

# Time to Get Spies Out of Politics

The Michael Morell story demonstrates that the intelligence community needs sweeping reform, beginning with getting spies all the way out of domestic political life

MATT TAIBBI

APR 24, 2023 · PAID



452



121



25



Share



Former Acting CIA head Michael Morell chilling

On September 08, 2002, *New York Times* writers Michael Gordon and Judith Miller wrote a blockbuster, titled, “[U.S. Says Hussein Intensifies Quest for A-Bomb Parts](#).” It began:

*Iraq has stepped up its quest for nuclear weapons and has embarked on a worldwide hunt for materials to make an atomic bomb, Bush administration officials said today.*

*In the last 14 months, Iraq has sought to buy thousands of specially designed aluminum tubes, which American officials believe were intended as components of centrifuges to enrich uranium.*

That same day, Vice President Dick Cheney went on “Meet The Press” and [told](#) Tim Russert Iraq had “reconstituted” its nuke program, citing “a story in the *New York Times* this morning.”

The Cheney-MTP episode set a standard for laundering disinformation through media. The *Times* got its “A-Bomb Parts” story by citing “Bush administration officials,” and Cheney sold the same story to the world by citing the *New York Times*. This merry-go-round is a perfect way for politicians and spooks to introduce bogus news into the world without leaving fingerprints.

The new story [about former acting CIA director Michael Morell](#) looks like a similar game of disinformation telephone. Again, the House Weaponization of Government Committee led by Jim Jordan recently [questioned](#) Morell. His answers suggest he may have been “triggered” by a call from then-Biden campaign official Anthony Blinken to organize a [group letter signed by 50 former intel officials](#), opining the Hunter Biden laptop story looked like a “Russian information operation.”

A little-noticed detail about the letter is in its next-to-last paragraph, where officials worked the word “disinformation” into the text:

*In addition, media reports say that the FBI has now opened an investigation into Russian involvement in the case. According to USA Today, “...federal authorities are investigating whether the material supplied to the New York Post by Rudy Giuliani is part of a smoke bomb of disinformation pushed by Russia.”*

The [USA Today piece](#) was published two days before the group letter. Citing a “person familiar with the matter,” it said the FBI was investigating the “smoke bomb of disinformation,” a *USA Today* characterization of the “person’s” assessment.

[POLITICS](#)

Rudy Giuliani

Add Topic +

## A tabloid got a trove of data on Hunter Biden from Rudy Giuliani. Now, the FBI is probing a possible disinformation campaign.

Enter the FBI.

Less than three weeks before one of the most contentious presidential campaigns in history, federal authorities are investigating whether the material supplied to the Post by Rudy Giuliani, President Donald Trump's personal lawyer, is part of a smoke bomb of disinformation pushed by Russia.

The inquiry, according to a person familiar with the matter, is at least in part,

*October 17, 2020*

This is the same circular firing squad trick Cheney employed. Nameless official is source for news outlet, news outlet becomes source for different official, and in the end, no one has to take credit for making the wrong claim. This is the template for information delivery in a world run by spooks, where we won't get news but what the Russians call *versii*, or versions — takes on takes on reality, with the origin source too far away to see. We'll know what we're supposed to think, but less and less effort is being put into the problem of giving us reasons to believe what we're told.

Hi **tomr@fastmail.net**

Keep reading with a 7-day free trial

Subscribe to **Racket News** to keep reading this post and get 7 days of free access to the full post archives.

[Start trial](#)

Already a paid subscriber? [Switch accounts](#)

© 2023 Matt Taibbi · [Privacy](#) · [Terms](#) · [Collection notice](#)  
[Substack](#) is the home for great writing