' by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, considered a central instrument of repression in Iran." (Peter Baker, "Aide's Fee Draws Critics and, Then Defenders," [The New York Times](#), 8/7/12)

- **According To United Against Nuclear Iran, MTN "Carried Out Orders From The Regime To Shut Off Text Messaging And Skype During Times Of Political Protest ..."** "According to a nonpartisan advocacy group called United Against Nuclear Iran, MTN 'carried out orders from the regime to shut off text messaging and Skype during times of political protest, and reportedly has a floor in its Tehran headquarters where Iranian military officials compile and access tracking data. That data has been used to track, apprehend, torture and kill regime opponents.' 'Simply put,' the group said in a statement, 'MTN has blood on its hands.'" (Peter Baker, "Aide's Fee Draws Critics and, Then Defenders," [The New York Times](#), 8/7/12)

Obama's Secretary Of Defense Signed A Letter From United Against Nuclear Iran That Attacked MTN For Claiming To Be A "Liberating Force" In Iran While It Carried Out Orders From The Regime To Suppress Dissent. "In addition, given MTN's relationship with the regime, MTN's assertion that it is a 'liberating force,' 'enriching the lives' of Iranians is completely untenable. MTN cannot reasonably assert that the substantial profits it earns from its growing role in the Iranian telecommunications market are merely a byproduct of a larger altruistic goal to empower the citizens of Iran and the developing world. If MTN was truly interested in empowering the Iranian people, it would not partner with the regime that oppresses them, and it would surely not carry out orders from the regime to shut off communications during times of popular protest." (Letter To Sifiso Dabengwa, President and CEO Of MTN Group, [United Against A Nuclear Iran](#), 2/29/12)

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)