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[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/10/08/goodbye\\_mr\\_jones](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/10/08/goodbye_mr_jones)

## **Goodbye, Mr. Jones**

**And good riddance. Why Jim Jones was the worst national security advisor in decades.**

**BY DAVID J. ROTHKOPF | OCTOBER 8, 2010**

The president's inexperience did in Jones more than any of the general's deficits. He didn't know what he wanted. He vacillated on key issues. He simply demonstrated the problems America repeatedly has when it hires men with no foreign-policy background to take on the most important international job in the world. Further, he did not really know enough about how the presidency works to nip in the bud the creation of the inner-circle bubble that effectively negated much of the work that the formal policy process did. Obama encouraged (or tolerated for long-enough that it looks like encouragement) his campaign foreign-policy deputies to continue to report directly to him, and this led to some public and private backdooring of Jones that undercut his authority dramatically. He did not empower Jones, and that combined with Jones's own shortcomings led to the zero-chemistry, ineffective collaboration that has been openly criticized by senior White House and foreign policy officials since the spring of Obama's first year in office.

In fact the situation got so bad that Jones was publicly undercut by true Obama confidante Denis McDonough more than once. It is something of a surprise he lasted this long. As one former national security advisor said to me while we were discussing a well-known instance of McDonough publicly undercutting Jones, "That would have only happened once on my watch. It would have been me or him."