

# Obama Appoints Fox to Investigate Spying In the Henhouse: Spymaster James Clapper to Lead Investigation into Spying

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

When Obama announced last Friday that he'd reform NSA spying, we documented that it [wasn't wise to trust him](#).

Friday, Obama promised an [independent group or experts would investigate spying](#):

We're forming a high-level group of outside experts to review our entire intelligence and communications technologies. We need new thinking for a new era. We now have to unravel terrorist plots by finding a needle in the haystack of global telecommunications. And meanwhile, technology has given governments — including our own — unprecedented capability to monitor communications.

So I am tasking this independent group to step back and review our capabilities — particularly our surveillance technologies. And they'll consider how we can maintain the trust of the people, how we can make sure that there absolutely is no abuse in terms of how these surveillance technologies are used, ask how surveillance impacts our foreign policy — particularly in an age when more and more information is becoming public. And they will provide an interim report in 60 days and a final report by the end of this year, so that we can move forward with a better understanding of how these programs impact our security, our privacy, and our foreign policy.

Today, Obama [appointed James Clapper](#) to head the “independent group” of “outside experts”.

Clapper is the same guy [who lied to Congress about spying](#) ... falsely claiming that the government wasn't spying on the American people. He subsequently [apologized to Congress](#) for lying.

And - as the Director of National Intelligence - Clapper is the U.S. spy-in-chief.

EmptyWheel [notes](#):

Neither Obama nor the Intelligence Committees get to hear from this Group themselves. It all goes through James Clapper.

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It took exactly 72 hours for that good idea to fizzle into a navel gaze directed

by the guy who lies to Congress.

TechDirt [notes](#):

[Obama] asking Clapper to first create and set up this “outside” and “independent” review group... and then to have the group report its findings back to Clapper. The same strong defender of the program who flat out lied to Congress about it. If this was about “restoring the trust” of the American people that the government isn’t pulling a fast one over on them, President Obama sure has a funny way of trying to rebuild that trust. This seems a lot more like giving the concerns of the American public a giant middle finger.

Will Wheaton [tweets](#):

President Obama putting Clapper in charge of the [#NSA](#) commission \*that reports back to Clapper\* is a giant Fuck You to America.

The government does the same thing every time it gets caught with its pants down: appoints a commission comprised of insiders the government can trust [to implement damage control and deflect political pressure](#).

It happened with the attacks at [Pearl Harbor, the Iran-Contra scandal](#), the [financial crisis, 9/11](#), and many other political scandals.

For example – as explored in the book [The Commission](#) by respected journalist Philip Shenon – the Executive Director of the 9/11 Commission was [an administration insider whose area of expertise is the creation and maintenance of “public myths” thought to be true, even if not actually true](#). He [wrote an outline of what he wanted the report to say very early in the process](#), controlled what the Commission did and did not analyze, then limited the scope of the Commission’s inquiry so that the overwhelming majority of questions about 9/11 remained unasked (see [this article](#) and [this article](#)).

9/11 Commissioner John Lehman said:

We purposely put together a staff that had – in a way – conflicts of interest.

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All of the staff had, to a certain extent, some conflict of interest.

Top constitutional and military law expert Jonathan Turley [stated](#):

[The 9/11 Commission] was a commission that was really made for Washington – a commission composed of political appointees of both parties that ran interference for those parties – a commission that insisted at the beginning it would not impose blame on individuals.

The same could be said of virtually all commissions formed in the wake of political scandals

... including Clapper's "spying" commission.

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