

Clinton urges State Department to release her emails (Update)

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In this Oct. 18, 2011, file photo, then-Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton checks her Blackberry from a desk inside a C-17 military plane upon her departure from Malta, in the Mediterranean Sea, bound for Tripoli, Libya. Clinton used a personal email account during her time as secretary of state, rather than a government-issued email address, potentially hampering efforts to archive official government documents required by law. Clinton's office said nothing was illegal or improper about her use of the non-government account and that she believed her business emails to State Department and other .gov accounts would be archived in accordance with government rules. (AP Photo/Kevin Lamarque, Pool, File)

Hillary Rodham Clinton urged the State Department to release the emails she wrote from a private email account as secretary of state, weighing in on a controversy that has generated negative attention this week for the likely Democratic presidential candidate.

In a tweet late Wednesday, Clinton said, "I want the public to see my email. I asked State to release them. They said they will review them for release as soon as possible."

Secretary of State John Kerry said the State Department will move immediately to review emails that Clinton wrote on her personal account, though he said that will take time.

Revelations that Clinton exclusively used a private email account for official business when she was secretary of state were fast becoming a distraction as she takes steps toward a likely presidential campaign in 2016. The former first lady is the overwhelming favorite for the Democratic nomination, although she has not formally announced her candidacy.

With the election 20 months away, it's unclear how the emails will affect her prospects in the long term. But Republicans, who control the investigative powers of Congress, say the revelations reaffirm their long-held portrayal of both former President Bill Clinton and his wife as secretive and playing by their own rules.

Kerry was asked if the department should look at emails outside those already provided by Clinton. He said he thought the department had all the emails related to the State Department but said he would check.

"We will undertake this task as rapidly as possible in order to make sure that we are dealing with the sheer volume in a responsible way," Kerry said, speaking in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Clinton's public comments Wednesday came after she didn't address the matter during a speech on Tuesday, and she still hasn't explained why she used her own server and eschewed a State Department email address.

The top Democrat on the House committee investigating the fatal 2012 attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya, attacks praised Clinton's call for State to release her emails.

"As far as I am aware, no other Cabinet secretary in history has ever called for the release of his or her emails—in their entirety and throughout his or her tenure," said Rep. Elijah Cummings.

Clinton's handling of the Benghazi attack and its aftermath has long been criticized by Republicans. Cummings noted that last year the State Department provided 55,000 pages of documents and last month submitted 800 pages of emails to the committee related to Benghazi.

At the White House Thursday, a person familiar with the matter said the counsel's office there was not aware at the time Clinton was secretary of state that she relied solely on personal email, and found out only as part of the congressional investigation into the Benghazi attack.

The person said Clinton's exclusive reliance on personal email as the nation's top diplomat was inconsistent with the guidance given to agencies that official business should be conducted on official email accounts. Once the State Department turned over some of her messages in connection with the Benghazi investigation after she left office, making it apparent she had not followed the guidance, the White House counsel's office asked the department to ensure that her email records were properly archived, according to the person who spoke on a condition of anonymity without authorization to speak on the record.

The chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform

Committee, Republican Jason Chaffetz, plans to investigate whether Clinton may have violated federal requirements that written communications of officials are preserved. The committee will join with a special committee investigating the 2012 attacks in Benghazi, Libya, which issued subpoenas Wednesday for Clinton's emails when she was secretary of state.

Clinton's team said this week she acted no differently from her predecessors at the State Department who also used private email addresses.

Last year, Clinton provided the State Department with the 55,000 pages of emails after the department asked her and other former secretaries for records that should be preserved. Yet her team alone decided what would be turned over and should not, without any outside control or clarity on how those decisions were made.

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