

As Promised, WikiLeaks Unloads on Hillary

The hacker group WikiLeaks released Friday nearly 20,00 emails that reportedly demonstrate collusion between former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's campaign and the Democratic National Committee to block U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders' presidential bid.

WikiLeaks released a total of 19,252 emails and 8,034 attachments from the accounts of seven DNC officials:

- communications director Luis Miranda,
- national finance director Jordon Kaplan,
- finance chief of staff Scott Comer,
- finance director of data and strategic initiatives Daniel Parrish,
- finance director Allen Zachary,
- senior adviser Andrew Wright and
- the finance director for northern California, Robert Stowe.

Among the evidence uncovered in the release are some emails that suggested major political operatives with mainstream media outlets like NBC News, CBS News and Politico were involved in the scheme. Another email chain suggests Clinton campaign staffers were involved in pushing for the closure of polling sites during the Rhode Island Primary.

The emails also show DNC Chairwoman U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.) found Sanders' moderation of his stance on Israel "disturbing." According to the emails, the DNC wanted to paint Sanders as an atheist, as well.

News of the emails began emerging Friday, but by Saturday, the new scandal had already claimed its first political casualty. Wasserman Schultz announced she will not take part in this

week's convention—although she will be required to gavel the meeting into order Monday afternoon—and that she will resign immediately at the conclusion of the quadrennial meeting.

“Going forward, the best way for me to accomplish those goals [of winning the presidency for Hillary Clinton] is to step down as party chair at the end of this convention,” she said in a written statement Saturday morning. “As party chair, this week I will open and close the convention and I will address our delegates about the stakes involved in this election not only for Democrats, but for all Americans.”

She will not, in fact, be speaking at the convention at all. A second release later said Wasserman Schultz would have no speaking slot at the convention at all.

Subject to a vote of the party's delegates—likely Monday afternoon—DNC Vice Chairwoman Donna Brazile, a longtime party operative who has been a mainstay of the Sunday morning political talk shows for decades—will run the DNC through to the November election. She also briefly served as party chair on an interim basis in 2011.

WikiLeaks, however, quickly pointed out Brazile is also implicated in the email scandal. Monday morning, the DNC announced she was being replaced by U.S. Rep. Marcia Fudge (D-Ohio), meaning the convention will now have its third chair in slightly more than 24 hours.

The start of the first day's proceedings has now been pushed back to 4 p.m. EDT Monday.

Further reinforcing the notion that no bad deed goes unrewarded in Clinton World, Wasserman Schultz was quickly named honorary co-chair of the Hillary Clinton presidential campaign. And, as one might imagine, Sanders supporters are furious.

The #NeverHillary faction of the party was already fully

fueled when the leak occurred. For his part, Sanders released the following statement:

“I told you a long time ago that the DNC was not running a fair operation, that they were supporting Secretary Clinton,” he told ABC’s George Stephanopoulos in an interview that aired Sunday morning. “So what I suggested to be true six months ago turned out to be true.”

“I am not an atheist,” he told CNN’s Jake Tapper in a separate interview. “But aside from all of that, it is an outrage and sad that you would have people in important positions in the DNC trying to undermine my campaign. It goes without saying, the function of the DNC is to represent all of the candidates—to be fair and even-minded.”

On the other side of the controversy, Clinton campaign manager Robby Mook told Tapper that “experts” told him the leak was the work of Russian government hackers who were working in concert with the Donald Trump campaign. The implication was that the Vladimir Putin government was actively promoting Trump’s candidacy.

Even as Tapper took an incredulous approach to the comments, Mook doubled down on them.

“I think we need to get to the bottom of these facts, but that is what experts are telling us. Experts have said that it is the Russians that in fact went in and took these emails,” he said. “And if they are the ones who took them, then we have to infer that they are the ones who released them.”

Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort quickly turned that argument around on the Clinton campaign, saying if Russians hacked the DNC’s protected server, they likely hacked the secretary of state’s unprotected server. He said Clinton should follow Wasserman Schultz’ example and drop out of the presidential race.

“Hillary Clinton should follow Wasserman Schultz’s lead and drop out over her failure to safeguard top secret, classified information both on her unauthorized home server and while traveling abroad,” he said in a statement released by the campaign. “Wasserman Schultz’s emails only put the Democratic Party at risk, but Hillary Clinton’s emails put all of America at risk.”

The outcome of this developing story is still difficult to predict, but it is certain to bring a certain level of chaos to the proceedings this week in Philadelphia.