

# Not a Coup, but a Cover Up



by Lee Smith

**Speculation is growing in Republican media circles** that the recent scandal over Joe Biden's improper possession of classified information from his time as vice president represents an internal coup. The theory holds that Democratic Party insiders, particularly former Barack Obama officials situated within the Biden administration, are using the revelations of Biden's carelessness to push him aside or at least prevent him from running for re-election in 2024.

Capitol Hill sources say it's true the Biden administration is a hornet's nest with several factions vying for control, including one led by domestic policy adviser Susan Rice and Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco, both Obama loyalists. However, a careful look at the evidence shows that senior Biden aides, Democratic officials, and the party's media apparatus are circling the wagons to protect Biden. What we are watching is not a coup but a cover up.

Press reports show that at the beginning of November, Biden's lawyers found classified documents in his office at a Washington, DC think-tank affiliated with the University of Pennsylvania and that bears his name, the Penn Biden Center. This account is improbable. If Biden's legal team, rather than his administrative staff, typically sorted through his papers, it's likely they would have previously identified the classified records in question.

There were at least two other opportunities for Biden aides to find the papers among his belongings. First, when his staff packed his boxes as he left the Office of the Vice President in January 2017. It isn't yet known where the documents resided between then and when they were moved to the Penn Biden Center when it opened in 2018. The move would have given his staff another chance to find the classified documents. Hence, it seems likely that it was an outside source that alerted either the Biden team, the National Archives, or the Department of Justice to the fact the president was improperly holding classified documents.

In a [press conference](#) on Jan. 12, Attorney General Merrick Garland said that on Nov. 9, he asked the FBI to assess whether those records had been mishandled. On Nov. 14, he asked the U.S. attorney in Chicago John Lausch to conduct an initial investigation.

Administration officials and Biden loyalists in federal law enforcement knew they had a problem. Mishandling classified documents was the basis of a broad Democratic Party campaign against Biden's possible 2024 rival, Donald Trump.

The FBI raided Trump's Florida home in August to seize classified documents, and rumors circulated that indictments were in the offing. Eventually, the Department of Justice appointed a special counsel to investigate Trump. Biden even chastised his predecessor for mishandling classified documents in a September media interview. And now here was Biden as

culpable as the man they hoped to destroy with the same instrument—classified documents.

The Biden team moved to attenuate the potential fallout with a leak to the press. A Nov. 14 [Washington Post article](#) citing “people familiar with the matter” explained that “FBI interviews with witnesses so far, they said, also do not point to any nefarious effort by Trump to leverage, sell or use the government secrets. Instead, the former president seemed motivated by a more basic desire not to give up what he believed was his property.”

That is, contrary to the public outcry that Trump had taken the documents for illicit purposes—he was selling U.S. nuclear secrets to Saudi Arabia, one journalist claimed without evidence or reason—there was nothing sinister at play. Rather, he was simply motivated by ego.

The Nov. 14 article was evidence that the Biden circle was walking back its scorched-earth campaign against Trump on classified papers. Nearly three months later, it’s clear why—to reframe the context for when news of Biden’s own problems with classified documents went public.

When the story broke last week in administration-friendly media outlets, Democratic lawmakers not only rallied around the president but also compared his response favorably to Trump’s. Unlike Trump’s team that argued with the institution tasked to keep U.S. records, Biden’s lawyers, intimidated Congressman Jamie Raskin (D-Md.), “appear to have taken immediate and proper action to notify the National Archives.”

Dozens of media publications, from the New York Times to Vox, have published explainers showing why what Trump did is much worse than what Biden did. Trump had more documents, the argument runs; Biden’s lawyers were more forthright, etc. The fact is that no one on the Democratic side has broken with the president or even so much as hinted that he did something

wrong. This isn't what an internal coup looks like.

The special counsel appointed to investigate Biden's handling of classified documents identifies as a Republican but he appears to be a Never Trump Republican. Robert Hur is a protégé of Rod Rosenstein, the deputy attorney general under Trump who [reportedly](#) offered to wear a wiretap to spy on the previous president.

Rosenstein furthered the anti-Trump cause by withholding documents from the investigation led by former Congressman Devin Nunes into alleged FBI crimes and abuses committed during the Bureau's Trump-Russia probe. He also allegedly [threatened to subpoena](#) Nunes's staffers, including Kash Patel. A winter 2018 chain of emails ([pdf](#)) between DOJ officials shows that Hur was part of the law enforcement team tasked to stonewall Nunes's investigation.

Former congressional investigators say that Hur's appointment as special counsel is intended not to uncover potential crimes committed by the president but rather to give the appearance of a genuine investigation and thereby bury the issue once and for all. And thus actions taken by the Biden administration, and the responses of Democratic officials and the media, show that what's unfolding at present isn't a coup, but a cover up.

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