

Clinton calls Trump “unqualified” to be commander-in-chief

Patrick Martin
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Democratic Party presidential frontrunner Hillary Clinton said Thursday that her likely Republican opponent was “not qualified to be president of the United States,” telling a CNN interviewer that Trump’s declarations on foreign policy would damage US interests.

Clinton linked her national security argument to the disappearance of an EgyptAir passenger jet earlier in the day, en route from Paris to Cairo, saying that this incident “shines a very bright light” on the threat of terrorism.

“I think it reinforces the need for American leadership. The kind of smart, steady leadership that only America can provide, working with our allies, our partners, our friends in Europe, the Middle East and elsewhere,” she said. “Because we have to have a concerted effort that brings to bear both domestic resources, sharing of intelligence, take a hard look at airport security one more time. Whatever needs to be done must be done.”

Clinton was being interviewed on CNN by Chris Cuomo, son of former New York Governor Mario Cuomo and brother of the current Governor Andrew Cuomo, a skill for the Democratic Party establishment who readily agreed that his guest was certain to be the nominee of the Democratic Party. “The math about the nomination,” he said, “that’s, frankly, the easy part.” The question was how to defeat Trump, he continued.

The axis of Clinton’s criticism of Trump was that he was too erratic in his statements and views on foreign policy. “I know how hard this job is, and I know that we need steadiness as well as strength and smarts in it, and I have concluded he is not qualified to be president of the United States,” Clinton said.

“And I think in this past week, whether it’s attacking Great Britain; praising the leader of North Korea, a

despotic dictator who has nuclear weapons; whether it is saying pull out of NATO; let other countries have nuclear weapons, the kinds of positions he is stating and the consequences of those positions and even the consequences of his statements are not just offensive to people, they are potentially dangerous.”

Clinton continued in this vein, criticizing Trump’s statements about barring Muslims from entering the United States, not as an unconstitutional attack on democratic rights, but as a boon to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. “Donald Trump is being used to essentially be a recruiter for more people to join the cause of terrorism,” she said.

The CNN interview represented an escalation of the attacks Clinton has made ever since Trump became the Republican frontrunner. She is openly appealing to Republican warhawks and neo-conservatives who regard Trump as a quasi-isolationist because of his retroactive criticism of the Bush administration’s war in Iraq, and who are hostile to his statements of praise and admiration for Russian President Vladimir Putin.

This appeal to militarism and the Republican right was spelled out even more explicitly by Clinton’s campaign chairman, former White House Chief of Staff John Podesta. In a statement emailed to the media on Friday, Podesta denounced Trump’s foreign policy pronouncements.

“This is not how presidents behave,” he said. “This is not about ideology—it’s about responsible leadership. Anyone who is serious about our national security, regardless of their party, should not stand with Donald Trump.”

In her overall approach to the general election campaign, Clinton is hewing closely to the line of argument laid down by President Obama, who ridicules Trump’s claims that the US economy is in dismal

shape. “I also feel optimistic about the country,” she told Cuomo. “I mean most of what Trump says is pretty negative about America. It’s pretty much fearmongering, criticizing. You know, we are well positioned, if we do our part, if we show leadership, if we bring people together.”

Clinton is running as the candidate of complacency and self-satisfaction, of continuing the “progressive” work of a Democratic administration that is in reality the most right-wing in US history. Clinton thus effectively cedes those who are dissatisfied and discontented with the social and economic conditions imposed by American capitalism—the vast majority of working people—to her semi-fascist opponent.

Within the Democratic primary campaign, the vast majority of young people and struggling sections of the working class have given their support to Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders. In her interview on CNN, Clinton barely even gave lip service to attracting the Sanders supporters once she officially becomes the Democratic nominee.

Effectively dismissing Sanders’ recent victories in Indiana, West Virginia and Oregon, and the likelihood that he will win most of the remaining contests—including the most populous US state, California—Clinton told Cuomo, “I will be the nominee for my party. That is already done, in effect. There is no way that I won’t be.”

She added that it was Sanders’ responsibility to convince his own supporters to back her as the Democratic nominee, just as she had supported Barack Obama in 2008 after losing a protracted fight for the presidential nomination.



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