

The New York Times, the state and the making of an amalgam

Who is James Bennet?

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For the past week, the *New York Times* has been spearheading a frenzied campaign against Russian President Vladimir Putin and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump in connection with more than 20,000 leaked Democratic National Committee emails published last Friday by WikiLeaks. The emails are highly incriminating. They show that the presidential campaign of Hillary Clinton and the DNC conspired to undermine the primary challenge mounted by Bernie Sanders.

But instead of focusing on the brazenly undemocratic and undoubtedly illegal effort to rig the US elections, the *Times* has published article after article accusing the Russian government and Russian President Vladimir Putin of stealing the emails and having them published in order to tilt the presidential election in favor of Trump. The charge, completely unsubstantiated, is that Trump is either directly conspiring with Putin or is the willing beneficiary of Russian government espionage. The McCarthyite-style demonization of Russia is combined with the accusation that Trump is a front man for Putin.

Over the past week, the *Times*, which serves as an unofficial mouthpiece of the Clinton campaign and the Democratic Party, has published a front page article on this topic virtually every day, along with editorials and op-ed pieces. Russia-bashing and denunciations of Trump from the right-wing, militaristic standpoint that he is unwilling to wage war on Russia have become an increasingly prominent theme of the Clinton campaign and the Democratic convention in Philadelphia.

By maneuvering to attack the fascistic Trump from the right on the basis of Cold War-style anti-Russian hysteria, Clinton and the party leadership are lining up the party's upper-middle class base to support military aggression that poses the very real danger of a nuclear

World War III.

There is no doubt that this campaign is being coordinated at the highest levels of the state, particularly its military and intelligence agencies. The *Times* has long functioned as a de facto propaganda arm of the American capitalist state. Its top personnel regularly consult with government officials over whether or not to publish sensitive articles and what information to withhold from the public. As former Executive Editor Bill Keller infamously wrote in connection with his interactions with government officials, "Freedom of the press includes freedom not to publish, and that is a freedom we exercise with some regularity."

In this connection, it is instructive to consider the individuals at the *Times* who are playing leading roles in the current anti-Russian propaganda blitz. The newspaper's editorial page editor is James Bennet. This is considered a highly sensitive and responsible position, often a stepping stone to becoming executive editor. As such, the selection of the person to fill it is deemed of great importance not only to the *Times*, but to corporate America and the state.

When Bennet was chosen as the new editorial page editor last March, to assume the post in May, the selection was widely reported as a major national news development.

Bennet's family exemplifies the politically incestuous relationship between the media and the political establishment and state apparatus. His father, Douglas Bennet, is a longstanding and trusted political operative from his time in the 1960s as an assistant to the ambassador to India. He later served on the staffs of several Democratic Party lawmakers, including Senator Hubert Humphrey, the Democratic presidential candidate in 1968.

Under President Jimmy Carter, the senior Bennet served as assistant secretary of state for legislative affairs, and later as the head of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), a front for the CIA that is deeply implicated in regime-changes operations around the world. He was named the head of National Public Radio in 1983 and was appointed by Bill Clinton as assistant secretary of state for international organization affairs in 1993. From 1995 to 2007, he was president of Wesleyan University, an elite liberal arts college in Connecticut.

Bennet's older brother Michael Bennet is currently the senior senator from Colorado. He was originally appointed to the position in 2009 by the governor to replace Ken Salazar, who was appointed secretary of the interior by President Obama. He won re-election in 2010. Michael Bennet also served as counsel to the US deputy attorney general in the Clinton administration and later as superintendent for Denver Public Schools, where he forced through a merit pay restructuring of teacher pay. He was one of the people considered by Obama to serve as secretary of education in 2008.

James Bennet himself went to work for the *New York Times* in 1991, where he served in a number of politically sensitive roles, first as a White House correspondent and later as the bureau chief in Jerusalem, where he oversaw the newspaper's pro-Israeli presentation of the news and helped cover up US imperialist intrigues throughout the Middle East.

Bennet was tapped to become the bureau chief in Beijing when he was hired by the news monthly the *Atlantic* as its editor in chief, a position he held until resigning to rejoin the *Times* in May. At the *Atlantic*, Bennet oversaw political scoundrels such as Jeffrey Goldberg, an apologist for the Obama administration whose latest article in the magazine seeks to outdo the *Times* journalists in accusing Trump of being "a de facto agent" of Putin, and Ta-Nehisi Coates, a leading propagandist of racial politics who became a national correspondent for the *Atlantic* under Bennet.

Since Bennet rejoined the *Times* as editorial page editor, he has overseen a relentless campaign by the newspaper's columnists to portray American society as irredeemably divided along racial lines, presenting every social issue, from police violence to the rise of Donald Trump, as a manifestation of white racism, and particularly racial prejudice among white workers.

Now he is deeply involved in the promotion of an amalgam aimed at paving the way for an escalation of military aggression that threatens the very existence of the human race.



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