

Based on reporting from New York Magazine

The biggest question among Hillary's circle concerns Huma Abedin, currently chief of Hillary's "transition office" and formerly her deputy chief of staff in the State Department. Abedin began as an intern for the First Lady in 1996, when she was 20 years old, and is, of course, married to former congressman and mayoral candidate Anthony Weiner, of sexting infamy.

In the midst of her husband's scandal, Abedin stepped down from her full-time job for a consulting contract and moved back to New York to take work with Teneo Holdings, a consulting firm and investment bank run by Bill Clinton's longtime consigliere, Doug Band. This gave Hillary cover while also keeping Abedin plugged in. "It's business as usual," says a Clinton insider. "Keep your circle of advisers small, and then you structure things in a way that makes it economically possible for your close advisers to sustain themselves."

But business as usual can be a giant target for enemies: Abedin has since become the subject of an inquiry, by a Republican congressman, into her dual consulting roles, looking for potential conflicts of interest while she served in a sensitive role in the administration. Then came a second episode of Weiner's sexting this summer, blindsiding the Clintons, obliterating Weiner's mayoral ambitions, and greatly complicating Abedin's future with the Clintons. With Weiner's ignominious loss and parting bird-flip, "Huma has a choice to make," says a close associate of hers. "Does she go with Anthony, or does she go with Hillary?"

Leaving the Clinton bubble is almost unimaginable for those who've grown up in it. According to a person familiar with the conversations, Abedin has struggled to reconcile her marriage to Weiner with her role as Clinton's top aide, traumatized by the prospect of leaving her boss's inner circle.

In a sense, the Weiner scandal is a ghost of Clintonworld past, summoning sordid images of unruly appetites and bimbo eruptions, exactly the sort of thing that needs to be walled off and excised in a 2016 campaign. Former advisers from State say any future campaign will take a page from Clinton's relatively peaceful past four years. "In contrast with reports of disunity in the 2008 campaign," says Kurt Campbell, "the State Department was operated with a high degree of harmony and collegiality."

The secret to realigning Clintonworld has been there all along. Since she

received her master's from Oxford in 2003, Chelsea Clinton had tried out different career paths, first in business consulting at McKinsey & Co., then at a hedge fund run by donors to her parents, and finally as a correspondent on NBC, with a few university postings sprinkled in. Chelsea has grown up in the Clinton bubble, the princess of Clintonworld, and getting outside of it has sometimes been difficult. She tried her hand at developing her "brand" on TV, but then, two years ago, stepped in and took over her father's foundation, a return to the fold that portended a lot of changes. She became vice-chairman of the board. The foundation hired white-shoe law firm Simpson Thacher & Bartlett to perform an audit and review of the foundation's finances and operations. And this summer, she installed a friend from McKinsey, Eric Braverman, as CEO.

Chelsea's arrival was a clear if unspoken critique of Doug Band, who'd long been Bill Clinton's gatekeeper in his post-presidential life. In Chelsea's view, the foundation started by Band had become sprawling and inefficient, threatened by unchecked spending and conflicts of interest, an extension of her father's woolly style. In 2012, a *New York Post* story suggested impropriety in Band's dual role, forcing Clinton to put a bit of distance between himself and Teneo.

In a report this summer, the *Times* claimed the foundation operated at a deficit and was vulnerable to conflicts of interest related to Teneo Holdings—which telegraphed the message that there was a new sheriff. Chelsea, says a Hillary loyalist, "has taken a chain saw to that organization. She has not allowed these old bubbas to deal with this."

Naturally, some of Bill Clinton's staff at the foundation were unhappy with Chelsea's arrival, especially the decision to include Hillary and Chelsea in the name of it. In a move that suggested intrafamily conflict, Bill Clinton stepped out to defend his comrades, insisting that Bruce Lindsey, the former CEO, who had suffered a stroke in 2011, would continue to be "intimately involved" in the foundation and that he couldn't have accomplished "half of what I have in my post-presidency without Doug Band."

But it's the ladies who are running the show now. Whether Abedin can stay with Weiner and continue to be Hillary's number one is a big question. Chelsea appears to be in charge of controlling Bill and making sure all the I's are dotted and the T's crossed in his dealings. Bill is not going to mess up a Presidential bid and he will be used to do what he does best: elect Presidents. The UN and the Annual Meeting of the Clinton Foundation both do business in New York this week.

