

Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)

From: Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)
Sent: Thursday, June 09, 2016 6:56 PM
To: Page, Lisa C. (OGC) (FBI)
Subject: FW: WSJ article out

From: Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)
Sent: Thursday, June 09, 2016 6:55 PM
To: Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI)
Cc: Quinn, Richard P. (DO) (FBI)
Subject: RE: WSJ article out

Not bad at all. I think we'll be OK. Thanks for all your work on this.

From: Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI)
Sent: Thursday, June 09, 2016 6:54 PM
To: Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)
Cc: Quinn, Richard P. (DO) (FBI)
Subject: RE: WSJ article out

What do you think?

From: Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)
Sent: Thursday, June 09, 2016 6:46 PM
To: Quinn, Richard P. (DO) (FBI) [redacted] Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI) [redacted]
Cc: Page, Lisa C. (OGC) (FBI) [redacted]
Subject: RE: WSJ article out

b6 -1
b7C -1
b7E -6

Thx

From: Quinn, Richard P. (DO) (FBI)
Sent: Thursday, June 09, 2016 6:40 PM
To: Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI); Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI)
Cc: Page, Lisa C. (OGC) (FBI)
Subject: RE: WSJ article out

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/dinton-emails-in-probe-dealt-with-planned-drone-strikes-1465509863?cb=logged0.3555549664010898>

At the center of a seminal probe involving [Hillary Clinton's](#) handling of classified information is a series of emails between American diplomats in Islamabad and their superiors in Washington about whether to challenge specific drone strikes in Pakistan.

The 2011 and 2012 emails were sent via the "low side"—government slang for a computer system for unclassified matters—as part of a secret arrangement that gave the State Department more of a voice in whether a Central Intelligence Agency drone strike went ahead, according to congressional and law-enforcement officials briefed on the Federal Bureau of Investigation probe.

Some of the emails were then forwarded by Mrs. Clinton's aides to her personal email account, which hosted them in a server she kept at her home in suburban New York when she was secretary of state, the officials said. Investigators have raised concerns that Mrs. Clinton's personal server was less secure than State Department systems.

From: Mills, Cheryl D
Sent: Friday, December 23, 2011 10:36 AM
To: Feldman, Daniel F

Subject: RE: (SBU)

Thanks – you good with this

From: Feldman, Daniel F
Sent: Friday, December 23, 2011 10:22 AM
To: Mills, Cheryl D; Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: FW: (SBU)

I'm sure you know already, but just in case.

From: Muntz, Cameron P
Sent: Friday, December 23, 2011 10:12 AM
To: Feldman, Daniel F; Ruggiero, Frank J
Subject: (SBU)

Dan, Frank,

Cameron

ENLARGE

A redacted email sent in 2011 by the then-U.S. ambassador to Pakistan and answered by a top aide to Hillary Clinton. The vaguely worded messages didn't mention the CIA, "drone" or details about the military targets officials said.

The still-secret email is a key part of the FBI investigation that has long dogged Mrs. Clinton's campaign, their officials said.

They were written within the often narrow time frame in which State Department officials had to decide whether or not to object to drone strikes from the CIA pulled the trigger, the officials said.

Law-enforcement and intelligence officials said State Department deliberations about the covert CIA drone program should have been conducted over a more secure government computer system designed to handle classified information.

State Department officials told FBI investigators they communicated via the less-secure system on a few instances, according to congressional and law-enforcement officials. It happened when decisions about imminent strikes had to be relayed fast and the U.S. diplomats in Pakistan or Washington didn't have ready access to a more secure system, either because it was night or they were traveling.

Email sent over the low side sometimes was informal discussions that occurred in addition to more formal notifications through secure communications, the officials said.

One such exchange came just before Christmas in 2011, when the U.S. ambassador sent a short, cryptic note to his boss indicating a drone strike was planned. That sparked a back-and-forth among Mrs. Clinton's senior advisers over the next few days in which it was clear they were having the discussions in part because people were away from their offices for the holiday and didn't have access to a classified computer, officials said.

The CIA drone campaign, though widely reported in Pakistan, is treated as secret by the U.S. government. Under strict U.S. classification rules, U.S. officials have been barred from discussing strikes publicly and even privately outside of secure communications systems.

The State Department said in January that 22 emails on Mrs. Clinton's personal server at her home have been judged to contain top-secret information and aren't being publicly released. Many of them dealt with whether diplomats concurred or not with the CIA drone strikes, congressional and law-enforcement officials said.

Several law-enforcement officials said they don't expect any criminal charges to be filed as a result of the investigation, although a final review of the evidence will be made only after an expected FBI interview with Mrs. Clinton in summer.

One reason is that government workers at several agencies, including the departments of Defense, Justice and State, have occasionally resorted to the low-side system to give each other notice about sensitive but fast-moving events, according to one law-enforcement official.

When Mrs. Clinton has been asked about the possibility of being criminally charged over the email issue, she has repeatedly said "that is not going to happen." She has said it was a mistake to use a personal server for work but it was a decision she made as a matter of convenience.

U.S. officials said there is no evidence Pakistani intelligence officials intercepted any of the low-side State Department emails or used them to protect militants.

State Department spokesman Mark Toner said the agency "is not going to speak in the context of documents, nor would we speak to any ongoing cases."

The email issue has dogged Mrs. Clinton for more than a year. Despite her success in getting down the Democratic presidential nomination, polls show many voters continue to doubt her integrity and honesty. Her campaign manager has acknowledged the email matter haunted her.

Republican rival Donald Trump was attacked by Mrs. Clinton repeatedly on the issue, calling her "Covered Hillary" saying what she did was a crime and suggesting the Justice Department should let her off because it is run by Democrats.

Beyond the campaign implications the investigation exposes the latest chapter in a power struggle that pits the enforcers of civil liberty, including the FBI and CIA, against some officials at the State Department and other agencies who want a greater voice in the use of covert tactics around the globe, because of the impact it has on broader U.S. policy goals.

In the case of Pakistan, U.S. diplomats found themselves in a difficult position.

Despite being treated as top secret by the CIA, the drone program has long been in the public domain in Pakistan. Television stations there go it is with reports of each strike, undermining U.S. efforts to foster goodwill and cooperation against militants through billions of dollars in American aid.

Pakistan officials, while publicly opposing the drone program, mostly acquiesced to the CIA campaign by clearing airspace in the militant-dense tribal areas along the Afghan border, according to former U.S. and Pakistani officials.

CIA and White House officials credit a sharp ramp-up in drone strikes early in Mr. Obama's presidency with battering al Qaeda's leadership in the Pakistani tribal areas and helping protect U.S. forces next door in Afghanistan. Targets have also included some of the Pakistan government's militant enemies.

In 2011, Pakistani officials began to push back in private against the drone program, raising questions for the U.S. over the extent to which the program still had their consent.

U.S. diplomats warned the CIA and White House they risked losing access to Pakistan's airspace unless more discretion was shown, and current and former officials within the administration, State Department and military officials argued that the CIA needed to be more "judicious" about when strikes were launched. They weren't challenging the spy agency's overall choice of targets but mainly the timing of strikes.

The CIA initially chafed at the idea of giving the State Department more of a voice in the program. Under a compromise reached around the year 2011, CIA officials would notify their embassy counterparts in Islamabad when a strike in Pakistan was planned, so then-U.S. ambassador Cameron Munter or another senior diplomat could decide whether to "concur" or "non-concur." Mr. Munter declined to comment.

Diplomats in Islamabad would communicate the decision to their superiors in Washington. A main purpose was to give then-Secretary of State Clinton and her top aide a chance to consider whether she wanted to weigh in with the CIA director about a planned strike.

With the compromise, State Department-CIA tensions began to subside. Only once or twice during Mrs. Clinton's tenure at State did U.S. diplomats object to a planned CIA strike, according to congressional and law-enforcement officials familiar with the events.

U.S. diplomats in Pakistan and Washington usually relayed and discussed their concur or non-concur decisions via the State Department's secure messaging system. But about a half-dozen times when they were away from more secure equipment, they improvised by sending emails on their smartphones about whether they backed an impending strike or not, the officials said.

Some officials shared at least some internal deliberations through intelligence channels, since they were discussing whether to push back against the CIA, congressional officials said.

The time available to the State Department to weigh in on a planned strike varied widely, from several days to as little as 20 or 30 minutes. If a strike was imminent, it was likely to use the "high side," which no one could see for seven hours," said one official.

Adding to those communications hurdles, U.S. intelligence officials privately objected to the State Department even using its high-side system. They wanted diplomats use a still-more-secure system called the Joint Worldwide Intelligence Community System, or JWICS. State Department officials don't have easy access to that system, even in Washington. If those strike decisions were needed quickly, it wouldn't be an option, officials said.

The Wall Street Journal first reported on the State Department-CIA tug-of-war over the drone program in 2011.

Under pressure to address critics at home, Mr. Obama pledged to increase the transparency of drone operations by shifting, as much as possible, control of drone programs around the world to the U.S. military instead of the CIA. An exception was made for Pakistan.

But even in Pakistan, Mr. Obama recently signaled a shift. The drone strike that killed Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour last month was conducted by the military, not the CIA, and the outcome was disclosed.

While the CIA still conducts drones over the tribal areas of Pakistan near Afghanistan, the pace of strikes has declined dramatically in recent years. U.S. officials say there are fewer al Qaeda targets there now than the CIA can find.

Richard R. Quinn
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Media Investigative Publicity



From: Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)
Sent: Thursday, June 09, 2016 6:31 PM
To: Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI); Quinn, Richard P. (DO) (FBI)
Cc: Page, Lisa C. (OGC) (FBI)
Subject: WSJ article out

Gents, saw the WSJ article is out online but it's blocked by premium firewall – would you be able to pull a copy?
Thanks,
Pete

Peter P. Strzok II
Section Chief
Counterespionage Section (CD4)
FBIHQ

