

Obama Throws Susan Rice Under the Bus, Then Blames the Bus Driver; Media Applauds

☒ On Wednesday, President Obama gave his first press conference in eight months. In between hard-hitting questions about global warming and whether or not the president has spoken to Mitt Romney since election night, one member of the White House press corps actually managed to squeeze in a question about the administration's public response to the Benghazi terrorist attack. Specifically, the question was in regard to the multiple interviews U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Susan Rice, gave to news networks five days after the attack.

As many of you will recall (unless you don't watch FOX News and are hearing this for the first time), Rice repeatedly stated that the government's best intelligence indicated that the attack was spawned by a spontaneous mob that was upset over an anti-Muslim YouTube video created by some guy in California.

We know now, of course, that at the time Rice made those remarks, our federal government was well aware that what happened at our consulate in Benghazi, Libya was a coordinated terrorist attack. The described 'spontaneous mob' didn't even exist. Thus, the information that Rice gave to the public was purposely dishonest. Many suspect (and by 'many', I mean anyone who's not in the tank for the administration) that the public was misled so as not to hurt President Obama's re-election campaign. Regardless of the motivations, the timeline clearly reveals that there was a cover-up.

The reporter asked the president to respond to comments from U.S. senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham that they planned

on blocking Susan Rice's possible nomination as the next Secretary of State, based on her Benghazi statements.

After singing the praises of Susan Rice, the president confirmed (for the first time) that the White House had given her the information that she relayed to the news organizations. He then scolded McCain and Graham for vowing to deny Rice the nomination.

He said, "For them to go after the U.N. ambassador, who had nothing to do with Benghazi and was simply making a presentation based on intelligence that she had received and to besmirch her reputation is outrageous."

Outrageous? Really? Let's take a look at that comment, because it's important on a couple of fronts... First of all, the obvious question is that if Rice "had nothing do with Benghazi", why was she sent out by the White House to talk about it to the press? Secondly, if the White House sent her out with information they knew to be false, aren't THEY the ones who besmirched her reputation?

The president continued: "When they go after the U.N. ambassador, apparently because they think she's an easy target, then they've got a problem with me."

How terribly chivalrous the president sounded there (well, except for that part about her being an "easy target", which was pretty darned condescending if you ask me). Anyway, the president was at least *trying* to show us once again exactly what his campaign told us for the last six months: That he's the *great protector of women*.

But let's take a step back. Who put Rice in this position? John McCain and Lindsey Graham didn't send her onto national television with false information. President Obama did. She was merely a pawn to the administration – someone they clearly felt was so inconsequential to them that they put her career aspirations in jeopardy by asking her to fall on the sword for

them. Maybe *that's* why the president categorized her as "an easy target." Obama just forgot to mention that he's the one who painted the bulls-eye on her.

To top things off, for those who watched the press conference, it was obvious by the president's demeanor that he was suggesting something chauvinistic in the way McCain and Graham were holding Rice accountable for her words. As if, somehow, a woman can't be criticized by two men (forget the fact that female senators are supporting McCain and Graham) without it having something to do with her gender.

Half of me expected Obama to identify McCain and Graham as "acting generals in the *War On Women*", and accuse them of trying to steal Rice's birth control pills. It certainly wouldn't have been any more ridiculous than some of the things that went on during the presidential campaign.

Isn't the reality pretty obvious, though? To cover his own butt, President Obama hid behind Susan Rice's skirt and sent her onto national television to spread false information. It was the president who put her career on the line in doing so. Yet McCain and Graham are supposed to be villains for holding her accountable? There's your *protector of women*, folks!

Equally nauseating has been the media's glowing reaction to Obama's so-called gallant *defense* of Rice.

On ABC's *Good Morning America*, George Stephanopoulos hailed the president for being "very forceful in defending Ambassador Rice." His colleague, Martha Raddatz, deemed it a "very strong defense."

ABC News' Diane Sawyer described the president as *coming out swinging*, in defense of Rice.

Most all of the mainstream media has found a way to admire the president's response, but the most embarrassing fawning came from NBC News...

Brian Williams said, "The president today, almost conjuring the wording of Aaron Sorkin from the movie *American President*, as will be pointed out all day, really deciding to throw down."

Andrea Mitchell concurred with Williams, saying, "This was President Andrew Shepherd really coming through in the East Room of the White House. Because this was President Obama saying, 'If you want to pick a fight with my U.N. ambassador, and blame her for something that was not her responsibility on Benghazi, then you come after me'....It was dramatic. He is angry."

Pathetic.

If only the national media could get as emotionally invested in the cover-up of the deaths of four American patriots, as they do over the president's phony, Hollywood chivalry, the public and the families of the victims might actually get some answers.

It's the Media, Stupid

☒ It's only been a few days since America re-elected President Obama, and there's already been a good deal of postmortem analysis over what went wrong for Mitt Romney.

Stringent conservatives are blaming the Republican party for supporting a candidate who wasn't ideologically pure enough. Liberals are insistent that the Republicans weren't enough like the Democrats, and that's why Romney lost. Others are pointing to Hurricane Sandy as the *October Surprise* that stole Romney's rising momentum in the week before the election. Many are crediting the superior ground game of the Obama campaign

in the state of Ohio, and pointing to the Hispanic vote as a major factor. Some are criticizing Romney for playing things too safe in the last two presidential debates, not bringing up the Benghazi attack as a campaign issue, and not responding quickly enough to Obama's Bain Capital attack ads.

People who wanted Mitt Romney to win, and are frightened over the reality of a second term in office for President Obama, are understandably frustrated. This was an election that couldn't afford to be lost, and they want answers.

Let me try and provide some...

First of all, I would suggest that those who think Obama won because Romney wasn't conservative enough are barking up the wrong tree. By election day, Romney had energized conservatives. He had won over the base. Sure, a post-election analysis revealed that 3 million registered Republicans chose not to vote on election day, but we can only speculate as to why. Overall turnout was down, and there's no information suggesting that concerns of conservative ideological purity had anything to do with it. For all we know, the majority of them could be moderates or simply aren't reliable voters.

The notion that the Republican platform needs to closer resemble the Democratic platform is silly. While there are certainly some individuals within the Republican party whose positions and conduct reflects poorly on the GOP, the same can obviously be said about the Democrats. The difference is really in how those people reflect on their party leaders, and I'll discuss that a little bit later in this column.

Hurricane Sandy, and footage Chris Christie cozying up to President Obama certainly didn't help Romney. Obama looking dignified in his little bomber jacket, and the facade of post-partisan leadership during a time of crisis most likely made a marginal impression upon an impressionable electorate.

If Romney had pounded the president on the Benghazi attack, it

might have helped. However, with the media dead set on not reporting on Benghazi, and their eagerness to paint Romney as a man politicizing tragedy, it might have done Romney more harm than good.

Is it important that the GOP do a better job of courting the Hispanic vote? Absolutely.

Should Romney have done a better job of responding to the Bain Capital attack ads? Yes.

But I really think all of these explanations miss the big picture. Most are relatively *small ball*. The idea that any of these things could derail an alternative choice to four years of the worst economy of the modern era is absurd.

As I suggested in my last column, the biggest thing that Mitt Romney had going against him was that a good portion of the electorate didn't seem to think that this year was anything special. They didn't see it as the most important election of their lifetime, when it was. They didn't see it as an extremely important choice between two very different futures. They didn't see it as perhaps the last chance we had to stop our country from driving off a fiscal cliff, and never again achieving any semblance of the prosperity my generation enjoyed for three straight decades.

If I'm right about that, and I really think I am, it's important that we ask ourselves why the electorate didn't see what the rest of us saw.

Was it because Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan didn't express how dire our economic situation was? No. They painted a very sobering picture of what Obama's policies were doing to the country, both short-term and long-term. They talked about economic numbers, the national debt, and the employment situation all the time. Paul Ryan's stump speech, in fact, often included a PowerPoint presentation that explained the country's economic trajectory in great detail.

Was it because Romney and Ryan didn't offer a different direction and a path to prosperity? No. They had the guts to talk about Medicare and tax reform. They talked about lifting regulations. They talked about starting a domestic energy boom.

The problem wasn't primarily in the Republican ticket's messaging. The problem was that their messaging, the country's economic realities, and even legitimate controversies within the Obama administration were constantly being trampled on by who Bernie Goldberg refers to as the president's *most loyal base*: The media.

Now, before you accuse me of passing the buck by trying to skirt blame away from the Romney campaign, hear me out. I'm not at all suggesting that the Romney camp bears no responsibility in their own defeat. Of course they do. As with any campaign, they made mistakes which should be learned from. My point is that while the Republicans are going through an identity crisis over how their party should better appeal to the electorate, they would be foolish to overlook the fact that the force most detrimental to their platform is not themselves nor even the Democratic party. It is the media.

The Republicans have long viewed the overwhelming media bias against them as a fact of life; a frustrating, extra hurdle to deal with that the Democratic party doesn't have to. But liberal media bias reached critical mass in this year's presidential election, far exceeding the widespread, over-the-top Obama-fawning of 2008. This year, a plethora of ridiculous assertions and narratives that came from the Obama campaign received little or no mainstream media scrutiny. In some cases, they were even substantiated by the media. What should have been major stories – ones detrimental to President Obama's re-election effort – were purposely downplayed, or even ignored entirely. It's no longer just merely bias that Republicans have to contend with. It's blatant, political activism in the news media. It's widespread corruption within

one of the most important institutes in any free society.

If the Benghazi attack cover-up had taken place under a Republican administration, it would have been treated as the next Watergate – an offense worthy of impeachment. Yet, the mainstream media has had practically no interest in it. Contrast their conduct with a more recent example: Plamegate. When Valerie Plame was exposed by a government official as a CIA officer, the media latched onto to the story like Chris Matthews to a shirtless poster of Barack Obama. They took that relatively inconsequential controversy and turned it into a months-long media circus with the sole purpose of embarrassing the Bush administration. Heck, Hollywood even made a feature film out of it! Yet, when four American patriots are murdered by terrorists in Libya right before a presidential election, and the Obama administration concocts some ridiculous explanation about a YouTube video and a non-existent mob being to blame, the media simply shrugs their shoulders. Even worse, they, in some cases, became active participants in the cover-up as we saw from *60 Minutes'* selective editing of Steve Kroft's interview with the president. The media's overall conduct on the Benghazi story has been nothing short of scandalous.

The War on Women? It was quite possibly the most obscenely ridiculous and insulting political campaign ever used in a presidential election. The notion that the Republican party wanted to stop women from using contraceptives is essentially the conservative counterpart of President Obama being born in Kenya. The difference is that while the media called out the Birther movement and Donald Trump for their absurdity, they were active participants in substantiating and spreading the word of the War on Women, along with Sandra Fluke who they portrayed as some kind of civil rights hero. As some might remember, the narrative didn't begin with Sandra Fluke and Rush Limbaugh's over-the-top comments toward her congressional testimony. It started at a presidential primary debate when

ABC News' George Stephanopoulos tried to make the denial of contraceptives to women a political issue, and none of the Republican candidates had any clue what he was talking about. When Republican senatorial candidate, Todd Akin made an idiotic comment about "legitimate rape", the media cited it as additional proof of the Republican's War on Women while they worked to link Akin as closely as possible with Romney. Yet, when Breitbart.com exposed that Barack Obama's own literary agent promoted him, for sixteen years, as being born in Kenya (almost certainly with Obama's knowledge), the media completely ignored it. When another Republican senatorial candidate made a controversy remark months later, Romney was again dragged into the fray. Yet, no one in the media ever held Obama accountable for the numerous despicable comments Harry Reid made, over the past six months, on the president's behalf. For that matter, why wasn't Obama held accountable for the perversions of Anthony Weiner? Does party-affiliation only make the leader of the party accountable if Republicans are involved?

Remember how much hype *The Buffett Rule* received from the media? For months and months, Obama promoted it as his answer to debt reduction and a big step toward getting the country's fiscal house in order. Named after ultra-successful businessman (and huge Obama supporter) Warren Buffett, the idea was that if "the rich" simply paid a higher tax rate, all would be good in the world. Obama marketed the plan by pointing out that under the current tax system, Buffet's secretary paid a higher tax rate than Warren himself did. He campaigned on how unfair that was, and even invited the secretary to sit alongside Michelle Obama at his State of the Union address so he could bring additional attention the narrative. The media loved the idea, and fell in love with the secretary. The problem is that the media never actually bothered to study, or at least not relay the information on, what kind of effect The Buffett Rule would have on our national debt. According to the CBO, the additional revenue

raised by The Buffett Rule would amount to the same amount of money that the U.S. government accumulates in debt in a **single day**. Yes, the president's answer to over \$15 trillion in national debt was to pay for a single day of government spending. Contrast how the media scrutinized Obama's plan with how they scrutinized Romney's tax reform plan, repeatedly following the Democratic party's lead of demanding that Romney offer up details on the tax exemptions he planned to cut.

These are merely a handful of examples, just in the past year alone, of how the media kept the American public dumb to the advantage of the Obama administration. An entire book could be written detailing the rest, and I imagine one will be.

Obama's margin of victory over Romney was somewhere in the ballpark of 3% of the vote count. Possibly even less. If the media hadn't been running heavy interference for the Obama administration for the past four years, and all other factors remained the same, does anyone honestly believe that the swing for Romney wouldn't have exceeded more than half of that 3%, and given him the victory? Romney would have won in the landslide Dick Morris kept annoyingly predicting.

So while the Republican party is searching for a winning formula to win back over the electorate (and their *is* work to be done there), their blueprint absolutely needs to include a strategy for dealing with the media. It's a challenge they'll have to take very seriously. They can't simply rely on FOX News and conservative radio to provide some semblance of a counterbalance – a small portion of the overall media from which their unfiltered viewpoint is given a platform. They also can't simply set up the mainstream media up as a "straw man" to pin all of their grievances on. Those are not the answers.

No, the GOP is going to need to figure out a way of effectively neutralizing political activism within a national news media that dishonestly markets itself as a reputable,

invaluable service to the American public. It's really not even a challenge limited to the Republican party itself. The answer might be within a grass-roots conservative movement, which might include the expansion of *new media* groups and independent, investigative journalism that compels the establishment media to cover stories they otherwise wouldn't through the pressure of viral publicity. I don't have all the answers, but I'm certain they exist.

Whatever the strategy is, the problem needs to be addressed. The current state of the media is not only undoubtedly dangerous to our country, but it's also an albatross around the neck of the Republican Party. If they're able to effectively deal with it, their other problems become manageable, and a swing of support from more than 1.5% of the electorate is absolutely guaranteed.