

Clinton denounces Russian “interference” in US elections, calls for escalation in Syria

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Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton this week publicly accused the Russian government of intervening in the American election on behalf of her Republican opponent Donald Trump.

She cited an investigation by US intelligence agencies, first reported Monday night by the *Washington Post*, into alleged Russian government hacking into the computer systems of the state election officials in the United States.

Clinton told a press conference Monday there were now “credible reports about Russian interference in our elections,” adding, “I want everyone—Democrat, Republican, Independent—to understand the real threat that this represents.”

Clinton referred both to the *Post* report about hacking into state government computers in Arizona and Illinois, and to the alleged Russian hacking of the emails of the Democratic National Committee (DNC), which revealed backroom efforts by top DNC officials to ensure Clinton’s victory.

Clinton’s suggestion of a Trump-Putin axis was followed up Tuesday in a speech in North Carolina by her vice-presidential running mate, Senator Tim Kaine, which was billed as a “major national security address” by the Democratic campaign.

Kaine contrasted Clinton’s going “toe-to-toe with Putin” as US secretary of state, to Trump’s suggestion that NATO was outmoded and that he could negotiate more successfully with Russia. He then raised the question “why Trump seems to support Russian interests at the expense of American ones,” suggesting that the billionaire real estate speculator was keeping his tax returns secret because they might shed light on his financial ties to Russia. He concluded by citing the claim of former acting CIA Director Michael Morell that Trump is an “unwitting agent” of the Russian

intelligence services.

Clinton appeared Monday at several Labor Day rallies, but she chose to focus her attack on Trump on national security issues, where she has consistently attacked the billionaire real estate speculator from the right.

Asked by a reporter if the alleged Russian actions amounted to a cyberwar, Clinton replied, “I’m not comfortable using the word ‘war’.” This demurral was only to disguise her intentions from the American people. However, in a speech last week to the American Legion convention, Clinton declared that cyberattacks on the United States should be answered by military force.

Clinton claimed that Putin had all but confirmed Russia’s role in the hacking of the DNC—a flat-out lie—adding, “The team around him certainly believe that there is some benefit to them to doing this.” She then declared that the prospect of additional hacking into the state government systems used to conduct the November 8 elections represented “a threat from an adversarial foreign power.”

The Democratic candidate also criticized the role of the Russian government in Syria, in backing the regime of President Bashar al-Assad against Islamist forces armed and financed by the United States and the Gulf monarchies. She denounced “the refusal of the Russians and the Iranians to put the kind of pressure on Assad that is necessary ...”

Clinton reiterated her support for imposing a no-fly zone over parts of Syria held by the US-backed “rebels,” which would require US air strikes against Syrian anti-aircraft positions and could lead to confrontations between Russian and American warplanes, which both conduct air strikes in the country.

“I think we need leverage,” she said. “I’ve always believed that if that were on the table and it were clear we were going to pursue it, that would give us the leverage we don’t have now.” Coming just after the well-publicized failure of talks last weekend between Obama and Putin at the G20 summit in China, Clinton was clearly seeking to stake out a more aggressive position on Syria than that of the Obama administration.

The Democrat’s claim to have discovered a Trump-Putin axis has two purposes: first, to cement Clinton’s standing as the consensus choice of the US military-intelligence apparatus; and second, to integrate the election campaign itself into the war preparations by US imperialism, both in the Middle East and against Russia (as well as China).

If Clinton wins the November 8 election over Trump, she will claim this to be a mandate for the escalation of US military operations in Iraq and Syria, as well as the continued NATO military buildup throughout Eastern Europe, openly aimed at preparing for war with Russia, a country with the world’s second-largest nuclear arsenal.

In her complaints about Russian interference in the US elections, Clinton is joining in the campaign waged by the Pentagon and CIA to prepare US public opinion for such a conflict.

The article published Monday by the *Washington Post* is little more than a handout from the intelligence agencies. It reports that the CIA, FBI, National Security Agency and Department of Homeland Security have started an investigation, led by Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, into a “broad covert Russian operation in the United States to sow public distrust in the upcoming presidential election and in US political institutions.”

In addition to discrediting the election among the American people—hardly necessary given that the entire political system is deeply despised and the two main candidates hated—Russian officials allegedly seek to “provide propaganda fodder to attack US democracy-building policies around the world,” the *Post* claimed.

As in previous reports by the *Post* and the *New York Times* about alleged Russian hacking of the DNC, no evidence of any kind is cited in the article, only the unsupported claims of intelligence officials, who even the *Post* reporters admit lack “definitive proof” of

either cyberattacks or even plans for cyberattacks.

Apparently the public is expected to treat such claims as the gospel, despite the decades of lying by these agencies to cover up assassinations, coup plots and other conspiracies abroad, and the systematic violation of the democratic rights of the American people at home.

Meanwhile, the claims of Russian hacking are being used to whip up a crisis atmosphere about the administration of the election itself. Earlier this summer the FBI issued a “flash” alert to election officials in all 50 states over the threat of cyber intrusions. Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson suggested that the entire US election system, including 9,000 polling places and 50 separate state election authorities, should be declared “critical infrastructure” subject to the same counterterrorism efforts as nuclear power plants and electrical power grids.



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