

## **Hillary Clinton says she, not Trump, is the one to defeat IS group**

24/03/2016 14:22 by admin

**Stanford, Calif:** Hillary Clinton is doing what Republican rivals now say they took far too long to do: Taking Donald Trump seriously.

In interviews and foreign policy addresses this week, the Democratic front-runner has worked to undercut Trump's credentials in the wake of deadly bombings in Brussels. Her goal is to transform the voters' vision of the bombastic reality TV star into a potential commander in chief with his finger on a nuclear trigger – an image her team believes will repel voters in November.

Clinton is casting herself as a calm harbor in a stormy world, frequently mentioning the need for "steady hands." The comment is a clear reference to Trump with the implication he'd never fill that need.

In a speech Wednesday Stanford University, Clinton called for "strong, smart, steady leadership," arguing that recent comments from Republicans Trump and Texas Sen. Ted Cruz show they are not up to the task of combatting Islamic militants.

"Turning our back on our alliances, or turning our alliance into a protection racket would reverse decades of bipartisan American leadership and send a dangerous signal to friend and foe alike," she said, referencing a call by Trump to lessen U.S. involvement in NATO. "Putin already hopes to divide Europe. If Mr. Trump gets his way, it will be like Christmas in the Kremlin."

Clinton also assailed Cruz's call for patrolling Muslim neighborhoods.

"When Republican candidates like Ted Cruz call for treating American Muslims like criminals and for racially profiling predominantly Muslim neighborhoods, it's wrong, it's counterproductive, it's dangerous," Clinton said.

Trump quickly dismissed her speech on Twitter and insisted he's better prepared to take over the country's fight against Islamic State militants.

"Just watched Hillary deliver a prepackaged speech on terror. She's been in office fighting terror for 20 years – and look where we are!" he wrote, adding: "I will be the best by far in fighting terror. I'm the only one that was right from the beginning, & now Lyin' Ted & others are copying me." That last was a reference to a Republican rival. Texas Sen. Ted Cruz.

Political strategists in both parties admit to being slightly baffled by the coming general election, acknowledging they have few clear expectations for a match-up between candidates with such high negative ratings and vastly different personal styles.

But there is one prediction they all agree on: It will get ugly.

Though there are still months of primary contests to come, the two front-runners have already begun trading heated attacks.

Trump has accused Clinton of being responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands across the globe. Clinton, in turn, has accused him of inciting violence and likened his rise in the polls to "dark chapters" of history like the Holocaust.

Her aides see foreign policy as an area that allows Clinton to highlight both Trump's unpredictable temperament and lack of international experience.

Democrats say those points, coupled with his controversial statements about women, Latinos and Muslims, will help their party woo moderate independents and even Republican voters â€” and of-set potential losses among the white, working class men attracted to Trump's candidacy.

One day after the Brussels attacks, Clinton stressed adapting to take on a sophisticated opponent, strengthening alliances abroad and not using "bluster that alienates our partners." The United States, she said, must intensify the air campaign against Islamic militants, support local Arab and Kurdish forces on the ground, take on extremism online and "harden defenses" at home.

She said the Brussels attacks showed the need for a "harder look at security protocols at airports and other sensitive, so-called soft sites." Referencing the conflict between the FBI and Apple over an encrypted iPhone used by one of the San Bernardino attackers, Clinton said the technology community and government must find ways to work together, calling for an "intelligence surge" in the United States and with allies.

Like Clinton, Trump, sees international instability as offering advantages to his campaign, repeatedly pointing to the November 2015 attacks in Paris as a turning point that boosted his poll numbers and helped win him voters.

"Whenever there's a big problem\_national security type problem\_I go up because people view me as much stronger. And they actually think that I\_I think they feel I'm much more competent," Trump said in an interview with Bloomberg television.

He's offered a flurry of inflammatory â€” and frequently vague â€” policy proposals to tackle terrorism. In the wake of Brussels attacks, he for the U.S. to "close up our borders," start widespread government surveillance on Muslims and expand international laws to permit forms of torture like waterboarding.

And he's increasingly trying to recast Clinton's tenure as America's top diplomat as one of failed leadership, blaming her for continued chaos in the Middle East.

In an interview with Fox News on Tuesday, he branded Clinton "Incompetent Hillary," saying "the woman has been a disaster" and every foreign policy conflict she's been involved with has turned out badly.

- AP