

Clinton pledges to outdo Obama in militarism

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In a major speech at the Brookings Institution, a key Washington think tank with close ties to the Democratic Party, presidential frontrunner Hillary Clinton indicated that she would be even more willing than the Obama administration to use military force to pursue the global objectives of American imperialism.

Clinton spoke on the eve the Senate vote that cleared the last obstacle to the nuclear deal reached by the US and five other powers with Iran, and much of the speech was devoted to defending the Iran deal, and elaborating on how a Hillary Clinton administration would enforce its provisions on Tehran.

This involved repeated assertions that the next administration must be prepared to use military force against Iran in the event the nuclear deal fails to achieve its objective of transforming Iran into a puppet state of Washington.

Clinton rebuffed the denunciations of the Iran deal by congressional Republican leaders, Republican presidential candidates, and former officials of the Bush administration like Vice President Richard Cheney. She criticized Cheney from the right, noting that Iran's nuclear program advanced by leaps and bounds during the Bush administration, which was preoccupied with the war in Iraq.

She noted that the Obama administration had placed Iran under intense economic and military pressure to force the Tehran regime to come to the bargaining table and make substantial concessions on its nuclear program.

"We systematically increased our military capabilities in the region," she said, "deepening our cooperation with partners and sending more fire power and additional aircraft carrier, battleship, strike aircrafts and the most advanced radar and missile defense systems available."

While solidarizing herself with some of the right-wing critics of the deal that was finalized on July 15,

most notably on the question of the frequency and timing of inspections of Iran's nuclear facilities, Clinton said that on balance the deal served the interests of the United States and put Washington in a stronger position in any future conflict with Iran.

More fundamentally, she warned that to reject the deal, after it was backed by China, Russia, Britain, France and Germany as well as the Obama administration, would forfeit the leading role of the United States.

"Great powers can't just junk agreements and expect the rest of the world to go along with us," she said. "We need to be reasonable and consistent and we need to keep our word, especially when we're trying to lead a coalition."

Clinton went on to make an explicit and categorical pledge to use military force in the event that US intelligence agencies declare Iran is in violation of the nuclear agreement.

"The Iranians and the world need to understand that we will act decisively if we need to," she said. "So here's my message to Iran's leaders: The United States will never allow you to acquire a nuclear weapon."

"As President, I will take whatever actions are necessary to protect the United States and our allies. I will not hesitate to take military action if Iran attempts to obtain a nuclear weapon. And I will set up my successor to be able to credibly make the same pledge."

"We will make clear to Iran that our national commitment to prevention will not waiver depending on who's in office. It's permanent. And should it become necessary in the future having exhausted peaceful alternatives to turn to military force, we will have preserved and in some cases enhanced our capacity to act."

This argument—that the nuclear deal makes a US military strike more effective because inspections will pinpoint Iranian nuclear facilities for US military

planners—was made by the Obama administration to win over a section of wavering Democrats in the House and Senate, culminating in Thursday's vote by 42 senators to block a resolution of disapproval.

Clinton declared, in an apparent breach with the hopes expressed by some Obama administration spokesmen, that the nuclear deal “isn't the start of some larger diplomatic opening” with Iran, or a reduction in political tensions in the Middle East.

Instead, she outlined a five-point program for confronting Iran across the region:

- Providing the most advanced US weaponry and intelligence to Israel
- Reaffirming the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz as a “vital interest,” including security commitments to the autocratic Gulf monarchies
- Countering Iranian-backed forces in Lebanon, Gaza, Yemen and Syria, with economic sanctions on any country helping Iran ship arms to them
- Stepped up support for pro-imperialist forces within Iran itself, claiming that US support for the 2009 Green movement was “too restrained”
- A “comprehensive regional strategy” centered on military pressure on the Assad regime in Syria

In the course of her remarks, and a question-and-answer session that followed,

Clinton alluded to several instances in which she had policy disagreements with Obama or others in high-level posts in the administration—in most cases, although Clinton did not say this, placing her on the opposite site of the dispute from Vice President Joe Biden, a potential rival for the Democratic presidential nomination.

On each issue she touched on, Clinton adopted a more hard-line position than the Obama White House. These included arms shipments to Syrian rebel groups fighting the government of Bashar al-Assad, US relations with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the size of the US military force in the Persian Gulf, and the approach to the Russian government of Vladimir Putin.

“I am in the category of people who wanted us to do more in response to the annexation of Crimea and the continuing destabilization of Ukraine,” she said, referring to the crisis that erupted a year after her departure from the position of secretary of state.

Clinton firmly backed the Obama administration's

“pivot to Asia,” the shifting of military forces and political/diplomatic attention to confronting China along a wide swathe from the Indian Ocean to the Korean peninsula.

As this review suggests, the Democratic frontrunner envisions a Clinton administration that would continue and even escalate the militaristic policies of Obama, including drone warfare, military engagement in Iraq and Syria, and confrontation with Russia and China. In this she is speaking not merely for herself, but for the American political establishment as a whole.

Whichever representative of the financial aristocracy enters the White House in January 2017, the next president will be committed to intensifying the drive by American imperialism to use military aggression, violence and subversion to offset its longterm economic decline.



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