

# White House, Clinton campaign intervene in conflict over Russian hacking charges

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The conflict within the US government and intelligence apparatus over allegations of Russian intervention in the US election escalated on Monday with the direct intervention by the White House and the Clinton campaign.

Since the White House announced Friday that it had commissioned an investigation into allegations that Russia hacked into Democratic Party emails to manipulate the election, the opposed factions in the state have assumed increasingly intransigent positions, which are bound up with conflicts over the foreign policy of the incoming Trump administration.

In a press briefing Monday, White House spokesman Josh Earnest declared that Trump's campaign was boosted by Russian government intervention into the election. "You didn't need a security clearance to figure out who benefited from malicious Russian cyberactivity," he said.

Speaking of Trump, Earnest added, "He called on Russia to hack Secretary Clinton. So he certainly had a pretty good sense of whose side this cyberactivity was coming down on."

Also on Monday, Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman, John Podesta, declared his support for a request by ten mostly Democratic members of the Electoral College for an intelligence briefing on the CIA's investigation into claims of Russian intervention in the election.

"We now know that the CIA has determined Russia's interference in our elections was for the purpose of electing Donald Trump," Podesta stated. "Electors have a solemn responsibility under the Constitution and we support their efforts to have their questions addressed."

The frenzied character of the Democratic Party-led campaign, accusing Russian President Vladimir Putin of manipulating the US election and portraying Trump

as his agent, was summed up by the statement of former acting CIA Director Michael Morell, who called the alleged intervention by Russia "the political equivalent of 9/11."

Morell, along with many former intelligence officials, publicly opposed Trump and backed Clinton during the election campaign.

Trump responded to this renewed offensive by reiterating his rejection of the CIA's claims of Russian hacking and intervention in his behalf. "Can you imagine," he demanded, "if the election results were the opposite and we tried to play the Russia/CIA card? It would be called conspiracy theory!"

The divisions within the state are not simply along party lines. On Monday, leading Republican members of Congress, including Senators Lindsey Graham and John McCain, joined calls by Democrats for a bipartisan investigation into the alleged hacking. McCain earlier called Putin "a thug, bully and murderer."

The escalation of the internecine conflict is related to two developments over the past several days. First was the announcement late last week that Trump would likely appoint Rex Tillerson, the CEO of ExxonMobil, to be his secretary of state. This appointment was confirmed Monday night by the Trump transition team and is expected to be formally announced this morning.

Tillerson has been criticized by some Republicans, including McCain and Florida Senator Marco Rubio, and a host of Democrats for his friendly relations with Putin and his extensive business ties to Moscow. A number of Republicans, including McCain, have suggested that they might unite with Democrats to block his confirmation in the Senate.

The Democrats are raising no objections to putting a multimillionaire executive of an oil conglomerate at the

head of the State Department. They are entirely focusing their opposition on Tillerson's supposedly too close relations with Russia.

The second development is the imminent rout of US-backed Syrian opposition forces, who are on the verge of being driven out of their former stronghold of Aleppo by Syrian government forces backed by Russia. The CIA, in particular, has invested enormous resources in the US regime-change operation against the Syrian president and Russian ally Bashar al-Assad. Several top Trump appointees, including his national security adviser, Michael Flynn, have criticized the failed CIA-led operation.

In an editorial Monday, the *New York Times* made clear the goals of the Clinton faction. "Hillary Clinton, the Democratic nominee, made it clear her administration would redouble efforts to punish and isolate Moscow for war crimes in Syria's civil war and its aggression toward Ukraine and other neighbors," the newspaper wrote. It favorably quoted Clinton's statements during the campaign that she had "taken Putin on" and "would do that as president."

While the forces behind Clinton have focused their threats on Russia, Trump has indicated a shift toward a more immediate focus on intensifying military and economic pressure on China. Earlier this month, he made a phone call to the president of Taiwan and later said he would be willing to revise the "One-China" policy that has been the foundation of Sino-US relations for nearly 40 years.

In their escalating campaign against Trump, the Democrats and the media outlets that support them, most notably the *New York Times*, are saying virtually nothing about the fact that Trump lost the popular vote (by as many as three million). Nor are they making an issue of the ultra-right-wing cabinet he is assembling, composed of billionaires, corporate executives and former generals.

While endlessly repeating unsubstantiated charges of Russian hacking, the Democrats have largely dropped any reference to the one state agency that clearly did intervene in an effort to shift the election toward Trump—the FBI. In the immediate aftermath of the election, the Clinton campaign cited the intervention of FBI Director James Comey into the scandal over Clinton's emails as a major factor in her defeat. This is now being downplayed in favor of denouncing Russia.

Whatever, if any, attempts by the Russian government to influence the outcome of the US election, they were dwarfed by the systematic and secret machinations of American intelligence agencies such as the FBI along with those of the Democratic Party establishment. The internal Democratic Party material released by WikiLeaks, which the Clinton campaign sought to bury by blaming the leaks on Russia, revealed a conspiracy between the Clinton team and the Democratic Party establishment to sabotage the primary challenge of Bernie Sanders. Other material included transcripts of Clinton's lavishly paid and groveling speeches to Wall Street bankers.

What is now being revealed are the issues both campaigns in the 2016 election sought to conceal: the far-reaching preparations for an escalation of global warfare and the sharp disagreements over the direction of Washington's predatory foreign policy.

There is not an ounce of democratic content in the positions of either faction of the state and intelligence apparatus and nothing to choose from between the arch-reactionary Trump and the veteran warmonger Clinton. However the disputes are resolved, the result will be a massive escalation of war abroad and the attack on the working class within the United States. The events of recent days have thrown into starker relief the need for the working class to advance its own political solution—opposed to both parties and the ruling elite they defend—in response to the deepening crisis.



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