

Are there really leakers in the White House or did Obama leave deeply hidden bugs in the offices?

- CNN already showed video from It's bugging camera of a Steve Bannon Trump argument in the Oval Office.
- CIA experts can remote-bug the White House from hotel rooms blocks away using lasers and microwaves
- Obama was widely known to have abused CIA and NSA resources for political shenanigans
- "A Faraday Cage room" needs to be fully installed in the conference room for adequate protection from Obama spy technologies, say experts

Frustration abounds in Trump White House

By [Jordan Fabian](#) and [Jonathan Easley](#) -

Trump World has a blunt message for the president: empower your staff or hire a new one.

Former aides, GOP strategists and sources close to the White House tell The Hill they're concerned about how Trump's handling of James Comey's firing as FBI director has undermined the people who work for him.

Changes seemed imminent late last week as the president seethed with anger over the rollout of Comey's firing.

But with Trump set to begin his first foreign trip as president on Friday, many think the threat of staff changes has lifted, at least for now.

Still, many view a reshuffling as all but guaranteed at some point this year, casting a pall over a White House staff that always appears one wrong move away from unemployment.

The repeated rumors of a shakeup have damaged morale, with aides acknowledging that the tempest surrounding Comey's firing is the worst to hit the White House yet.

Allies close to the administration want to see Trump act decisively or move on, rather than keep his staff in limbo under threat of change.

"We've all seen this movie before," said one former Trump adviser. "I don't know that it's any more or less real this time, but it's getting old. If you have a problem, fix it and move on."

The rumors have touched nearly every corner of the West Wing, including senior advisers such as chief of staff Reince Priebus and strategist Stephen Bannon. The most intense speculation in recent days has centered on the press operation and embattled press secretary Sean Spicer.

Multiple reports indicate Trump kept his communications team in the dark ahead of firing Comey, leading to a chaotic rollout that produced conflicting stories about the reasoning behind the decision.

The turmoil led Trump to publicly question the performance of his media relations staff. The president said in an interview last Friday with Fox News that he doesn't see a need for the daily White House press briefings and that his press shop isn't able to keep up with his fast-paced approach.

While Trump praised Spicer as a "nice man," he declined to definitively say if he would keep his current post.

"He's doing a good job, but he gets beat up," Trump said. Pressed on whether he'd keep Spicer at the lectern, Trump said, "He's been there at the beginning."

A subdued Spicer returned to the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room on Monday, where he faced another barrage of questions over Trump's decision to fire Comey.

White House spokespeople did not respond to requests for comment for this story.

Those who have worked for Trump say it is common knowledge that, with the exception of family, staff members live on thin ice.

But confusion over the division of responsibilities on the team of rivals Trump has assembled has created a White House where leaks have become the norm.

Trump's allies say he is frustrated by the leaks, which they say are coming from advisers who either don't believe in Trump's message, refuse to buy into the way he does business, or are so obsessed by the Washington power game that they'd risk harming the administration to boost their own image.

The president, in turn, has grown so distrustful of his staff that he chose to keep many of them out of the loop until the last minute on his decision to fire Comey, according to The Associated Press.

"You almost have to clean house and bring in true believers that are better capable of governing. Dissatisfied people leak, so clearly a lot of senior advisers are not happy," said one former campaign adviser.

A sweeping reshuffle would bring its own set of difficulties.

Trump's thirst for personal loyalty could narrow the universe of Republicans he might consider hiring, given that many top GOP aides were deeply critical of him during the 2016 campaign. It's a problem the White House has encountered as it struggles to fill posts across the federal government.

"Who is he going to shake it up with?" wondered one Trump associate. "Who are these senior Republicans who he would be talking to?"

At the same time, the ally stressed that whoever is brought in would have to have enough gravitas to carry out major changes, saying, “He’s going to have to bring in a real, real political pro to fix this thing.”

Others say Trump has brought these problems upon himself by shutting out many of his top aides and advisers or contradicting them in public.

“The problem is not Spicer or [White House communications director Michael] Dubke if you tell them 45 minutes in advance that you’re firing Jim Comey,” said one former adviser. “If you lack confidence in your communications team, go find people you have confidence in.”

Republican strategist John Feehery, who is also a columnist for The Hill, made a similar point.

“The White House is actually doing pretty well when the president doesn’t screw up,” he said. “They needed to have a better system of controlling his anger.”

In past administrations, the chief of staff has taken on the role of gatekeeper to the president, controlling who meets with him and what information he receives.

In Trump’s White House, rival factions exist in competition for Trump’s ear.

Former Trump aides and GOP operatives with close ties to the White House say Trump has not given Priebus enough responsibility.

“The leaks shows a total lack of discipline, and that starts with the chief of staff,” said a former Trump adviser. “The only way to be effective here is for the chief of staff to grab the loudest, most inveterate opponents inside the White House and to fire them. If the president hasn’t empowered him to do that, then he needs to walk.”

Insiders who spoke to The Hill believe that despite recent reports, Bannon is probably safe. He represents Trump’s core economic nationalist vision, and it is believed that Trump’s base would flee if the president narrowed his inner circle to Trump’s son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and economic adviser Gary Cohn, who are viewed as liberals by many grassroots conservatives.

“There would be tremendous base flight if Bannon were gone,” said one former adviser.

Bannon’s allies believe Kushner is pushing his father-in-law to clean house.

Political watchers say the appearance of chaos and the backdrop of uncertainty has undercut Trump’s credibility on the global stage as he prepares to make his first overseas trip, which includes stops in Saudi Arabia and Israel as well as summit meetings with major U.S. allies.

“Trump’s credibility abroad is taking severe hits,” Ian Bremmer, the president of the Eurasia Group, wrote in a dispatch to clients. “On the back of Emmanuel Macron’s win in France, continental European leaders together view Trump as a dangerous buffoon, one to be increasingly strategized against, rather than with.”

Niall Stanage contributed.

