

Biden, White House spur media discussion of presidential bid

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Vice President Joe Biden and the White House, acting in apparent coordination, have fueled press speculation about a possible Biden entry into the campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination.

On Saturday, Biden held a closed-door but much-publicized meeting with Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, a spokesperson for the liberal wing of the Democratic Party, who earlier this year rebuffed suggestions that she enter the presidential race herself.

The meeting triggered widespread media reports that Biden had sounded out Warren on her attitude to his potential entry into the presidential race, and even speculation that he had offered her a slot on the ticket as his running mate in return for her support.

A Biden press spokesman downplayed such suggestions, but reiterated that the vice president would make a decision about entering the presidential race by the end of the summer, as he had previously indicated.

Soon afterwards, the *Wall Street Journal* posted a report on its web site headlined “Joe Biden Is Leaning Toward a 2016 Run.” The article noted Biden’s meeting with Warren and cited “one Biden supporter” as saying it “represented a pivot from potential to likely candidate.”

The next day, Biden held his regular one-on-one Monday luncheon meeting with President Obama, at which, according to CNN, Obama gave his “blessing” to a Biden candidacy. Citing as its source “a senior Democrat,” the network reported, “The president made clear he would not stand in his way or counsel him against a run.”

At his press briefing Monday afternoon, White House spokesman Josh Earnest addressed the issue at length and with the evident purpose of fueling the media furor over Biden. He engaged in a clearly choreographed exchange with Jonathan Karl of ABC News, who has

close ties to Republican Party circles and is a frequent critic of Hillary Clinton.

In response to a question about Biden’s possible candidacy, Earnest said, “The president has indicated his view that the decision that he made, I guess, seven years ago to add Joe Biden to the ticket as his running mate was the smartest decision that he had ever made in politics, and I think that should give you some sense of the president’s view of Vice President Biden’s aptitude for the top job.”

Karl pointed out that this suggested a less flattering opinion of Hillary Clinton: “I mean, this is obviously a better decision than the secretary of state he chose, so. You said it was his best--the best decision he made.”

Earnest responded with a broad smile, and without any hesitation about the evident favoring of Biden over Clinton, he said, “Yeah, it was. It was.” He went on to tout Biden’s credentials for a presidential run and added, “I wouldn’t rule out the possibility of an endorsement during the Democratic primary.”

Also Monday, Biden’s office announced that he had hired Kate Bedingfield, a former spokeswoman for the 2008 presidential campaign of Democrat John Edwards, as his communications director, a selection that signaled interest in laying the groundwork for a presidential bid in 2016.

The *Washington Post* followed suit with a front-page report Tuesday by its senior political reporter, Dan Balz, who wrote, “Biden is now leaning more toward running than he was earlier in the summer, though he is still weeks from a decision.”

The newspaper also reported that major Democratic fundraisers had been invited to meet with Biden at his official residence, the Naval Observatory, shortly after Labor Day, noting, “Among the guests invited to the gathering are top bundlers who raised large sums for

the Obama-Biden campaigns in 2008 and 2012.”

The White House also announced that Biden would address a conference call of the members of the Democratic National Committee Wednesday. While the ostensible purpose is to appeal to DNC members to back the six-power nuclear deal with Iran, which is to be debated and voted on by Congress next month, the effect is to place Biden before the top body of the Democratic Party just as he is finalizing plans for a presidential campaign.

Right-wing and pro-Republican media outlets, such as the *Wall Street Journal* and Fox News, have leapt on the possible Biden candidacy as a means of attacking the campaign of Hillary Clinton, still regarded as the likely Democratic Party presidential nominee.

The *Wall Street Journal* editorialized Tuesday that the stepped-up promotion of Biden by the Obama White House, despite Clinton’s enormous head start in fundraising and campaign organization and a large lead in the polls, raised questions. It “leads us to wonder what Mr. Biden and Mr. Obama know about Mrs. Clinton’s mishandling of classified information on her personal email server while running the State Department.” The newspaper continued, “The FBI is now investigating, and it’s hard to believe the White House wouldn’t have some inkling about the seriousness of that probe.”

For the working class, there is nothing to choose between Clinton and Biden, two reactionary representatives of one of corporate America’s two major right-wing parties.

The media scandal-mongering over Clinton’s email server is one of the means by which the real powers in American politics—the Wall Street billionaires and the chiefs of the military-intelligence apparatus—regulate the outcome of the 2016 presidential campaign. Clinton’s email practices have been seized on as a means of either driving her out of the campaign entirely or creating the conditions for her electoral defeat, without discussing in front of the American people any of the actual political issues involved.

Last month, the *New York Times* published a report that Clinton was the subject of a federal criminal investigation, citing “multiple high-level government sources.” Three days later the newspaper retracted the report as false, without naming the officials who were responsible for the political smear.

WSWS noted at the time, either the White House aides or top officials of the intelligence agencies must have been responsible for the false *Times* report, revealing either “subterranean divisions within the Democratic Party wing of the political establishment,” or “significant opposition within the apparatus of the state itself either to Clinton’s campaign in particular, or to the prospect of any Democrat succeeding Obama in the White House.”

These two alternatives are not, of course, mutually exclusive. Given the close ties between Obama and the intelligence apparatus, the use of a purportedly security-driven “scandal” to settle scores within the Democratic Party is a perfectly plausible scenario.

Only one thing can be said with certainty: whatever the political issues involved, and the ruthless methods being used to fight them out, American working people have absolutely no say in the outcome of the 2016 election campaign. Both the Republican and Democratic parties are instruments of the capitalist ruling elite, which will deploy vast resources in media manipulation and political skullduggery to select the next “commander-in-chief” for American imperialism.



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