

Even the 'Clinton News Network' is Souring on Hillary Clinton

The softball-style approach CNN has long taken with regard to former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has earned it the nickname the "Clinton News Network," but an exchange between its flagship host, Anderson Cooper, and the Democratic presidential nominee may have exposed cracks in her media support.

Things got very testy when Cooper asked Clinton, who phoned into his *Anderson Cooper 360* program, why it was OK for the Clinton Foundation to accept foreign donations when she was secretary of state, but it wouldn't be if she were president. Clinton said she "went above and beyond what was required" of any charitable organization during her tenure at the State Department.

She said being president would present different circumstances she called "unique" to the position. She was about to discuss the "additional, unprecedented" measures the foundation would take if she is elected when Cooper interrupted with a follow-up question.

"But didn't those unique circumstances exist when you were secretary of state?" he asked.

"No, no. You know, look, Anderson, I know there's a lot of smoke and there's no fire," she said. "This AP report, put in it context—this excludes nearly 2,000 meetings I had with world leaders, plus countless other meetings with U.S. government officials when I was secretary of state.

"It looked at a small portion of my time, and it drew the conclusion, and made the suggestion that my meetings with

people like the great Elie Wiesel, or Melinda Gates, or the Nobel Prize winner Muhammad Yunus were somehow due to connections with the foundation, instead of their status as highly respected global leaders. That is absurd.

"These are people I was proud to meet with, who any secretary of state would have been proud to meet with, to hear about their work, and their insights."

The AP report actually noted many of the foreign leaders' countries also contributed to the Clinton Foundation, but focused solely on the nongovernment visits. It found 85 of 154 such visits were with people who donated a combined \$156 million to the foundation.

In defense of its reporting, which the Clinton camp has said was based on "utterly flawed data," AP issued a statement that said it was "transparent" in how it reported the story. The news syndicate's media relations director, Paul Colford, said the investigation was conducted by the same reporters who tracked Clinton's private email server to her basement in Chappaqua, N.Y., as well as former Donald Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort's connections to the pro-Russian government in Ukraine.

"AP has been examining issues facing the presidential candidates and will continue to do so," Colford said.

But that wasn't the only point of contention in the interview. Cooper also brought up the fact that Clinton hasn't held a press conference in a very long time, and asked if she was intentionally doing that in order to keep the media focus on Trump, the Republican presidential nominee.

"Well, Anderson, I'm talking to you now, and I've given way in excess of 300 interviews this year," she said.

Most one-on-one interviews involve topics and questions that were approved by the Clinton campaign. So, Cooper asked

Clinton, again, why she “won’t just schedule a press conference.”

“I’ve got a lot that I’ve been sharing with the press, talking to the press, as I’m doing with you right now,” Clinton responded. “So, you know, stay tuned. There will be a lot of opportunities for me to talk to the press as well as continuing to talk to the American public.”

Cooper, seemingly dissatisfied with her reply, closed the interview with one final editorial comment about her lack of press conferences. There are many other members of the press, he noted, “who would certainly welcome the opportunity to ask you questions at a press conference.”

For the record, it has now been 264 days since Clinton held an actual press conference with members of her press pool.