

Huma Abedin: Spy?



AP Photo

Emails show Huma Abedin's ties to private spy consulting firms Teneo and In-Q-Tel, specializing in political coups

Fully qualified to hide a TV camera in Trump's microwave, Smart TV or ceiling fan?

By [Rachael Bade](#) and [Eric Draitser](#)

A spring 2012 email to Hillary Clinton's top State Department aide, Huma Abedin, asked for help winning a presidential appointment for a supporter of the Clinton Foundation, according to a chain obtained by POLITICO.

The messages illustrate the relationship between Clinton's most trusted confidante and the private consulting company that asked for the favor, Teneo — a global firm that later hired Abedin. Abedin signed on with the company while she still held a State Department position, a dual employment that is now being examined by congressional investigators.

Abedin's status as a "special government employee" has been questioned by Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), who has raised concerns about any overlapping duties and whether they posed potential conflicts of interest. Abedin also worked as an adviser to the Clinton Foundation, the nonprofit founded by former President Bill Clinton.

Abedin's legal team maintains that the part-time jobs were appropriate and approved by Abedin's supervisors at State and that she did nothing wrong. Indeed, in the email request obtained by POLITICO, there is no evidence that Abedin interceded on behalf of Teneo as it sought a new appointment for Judith Rodin, a Teneo client and the president of The Rockefeller Foundation.

Rodin, a former White House appointee to the White House Council for Community Solutions, did not get the appointment Teneo was seeking. The Rockefeller Foundation paid Teneo \$5.7 million in 2012 to do public relations work but no longer works with the firm.

The Clinton campaign, which Abedin now leads as vice chairwoman, said in a statement that the release of the email chain was a "shameful" attempt to smear Clinton's top staffer.

"This email — from before Huma Abedin was an SGE — is yet another attempt to smear a hardworking public servant in the press through ill-informed partisan leaks, as demonstrated by the fact that this email is marked as 'Produced to Senate Judiciary Committee Only. Not for Public Release,'" said Hillary for America spokesman Nick Merrill in an email.

Grassley contends that the emails suggest a blurred line between a private firm and government work.

"This is a troubling example of Teneo and the Clinton Foundation seeking State Department help for a Teneo client and Clinton Foundation supporter," Grassley said in a statement. "It raises serious questions. ... Was anyone vetting the potential conflicts of interest? Were there other requests like this, and if so, how were they handled? The State Department ought to release the rest of any such emails in the interest of good government and transparency."

The newly disclosed email chain comes a day after Bloomberg first reported that the FBI can recover all of Clinton's emails on her homemade server, where Abedin also had an email account that she used for some State Department work.

The email scandal has thrown a wrench into Clinton's campaign, and Abedin, a longtime aide, has been caught up in the controversy.

News broke days ago that the State Department inspector general had opened a "criminal investigation" into alleged overpayments made to Abedin at State. The Justice Department failed to take up the case, which is now being handled administratively. Abedin's lawyers say the IG's findings were unfair, and they are disputing a State Department billing to cover the questioned salary.

The emails obtained by POLITICO show that before Abedin signed on with the consulting firm, Teneo turned to her for help because of her close proximity to then-Secretary Clinton.

In the April 10, 2012, exchange, Teneo President Doug Band — a close confidant of Bill Clinton — asked Abedin to help him get Rodin nominated to the President's Global Development Council, an unpaid post.



The Rockefeller Foundation at the time was both a Teneo client and a Clinton Foundation donor — and Band made that point in his email to Abedin.

The email subject line read: “She is expecting us to help her get appointed to this.”

“Judy rodin,” he wrote to Abedin in the shorthand email. “Huge foundation/cgi supporter and close pal of wjc[.] Teneo reps her as well[.] Can you help?”

“Wjc” is often used as shorthand for Bill Clinton. And “foundation,” likely means Clinton Foundation. Teneo did not return a request for comment for this story.

The position in question was technically under U.S. Agency for International Development jurisdiction, but State was also involved, according to the Teneo employees discussing the appointment.

A spokesman for The Rockefeller Foundation said Rodin and staff “followed standard procedures in applying for this unpaid position — an application was submitted through the White House’s official online portal, which detailed the foundation’s interest in joining the Council and Dr. Rodin’s credentials.”

“At the time, Teneo was acting as the Rockefeller Foundation’s public relations consultant, and the foundation staff informed Teneo of Dr. Rodin’s application and interest,” the statement reads.

In the message to Abedin, Band forwarded along the full conversation, whereby multiple Teneo employees openly discussed who in power they could contact to help get their client Rodin assigned to the new post.

“Could someone from [Sen. Chuck] Schumer’s office place a call to the WH?” Orson Porter, senior vice president of Teneo, asked Tom Shea, the managing director.

“Doug is willing to push with Valerie or HRC, but I can’t find out who the decision maker is,” Shea replied, perhaps referring to Valerie Jarrett, a senior adviser to President Barack Obama.

Eventually, Porter sent the email up the chain to Band.

“Hey brother — it’s been a lift in the [W]hite [H]ouse,” he wrote to Band. “She is not on anyone’s friend list — VJ’s office promised to send it up the flag pole, but they will need to hear from someone outside of us — I keep pushing Tom to have a congressional office send a note. Do you think Bruce Reed would be helpful?”

Reed was Vice President Joe Biden’s chief of staff.

The CIA and Hillary’s Teneo tech Startup are arming Police, Intelligence Agencies. Police officers and private security contractors are getting hi-tech help with their surveillance efforts - and the CIA is picking up the tab. But what are Hillary and Obama doing with all this spy gear behind-the-scenes?

By [Eric Draitser](#)



Police use surveillance software, which uses mobile technology and social media to keep tabs on citizens.

NEW YORK— It is run out of a quiet, unassuming office on a tree-lined avenue in Bethesda, Maryland. The rows of hip restaurants are offering young urban professionals all the grande-iced-sugar-free-vanilla-soy-lattes they could ever need. However, this serene suburban idyll belies the fact that serious work for the police state is taking place out of view.

Nestled in a suite just upstairs from the Asian fusion and seafood restaurants is a company that is transforming the way law enforcement, intelligence agencies and even giant corporations communicate within their organizations and with each other.

The company is called [BlueLine Grid](#). It markets itself as “the nation’s premier, trusted collaboration network for law enforcement, first responder and security teams.” Indeed, BlueLine Grid boasts an impressive array of investors and customers, including the LAPD and General Electric, among others.

But perhaps their most interesting client – and the one that deserves the most scrutiny – is [In-Q-Tel, the venture capital and investment arm of the CIA](#). It is no secret that In-Q-Tel [invests](#) in emerging technologies that the U.S. intelligence community, especially the CIA, views as potential tools in their covert trade.

As the “[Vault 7” documents published by WikiLeaks have revealed](#), the CIA’s Directorate for Digital Innovation is involved in hundreds of projects aimed at turning everything from smartphones and televisions to critical computer software into potent weapons for U.S. intelligence. Private companies operating outside of, but in partnership with, the CIA form a vital aspect of the agency’s innovation industry.

BlueLine Grid is a perfect example of the partnership that exists between the intelligence community and the private sector. This partnership raises significant concerns regarding potential breaches of privacy.

Policing the World by Smartphone



BlueLine Grid uses real-time GPS information to allow police officers, intelligence operatives and other potential clients to communicate and coordinate within a given area and respond, in real-time, to changing developments on the ground. (Photo: BlueLine Grid marketing material)

BlueLine Grid's apps allow clients to communicate with team members in a reliable and secure network using a technology called geofencing. Essentially, the technology allows a particular client (e.g. the Los Angeles or New York police departments) to draw a perimeter on a live map and communicate with all officers within that perimeter.

Put another way, BlueLine Grid uses real-time GPS information to allow police officers, intelligence operatives and other potential clients to communicate and coordinate within a given area and respond, in real-time, to changing developments on the ground. Rather than a walkie-talkie or generic mass text message, BlueLine Grid's technology allows users to rigidly define a geographic space within which messages can be sent, as well as prevent those messages from being sent outside of the space.

The frightening implication is that this technology could eventually be used to stifle protest and halt communication among protesters. It is not hard to imagine police officers in major U.S. cities using the tech to harass and arrest protesters within specific geographical areas, cutting the legs out from under protests before they even begin.

Considering that police forces across the country are already fully militarized and employ [military-style tactics](#), it would seem that BlueLine Grid is offering yet another potent weapon in the police state's ongoing war against free speech and assembly. But it goes much further than that, as this technology is now quite literally the property of the CIA thanks to the undisclosed, but assuredly large, investment made in BlueLine Grid by the agency. And the connections to the police state and military-industrial-security complex run far deeper.

The Forces Behind BlueLine Grid

New York City Police Commissioner William J. Bratton announces that every police officer will be equipped with a smart phone by March 2016 during the New York City Police Foundation's "State of the NYPD" breakfast, Wednesday, Jan. 20, 2016, in New York. (Diane Bondareff/AP)

The company was founded by former politician Jack Weiss and entrepreneur David Riker, along with former New York and Los Angeles police department chief Bill Bratton. Originally founded as Bratton Technologies, Inc., the company rebranded itself as BlueLine Grid in 2013. A quick look at the background of these individuals offers some insight into how BlueLine Grid got on the fast track to being the premier state intelligence app service.

Bratton, in many ways, has been the public face of the company since its inception. He's a skilled political operator connected to some of the most important power brokers in Washington, DC. After founding the company, Bratton had a stint as Commissioner of the New York Police Department, a position from which he resigned in 2016.

Bratton did not retire into obscurity, however. Instead, [he took a job with Teneo Holdings](#), a consulting group closely linked to the Clinton political machine, as well as to Israel and its powerful DC lobby. Teneo Holdings was founded by longtime Clinton advisers Douglas Band and Declan Kelly, who [used their Clinton connections to make Teneo into one of the world's most lucrative consulting firms](#).

Alongside Bratton, Teneo boasts influential consultants, such as former Clinton and Obama Middle East envoy [George Mitchell](#), and former British Foreign Secretary [William Hague](#). Teneo has essentially become a nexus between law enforcement, the national security state, the military-industrial complex and political power brokers.

Teneo as a whole, and Bratton specifically, have deep ties to Israel, with Bratton having given multiple high-profile speeches, including the [keynote address](#) at Israel's National Conference on Personal Security in Jerusalem, a conclave of some of the leading figures in Israel's (and the United States') national security apparatus.

The conference included influential attendees from around the globe. With Israel having established itself as one of the world's leading security-tech centers, it's no wonder that Bratton has cultivated such ties over the years as he [established joint-training and close cooperation](#) between the LAPD and Israeli security forces as chief of the department.



NYPD Commissioner William Bratton poses with Israeli officials at the First National Personal Security Conference in Israel.

Considering the way in which Israel criminalizes and represses Palestinian activists, it should come as no surprise that Bratton is also interested in cutting-edge technologies that give his clients the advantage over activists and oppressed communities.

But Bratton is not the only connection between BlueLine Grid and the military-industrial-security state. Co-founder of BlueLine Grid Jack Weiss has also traveled in some of the elite circles within the security apparatus.

Before co-founding Bratton Technologies, Weiss worked for Altegrity Inc., a private contractor that focused on global investigations and security. The [chairman of Altegrity was the same Bill Bratton](#) who, at the time, had recently retired from the LAPD. Altegrity went on to acquire the infamous Kroll, Inc., a business intelligence and investigations company, with Weiss heading up Kroll's LA office.

As a [2009 New Yorker profile](#) of the company's founder Jules Kroll noted:

Kroll really made his living, and his name, on Wall Street. He owed his success ...to Goldman Sachs and Skadden Arps and a long list of corporations, law firms, investment banks, management consultants, hedge funds, and brokerage houses...he and his company have been more highly valued for keeping things in the dark than for the occasional, client-approved exposé. They are the keepers of innumerable embarrassing, probably career-destroying, possibly corporation-destroying secrets.

Kroll is widely credited with having created an industry where there was none. Call it corporate intelligence...He offered an ever-widening range of services—forensic accounting, crisis management, competitor analysis—tooled for a globalized business world, in which industrial espionage, counterfeiting, computer fraud, identity fraud, and sophisticated financial crimes have flourished.

Indeed, the Kroll brand was well-known in political and financial circles, perhaps too well-known. As the New Yorker continued:

“With its international intelligence networks and their sometimes unnerving abilities, Kroll began to be described as ‘a private C.I.A.’ This was unhelpful. [Norb] Garrett—who was the C.I.A.’s station chief in Cairo before he joined Kroll—told me, ‘We can’t work in certain parts of the world if people believe we’re C.I.A. We just can’t.’”

Kroll, with its deep ties to the CIA and U.S. intelligence, came under the leadership of Weiss and Bratton in the last decade. Now they're scratching each other's backs one more time, this time with CIA seed money bankrolling yet another Weiss-Bratton business venture, BlueLine Grid.

And as the CIA money came flowing in, Weiss chose to move the company from New York to Bethesda, Maryland, just a 10-mile drive from CIA headquarters in Langley. As Weiss stated:

“We have this incredible pool of talent from industries related to government that enable us to build real, mission critical, serious, hardcore technology right here in the D.C. area...We can take people who have been working on big, serious projects for a past couple years and put them in a new, cool startup environment and create a ton of new value.”

Put another way, BlueLine Grid moved to DC in order to leverage its contacts with the CIA and other government agencies and share talent and resources with them. While it remains a private startup company, BlueLine Grid has become a de facto government contractor, part of the very large revolving door between government and the security-surveillance complex.

Reclaiming the Tech Theater of Conflict

Thousands of demonstrators hold up their cell phones as they protest against an Internet tax planned to be introduced by the Hungarian government, in front of the Ministry of National Economy in Budapest, Hungary, Sunday, Oct. 26, 2014. Inscription reads: “Mafia government”.

There should be little doubt that the technology with which BlueLine Grid is equipping police forces, intelligence agencies and private corporations could be used against groups that organize to challenge state and corporate power.

That's why it's critical that activists from Standing Rock to Zuccotti Park, from Ferguson to Berkeley, be equipped with the necessary technology to defend themselves. They will need hackers to take BlueLine Grid's technology and turn it into a tool for organizing.

If police and intelligence officers can freely communicate in order to organize and coordinate their actions, so too should protesters and revolutionaries. If the iPhone or Android is a weapon in the hands of the authorities, so too should it be a weapon in the hands of the peaceful protester.

Technology is one of the most critical theaters of conflict with the state and the forces of corporate control. There may be a BlueLine Grid out there working to arm the police with hi-tech weapons, but there are also millions of us working to disarm them and build a better world.



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