

RELEASE IN PART B5,B6

From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, July 17, 2009 1:23 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Greetings from the White House

[Redacted]

From: Vietor, Thomas F. [Redacted]
To: Abedin, Huma; Reines, Philippe I
Sent: Fri Jul 17 11:29:51 2009
Subject: FW: Greetings from the White House

FYI

From: Vietor, Thomas F.
Sent: Friday, July 17, 2009 11:29 AM
To: [Redacted]
Subject: Greetings from the White House

Hi Peggy,

My name is Tommy Vietor and I handle foreign policy issues out of the White House press office. We met briefly at George Will's house when the President visited a few months back.

I'm writing to strenuously object to your portrayal of Secretary Clinton in today's column. First, a little background about me. I spent the better part of my time on the Obama campaign working to defeat then Senator Clinton, so I'm no apologist or Hillaryland loyalist. But to be frank, in the first 6 months of this administration she has more than won me and the vast majority of this White House over with her tireless work.

The truth is that Secretary Clinton has been leading the administration's foreign policy on a host of critical issues, including the most recent crisis in Honduras. Her visit to Russia laid the groundwork that allowed the President's trip to Russia to be such a success. Her visit to the Hague led to an increase in foreign assistance – the list goes on and on. Moreover, she and the President have developed a very close working relationship. She's at the WH nearly every day of the week, either meeting one-on-one with the President, joining him at meetings with foreign heads of state, or slogging out policy decisions in the Situation Room in principles committee meetings. The fact that she has hired strong envoys like Holbrooke and Mitchell to focus day in and day out on specific regional issues just further demonstrates her strength. She has the confidence in her role to hire big personalities, and she doesn't care if they're the ones quoted in the paper as long as we're making progress.

But still the going conventional wisdom seems to be that a Secretary of State's worth can be measured in Nexis hits. But to be frank, she can do far more to influence policy in the White House Situation Room than in Wolf Blitzer's. And her star power abroad, as evident by her rock star treatment on shows like "Good Morning Manila" helps America's reputation abroad in ways that cannot be quantified.

Yes, it's true that she didn't attend the G-8 or the Russia trip, but that has nothing to do with the President not wanting her in the room. In fact, everyone was very disappointed that she couldn't come because she adds so much value. But the truth is threat shattering your elbow at age 62 is incredibly painful and requires recover time. I dislocated my shoulder late last week, and the idea of having to endure an international flight and a summit on international finance would be unbearable, and I'm in my late 20s.

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B6

Maybe I'm just naïve, but I do hope that at some point the relationship between President Obama and Secretary Clinton will no longer be viewed on purely adversarial and political terms. The notion that she has been shelved or sidelined because you see the President also speaking about foreign policy makes no sense. Of course you're going to see the President out in front talking about these issues – that's part of his job, and it's also the reality of having the nuclear codes at your disposal. But the President asked Secretary Clinton to serve as Secretary of State because he believed she is a person of extraordinary talent and intelligence with almost unlimited potential to influence opinion of the United States abroad and further US interests. She has been extremely successful, and anyone who works in this building on foreign policy (ie – people that Tina Brown has never spoken to) will tell you that there is no one who walks into this building with more influence.

Anyway, thanks for reading and writing. I truly enjoy reading your columns, even if I don't always agree.

Best,

Tommy Vietor