

RNC Research BRIEFING

Clinton's 2016 Pitfalls

Skepticism Of Hillary Clinton's 2016 Presidential Bid Builds While Clinton Controversies Begin To Swirl

DEMOCRAT STRATEGISTS AND POLITICAL ANALYSTS ARE BEGINNING TO GROW SKEPTICAL ABOUT HILLARY CLINTON'S EMERGING CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

"Hillary Clinton's Lofty Status As The Apparent 2016 Democratic Nominee-In-Waiting Has Some Allies Concerned That The Hype Might Be Too Much, Too Soon." "Hillary Clinton's lofty status as the apparent 2016 Democratic nominee-in-waiting has some allies concerned that the hype might be too much, too soon. This seeming inevitability makes her more sensitive to attacks and risks amplifying any stumble, no matter how minor. And voters may react poorly to a candidate who appears to be waltzing to the nomination with minimal effort." (Michael O'Brien, "Hillary Hype Poses Risks For A Potential 2016 Candidacy," [NBC News](#), 8/19/13)

Democrat Strategist Robert Gibbs On Clinton: "I Am Fairly Floored That She Has Decided To Enter The Public Fray So Quickly." NBC'S DAVID GREGORY: "There is a question, Robert Gibbs, that I have, which is how does Hillary Clinton position herself, vis-a-vis Barack Obama? She wants a coalition that he has built her in 2012. She wants that certainly to be her coalition in 2016, but the legacy of Obama could both help and hurt her. How does she distinguish herself and have room to run?" GIBBS: "Well, she also has to distinguish herself from her husband, too, right? ... I as a strategist am fairly floored that she has decided to enter the public fray so quickly. She could do the foundation work, she could do issue work, she could build the campaign, she could develop a message without having to be so far out front there. And Chuck talks about strong bipartisan approval ratings, those will whittle quite quickly as she steps further and further-" (NBC's "Meet The Press," 8/18/13)

- **Gibbs: "If Her Campaign Becomes An Extension Really Of Either Her Husband's Term Or The Current President's Term, It's Not Necessarily A Good Deal For Her."** GIBBS: "Listen, if her campaign becomes an extension really of either her husband's term or the current president's term, it's not necessarily a good deal for her. I completely agree with Chuck." (NBC's "Meet The Press," 8/18/13)

NBC News' Chuck Todd: "I Don't Understand Why She's Out So Early Right Now. I Don't Know Why They Didn't Take The Entire Year Off." (MSNBC's "[Morning Joe](#)," 8/19/13)

Newsweek Editor Tina Brown Is Not Sure That The Attention On Clinton Is "So Great" For Her 2016 Hopes. TINA BROWN: "I'm not sure it's so great for Hillary Clinton actually. I mean I think there is the

curse of the frontrunner situation for her now. This is just getting so much kind of focus on her, so much early, you know, garbage about her, so much anger about her which will build and, in a way, by the time she runs, she will be an old story again which I do think is a problem. You can see the freshness of a Chris Christie if he were to be the nominee, a newer story, fresher story. And that was one of her problems last time. She felt like old news. So I don't necessarily think it's so great for Hillary Clinton that all of this -" (MSNBC's ["Morning Joe,"](#) 8/19/13)

- **Brown: "Obviously" The Huma Abedin Issue Has Not Been "Helpful" For Clinton.** "It was a golden thing going on for her when she left the State Department and suddenly back into Clinton land and I don't think that press is great. Obviously the Huma Abedin stuff hasn't been very helpful either." (MSNBC's ["Morning Joe,"](#) 8/19/13)

IT'S NO WONDER THAT DEMOCRATS ARE GETTING NERVOUS AS SKELETONS HAVE ALREADY STARTED TO JUMP OUT OF CLINTON'S CLOSET

Questions Are Mounting About The Role Clinton Advisor Huma Abedin Played During Her State Department Tenure

Huma Abedin, A Top Aide To Secretary Hillary Clinton, Was Granted Approval To Take On Work For Private Clients While Serving At The State Department. "When news surfaced in May that the State Department had approved an arrangement that allowed Huma Abedin, a top adviser to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, to take on work for private clients, officials at the department described it as nothing unusual. But three months later, questions about the arrangement persist, and the department has declined to provide some basic information about Ms. Abedin's situation and those of other State Department employees who may have been given similar status." (Raymond Hernandez, "Questions On The Dual Role Of A Clinton Aide Persist," [The New York Times](#), 8/18/13)

- **Abedin Was Granted Status As A "Special Government Employee" In June 2012 – An Arrangement That Allowed Her To Also Consult For Corporate Clients And The Clintons.** "Ms. Abedin, 37, a confidante of Mrs. Clinton's, was made a 'special government employee' in June 2012. That allowed her to continue her employment at State but also work for Teneo, a consulting firm, founded in part by a former aide to President Bill Clinton, that has a number of corporate clients, including Coca-Cola. In addition, Ms. Abedin worked privately for the Clinton Foundation and for Mrs. Clinton personally." (Raymond Hernandez, "Questions On The Dual Role Of A Clinton Aide Persist," [The New York Times](#), 8/18/13)
- **"Ms. Abedin Has Not Disclosed How Much She Was Paid By Teneo, The Clinton Foundation Or Mrs. Clinton During This Period. She Resigned From State On Feb. 1."** (Raymond Hernandez, "Questions On The Role Of A Clinton Aide Persist," [The New York Times](#), 8/18/13)
- **"The State Department Has Declined To Say What Role Mrs. Clinton Played In Approving The Arrangement."** (Raymond Hernandez, "Questions On The Dual Role Of A Clinton Aide Persist," [The New York Times](#), 8/18/13)

Government Watchdog Groups Have Questioned Whether A Top State Department Official Should Have Been Allowed To Work For Private Sector Clients At The Same Time. "The arrangement set off concern among some government watchdog groups and a senior Republican in Congress, who questioned whether a person in a sensitive State Department position should be working for clients in the private sector at the same time." (Raymond Hernandez, "Questions On The Dual Role Of A Clinton Aide Persist," [The New York Times](#), 8/18/13)

The State Department Refused To Respond To Requests From *The New York Times* About The Title

And Job Descriptions Of Any Other Employees Who Were Given The Title Of “Special Government Employee.” “In addition, The New York Times asked the State Department to provide the titles and job descriptions of other individuals the department has permitted to serve in the capacity of special government employee, and whether any of Mrs. Clinton’s other political appointees were given the special designation. The department has declined to do so, citing issues of employee confidentiality. ‘As a general policy, the Department of State does not disclose employee information of this nature,’ a department spokesman, Alec Gerlach, said.” (Raymond Hernandez, “Questions On The Role Of A Clinton Aide Persist,” [The New York Times](#), 8/18/13)

- **Senate Investigators Have Also Faced Obstacles On Determining If Abedin Was The Only Aide Granted Special Treatment And How Much Abedin Earned From Her Corporate Clients.** “Aides to Senator Charles E. Grassley, a Republican of Iowa who has led an inquiry into the matter, say they have faced obstacles in efforts to gather certain information about Ms. Abedin’s arrangement and about the rules the State Department applies in approving such arrangements. The questions Mr. Grassley and his staff are still seeking answers to include: who in the department specifically authorized the arrangement for Ms. Abedin; who in the department was aware of her outside consulting activities; copies of contracts Ms. Abedin signed with private clients; and the amount she earned from those contracts.” (Raymond Hernandez, “Questions On The Dual Role Of A Clinton Aide Persist,” [The New York Times](#), 8/18/13)

The Clinton Foundation Is A Burgeoning Concern For Clinton’s 2016 Ambitions

The New York Times Headline: “Unease At Clinton Foundation Over Finances And Ambitions.”

(Nicholas Confessore and Amy Chozick, “Unease At Clinton Foundation Over Finances And Ambitions,” [The New York Times](#), 8/13/13)

By 2011, The Clinton Foundation Had Become “A Sprawling Concern, Supervised By A Rotating Board Of Old Clinton Hands, Vulnerable To Distraction And Threatened By Conflicts Of Interest.”

“Soon after the 10th anniversary of the foundation bearing his name, Bill Clinton met with a small group of aides and two lawyers from Simpson Thacher & Bartlett. Two weeks of interviews with Clinton Foundation executives and former employees had led the lawyers to some unsettling conclusions. The review echoed criticism of Mr. Clinton’s early years in the White House: For all of its successes, the Clinton Foundation had become a sprawling concern, supervised by a rotating board of old Clinton hands, vulnerable to distraction and threatened by conflicts of interest.” (Nicholas Confessore and Amy Chozick, “Unease At Clinton Foundation Over Finances And Ambitions,” [The New York Times](#), 8/13/13)

- **After “More Than A Year Of Internal Debate” The Efforts Of The Clinton Foundation Are “Taking On New Urgency” As It Becomes The “Nerve Center Of Hillary Rodham Clinton’s Increasingly Busy Public Life.”** “The review set off more than a year of internal debate, and spurred an evolution in the organization that included Mr. Clinton’s daughter, Chelsea, taking on a dominant new role as the family grappled with the question of whether the foundation — and its globe-spanning efforts to combat AIDS, obesity and poverty — would survive its founder. Now those efforts are taking on new urgency. In the coming weeks, the foundation, long Mr. Clinton’s domain since its formation in 2001, will become the nerve center of Hillary Rodham Clinton’s increasingly busy public life.” (Nicholas Confessore and Amy Chozick, “Unease At Clinton Foundation Over Finances And Ambitions,” [The New York Times](#), 8/13/13)
- **“Long Simmering Tensions” Have Been “Aggravated” As The Clinton Foundation “Tries To Juggle The Political And Philanthropic Ambitions Of A Former President, A Potential Future President, And Their Increasingly Visible Daughter.”** “But the changing of the guard has aggravated long-simmering tensions within the former first family’s inner circle as the foundation

tries to juggle the political and philanthropic ambitions of a former president, a potential future president, and their increasingly visible daughter.” (Nicholas Confessore and Amy Chozick, “Unease At Clinton Foundation Over Finances And Ambitions,” [The New York Times](#), 8/13/13)

- **“Efforts To Insulate The Foundation From Potential Conflicts Have Highlighted Just How Difficult It Can Be To Disentangle The Clintons’ Charity Work From Mr. Clinton’s Moneymaking Ventures And Mrs. Clinton’s Political Future.”** “And efforts to insulate the foundation from potential conflicts have highlighted just how difficult it can be to disentangle the Clintons’ charity work from Mr. Clinton’s moneymaking ventures and Mrs. Clinton’s political future, according to interviews with more than two dozen former and current foundation employees, donors and advisers to the family. Nearly all of them declined to speak for attribution, citing their unwillingness to alienate the Clinton family.” (Nicholas Confessore and Amy Chozick, “Unease At Clinton Foundation Over Finances And Ambitions,” [The New York Times](#), 8/13/13)

Companies Run By Longtime Clinton Ally, Terry McAuliffe, And Clinton’s Brother, Anthony Rodham, Are Under Federal Investigation

The Securities And Exchange Commission Is Investigating Terry McAuliffe’s GreenTech “Over Its Conduct In Soliciting Foreign Investors.” “An electric-car company co-founded by Virginia gubernatorial candidate Terry McAuliffe (D) is under investigation by the Securities and Exchange Commission over its conduct in soliciting foreign investors, according to law-enforcement documents and company officials.” (Tom Hamburger and Ben Pershing, “Company With Ties To Terry McAuliffe Is Under SEC Investigation,” [The Washington Post](#), 8/2/13)

The SEC Has Subpoenaed Documents From Both McAuliffe’s GreenTech And Gulf Coast Funds, A Sister Company Run By Hillary Clinton’s Brother, Anthony Rodham. “The SEC subpoenaed documents in May from GreenTech Automotive and bank records from a sister company, Gulf Coast Funds Management of McLean. The investigation is focused, at least in part, on alleged claims that the company ‘guarantees returns’ to the investors, according to government documents. GreenTech has sought overseas investors through a federal program that allows foreigners to gain special visas if they contribute at least \$500,000 to create U.S. jobs. Gulf Coast, which is run by Anthony Rodham, the brother of former secretary of state Hillary Rodham Clinton, seeks investors for GreenTech and arranges the Visas.” (Tom Hamburger and Ben Pershing, “Company With Ties To Terry McAuliffe Is Under SEC Investigation,” [The Washington Post](#), 8/2/13)