

The New Hillary Hit — Pit Her Against President Obama

Written by Earl Ofari Hutchinson

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GOP strategists have made absolutely no secret that they are loading up for bear against Hillary Clinton, if but more likely when, she announces that she's in for White House in 2016. They've already shelled out millions to assail her on websites, blogs, and in less than discreet digs at her from the Republican National Committee. They've rehashed all the old stuff about Whitewater, the Lewinsky scandal, her tout of health care reform, which was the prelude to the much harangued Affordable Care Act, and most importantly her alleged cover-up of Benghazi.

This is expected and Clinton can easily parry the GOP hits as the customary political bloodletting from her ancient and implacable foe. But now there's a new twist in the bash Hillary game. President Obama, or more particularly, the not so subtle effort to use Obama as a foil against her by depicting her as mean-spirited, petty and vindictive against top Democrats who allegedly betrayed her in 2008 and backed Obama.

The indictment reads like this. With Hillary's blessings, her 2008 campaign staffers and advisors kept what's tantamount to an "enemies list" of Democrats who switched hats and jumped to the Obama camp. Supposedly, these prominent turncoat Democrats from Ted Kennedy to John Lewis were a prime cause of her 2008 Democratic primary defeat. The depiction of them in her campaign staffer's inside notes, and presumably with Hillary's blessing, is anything but flattering. There's no direct hint in any of this that Hillary will evoke an Elephantine memory if she tosses her hat in the presidential rink and ala Richard Nixon punish these Democrats for their alleged betrayal. It's also conceded that politicians in their incessant campaign wars against each other routinely keep lists, notes, and files on the notables that back their opponents. Yet, the point of all this that dangles tantalizing in the political air is that 2016 Democratic presidential candidate Clinton might, just might, be capable of going Nixon on those that she deemed as Judases eight years ago.

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The GOP we can understand. It zeroes in on her in their open assault with one aim, and that is to knock her out the box as a viable 2016 presidential candidate. Clinton would be more formidable than Obama with a couple of key voter demographics and that's her appeal to women and the blue-collar Democrats who had doubts and ambivalence about voting for an African-American presidential candidate. Obama's wins didn't totally dispel that fear. He still did poorly among white male, blue-collar voters in several swing states. This was the case again in his re-election win in 2012. The women and white male blue-collar voters in those states are still crucial to a Democratic presidential candidate's White House success. Her positions on health care and corporate reform, her mea culpa for her early support of the Iraq war and willingness to oppose it later, her experience in international relations, and her hands on administrative experience in White House policy affairs insure the allegiance of millions of voters to her. She is the one sure Democrat who can beat any GOP contender, and hit the ground running once in office.

Before the Democratic Party leadership and much of the media abandoned her in 2008, she was the clear presidential choice of most rank and file Democrats and millions of voters who spanned all racial and ethnic lines. Despite being outgunned and out spent during the primary campaign war with Obama, she still retained much of that support.

The big question then is why anyone not directly connected with or on the payroll of some GOP operative would go after Hillary when she hasn't even declared her candidacy. The answer is two-fold. This is a deadly slow political downtime period in between the run-up to the mid-term elections in November and Hillary is good political copy. Her steadfast refusal to tip her hand about what she's going to do in 2016 only feeds into the voracious political and media appetite for anything on Hillary.

The other is that Hillary as a non-presidential candidate is still heads and shoulders ahead in virtually every poll of any potential GOP presidential rival. The one exception is New Jersey Governor Chris Christie who polled well in straw match ups against her. But Bridgegate and more developing probes of his doings may have pretty much dulled if not ended the enthusiasm among millions for him. No Christie, then there's no other GOP challenger who has a prayer against her. This in effect means that candidate Hillary is about the only presidential game going at this point. This makes her an even juicier target for a political hit from all sides.

And what better attention grabber than to dig up some old stuff that pits her against not the GOP but Obama. Stay tuned, there's much more to come.

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