'We should have done something to determine who was going to win': Hillary Clinton heard on tape making stunning argument that US should have fixed 2006 Palestinian election

- Clinton was speaking to the editorial board of a New York Jewish newspaper during her Senate re-election bid
- Then-Senator Clinton criticized the George W. Bush administration for allowing Islamist group Hamas to participate in elections
- Hamas won a plurality of votes in a stunning upset over its US-backed rivals, Fatah
- Clinton's remarks ironic in light of Donald Trump's repeated claims that the presidential election is 'rigged'

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PUBLISHED: 08:26 EST, 29 October 2016 | UPDATED: 11:43 EST, 29 October 2016

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Hillary Clinton was overheard on tape telling the editorial board of a Jewish newspaper in New York that she believed the United States ought to fix the results of a 2006 Palestinian election.

The report appeared in the New York Observer on Friday. The newspaper's publisher is Jared Kushner, the son-in-law of Clinton's Republican opponent in the presidential race, Donald Trump.

Clinton made the remark during a meeting with the editorial board of the Jewish Press during her 2006 bid to win re-election as senator from New York.

The then-senator was recorded making the remark by Eli Chomsky, an editor and staff writer for the Jewish Press at the time.
Hillary Clinton heard on tape saying that US should have fixed 2006 Palestinian election | Daily Mail Online

Hillary Clinton (seen here during a news conference in Iowa on Friday) was taped telling a New York Jewish newspaper that the US should have 'made sure we did something to determine who was going to win' the 2006 election for the Palestinian parliament.

'I do not think we should have pushed for an election in the Palestinian territories. I think that was a big mistake,' said Clinton. 'And if we were going to push for an election, then we should have made sure that we did something to determine who was going to win.'

Clinton was referring to the 2006 elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council.

Those elections were won by Hamas in a stunning upset over its bitter rival, the US-backed Fatah movement.

Hamas is the Islamist movement that has long opposed peace talks with Israel, while its rival, the secularist Fatah, is the faction that for decades dominated the Palestine Liberation Organization.
Palestinian supporters of Hamas, the anti-Israel Islamist movement, celebrate their victory in the Palestinian election during a rally in Khan Younis, south of Gaza Strip, January 27, 2006

The PLO recognized Israel in 1993 and engaged it in peace talks aimed at creating an independent Palestinian state, but the negotiations were upended in part due to deadly suicide bombings carried out by Hamas and their Islamist allies.

The US, which was led at the time by the administration of President George W. Bush, supported Hamas' participation in the elections as part of its overall efforts to democratize the Middle East.

Washington believed that its newfound policy to allow for free and fair elections in the Palestinian territories would bolster its ally, Fatah, led at the time by President Mahmoud Abbas.
Israel's then-prime minister Ariel Sharon (left) holds a news conference with then-US President George W. Bush in Crawford, Texas on April 11, 2005. Over Israel's objections, Bush insisted that Hamas be permitted to run as part of his overall strategy to democratize the Middle East.

Israel and its supporters were opposed to the idea of Hamas' participation since the group did not renounce violence while also sticking to its long-held position of refusing to recognize Israel's existence.

But the Bush administration insisted that Hamas be permitted to stand for election.

The result backfired, as the Islamist group captured a plurality of seats in the Palestinian parliament.

Clinton's remark that in hindsight suggesting that it would have been preferable for the US to predetermine the outcome is ironic, given that Trump has often complained that the upcoming presidential election is 'rigged.'

The journalist who taped the remark, Chomsky, told the Observer that he was 'taken aback' by Clinton's off-hand comment that 'anyone could support the idea - offered by a national political leader, no less - that the US should be in the business of fixing foreign elections.'

Chomsky said that though at the time he thought Clinton's comments were newsworthy, his bosses didn't want to ruffle her feathers since it was likely they needed access to her in the future.

'I went to my bosses at the time,' Chomsky told the Observer.

'The Jewish Press had this mindset that they would not want to say anything offensive about anybody - even a direct quote from anyone - in a position of influence because they might need them down the road. My bosses didn't think it was newsworthy at the time.'

'I was convinced that it was and I held onto it all these years.'