Leaked Clinton email admits Saudi, Qatari government funding of ISIS in Syria

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An email exchange between Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton and her campaign manager John Podesta, posted Monday by WikiLeaks, frankly acknowledges that the Islamic State (also known as ISIS) is funded and supported by Washington's chief allies in the Arab world.

The September 2014 exchange was contained in one of the 2,086 documents posted by WikiLeaks Monday, following up on the release a week ago of over 2,000 more of Podesta's emails and attachments.

At the time of the exchange on ISIS, Podesta was a White House counselor to President Barack Obama. One of the most powerful figures in the Democratic Party establishment, he is the former White House chief of staff to Bill Clinton, the former chairman of the Obama transition and a corporate lobbyist for corporations like WalMart, BP and Lockheed Martin. For her part, Clinton had left her post as secretary of state over a year earlier.

The email acknowledges that the sources for the assessment of the Saudi and Qatari support for ISIS "include Western intelligence, US intelligence and sources in the region."

The document calls for increased reliance upon the Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga as a key proxy force for combating ISIS in Iraq, pointing to the Kurdish militia's "long standing relationships with CIA officers and Special Forces operators."

It adds: "While this military/para-military operation is moving forward, we need to use our diplomatic and more traditional intelligence assets to bring pressure on the governments of Qatar and Saudi Arabia, which are providing clandestine financial and logistic support to ISIL [ISIS] and other radical Sunni groups in the region."

The email continues: "This effort will be enhanced by the stepped up commitment in the [Kurdish Regional Government]. The Qataris and Saudis will be put in a position of balancing policy between their ongoing competition to dominate the Sunni world and the consequences of serious US pressure."

The Obama administration has publicly embraced Saudi Arabia as its closest Arab ally and the ostensible leader of an "Islamic alliance" against terrorism. The Saudi regime is the patron of the High Negotiations Committee (HNC), which purportedly represents the so-called "moderate" opposition that is also supported by Washington in the more than five-year-old war for regime change against the Syrian government of President Bashar al-Assad.

Officially, the US administration has maintained that, while wealthy individuals in Saudi Arabia and Qatar had helped finance ISIS, the despotic governments of these oil monarchies were blameless.

This pretense was blown in October 2014, barely a week after the Podesta-Clinton email, when Vice President Joe Biden told an audience at Harvard University that the Saudi regime, along with other Gulf sheikdoms and Turkey, had "poured hundreds of millions of dollars and tens, *thousands* of tons of weapons into anyone who would fight against Assad. Except that the people who were being supplied were al-Nusra and Al Qaeda and the extremist elements of jihadis coming from other parts of the world."

"We could not convince our colleagues to stop supplying them," Biden added.

The US State Department subsequently "clarified" the vice president's remarks and Biden himself apologized for "any implication that Turkey or other Allies and partners in the region had intentionally supplied or facilitated the growth of ISIL [ISIS] or other violent extremists in Syria."

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The contents of the Clinton-Podesta email are supplemented by a separate email released by WikiLeaks that includes an excerpt from a secret speech delivered by Clinton in 2013 that was flagged as problematic by her staff. In it she claimed that US attempts to "vet, identify, train and arm cadres of rebels" in Syria had been "complicated by the fact that the Saudis and others are shipping large amounts of weapons--and pretty indiscriminately--not at all targeted toward the people that we think would be the more moderate, least likely, to cause problems in the future."

And previously, WikiLeaks posted a secret State Department memo signed by Clinton in 2009 that affirmed: "Saudi Arabia remains a critical financial support base for al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, LeT, and other terrorist groups."

The Clinton camp has responded to the latest release of emails by ratcheting up its virulently anti-Russian campaign, claiming that WikiLeaks was acting as a pawn of the Kremlin and that the material released may have been altered to serve Moscow's foreign policy purposes.

In her debate Sunday with her Republican rival Donald Trump, however, Clinton herself acknowledged the authenticity of the documents, attempting to defend a statement quoted in one of them from a speech to real estate investors in which she declared that in politics "you need both a public and private position." She claimed that her inspiration for this approach was Abraham Lincoln.

The method of the "public and private" position is clearly in force in relation to Saudi Arabia, and for good reason.

Saudi Arabia remains a key pillar of political reaction and imperialist domination in the Middle East, with its ruling monarchy constituting the world's chief customer of the American arms industry. Some $115 billion in US weapons and military support have poured into the kingdom since Obama took office in 2009.

More importantly, the Saudi government support for Al Qaeda, ISIS and similar Islamist militias has developed in close collaboration with the CIA, which coordinated the flow of arms, money and foreign fighters into Syria from a station in southern Turkey.

Moreover, such collaboration began long before the Syrian civil war, dating back to the US-orchestrated war against the Soviet-backed regime in Afghanistan in the 1980s, where Al Qaeda got its start under the leadership of Osama bin Laden, who collaborated closely with the CIA and Pakistani intelligence.

The determination of the US ruling establishment to maintain a veil of secrecy over this collaboration was underscored by Obama's veto--subsequently overridden--of legislation allowing Americans to sue foreign governments alleged to be responsible for terrorist attacks in the US. The clear target of the bill was Saudi Arabia, based on ample evidence of Saudi government involvement in the September 11, 2001 attacks that claimed nearly 3,000 lives.

The overriding fear within the administration and US ruling circles is that any serious probing of the Saudi role in these attacks would uncover the complicity of elements within the US intelligence agencies themselves in the events of 9/11.

Another significant element of the Clinton-Podesta email is its welcoming of the ISIS 2014 offensive in Iraq. It states that "the advance of ISIL [ISIS] through Iraq gives the U.S. Government an opportunity to change the way it deals with the chaotic security situation in North Africa and the Middle East. The most important factor in this matter is to make use of intelligence resources and Special Operations troops in an aggressive manner."

In other words, ISIS provided a pretext for launching a renewed US military intervention aimed at furthering the strategic goal of American hegemony in the Middle East under the guise of a struggle against terrorism.

The email exchange further exposes Hillary Clinton's deep involvement in all of these crimes.

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