

Now Another Obama Official Has Been Caught Using a Personal Email Account

Ash Carter became the 25th Secretary of Defense less than one year ago—on Feb. 17, 2015—and he's already facing some tough questions over his reported use of a personal email account for government business.

Some may recall the firestorm that ensued after the Guicifer hack that established former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton—now a Democrat presidential candidate—had been using a personal email account, and a private email server, for government business. The hacker released the Clinton email information March 22, 2013, nearly two years before Carter was sworn in.

Now U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, who has jurisdiction over the Freedom of Information Act, is beginning to ask Carter serious questions about his own use of personal email account for government business. The senator's questions include:

- *Have you provided all emails you sent from a personal device for official government business while Secretary of Defense to the Department for federal records preservation purposes? If so, when did you do so, how many did you provide, and when did you provide them? If not, please explain why not.*
- *Why did you use a personal electronic device with a personal email address rather than your assigned government email address?*
- *Has a classification review been conducted on the emails to determine whether you ever sent or received classified information on a personal device using a*

personal email address? If so, please provide a detailed explanation of who conducted the review and its results. If not, please explain why not.

- *After being confirmed as Secretary of Defense, when did you begin using a personal email address for official business? When did you begin using a government email address for official business? When did you cease using a personal email address for official business?*
- *What training and employment paperwork did you receive prior to beginning work as Secretary of Defense that related to the use of electronic communication and prohibitions on the use of personal email to conduct official government business? Please provide a copy of any paperwork documenting that training and your understanding of federal rules and regulations on this subject.*
- *While using your private email for official business, what actions, if any, did you take to ensure compliance with federal recordkeeping requirements?*
- *Other than acknowledging this practice as a mistake, what steps have you taken to see it is not repeated or followed by anyone else in your Department?*
- *Has DoD or any other agency conducted any audit or investigation to determine whether your personal email accounts were compromised during the period you were using them to conduct government business or whether your personal use of an iPhone compromised your personal security by potentially revealing your location? Please provide a copy of any reports documenting these reviews.*

Grassley gave Carter until Feb. 16 to respond to his inquiry. He also noted the secretary's use of personal email for government business is a violation of numerous laws and government rules.

"Importantly, the use of private email in this context exposes the information to possible hacks and intrusions by foreign

intelligence agencies,” Grassley wrote. “As the Secretary of Defense, you are inevitably a prime target for foreign hackers. As such, the threat is real and compliance with the law is essential.”

Grassley has also been involved in the investigation of Clinton’s “questionable use” of private email for official business and whether it compromised classified or sensitive information or impeded FOIA compliance.