

Is Hillary buckling?

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Region: [USA](#)

Global Research, December 05, 2007

The Planetary Movement 5 December 2007



The latest polls from Iowa indicate that frontrunners in both parties, Senator Hillary Clinton and former Governor Mitt Romney, are losing momentum in the closing stages of this key primary. The backstory is fascinating.

Eighteen months ago, US pollster Stanley Greenberg visited London to counsel his deeply troubled client and now former Prime Minister, Tony Blair. Greenberg would leave London to fly to Tel Aviv there to counsel with another client, the Labour Party of Israel. Both Blair and Labour were in dire straits. Both had followed Greenberg's peculiar advice for years. Both would suffer political humiliation in the months after Greenberg's mission.

While he was in London, Greenberg addressed a group of Democrats Abroad. As a long-standing advisor and supporter of Hillary Clinton, Greenberg assured the Dems Abroad that she would be a seriously formidable presidential candidate in 2008. "Her numbers will be high," Greenberg assured the skeptical audience when he was asked about her potential vulnerability.



Greenberg is one of the primary architects of the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), an organization that claims credit for both of the winning elections of William Jefferson Clinton to the White House but deserves credit for neither. The DLC champions a peculiar brand of

stealth politics - center-right policies and center-right messaging for center-left parties.

While the methods of Greenberg and his business partners have been successful financially - one of his partnerships reported gross sales of sixty million pounds sterling (circa \$120 million in today's dollars) in calendar year 2000 alone - several of his most prominent political clients have suffered defeats at the polls. The American Democratic Party is merely one. The Labour Party of Israel is another. James Carville is one of Greenberg's associates. Since 1992, Carville has very rarely been involved in US political campaigns as a principal advisor to a candidate. He has, however, pursued a marvelously successful international practice that has followed the story arc of the DLC - counseling center-left parties to message as if they were center-right. The result has been to eviscerate the center-left political thrust in many of the world's nations.



Today, both men, Greenberg and Carville, have been in the wings of the US presidential election as supporters - if not direct counselors - to Senator Hillary Clinton who has run a textbook DLC campaign - center-right messaging to gain the nomination of her center-left party.

In polls that coursed through the professional community of political consultants in Washington last week, it now appears that Senator Clinton's presidential candidacy may be buckling under the weight of the burden of messaging against her base.

In September I was approached by a close associate of Senator Clinton. When asked what I thought of her chances, I stated my opinion that her foreign policy was flawed. Then I heard what has become a mantra for her DLC supporters, "She has to get elected." When I pointed out that she might well not get elected due precisely to her unpopular foreign policy that has supported the war in Iraq since its inception and promises to support a war against Iran, I heard yet another mantra, "She only has to win one more state than Kerry."



With that sort of thinking, there is little wonder why Hillary's numbers are now beginning to buckle in a crucial state: Iowa. Both Iowa and New Hampshire are gatekeepers, as well as South Carolina. While it is conceivable that Hillary could lose both Iowa and New Hampshire yet soldier on to win the nomination in the South like Mondale did to defeat Hart in 1984, times have changed. Let us not forget what fate ultimately befell Mondale's campaign in the fall election - he lost miserably and took down hundreds of Democrats with him.

There is no doubt that Senator Clinton's top campaign staff believe they are now out of control of their presidential campaign which has assumed a new and unwanted dynamic. Now some of Senator Clinton's top staff believe that they are in a dangerous and potentially lethal tailspin. The ominous symptoms of panic in Hillaryland hit the front pages only last week as her staff lashed out at her primary opponent: Senator Barack Obama.



At the end of the week, they had accused Obama with being a closet Muslim injecting the dangerous toxin of Islamophobia into the Democratic presidential campaign. This is an egregious development, for the majority of the American Muslim population will vote

Democratic in next year's presidential election - as long as the Democrat does not attempt to demonize them or their religious traditions.

The next day, questions were raised in the US media about the propriety and legality of some of the contributions of Senator Obama's political action committee.

Both of these smears had the fingerprints of Senator Hillary Clinton's staff all over them. From highly placed sources in Washington, Planetary received reports that the attacks centering on Obama were being orchestrated by Clinton's increasingly desperate black operations unit.



On Sunday's edition of Face the Nation, one of Senator Clinton's chief lieutenants, Howard Wolfson, openly attacked Senator Obama. There is precisely one and only one reason for these public and covert attacks - her campaign's internal polls now indicate she is losing ground to Senator Obama in the crucial state of Iowa - and, perhaps, elsewhere as well.

Last week, the Clinton campaign made the conscious decision to go 'negative.' In this particular case, this is a last ditch attempt to hold her faltering candidacy together. If their desperate measure is not successful, Senator Hillary Clinton's bold attempt to become the first woman president of the United States of America will collapse.

There could well be much more to this crisis than the collapse of Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton as a viable presidential candidate. In the Republican Party, there have been seismic shifts of telluric proportions. Former Arkansas Governor, Mike Huckabee is surging into contention and possibly even the lead in Iowa. Mitt Romney, former Governor of Massachusetts and long-standing primary frontrunner for the Republican nomination, could be in the same position as Senator Hillary Clinton - facing political eclipse in the next thirty days. America could be in the earliest stages of a political realignment.



If both trends continue, a collapse of the center-right in the Democratic Party and the collapse of the mainstream in the Republican Party who are supporting Mitt Romney - then we could be witnessing some of the earliest symptoms of new political awakening in American history. What would be interesting would be a chain reaction that would transform both major parties into popular and populist parties. Loyalists in both parties have had enough of the crimes and misdemeanors of the Bush-Clinton-Bush Era.

At this point in the arc of history, the American public is fed up with the excesses of Republican neoconservatism led by Cheney, Bush, Bolton, Ledeen, Abrams, Pipes, Hadley, Libby and Rice and its stealth faction in the DLC led by Senator Clinton and her husband aided by their merry band of neocons clustered around Al From, Howard Wolfson, Stanley

Greenberg and James Carville, all of whom supported the ill-fated wars of the Bush Era. In 2002, encouraged by her husband and their minions in the DLC, Senator Clinton led the charge against Iraq, and she has been at the forefront of the pack calling for another surge of jingoistic bellicosity against Iran.



Planetary is monitoring these tectonic developments and will publish commentary on the rapidly evolving situation.

SOURCES

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