

As her poll numbers decline, Clinton appeals to military in San Diego speech

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In a speech delivered Thursday in San Diego, Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton advertised herself as the most able representative of US imperialism and a career-long, consistent supporter of the American war machine.

The speech was targeted not at the California voters who go to the polls on June 7, but at the military-intelligence apparatus which will play a more prominent, backstage role in determining the next president. In the speech, Clinton sought to portray herself as the ruling class's best alternative to the presumptive Republican nominee, Donald Trump.

Adopting the tone of a presumptive nominee, Clinton said that the general election is “a choice between a fearful America that's less secure and less engaged in the world, and a strong, confident America that leads to keep our country safe and our economy growing.” She criticized Trump's “dangerously incoherent lies” and said Trump was “temperamentally unfit to hold an office that requires knowledge, stability and immense responsibility.”

Clinton then indicated that Trump was dangerous because he would not adequately prosecute the interests of Wall Street on an international scale.

Clinton attacked Trump for “prais[ing] dictators like Vladimir Putin” and explained that he does not understand that “countries like Russia and China often work against us,” a situation which Clinton claims “hurts American workers.” Trump “would embolden ISIS,” she said.

Asserting the principle that the US must dominate in every part of the globe, Clinton said, “If America doesn't lead, we leave a vacuum—and that will either cause chaos, or other countries will rush in to fill the void. Then they'll be the ones making the decisions about your lives and jobs and safety—and trust me, the

choices they make will not be to our benefit.

Now Moscow and Beijing are deeply envious of our alliances around the world, because they have nothing to match them. They'd love for us to elect a president who would jeopardize that source of strength. If Donald gets his way, they'll be celebrating in the Kremlin. We cannot let that happen.”

She pointed to Trump's calls for arming Saudi Arabia with nuclear weapons and his proposal to “abandon our allies in NATO—the countries that work with us to root out terrorists abroad before they strike us at home” as examples of his faults.

According to Clinton, what is dangerous about Trump is that he believes “he doesn't have to listen to our generals or our admirals, our ambassadors and other high officials.”

In this statement, Clinton provides insight into the character of a political establishment dominated by a financial aristocracy and the military-intelligence agencies. Her speech is based on the defense of what has become a fundamental rule of American bourgeois politics: an elected official does not question the authority of the military-intelligence agencies.

In her speech, Clinton sought to appeal to popular hostility to Trump—a hostility so widespread it even outpaces her own negativity ratings. “Imagine him deciding whether to send your spouses or children into battle,” she said. “Do we want his finger anywhere near the button?”

The widespread opposition to Clinton in the Democratic primary indicates that very few in the US want her finger anywhere near the nuclear trigger, either. At one point, Clinton denounced Trump for having “said he would order our military to carry out torture and the murder of civilians who are related to suspected terrorists—even though those are war crimes.”

Hillary Clinton is herself a war criminal who has supported every war the United States has conducted in the last 25 years. She was a strong advocate for the US wars in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Libya. In the latter case, she was the prime instigator of a war which has left tens of thousands of civilians dead. When she received news that former Libyan President Muammar Gaddafi had been murdered, she laughed and said: “We came, we saw, he died.”

There is an element of desperation in her speech. As her poll numbers continue to slide and she faces an ongoing investigation into her use of a private email server while secretary of state, Clinton is making her case to the forces that really run the country.

Beneath her speech is a definite subtext. The US ruling class faces immense challenges in the coming period as it seeks to reorganize the world and forestall its historic decline. Behind the backs of the American people, new wars are being prepared, new confrontations with Russia and China, and new attacks on democratic rights under the guise of waging a “war on terror.”

Despite the fact that Trump has pledged his support for US imperialism, his erratic statements are cause enough for concern for a significant section of the ruling class. The blunt terms Clinton used to attack Trump—“temperamentally unfit,” for example—indicate that these divisions are profound.

Then there is the problem of social opposition. Citing Trump’s lack of ability to make “hard choices,” Clinton gave a telling example: “A revolution threatens to topple a government in a key region...what do you do?”

Clinton has answered this question in her tenure as secretary of state, a period which spanned from 2009 to 2013. When tens of millions of Egyptian workers poured into the streets in February 2011, Clinton supported Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak, saying he was “looking for ways to respond to the legitimate needs of the Egyptian people,” only to later orchestrate the maintenance of power by the Egyptian military as it killed hundreds of protestors throughout 2012 and 2013.

Clinton and the ruling class are not only concerned about revolution in foreign countries, but in the US as well. For this reason, Clinton has supported the National Security Agency’s surveillance programs and

supports the jailing of whistle-blower Edward Snowden.

Clinton’s speech, though explicitly directed against Trump, was also implicitly an attack on her competitor Bernie Sanders, who is a beneficiary of growing social opposition on account of his self-proclaimed support for “socialism.” Clinton’s speech was also aimed at convincing growing sections of the Democratic Party establishment that she remains the most reliable candidate in the primaries, and that she should not be moved aside in favor of Sanders or some other candidate.

As the ruling class prepares for an intensification of the drive to war and the attack on democratic rights, Sanders remains silent. His main criticism of Clinton’s foreign policy program is that she made a “mistake” in supporting the war in Iraq. Throughout the course of the 2016 presidential campaign, Sanders made clear his support for the war in Libya, Afghanistan, Syria, and once again in Iraq.



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