

TRUMP's NSA Head Rogers controversial head of 2 spy organizations

News that senior administration officials want Mike Rogers replaced comes as the Navy admiral appears under consideration for a position under President-elect Donald Trump.

NSA Head Rogers on His Recommended Firing: 'I'm Accountable for My Actions'



NSA director Adm. Michael Rogers testifies during a hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee on Sept. 13 in Washington, D.C. (ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES)

HALIFAX, Nova Scotia – Navy Adm. Mike Rogers, chief of U.S. Cyber Command and the National Security Agency, said he was "accountable for his actions" following a report published during a security conference he attended here this weekend that senior administration officials have recommended President Barack Obama remove him amid concerns with his performance and the possible splitting of command duties for the two secretive organizations he leads.

"I'm not going to go down that road," Rogers said, interrupting a journalist who asked about [The Washington Post story](#) during a forum where the admiral was speaking

He added, "I'm accountable for my actions."

Citing unnamed U.S. officials, the Post reported that Defense Secretary Ash Carter and outgoing Director of National Intelligence James Clapper recommended last month that Obama remove Rogers, with Carter having concerns about Rogers' performance and Clapper's case driven

largely by his and Carter's recommendation that leadership of Cyber Command and the NSA be split. Clapper also reportedly prefers that the NSA be led by a civilian.

Per an official, the report said it had been expected that Rogers would be removed from his position in tandem with a shift in the leadership structure of the two agencies before the Nov. 8 presidential election.

Meanwhile, the 57-year-old admiral's recent trip to New York to meet with President-elect Donald Trump on Thursday also caused "consternation" for the Obama administration, the Post said, in part because it appears unprecedented for an officer like Rogers to conduct such a meeting and not inform his superiors.

Trump reportedly is considering Rogers to replace Clapper, who said Thursday [he is retiring](#) from his position overseeing all of the U.S. government's 17 intelligence agencies. It is also not believed Carter will stay on in the Trump administration, which continues to vet candidates for defense secretary, including retired Marine Gen. James Mattis.

The Atlantic's Steve Clemons, who was moderating a panel featuring Rogers at the Halifax International Security Forum, hinted at Rogers' meeting with Trump earlier in the forum by jokingly asking the admiral, "How was 'Hamilton'?" - "Next question," Rogers said quickly.

During the discussion, Rogers advocated for the breakup of the two agencies he leads, though that prospect has concerned some cybersecurity professionals over fears that Cyber Command, a military headquarters, and the NSA, which focuses on surveillance and cryptology, would work at cross-purposes. Others see a benefit from the largely digitally focused agencies in part competing against one another, particularly amid accusations highlighted in the Post report that Cyber Command has been slow to counter the digital activities of the Islamic State group.

"I believe in the long run pulling them apart but keeping them closely aligned is the right thing to do," Rogers said. "We spent years building this. I think it's going to take some period of time to make sure we prepare to separate them and ensure the long-term successes of both organizations." "The worst outcome is that we pursue a course of action that results in risking the mission for either organization."



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