

RELEASE IN PART
B6

From: PIR <preines[redacted]>
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2009 8:04 AM
To: H
Subject: WaPo Outlook Piece

B6

It's quite possibly the best thing written about you as SecState. We're getting it around to friends & family, along with People op-ed and NYT Mag q&a - was a great weekend in terms of positive press.

It's 3 a.m. Do You Know Where Hillary Clinton Is?
By David Rothkopf
Washington Post
Sunday, August 23, 2009

When it comes to Hillary Rodham Clinton, we're missing the forest for the pantsuits.

Clinton is not the first celebrity to become the nation's top diplomat -- that honor goes to her most distant predecessor, Thomas Jefferson, who by the time he took office was one of the most famous and gossiped-about men in America -- but she may be the biggest. And during her first seven months in office, the former first lady, erstwhile presidential candidate and eternal lightning rod has drawn more attention for her moods, looks, outtakes and (of course) relationship with her husband than for, well, her work revamping the nation's foreign policy.

Even venerable publications -- such as one to which I regularly contribute, Foreign Policy -- have woven into their all-Hillary-all-the-time coverage odd discussions of Clinton's handbag and scarf choices. Daily Beast editor Tina Brown, while depicting herself as a Clinton supporter, has been scathing and small-minded in discussing such things as Clinton's weight and hair, while her "defense" of Hillary in her essay "Obama's Other Wife" was as sexist as the title suggests.

Indeed, sexism has followed Clinton from the campaign trail to Foggy Bottom, as seen most recently in the posturing outrage surrounding the exchange in Congo when Clinton reacted with understandable frustration to the now-infamous question regarding her husband's views. Major media outlets have joined the gossipfest, whether the New York Times, which covered Clinton's first big policy speech by discussing whether she was in or out with the White House, or The Washington Post, where a couple of reporters mused about whether a brew called Mad Bitch would be the beer of choice for the secretary of state.

Amid all the distractions, what is Clinton actually doing? Only overseeing what may be the most profound changes in U.S. foreign policy in two decades -- a transformation that may render the presidencies of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush mere side notes in a long transition to a meaningful post-Cold War worldview.

The secretary has quietly begun rethinking the very nature of diplomacy and translating that vision into a revitalized State Department, one that approaches U.S. allies and rivals in ways that challenge long-held traditions. And despite the pessimists who invoked the "team of rivals" cliché to predict that President Obama and Clinton would not get along, Hillary has defined a role for herself in the Obamaverse: often bad cop to his good cop, spine stiffener when it comes to tough adversaries and nurturer of new strategies. Recognizing that the 3 a.m. phone calls are going to the White House, she is instead tackling the tough questions that, since the end of the Cold War, have kept America's leaders awake all night.

In these early days of the new administration, it has been easy to focus on what Clinton has not achieved or on ways in which her power has been supposedly constrained. Indeed, some of her efforts have been frustrated by difficult personnel approvals or disputes with the White House about who should get what jobs. But this is the way of all

administrations. More unusual has been the avidity with which the new president has seized the reins of foreign policy -- more assertively than either George W. Bush or Bill Clinton before him. Obama's centrality amplifies the importance of his closest White House staffers, while his penchant for appointing special envoys such as Richard Holbrooke (on Afghanistan and Pakistan) and George Mitchell (on the Middle East) has been interpreted by some as limiting Clinton's role.

Given the challenges involved, it was perhaps natural that the White House would have a bigger day-to-day hand in some of the nation's most urgent foreign policy issues. But with Obama, national security adviser Jim Jones, Vice President Joe Biden and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates absorbed by Iraq, Afghanistan and other inherited problems of the recent past, Clinton's State Department can take on a bigger role in tackling the problems of the future -- in particular, how America will lead the world in the century ahead. This approach is both necessary and canny: It recognizes that U.S. policy must change to fulfill Obama's vision and that many high-profile issues such as those of the Middle East have often swamped the careers and aspirations of secretaries of state past.

Which nations will be our key partners? What do you do when many vital partners -- China, for example, and Russia -- are rivals as well? How must America's alliances change as NATO is stretched to the limit? How do we engage with rogue states and old enemies in ways that do not strengthen them and preserve our prerogative to challenge threats? How do we move beyond the diplomacy of men in striped pants speaking only for governments and embrace potent nonstate players and once-disenfranchised peoples?

In searching for answers, Clinton is leaving behind old doctrines and labels. She outlined her new thinking in a recent speech at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, where she revealed stark differences between the new administration's worldview and those of its predecessors: The recurring themes include "partnership" and "engagement" and "common interests." Clearly, Madeleine Albright's "indispensable nation" has recognized the indispensability of collaborating with others.

Who those "others" are is the area in which change has been greatest and most rapid. "We will put," Clinton said, "special emphasis on encouraging major and emerging global powers -- China, India, Russia and Brazil, as well as Turkey, Indonesia and South Africa -- to be full partners in tackling the global agenda." This is the death knell for the G-8 as the head table of the global community; the administration has an effort underway to determine whether the successor to the G-8 will be the G-20, or perhaps some other grouping. Though the move away from the G-8 began in the waning days of the Bush era, that administration viewed the world through a different lens, a perception that evolved from a traditional great-power view to a pre-Galilean notion that everything revolved around the world's sole superpower.

Obama and Clinton have both made engaging with emerging powers a priority. Obama visited Russia earlier this year and will host Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in his first state dinner in November. Clinton has made trips to China and India, and she would have been with Obama in Russia had she not injured her elbow. Both have visited Africa and the Middle East, reaching out to women and the Islamic world.

On many critical agenda items -- from a rollback of nuclear weapons to the climate or trade talks -- such emerging powers will be essential to achieving U.S. goals. As a result, we've seen a new American willingness to play down old differences, whether with Russia on a missile shield or, as Clinton showed on her China trip, with Beijing on human rights.

At the center of Clinton's brain trust is Anne-Marie Slaughter, the former dean of Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. Now head of policy planning at the State Department, Slaughter elaborated on the ideas in Clinton's speech. "We envision getting not just a new group of states around a table, but also building networks, coalitions and partnerships of states and nonstate actors to tackle specific problems," she told me.

"To do that," Slaughter continued, "our diplomats are going to need to have skills that are closer to community organizing than traditional reporting and analysis. New connecting technologies will be vital tools in this kind of diplomacy."

A new team has been brought in to make these changes real. Clinton recruited Alec Ross, one of the leaders of Obama's technology policy team, to the seventh floor of the State Department as her senior adviser for innovation. His mission is to harness new information tools to advance U.S. interests -- a task made easier as the Internet and mobile networks have played starring roles in recent incidents, from Iran to the Uighur uprising in western China to Moldova. Whether through a telecommunications program in Congo to protect women from violence or text messaging to raise money for Pakistani refugees in the Swat Valley, technology has been deployed to reach new audiences.

Of course, you need more than new ideas to revitalize the State Department; you need resources, too. The secretary has brought in former Bill Clinton-era budget chief Jack Lew to help her claw back money for statecraft that many in Foggy Bottom feel has been sucked off toward the Pentagon. She has also created special positions to back new priorities, such as Melanne Verveer as ambassador at large for women's issues, Elizabeth Bagley to handle public-private outreach worldwide and Todd Stern as the chief negotiator on climate.

Even just a few months in, it's clear that these appointments are far from window dressing. Lew, Slaughter and the acting head of the U.S. Agency for International Development are leading an effort to rethink foreign aid with the new Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, an initiative modeled on the Pentagon's strategic assessments and designed to review State's priorities. Stern has conducted high-level discussions on climate change around the world, notably with China. Clinton made women's issues a centerpiece of her recent 11-day trip to Africa, where she stressed that "the social, political and economic marginalization of women across Africa has left a void in this continent that undermines progress and prosperity."

Clinton has also signaled the importance of private-sector experience by naming former Goldman Sachs International vice chairman Robert Hormats, a respected veteran of four administrations, to handle economic issues at the State Department, as well as Judith McHale, former chief executive of Discovery Communications, to run public diplomacy. In the same vein, she has opened up Cuba to American telecommunications companies and reached out to India's private sector on energy cooperation -- showing that this administration will seek to advance national interests by tapping the self-interests of the business community. As with any new administration, there have been inevitable problems. The old campaign teams -- Clinton's and Obama's -- still eye each other warily, but this feeling is gradually fading. And by most accounts, the administration's national security team has come together successfully, with Clinton developing strong relationships with national security adviser Jones and Defense Secretary Gates. Her policy deputy, Jim Steinberg, has renewed an old collaboration with deputy national security adviser Tom Donilon; the two of them, working with Obama campaign foreign policy advisers Denis McDonough and Mark Lippert, have formed what one State Department seventh-floor dweller called "a powerful quartet at the heart of real interagency policymaking." Henry Kissinger may have overstated matters when he said this is the best White House-State relationship in recent memory, but it's not bad, while the State-Pentagon relationship is in its best shape in decades.

At the heart of things, though, is the relationship between Clinton and Obama. For all the administration's talk of international partnerships, that may be the most critical partnership of all.

So far, according to multiple high-level officials at State and the White House, the two seem aligned in their views. In addition, they are gradually defining complementary roles. Obama has assumed the role of principal spokesperson on foreign policy, as international audiences welcome his new and improved American brand. Clinton thus far has echoed his points but has also delivered tougher ones. Whether on a missile shield against Iran or North Korean saber-rattling, the continued imprisonment of Aung San Suu Kyi in Burma or rape and corruption in Congo, the secretary of state has spoken bluntly on the world stage -- even if it triggered snide comments from North Korea.

It is still early, and a president's foreign policy legacy is often defined less by big principles than by how one reacts to the unexpected, whether missiles in Cuba or terrorism in New York. Promising ideas fail because of limited attention or reluctant bureaucracies, and some rhetoric eventually rings hollow, as the self-congratulatory "smart power" already does to me.

Nevertheless, there is evidence that, seven months into the job, Obama's unlikely secretary of state is supporting and augmenting his agenda effectively. Not as Obama's "other wife," not as Bill Clinton's wife, not even as a celebrity or as a former presidential candidate -- but in a new role of her own making.

David Rothkopf is a visiting scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the author of "Superclass: The Global Power Elite and the World They Are Making" and "Running the World: The Inside Story of the NSC and the Architects of American Power." He will be online to chat with readers Monday at 11 a.m. Submit your questions and comments before or during the discussion.