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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

June 13, 2013

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary of State
Office of the Secretary
United States Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

I am writing to inquire about Huma Abedin's final months as a government employee at the Department of State. Ms. Abedin became Deputy Chief of Staff when Hillary Clinton became Secretary of State in 2009. It has been reported that in late December 2011, Ms. Abedin took a maternity leave after giving birth to her son and returned to the Department of State resuming her duties in June 2012.¹

According to news reports, Ms. Abedin was granted an arrangement to serve as a "special government employee", which allowed her to work "as part-time consultant with the agency" while also representing outside clients.² According to 18 U.S.C. 202, a special government employee is:

...an officer or employee of the executive or legislative branch of the United States Government, of any independent agency of the United States or of the District of Columbia, who is retained, designated, appointed, or employed to perform, with or without compensation, for not to exceed one hundred and thirty days during any period of three hundred and sixty-five consecutive days, temporary duties either on a full-time or intermittent basis...³

¹ Raymond Hernandez; "Weiner's wife didn't disclose consulting work she did while serving in State Dept."

² Maggie Haberman; "Huma Abedin allowed to represent clients while at State"; Politico.

³ 18 U.S.C. 202.

This arrangement appears to have continued from Jun 2012 until she resigned from the agency on February 1, 2013.⁴ Under her new status, Ms. Abedin's clients included, among other entities, Teneo, a global strategic consulting firm”⁵

Teneo describes itself as a company that “brings together the disciplines of government and public affairs, investor and public relations and investment banking advisory in an integrated approach that allows us to provide clients with unparalleled strategic counsel and operational support.”⁶ It also describes itself as, “The next chapter in strategic advisory.”⁷

It appears that Teneo may have been compensating Ms. Abedin for gathering information from government sources for the purpose of informing investment decisions of her clients—or in other words, political intelligence.

It has been reported that Ms. Abedin earned approximately \$135,000 from the State Department while receiving \$355,000 in consulting income for representing outside clients, as she remained a Federal employee and a trusted advisor to Secretary Clinton.⁸ This raises important questions about whether her dual role was adequately disclosed to government officials who may have provided her information without realizing that she was being paid by private investors to gather information.

To explore the use of the special government employee designation and the ability of government employees to consult and gather political intelligence for private clients, please answer the following questions:

1. What was (were) Ms. Abedin's official title(s) at the Department of State from June 2012 until February 2013?
2. When did Ms. Abedin change her status to “special government employee”?
3. What were Ms. Abedin's official duties as Deputy Chief of Staff?
4. What were her duties as a “special government employee”?
5. What was the procedure in making such a change in title?

⁴ Josh Margolin; “Huma in job hunt”; New York Post.

⁵ Maggie Haberman; “Huma Abedin allowed to represent clients while at State”; Politico.

⁶ Teneo, <http://teneoholdings.com/pages/businesses>.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Raymond Hernandez; “Weiner's wife didn't disclose consulting work she did while serving in State Dept; New York Times.”

6. Who authorized the change in status of Ms. Abedin's official title?
7. Who supervised Ms. Abedin once she assumed her position as a SGE?
8. What effect, if any, did the change have on her security clearance and her access to classified information?
9. Did Ms. Abedin continue to represent herself as the U.S. State Department Deputy Chief of Staff following her change to SGE?
10. Who replaced Ms. Abedin as Deputy Chief of Staff following her change to a special government employee?
11. Did Ms. Abedin complete ethics training that the United States Office of Government Ethics intends for special government employees to complete? If so, when?
12. Who in the Department was aware of Ms. Abedin's consulting activities?
13. For what companies, through Teneo, did Ms. Abedin consult?
14. What steps were taken to assure there would be no conflicts of interest between Ms. Abedin's work with the State Department and any clients of Teneo with whom she consulted?
15. In what ways did the Department interact with the companies that Ms. Abedin consulted for?
16. Following her transition, did Ms. Abedin use her official position at the U.S. Department of State to gain special access or attention from Government decision-makers, which would be unavailable to the general public?
17. Was Ms. Abedin recused of any issues at the U.S. Department of State when she became a special government employee? If so, please list all recused issues.
18. In addition, please provide all records relating to communications between the State Department and Teneo and the State Department and any clients or entities represented by Teneo.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter. Please respond to these questions by June 27, 2013 and number your answers in accordance with my questions. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Chris Lucas of my staff at (202) 224-5225.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chuck Grassley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary