

The Role of Hillary Clinton, as a Secretary of States, in U.S Foreign Policy Between 2008-2012

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Abstract

Following work refers to the U.S Foreign Policy during 2008-2012, while the Secretary of States was Hillary Rodham Clinton. Her intervention in foreign crisis and activities to solve that crisis. Despite the fact that she is a woman, I would to underline her activity as a strong person and politician. How actively she is involved in world affairs. From my point of view she is really strong and intellectual person and I strongly with the opinion that she is a "Living History".

My article is based on U.S and Georgian politicians' and political scientists' opinions and researches.

Keywords: federal budget, department budget, jurisdiction, personal security, national-security team

Introduction

The officially stated goals of the foreign policy of the United States, as mentioned in the Foreign Policy Agenda of the U.S. Department of State, are *"to create a more secure, democratic, and prosperous world for the benefit of the American people and the international community."* (U.S. Dept. of State - Foreign Policy Agenda) In addition, the United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs states as some of its jurisdictional goals: *"export controls, including nonproliferation of nuclear technology and nuclear hardware; measures to foster commercial intercourse with foreign nations and to safeguard American business abroad; international commodity agreements; international education; and protection of American citizens abroad and expatriation."* (Committee on Foreign Affairs: U.S. House of Representatives) U.S. foreign policy and foreign aid has been the subject of much debate, praise and criticism both domestically and abroad. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates noted that *"governments deal with the United States because it's in their interest, not because they like us, not because they trust us, and not because they believe we can keep secrets."*

United States Foreign Policy in 2008-2012 under the Secretary of States Hillary Rodham Clinton

In November 2008, President-elect Barack Obama dis-

cussed the possibility of Hillary Clinton serving as U.S. Secretary of State in his administration. She was initially quite reluctant, but by November 21, reports indicated that she had accepted the position. On December 1, President-elect Obama formally announced that Clinton would be his nominee for Secretary of State. Clinton said she did not want to leave the Senate, but that the new position represented a "difficult and exciting adventure".

During the transition period, Clinton sought to build a more powerful State Department. She began a push for a larger international affairs budget and an expanded role in global economic issues. She cited the need for an increased U.S. diplomatic presence, especially in Iraq where the U.S. Defense Department had conducted diplomatic missions. U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates agreed with her, and also advocated larger State Department budgets. In the Obama administration's proposed 2010 United States federal budget of February 2009, there was a proposed 9.5 percent budget increase for the State Department and other international programs, from \$47.2 billion in fiscal year 2009 to \$51.7 billion in fiscal year 2010. By the time of Clinton's May 2009 testimony before the United States Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, numbers had been restated following rounds of general federal budget cuts, and the proposed fiscal year 2010 budget request for the State Department and

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USAID was \$48.6 billion, a 7 percent increase.

Clinton also brought a message of departmental reform to the position, especially in regarding foreign aid programs as something that deserves the same status and level of scrutiny as diplomatic initiatives.

On February 2009, Clinton made her first trip as secretary to Asia, visiting Japan, Indonesia, South Korea, and China on what she described as a “listening tour” that was “intended to really find a path forward.”

In early March 2009, Clinton made her first trip as secretary to Israel. During this time, Clinton announced that the US government will dispatch two officials to the Syrian capital to explore Washington’s relationship with Damascus. On March 5, Clinton attended the NATO foreign ministers meeting in Brussels. At this meeting, Clinton proposed including Iran at a conference on Afghanistan. Clinton said the proposed conference could be held on March 31 in the Netherlands. On March 6, a photo-op with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov intended to demonstrate the U.S. and Russia pressing the “reset button” on their relationship went a bit awry due to a mistranslation.

During March 2009, Clinton prevailed over Vice President Joe Biden on an internal debate to send an additional 20,000 troops to Afghanistan.

In late October 2009, Clinton travelled to Pakistan. Her arrival was followed within hours by the 28 October 2009 Peshawar bombing; in response, Clinton said of those responsible, “They know they are on the losing side of history but they are determined to take as many lives with them as their movement is finally exposed for the nihilistic, empty effort that it is.” In addition to meeting with Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani, she also staged numerous public appearances. In those, she let students, talk show hosts, and tribal elders repeatedly complain about and criticize American foreign policy and American actions. Occasionally, she pushed back in a more blunt fashion than usual for diplomats, explicitly wondering why Pakistan had not been more successful in combating al Qaeda “if they wanted to.” Member of Parliament and government spokesperson Farahnaz Ispahani said, “In the past, when the Americans came, they would talk to the generals and go home. Clinton’s willingness to meet with everyone, hostile or not, has made a big impression – and because she’s Hillary Clinton, with a real history of affinity for this country, it means so much more.”

In December 2009, Clinton attended the Copenhagen United Nations Climate Change Conference, where she pushed forward a last-minute proposal of significant new amounts of foreign aid to help developing countries deal with the effects of global warming, in an attempt to unstick stuck negotiations and salvage some sort of agreement at the conference. The secretary said, “We’re running out of time.

Without the accord, the opportunity to mobilize significant resources to assist developing countries with mitigation and adaptation will be lost.” The amount of aid she proposed, \$100 billion, was in the modest terms of the Copenhagen Accord that was agreed to by the summit.

Secretary Clinton finished the year with very high approval ratings. She also narrowly edged out former Alaska Governor Sarah Palin in being America’s most-admired woman, per a Gallup finding.

In January 2010, Secretary Clinton cut short a trip to the Asia-Pacific region in order to see firsthand the destructive effects of the 2010 Haiti earthquake and to meet with President of Haiti René Prével. Clinton said she would also evaluate the relief effort and help evacuate some Americans. She stressed that her visit was designed not to interfere with ongoing efforts: “It’s a race against time. Everybody is pushing as hard as they can.”

In February 2010, Clinton made her first visit to Latin America as secretary. The tour would take her to Uruguay, Chile, Brazil, Costa Rica and Guatemala and Argentina. She first visited Buenos Aires and talked to Argentine President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. They discussed Falkland Islands sovereignty and the issue of oil in the Falklands. Clinton said that “We would like to see Argentina and the United Kingdom sit down and resolve the issues between them across the table in a peaceful, productive way.” Clinton offered to help facilitate such discussions, but did not agree to an Argentinian request that she mediate such talks. Within 12 hours of Clinton’s remarks, Downing Street categorically rejected a U.S. role: “We welcome the support of the secretary of state in terms of ensuring that we continue to keep diplomatic channels open but there is no need for [direct involvement].” Clinton then went on to Santiago, Chile to witness the aftereffects of the 2010 Chile earthquake and to bring some telecommunications equipment to aid in the rescue and recovery efforts.

During an early June 2010 visit to Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, Clinton dealt with questions at every stop about the recently passed and widely controversial Arizona SB 1070 anti-illegal immigration law, which had damaged the image of the U.S. in Latin America. When answering a question from local television reporters in Quito about it, she said that President Obama was opposed to it and that “The Justice Department, under his direction, will be bringing a lawsuit against the act.” This was the first public confirmation that the Justice Department would act against the law; a month later, it became official as the lawsuit *United States of America v. Arizona*. While at a hotel bar in Lima, she completed an agreement with a representative of China over which companies could be specified in a UN resolution sanctioning the nuclear program of Iran. Returning to SB

1070, in August 2010 she included the dispute over it in a report to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as an example to other countries of how fractious issues can be resolved under the rule of law.

In July 2010, Clinton visited Pakistan for the second time as secretary, announcing a large new U.S. economic assistance package to that country as well as a U.S.-led bilateral trade agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan. She then travelled to Afghanistan for the Kabul Conference on the situation there, during which President Hamid Karzai vowed to implement much-promised legal, political, and economic reforms in exchanged for a continued Western commitment there. Clinton said that despite the scheduled U.S. drawdown there in 2011, the U.S. has “no intention of abandoning our long-term mission of achieving a stable, secure, peaceful Afghanistan. Too many nations – especially Afghanistan – have suffered too many losses to see this country slide backward.” She then went on to Seoul and the Korean Demilitarized Zone where she and Defense Secretary Robert Gates met with South Korean Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan and Minister of National Defense Kim Tae-young in a ‘2+2 meeting’ to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Korean War. There she said that the U.S. experience in staying in Korea for decades had led to a successful result, which might also be applicable to Afghanistan.

In a prominent September 2010 speech before the Council on Foreign Relations, Clinton emphasized the continuing primacy of American power and involvement in the world, declaring a “new American moment”. Making reference to actions from reviving the Middle East talks to U.S. aid following the 2010 Pakistan floods, Clinton said that “The world is counting on us” and that “After years of war and uncertainty, people are wondering what the future holds, at home and abroad. So let me say it clearly: The United States can, must, and will lead in this new century.”

Over the summer of 2010, the stalled peace process in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict was potentially revived when the various parties involved agreed to direct talks for the first time in a while. While President Obama was the orchestrator of the movement, Secretary Clinton had gone through months of cajoling just to get the parties to the table, and helped convince the reluctant Palestinians by getting support for direct talks from Egypt and Jordan. She then assumed a prominent role in the talks; Speaking at a September 2 meeting at the State Department between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel and President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority, she acknowledged that, “We’ve been here before, and we know how difficult the road ahead will be.” Her role in the ongoing talks would be to take over from U.S. Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George J. Mitchell when discussions threatened

to break down. The talks were generally given little chance to succeed, and Clinton faced the history of many such past failures. Nevertheless, her prominent role in them thrust her further into the international spotlight and had the potential to affect her legacy as secretary.

Secretary Clinton began the year 2011 aboard, attending the Inauguration of Dilma Rousseff in Brazil, having been sent by President Obama to represent the U.S. Rousseff was the first woman to rule that country.

In mid-January, Clinton made a four-country trip to the Middle East, visiting Yemen, Oman, The United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. Speaking at a conference in Doha, she criticized Arab governments’ failure to move more rapidly vis à vis reform in unusually blunt language, saying, “In too many places, in too many ways, the region’s foundations are sinking into the sand. The new and dynamic Middle East that I have seen needs firmer ground if it is to take root and grow everywhere.” Her visit to Yemen, the first such visit by a Secretary of State in 20 years, found her focusing on the dangers of terrorism emanating from that country. An impromptu tour around the walled old city of Sana’a found Clinton being cheered by on looking schoolchildren. A trip and fall while boarding the departing airplane left Clinton unhurt but news services making predictable witticisms.

When the 2011 Egyptian protests began, Clinton was in the forefront of the administration’s response. Her initial public assessment on January 25 that the government of President Hosni Mubarak was “stable” and “looking for ways to respond to the legitimate needs and interests of the Egyptian people” soon came under criticism for being tepid and behind the curve of developing events, although others agreed that the U.S. could not be out front in undermining the government of a long-term ally. By the next day, Clinton was criticizing the Egyptian government’s blocking of social media sites. By January 29, Obama had put Clinton in charge of sorting out the administration’s so-far confused response to developments.

The Egyptian protests became the most critical foreign policy crisis so far for the Obama administration, and Obama came to increasingly rely upon Clinton for advice and connections. Clinton had known Mubarak for some twenty years, and had formed a close relationship with Egyptian First Lady Suzanne Mubarak by supporting the latter’s human rights work. Clinton originated the idea of sending Frank G. Wisner as an emissary to Cairo, to tell Mubarak not to seek another term as the country’s leader. As Mubarak’s response to the protests became violent in early February, Clinton strongly condemned the actions taking place, especially those against journalists covering the events, and urged new Egyptian Vice President Omar Suleiman to conduct an official investigation to hold those responsible for

the violence accountable. When Wisner baldly stated that Mubarak's departure should be delayed to accommodate an orderly transition to another government, Clinton rebuked him, but shared a bit of the same sentiment. Mubarak did finally step down on February 11 as the protests became the 2011 Egyptian revolution. Clinton said that the U.S. realized that Egypt still had much work and some difficult times ahead of it.

When the 2011 Libyan civil war began in mid-February and intensified into armed conflict with rebel successes in early March 2011, Clinton stated the administration's position that Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi "must go now, without further violence or delay". As Gaddafi conducted counterattacks against the rebels, Clinton was initially reluctant, as was Obama, to back calls being made in various quarters for imposition of a Libyan no-fly zone. However, as the prospects of a Gaddafi victory and possible subsequent bloodbath that would kill many thousands emerged, and as Clinton travelled Europe and North Africa and found support for military intervention increasing among European and Arab leaders, she had a change of view. Together with Ambassador to the U.N. Susan Rice and National Security Council figure Samantha Power, who were already supporting military intervention, Clinton overcame opposition from Defense Secretary Robert Gates, security advisor Thomas Donilon, and counterterrorism advisor John Brennan, and the administration backed U.N. action to impose the no-fly zone and authorize other military actions as necessary. Clinton helped gain the financial and political support of several Arab countries, in particular convincing Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Jordan that a no-fly zone urged by the Arab League would not be sufficient and that air-to-ground attacks would be necessary. Clinton then persuaded Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov that his country should abstain on the UN resolution authorizing force against Gaddafi, and Rice and Clinton played major roles in getting the rest of the United Nations Security Council to approve United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973. Regarding whether the U.S. or some other ally would send arms to the anti-Gaddafi forces, Clinton said that this would be permissible under the resolution, but that no decision had yet been made on doing so.

While Clinton recognized some of the contradictions of U.S. policy towards turmoil in the Mideast countries, which involving backing some regimes while supporting protesters against others, she was nevertheless passionate on the subject, enough so that Obama joked at the annual Gridiron Dinner that "I've dispatched Hillary to the Middle East to talk about how these countries can transition to new leaders — though, I've got to be honest, she's gotten a little passionate about the subject. These past few weeks it's been tough

falling asleep with Hillary out there on Pennsylvania Avenue shouting, throwing rocks at the window."

Following the successful May 1–2, 2011, U.S. mission to kill Osama bin Laden at his hideout compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, and the resulting criticism from various Americans that Pakistan had not found, or had let, bin Laden hide in near plain sight, Clinton made a point of praising Pakistan's past record of helping the U.S. hunt down terrorists: "Our counter-terrorism cooperation over a number of years now, with Pakistan, has contributed greatly to our efforts to dismantle al-Qaeda. And in fact, cooperation with Pakistan helped lead us to bin Laden and the compound in which he was hiding. Going forward, we are absolutely committed to continuing that cooperation." Clinton then played a key role in the administration's decision not to release photographs of the dead bin Laden, reporting that U.S. allies in the Middle East did not favor the release and agreeing with Secretary Gates that such a release might cause an anti-U.S. backlash overseas.

Following the October 2011 announcement by Obama that the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq would complete by the close of that same year, Clinton forcefully defended the decision as emanating from an agreement originally signed with Iraq under the Bush administration and as evidence that Iraq's sovereignty was real, and said that despite the absence of military forces, the U.S. was still committed to strengthening Iraq's democracy with "robust" diplomatic measures. She also praised the effectiveness of Obama's foreign policy in general, pointing most recently to the death of Muammar Gaddafi and thus conclusion of the Libyan intervention, and implicitly pushing back on criticism from those running for the 2012 Republican presidential nomination.

In early December 2011, Clinton made the first visit to Burma by a U.S. secretary of state since John Foster Dulles's in 1955, as she met with Burmese leaders as well as opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and sought to support the 2011 Burmese democratic reforms. Clinton said that due to the direct and indirect communications she had had with Suu Kyi over the years, "it was like seeing a friend you hadn't seen for a very long time even though it was our first meeting." The outreach to Burma attracted both praise and criticism, with Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen saying it "sends the wrong signal to the Burmese military thugs" but others saying the visit combined idealism with respect to reform and realpolitik with respect to keeping Burma out of the direct Chinese sphere of influence. Regarding whether the Burmese regime would follow up on reform pledges, Clinton said, "I can't predict what's going to happen, but I think it certainly is important for the United States to be on the side of democratic reform ... This is a first date, not a marriage, and

we'll see where it leads." She continued to address rights concerns in a December 2011 speech a few days later before the United Nations Human Rights Council, saying that the U.S. would advocate for gay rights abroad and that "Gay rights are human rights" and that "It should never be a crime to be gay." This drew criticism from some American social conservatives.

As the year closed, Clinton was again named by Americans in Gallup's most admired man and woman poll as the woman around the world they most admired; it was her tenth win in a row and sixteenth overall.

In a State Department town hall meeting on January 26, 2012, Clinton indicated her desire to remove herself from "the high wire of American politics" - "I have made it clear that I will certainly stay on until the president nominates someone and that transition can occur."

As the 2011–2012 Syrian uprising continued and intensified with the February 2012 bombardment of Homs, the U.S. sought a UN Security Council resolution that backed an Arab League plan that would urge Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to relinquish powers to the vice presidential level and permit a unity government to form. However, Russia and China vetoed the resolution, an action that Clinton characterized as a "travesty". After the failure of the effort, Clinton warned that Syria could degenerate into "a brutal civil war" and called for a "friends of democratic Syria" group of like-minded nations to promote a peaceful and democratic solution to the situation and pressure Syria accordingly. At a meeting in Tunis of the consequent Friends of Syria Group, Clinton again criticized the actions of Russia and China as "distressing" and "despicable", and predicted that the Assad regime would meet its end via a military coup.

At a keynote speech before the International Crisis Group, the secretary brought her view regarding the empowerment of women specifically into the area of peace-making, saying that women's multifaceted ties with a community make them more compelled to concern about social and quality of life issues that prosper under peacetime conditions. Furthermore women identify more with minority groups, being discriminated against themselves. Thus, "Women are the largest untapped reservoir of talent in the world. It is past time for women to take their rightful place, side by side with men, in the rooms where the fates of peoples, where their children's and grandchildren's fates, are decided." She also continued to believe that empowerment of women would continue to grow as people saw that it would lead to economic growth.

A late April/early May 2012 trip to China found Clinton in the middle of a drama involving blind Chinese dissident Chen Guangcheng. He had escaped house arrest and, after finding his way to the Embassy of the United States, Beijing,

requested an arrangement whereby he could stay in China with guarantees for his safety. After a deal towards that end fell through, he requested a seat on Clinton's plane when she flew back to the U.S. After further negotiations in parallel with the existing agenda of Clinton's trip, Chen left for the U.S. after Clinton's departure. Despite an environment that had, as one aide said, "exploded into an absolute circus", Clinton managed to find a path for the U.S. that kept China from losing face and kept the overall agenda of the meetings intact.

On September 11, 2012, an attack on the U.S. diplomatic mission in Benghazi took place, resulting in the death of U.S. Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three other Americans. The next day, Clinton also made a statement describing the perpetrators as "heavily armed militants" and "a small and savage group - not the people or government of Libya." Clinton also responded to the notion that the attack had been related to the reactions in Egypt and elsewhere to the anti-Islamic online video known as Innocence of Muslims, saying: "Some have sought to justify this vicious behavior as a response to inflammatory material posted on the internet. The United States deplores any intentional effort to denigrate the religious beliefs of others. But let me be clear: There is never any justification for violent acts of this kind." She and President Obama appearing together in the White House Rose Garden the same day and vowed to bring the attackers to justice. On September 14 the remains of the slain Americans were returned to the U.S. Obama and Clinton attended the ceremony; in her remarks, Clinton said, "One young woman, her head covered and her eyes haunted with sadness, held up a handwritten sign that said 'Thugs and killers don't represent Benghazi nor Islam.'"

The attack, and questions surrounding the U.S. Government's preparedness for it, and explanations for what had happened afterward, became a political firestorm in the U.S., especially in the context of the ongoing presidential election. The State Department had previously identified embassy and personnel security as a major challenge in its budget and priorities report. On the September 20, Clinton gave a classified briefing to U.S. Senators, which several Republican attendees criticized, angry at the Obama administration's rebuff of their attempts to learn details of the Benghazi attack, only to see that information published the next day in *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*. She did announce the formation of an Accountability Review Board panel, chaired by longtime diplomat Thomas R. Pickering and vice-chaired by retired Admiral and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Michael Mullen, to investigate the attack from the State Department's viewpoint.

On November 6, 2012, Obama was re-elected for a second term as president. Clinton said shortly before the

election that she would stay on until her successor was confirmed, but that “this is not an open-ended kind of time frame.” Despite her continuing to express a lack of interest, speculation continued about Clinton as a possible candidate in the 2016 presidential election. A poll taken in Iowa, the first state in the nomination process, showed that in a hypothetical 2016 caucuses contest, Clinton would have 58 percent support, with Vice President Biden coming in next at 17 percent.

In mid-December 2012, Clinton fell victim to a stomach virus. On January 2, 2013, Clinton was released from the hospital. She returned to work at the State Department on January 7, when co-workers welcomed her back with a standing ovation and a joke gift of a football helmet featuring the department’s seal. It was her first normal public appearance in a month.

The illness did, however, put an end to her days of travel in the job. She finished with 112 countries visited, making her the most widely traveled secretary of state in history. Her total of 956,733 air miles ended up falling short of Condoleezza Rice’s record for total mileage. That total, 1,059,207, was bolstered late in Rice’s tenure by repeated trips to the Middle East. Clinton traveled during 401 days, with 306 of those spent in actual diplomatic meetings, and spent the equivalent of 87 full days on airplanes. Compared to other recent secretaries, Clinton traveled more broadly, with fewer repeat visits to certain countries.

Conclusion

On January 24, 2013, Clinton introduced John Kerry before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, as hearings were held on his nomination to succeed her. She called him “the right choice to carry forward the Obama Administration’s foreign policy”.

Clinton’s final day as secretary was February 1, 2013, when she met with Obama to hand in her letter of resignation and later gave farewell remarks in a meeting with employees at State Department headquarters.

The divisions between Obama and Clinton that many observers had originally predicted never happened. Indeed, a writer for The New York Times Magazine declared that “Obama and Clinton have instead led the least discordant national-security team in decades, despite enormous challenges on almost every front.” In part, this was because Obama and Clinton both approached foreign policy as a largely non-ideological, pragmatic exercise.

The first secretary of state to visit countries such as Togo and Timor-Leste, Clinton believed that in-person visits were more important than ever in the digital age. As she

said in remarks shortly before leaving office, “I have found it highly ironic that, in today’s world, when we can be anywhere virtually, more than ever people want us to show up, actually. Somebody said to me the other day, ‘I look at your travel schedule. Why Togo? Why the Cook Islands?’ No secretary of state had ever been to Togo before. Togo happens to be on the U.N. Security Council. Going there, making the personal investment has a real strategic purpose.”

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