

U.S. Presidential Elections: Kucinich strengthens Obama

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Region: [USA](#)

Global Research, January 02, 2008

planetarymovement.org 2 January 2008

In the mythology of political power, Iowa is frequently the sterile cemetery of those fading but recurrent dreams of a resurgent democracy in America. In that cold and pitiless graveyard that is a vast mausoleum for political progress, Dennis Kucinich struck a match and lit a candle for the future of America. Yesterday, in a terse but dramatic announcement, the man who has won every progressive poll in the past three months endorsed Senator Barack Obama as the valid agent of “change” and urged his loyal supporters to vote for the Senator from Illinois on their second ballots in the Iowa caucuses.

Coming as it does on the heels of a hellish onslaught against Senator Obama by a coordinated attack of his primary opponents: Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton who is being guided by her husband, the former president William Jefferson Clinton, and their ally, former Senator John Edwards, Kucinich’s nod to Obama forges an alliance not unlike that in Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*. In the War of the Ring, the Rohirim under Erkenbrand and the riders of Rohan under the command of Theoden combined their powers at the battle of Helm’s Deep to face the massive onslaught of Saruman’s forces composed of Orcs, Uruk-Hai and Dunlendings. The Kucinich-Obama alliance of progressives and African-Americans is a potent combination of two groups at the core of Democratic political power.

Four years ago in Iowa, Kucinich endorsed John Edwards in a move that strengthened the former Senator at precisely the right moment for him to survive the fierce opposition he was facing in the early primaries. Kucinich’s progressive support in Iowa ultimately launched former Senator Edwards into the Vice Presidential nomination – and beyond.

This year, the forces of change have been muted in the Democratic campaign. In a cold calculation crafted by the Clintons and their devoted lackey, Edwards, Kucinich was deliberately excluded from the final presidential debate in Iowa because he had topped polls by: Democracy for America; Progressive Democrats of America and *The Nation* magazine – and he represented a fundamental threat to their ‘precious’ status quo. Last summer in Detroit, Senator Clinton and former Senator Edwards were caught off guard at a forum sponsored by the NAACP when their microphones recorded their covert plot to exclude Kucinich from formal presidential debates in what will always be referred to as: The Open Mike Scandal.

“We should try to have a more serious and a smaller group,” Edwards said, and Clinton agreed. “Our guys should talk,” Clinton said.

The “guys” to whom Senator Clinton was referring were: Mark Penn and Harrison Hickman, the leading pollsters for their campaigns. Kucinich branded their crude plot to exclude him

from future presidential debates as a blatant attempt to “rig the presidential election.”

The alliance between Senator Clinton and former Senator Edwards has never been more apparent than in the past week in Iowa when they both launched syncopated and cleverly coordinated media bombardments designed to destroy Senator Obama. On the political playing fields of Iowa, the troops of both Senator Clinton and former Senator Edwards have long uttered what is nothing less than racist cant – stating blatantly and promiscuously that Senator Obama is “unelectable” – this season’s code for “black.”

The overwhelming superiority of Senator Hillary Clinton’s brazen thrust for power in a campaign guided by her husband and his massive reserves of Orcs and Dunlendings led by their very own Uruk Hai – otherwise known as the Democratic Leadership Council – has distorted the contest for the Democratic nomination from the outset. In the latest stages of the campaign, Senator Clinton’s forces have seen their vast superiority in numbers, funds and minions with boots on the ground dwindle to a microcosm of its former self in her salad days when she had commanded a lead that was deep into double digits. Now the situation is entirely different, and it is fluctuating wildly. Senator Clinton’s lead has now shriveled to single digits in Iowa – and it is deteriorating at a palpable rate – in what may be a historical diminuendo for the Clinton Dynasty.

Only a few minutes ago – America’s greatest pollster, John Zogby, published a pregnant update on the swiftly evolving dynamics of the Iowa caucuses:

The race for the Democratic presidential nomination tightened again over the last 24 hours, as Senator Hillary Clinton fell into a tie for the lead among likely caucus-goers with rival Barack Obama, and fellow Democrat John Edwards remained in a statistical dead heat just two points behind . . . Clinton dropped two points to 28% heading down the stretch, falling into a dead-even tie with Obama and holding just a two-point edge over Edwards, . . . When second-choice voters were included in the Democratic equation, all three top vote-getters were virtually deadlocked, creating as close a race for the party’s nomination as we have seen in modern history.

Yesterday, The Des Moines Register published their last pre-caucus poll. In previous years, the final Des Moines Register poll has been uncannily accurate. The headline read: “New Iowa Poll: Obama widens lead over Clinton.”

Tonight, in a political move that wrecks of personal desperation and political panic – Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton will broadcast a two minute advertisement titled, “Crossroads,” during the six o’clock newscasts in Iowa.

Senator Clinton’s usually fluent performance on television has been honed, but in her own production, “Crossroads,” she exhibits an uncharacteristic trace of woodenness and a colder than usual degree of pure political calculation – flaws that are obviously borne out of her rising fears of defeat. She blasts her un-named opponent, Senator Barack Obama, with the charge that he is only offering “band-aids” for America’s critical wounds. In another blatant swipe at Senator Obama, she states that she will be ready to start on “day one” implying that he is inexperienced.

One word that is totally absent from Senator Clinton’s desperate appeal in “Crossroads” is telling: that word is, “change.” So, there it is – now official and from the horse’s mouth as it were – in her own words, Senator Hillary Clinton is repudiating the desire of the American

public for genuine political “change” – she is now self-anointed as the candidate of the status quo proposing technocratic tweaks as solutions for fundamental problems as disparate as “cowboy diplomacy” and the healthcare crisis. Her message is perfectly clear – if you want “change” do not expect to get it from Senator Hillary Clinton. She is after all the heiress to the throne of a political dynasty built upon the foundation of NAFTA, corporatism, corporate campaign contributions (read: pseudo-legal bribes) and a foreign policy that we know only too well, for who can forget her clarion calls for jingoistic belligerence in speeches she made on the Senate floor in the days, weeks and months preceding the bombing and occupation of Iraq.

In “Crossroads,” Senator Hillary Clinton is mimicking the late Richard Nixon who invented the unctuous television hard-sell with his now infamous “Checkers Speech” in 1952 after he was hit with charges of corporate bribery. In a maudlin and humiliating performance, Nixon contended that his wife, Pat, wore a Republican coat of cloth and that they had received a corporate bribe, a cocker spaniel named “Checkers” that he refused to give up.

When cornered, politicians seeking the White House will do desperate – even humiliating – things. That much has not changed in the fifty-five years between Nixon’s performance in “Checkers” and Clinton’s performance in “Crossroads.”

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