

When Smart People Say and Do Stupid Things ...

✘ I'm never surprised when stupid people say stupid things. But when smart people say stupid things, I want to know more.

Which brings us to Susan Rice, the president's national security advisor who, based on traditional standards, is a very smart individual. She was a high school valedictorian, a Phi Beta Kappa at Stanford, and a Rhodes scholar.

Not bad, right? So how can someone that bright say such dumb things. Speaking on ABC's Sunday news show "This Week," Ms. Rice said that Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, who, according to his fellow soldiers may have been a deserter – or worse, "served the United States with honor and distinction."

This is the same Susan Rice who went on Sunday news programs and misled the nation about the slaughter of four Americans in Benghazi, saying it was instigated by an anti-Muslim video.

Smart people learn from their mistakes. Not Susan Rice.

I suspect Ms. Rice checks her intelligence at the door and just says whatever Mr. Obama's people want her to say. She may see this as loyalty to the president – and maybe it is. But she comes off as a dolt.

The president supposedly is pretty smart too, Columbia and Harvard Law would indicate a certain level of smarts. But how could a smart person so mishandle the announcement of Sgt. Bergdahl's release from Taliban captivity?

As we all know, the president brought the soldier's parents to the Rose Garden to make the big announcement – on live TV. There was no mention of Bergdahl's questionable conduct in

Afghanistan. How could he say anything about that with the soldiers parents standing next to him?

Perhaps President Obama calculated that when the news got out, his allies in the so-called mainstream media would fall into line and attack conservatives for having the bad manners to question the president's judgment. After all, even if we stipulate that it's the president's duty to bring any American soldier home who's been held in captivity, it's perfectly reasonable to ask if this was a deal he should have made, since it had already been rejected by his top aides several years ago.

Was trading five top Taliban commanders held at Guantanamo ... for a soldier who, according to more than a few of the men who knew him, was a deserter, a smart move? The president said Bergdahl's health was deteriorating and it was now or never. That may or may not turn out to be true.

I get the impression that Mr. Obama thought we'd all swoon over his success in bringing an American soldier home after five years of captivity. A narcissist might think that way. Perhaps he figured if Republicans jumped on him, his loyalists would simply say they were engaging in detestable partisan politics and the American people would take the president's side. Except no one but the most sycophantic so-called progressive supporters of this president is happy with what has transpired.

How could a smart man have engineered such a public relations disaster?

Maybe Sgt. Bergdahl is not a deserter. Maybe he didn't collaborate with the enemy. Maybe so many of his fellow soldiers got it all wrong. Time will sort out the facts. Still, a smarter president, one not so enamored with himself, would *not* have held a high-profile ceremony outside the White House. A smarter president would have found a more modest way

to tell the nation he was bringing an American soldier home; he would have explained that it was a very difficult decision because of the high price America had to pay. He would have told us that he was not happy about releasing the worst of the worst from Guantanamo. He would have said his decision was made all the more difficult because of reports about Sgt. Bergdahl's behavior in Afghanistan. But in the end, a somber Mr. Obama might have said, "I wanted to get this American out. I hope you understand."

And I think most Americans would have understood.

Instead, as some have said, the president went into the Rose Garden and "spiked the football." He never saw the storm coming. Or perhaps he did – and simply didn't care.

As for Susan Rice, she needs to stay home on Sunday mornings.