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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

January 15, 2009

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The Honorable William J. Clinton
William J. Clinton Foundation
55 W 125th St
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Dear President Clinton:

I am deeply troubled by news reports that you will continue active fund-raising efforts for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) even if your wife is confirmed as secretary of State. This news comes on the heels of reports that your foundation has collected at least \$41 million from foreign nations including countries such as Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar and Brunei. That doesn't include the millions more from foreign individuals and entities. I think these fund-raising activities—both in the political and foreign arenas—are indefensible for the spouse of a sitting secretary of State.

Senator Richard Lugar raised concerns similar to mine at Tuesday's confirmation hearing for Mrs. Clinton: "The core of the problem is that foreign governments and entities may perceive the Clinton Foundation as a means to gain favor with the secretary of State." Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman John Kerry echoed these comments saying that Senator Lugar was "expressing the view of the committee as a whole." Mr. Lugar added that the "only certain way to eliminate this risk going forward is for the Clinton Foundation to forswear new foreign contributions when Senator Clinton becomes Secretary of State." I am in complete agreement.

Broadly speaking, while individual donations to presidential election campaigns are limited in amount, and restricted altogether from foreign sources, fund-raising for presidential libraries is completely unregulated and as such ripe for corruption, or at the very least, the appearance of impropriety. The opportunities for such indiscretions will, of course, be exponentially greater when Senator Clinton becomes Secretary of State Clinton.

In November I wrote to President Bush urging him to make public donor information to his library and not to accept any money from the Chinese government because of its grave human rights abuses. We know for a fact that various repressive governments, such as China and Saudi Arabia, have big name Washington lobbyists on retainer to help them curry favor in the halls of power. Sadly the people that these governments persecute and imprison cannot afford such luxuries. An unregulated arena like a presidential library is no exception. Furthermore, these same lobbyists contribute widely to congressional candidates and political parties. They are the same firms and individuals from which you will be soliciting money via the DCCC. Foreign governments, D.C. lobbyists, the secretary's ear—I shudder to think how influence-peddling could taint and permeate American foreign policy.

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Your situation is unprecedented. For eight years you, Mrs. Clinton and your daughter were America's First Family. Never before has the wife of a former president served as secretary of State. Not only would Mrs. Clinton be America's top diplomat, but constitutionally she would also be the first cabinet official in the presidential line of succession. You once famously joked during the 1992 campaign cycle that if you were elected, Americans would get "two for the price of one." The connection between husband and wife both literally and in terms of public perception is inseparable.

In late December, the *Washington Post* editorialized, "There is no getting around the uniquely difficult issues posed by the dual roles of Hillary Rodham Clinton as future secretary of state and former president Bill Clinton as the head of a foundation that raises money from foreign governments...[E]ven if Ms. Clinton is not influenced by gifts to her husband's charity, the appearance of a conflict is unavoidable." CNN too echoed similar sentiments: "The potential conflict of interest, for a man with intimate access to America's top diplomat, is enormous."

Yesterday the *Washington Post* editorial page recommended Mrs. Clinton press you to "suspend foreign fundraising" altogether. In the best interest of the nation you served, I, too, call on you to stop all foreign fund-raising, as well as political fund-raising. I implore you to refrain from placing your wife, and this country, in a compromising position.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress

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