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Hillary Clinton Directs Aides to Give Email Server and Thumb Drive to the Justice Department

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Hillary Rodham Clinton has directed her aides to give the Justice Department an email server that housed the personal account that she used exclusively while secretary of state, along with a thumb drive that contained copies of the emails, her presidential campaign said on Tuesday.

The Justice Department and the F.B.I. have sought the server and the thumb drive as they investigate how classified information was handled in connection with the account. Earlier on Tuesday, the inspector general for the intelligence community told members of Congress that Mrs. Clinton had “top secret” information — the highest classification of government intelligence — in two emails among the 40 from the private account that the State Department has allowed him to review.

The State Department has declined to give the inspector general, I. Charles McCullough III, access to the entire trove of roughly 30,000 emails that Mrs. Clinton handed over to the department last year. Mrs. Clinton deemed those emails work-related, and said she deleted an additional 30,000 messages that were personal.

Since the account was revealed in March, Mrs. Clinton has been widely criticized for creating an email system that she said was more convenient for her, but that also helped shield her correspondence from Congress and the news media. She said she had never had any classified information on the account, though Mr. McCullough’s findings raise questions about that claim.

“I am confident that I never sent or received any information that was classified at the time it was sent and received,” she said at an event in Iowa in July. “What I think you’re seeing here is a very typical kind of discussion, to some extent disagreement among various parts of the government, over what should or should not be publicly released.”

The House committee looking into the 2012 attacks in Benghazi, Libya, asked Mrs. Clinton earlier this year to turn over her server to a third party so it could determine whether she had deleted emails that might have included

government records.

In late March, Mrs. Clinton's lawyer, David Kendall, told the committee that there was no reason to do so because the emails had been deleted from the server. It is unclear whether technical experts could recover any deleted emails.

Mr. McCullough alerted the F.B.I. in July that classified information was on the account. Mrs. Clinton decided to hand over the server and the thumb drive to the authorities after the F.B.I. began investigating the matter.

In a statement on Tuesday, a spokesman for Mrs. Clinton, Nick Merrill, said that she has "pledged to cooperate with the government's security inquiry, and if there are more questions, we will continue to address them."

The campaign did not say whether the server and the thumb drive had been handed over yet to the authorities. And it did not say if the server was the one she had set up in her home in Chappaqua, N.Y., to house the private email account.

In addition to the home server, information was stored with a small technology company in Colorado called Platte River Networks.

Mr. Kendall has told government investigators that the server at Platte River Networks has been wiped clean. Nevertheless, F.B.I. agents went to the company this month to inquire about it.

A spokesman for the F.B.I. declined to comment.

In a letter to the heads of the Senate and House intelligence and judiciary committees and several other members of Congress, Mr. McCullough said that two additional emails he had examined contained classified information. He said that the intelligence in them came from the State Department but that the specific classification level of the information had not yet been determined.

In an attempt to explain why the classified information ended up on Mrs. Clinton's account, the State Department said in a statement that "department employees circulated these emails on unclassified systems in 2009 and 2011 and ultimately some were forwarded to Secretary Clinton."

It added that the information was not marked as classified at the time.

Mr. McCullough's letter was released by the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Charles E. Grassley, Republican of Iowa.

In a statement, he said it was "a welcome development" that Mrs. Clinton had agreed to hand over the server and the thumb drive. But he added, "That's a long time for top secret classified information to be held by an unauthorized person outside of an approved, secure government facility."

"I look forward to the F.B.I. answering my questions so the American people can be assured that everything has been done to protect our national security interests and hold accountable anyone who broke the rules," Mr. Grassley said.