



## Will Hillary Survive Her E-mail Problems?

Let's summarize Mrs. Clinton's use of e-mail while she served as our nation's secretary of state. We'll start with absolute certainty that any other high government official who might have been found as contemptuous of rules regarding e-mail use would surely have been speedily dumped and never considered as a candidate for the highest office in the land. Such arrogant characters would surely have faded into "has been" status. However, it remains to be seen whether a new edition of "Clinton magic" remployed so deftly by her husband will rescue the former senator and secretary of state.



On May 25, the State Department released a 79-page report [detailing Mrs. Clinton's abuse](#) of the procedural rules regarding e-mail. It noted that she frequently used her own less secure private system to transmit and receive 2,100 classified messages dealing with sensitive foreign policy matters. Her conduct [could have endangered our country](#) or some of its personnel serving in sensitive overseas posts. State Department rules required her to use her official messaging system, one that is far more secure and far less vulnerable to access by outsiders. But she chose to have governmental business transmitted on a significantly less secure device. The report added the testimony of several State Department officials that "Secretary Clinton never demonstrated to them that her private server or mobile device met minimum information security requirements."

Also criticized for her refusal to adhere to Department rules regarding the handling of records after leaving office, she eventually — and reluctantly — turned over approximately 60,000 e-mails. She did so because of pressure from the congressional committee investigating her performance involving the 2011 attack in Benghazi. Four Americans, including the U.S. Ambassador to Libya, died in that assault.

Mrs. Clinton now admits that her reliance on a private e-mail system "was a mistake," but she surely knew of the State Department rules barring the use of private devices for transmitting government business. She also knows that she never sought and would never have received approval to conduct her business on a private e-mail server. Add to this the department rules requiring that, when departing office, all employees must formally indicate by signature that they have turned over all federal records. She left office in January 2013 and didn't comply with that requirement until late 2014. Even then, she deleted 30,000 e-mails.

In September 2015, as the matter of her forbidden e-mail practices became more of an issue, she responded, "What I did was allowed. It was allowed by the State Department. The State Department confirmed that." But the newly released report confirms that there is no evidence confirming such a claim. Had she asked the State Department for permission to use her private account for official business, something she never did, it would not have been granted. The Inspector General's report noted that disciplinary proceedings had been levied against J. Scott Gration, the U.S. ambassador to Kenya, for his similar use of a private device to send and receive official e-mail. If Gration had to face



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the music, Clinton, who held a much higher and more sensitive position, should face it as well.

Mrs. Clinton has frequently faced suspicion that she can't be trusted ([see this New American article](#) regarding her e-mails and dishonest statements about the Trans-Pacific Partnership). This State Department report certainly adds plenty of fuel to the fire burning up her reputation. Whether it will seriously impact her drive to the Democratic Party's nomination, or to victory in the November's presidential race, remains to be seen. But it is safe to say that no Republican, especially a conservative-leaning member of the GOP, could survive such a damaging government report.

*John F. McManus is president emeritus of [The John Birch Society](#). This column appeared originally at the [insideJBS](#) blog and is reprinted here with permission.*



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