

THE UNMASKING PANIC AND THE FLYNN PLEA

Yesterday, Eli Lake was the first person to confirm the identity of the “very senior” official who “directed FLYNN to contact officials from foreign governments, including Russia, to learn where each government stood on the resolution” condemning Israel’s illegal settlements.

At the time, the U.N. Security Council resolution on Israeli settlements was a big deal. Even though the Obama administration had less than a month left in office, the president instructed his ambassador to the United Nations to abstain from a resolution, breaking a precedent that went back to 1980 when it came to one-sided anti-Israel resolutions at the U.N.

This was the context of Kushner’s instruction to Flynn last December. One transition official at the time said Kushner called Flynn to tell him he needed to get every foreign minister or ambassador from a country on the U.N. Security Council to delay or vote against the resolution. Much of this appeared to be coordinated also with Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose envoys shared their own intelligence about the Obama administration’s lobbying efforts to get member states to support the resolution with the Trump transition team.

Lake was also the reporter who got the earliest “scoops” on the unmasking panic earlier this year.

There’s a reason for that. They’re the same story.

In April, I laid out how Devin Nunes was at the

center of both the January unmasking panic and the panic on behalf of a bunch of Republicans, during the Iran deal negotiations, who got their collusion with Bibi Netanyahu to kill the deal sucked up.

Throughout his ongoing information operation to claim the Obama White House spied on the Trump transition team, Devin Nunes has pointed to what he claimed was a precedent: when, in December 2015, members of Congress suddenly copped on that their conversations with Bibi Netanyahu would get picked up incidentally. In his March 22 press conference, he explained,

We went through this about a year and a half ago as it related to members of Congress, if you may remember there was a report I think it was in the Wall Street Journal and but then we had to have we had a whole series of hearings and then we had to have changes made to how Congress is informed if members of Congress are picked up in surveillance and this looks it's like very similar to that.

Eli Lake dutifully repeated it in the second of his three-post series pitching Nunes' information operation.

A precedent to what may have happened with the Trump transition involved the monitoring of Israel's prime minister and other senior Israeli officials. The Wall Street Journal reported at the end of 2015 that members of Congress and American Jewish groups were caught up in this surveillance and that the reports were sent to the White

House. This occurred during a bitter political fight over the Iran nuclear deal. In essence the Obama White House was learning about the strategy of its domestic political opposition through legal wiretaps of a foreign head of state and his aides.

But Lake didn't apparently think through what the implications of Nunes' analogy – or the differences between the two cases.

Here's the [WSJ](#) report and [CBS](#) and [WaPo](#) versions that aren't paywalled. All make it very clear that Devin Nunes took the lead in worrying about his conversations with Bibi Netanyahu being sucked up (I don't remember Republicans being as sympathetic when Jane Harman got sucked up in a conversation with AIPAC).

It's clear now that it's all one panic.

The most public confirmed unmasking involved Susan Rice discovering that Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan had a secret meeting with Flynn, Kushner, and Bannon in NY.

Former national security adviser Susan Rice privately told House investigators that she unmasked the identities of senior Trump officials to understand why the crown prince of the United Arab Emirates was in New York late last year, multiple sources told CNN.

The New York meeting preceded a separate effort by the UAE to facilitate a back-channel communication between Russia and the incoming Trump White

House.

The crown prince, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan, arrived in New York last December in the transition period before Trump was sworn into office for a meeting with several top Trump officials, including Michael Flynn, the president's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and his top strategist Steve Bannon, sources said.

But we now know that there would be intercepts between Netanyahu and Kushner leading up to it.

I wouldn't even be surprised if the Republicans are so certain they've been unmasked because Israel has their own way of discovering such things.

I've laid out how Jared Kushner's "peace" "plan" really is just an attempt to remap the Middle East to the interests of Israel and Saudi Arabia, interests which require significantly more belligerence against Iran than Obama showed. The unmasked discussions would include the ones that preceded Kushner's order to Flynn to try to undercut the resolution, as well as whatever else Kushner discussed with Netanyahu at the time.