

## WEEKLY STRATEGIC REVIEW ON HILLARY CLINTON FOR PRESIDENT CAMPAIGN

**To:** Senator Clinton  
**From:** Mark Penn **Date:**  
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### Situation:

We are maintaining our position as the frontrunner, while support for our opponent appears to have leveled off. There were four polls in the last week, and only one -Time Magazine -- showed the primary closer at 8 points with Gore – though not because we lost any votes, but because Obama gained with independents. The other three polls -CNN, Gallup and AP-IPSOS -- showed us with 15- to 20-point leads, and essentially no change in this race at all. Our unfavorables have increased from their highs; Obama now has the highest favorable across the board while we have the highest favorable with Democrats, and we have the highest Very Favorable with Democrats with a wide margin. Our base is solid – his votes are not, and fall off at the slightest additional information.

Tonight's polling was:

	HRC 37 / Obama 21 / Gore 13 / Edwards 10 HRC
Multi-way:	39 / Obama 25 / Edwards 11
Without Gore:	HRC 42 / Obama 26 / Edwards 19
3-Way:	HRC 47 / Obama 39
2-Way:	

This was a half sample; it is not final.

What do I believe?

All front runners have the frontrunner-itis we are experiencing. The media ceaselessly tore at Gore, making fun of his internet claims, his poor speaking style, and his problems with Clinton. I doubt Gore got a single word of good publicity no matter what he did, and he had some of the same forces against him, with the Republicans realizing he was the nominee and the left promoting Bradley.

In a typical race against Edwards, this would be nothing new or different. He would get the blogosphere, there would be the appearance of a challenge, and he would lose.

And this is a very different race from what Bill Clinton had in 1992. Bill Clinton was able to go forward with 19% in New Hampshire. Clinton was the insurgent. There was no dear front runner. And we had no internet.

This is closest to what Dean got going last time – the rise of students, columnists, internet donors, and fame. He seemed to have an unstoppable magic last time, that was never as big as it seemed for the reason that he represented only the left. Here, Obama is being allowed to represent both the left and the right.

Perhaps the single most important finding in Gallup poll is that 2/3 of our voters were strong supporters, and only 1/3 of Obama's supporters were strong supporters. And in fact in the poll I am running, just the slightest negative drops Obama's support by 10 points. We are gaining a base with women Democrats and non-college voters, and he is gaining with white, college-educated voters, especially men and the rich. (With a profile like this, it is not hard to see why talking to the donors is often a chore.)

**What holds him .**

**up?** Authenticity

Left/Right appeal

Black

New and fresh

**What could hold him back?**

Lack of Experience

Lack of American roots

Removed from working man/woman

Phony/Just another politician

**Putting Edge in Our Message to get ready for the contrast when the race is joined.**

The easiest thing for us to do is what he is doing – hit messages of the day that clearly have some edge against him without mentioning it.

**Experience:**

Here we can just sharpen the lines we use.

It is a complex and dangerous world out there. It is perhaps the most precarious international situation since the start of WWII, with hidden enemies and fractured alliances. It is an economy reeling from uncertain global competition. This is no time for rookies. No time for rhetoric. It is a time for experienced leadership that can get results. That is who I am and what I have to offer.

Start an audience responsive riff – what is it going to take to get it done? Experience!

## **Lack of American Roots**

All of these articles about his boyhood in Indonesia and his life in Hawaii are geared towards showing his background is diverse, multicultural and putting that in a new light.

Save it for 2050.

It also exposes a very strong weakness for him – his roots to basic American values and culture are at best limited. I cannot imagine America electing a president during a time of war who is not at his center fundamentally American in his thinking and in his values. He told the people of NH yesterday he has a Kansas accent because his mother was from there. His mother lived in many states as far as we can tell - but this is an example of the nonsense he uses to cover this up.

How could we give some life to this contrast without turning negative:

Every speech should contain the line you were born in the middle of America to the middle class in the middle of the last century. And talk about the basic bargain as about the deeply American values you grew up with, learned as a child and that drive you today. Values of fairness, compassion, responsibility, giving back.

Let's explicitly own "American" in our programs, the speeches and the values. He doesn't. Make this a new American Century, the American Strategic Energy fund. Let's use our logo to make some flags we can give out. Let's add flag symbols to the backgrounds.

We are never going to say anything about his background – we have to show the value of ours when it comes to making decisions, understanding the needs of most Americans – the invisible Americans.

## **Phony**

Perhaps what is holding him up more than anything else is his questionable honesty. There are four pieces of info we have so far that challenge his honesty:

1. His simple Iraq statements and votes. In tonight's poll, only 11% thought he had voted for any war funding. This is like Lazio and Gingrich – people seriously have no idea of the basics on him, and he has been allowed to get away with murder here. Forgetting about the convention quotes for a moment, he voted against an end date just a year ago, and almost no one guessed that. Forget about the 2002 vote; what about the 2005 and 2006 votes?
2. He voted "present" 112 times in the state legislature, almost always on hot button issues like abortion, sexual predators and others. In the poll, this greatly undermined his appeal. Did you ever vote present on an important bill in the Senate?

- 3 His land deal is an unexposed crime just sitting out there. A corrupt and under-investigation donor bought and held his yard for his later purchase.
- 4 His stock dealings in the not-so-blind trust.

It is incumbent on us to get out #1-1 may try it at Harvard if I can do it nicely. Maybe the Globe story will appear Monday or Tuesday. Then we should move to Kurtz.

On issue #2 -voting present – we are holding for ads or debates or when we need it.

Issues #3 and 4 are really up to the press to pursue further at this point.

### **How is the environment?**

It is no different from what I have written in these memos many times for the President and the Senator. The environment with elites is toxic; the environment with voters is solid. Elites are caught in a world almost exactly like 2000 – "Hillary is cold, removed, needs to be authentic. We love her, but if she were just more likeable, they would love her." Voters see her as a surprise -far better than they expected in person – and wonder why she can't be this way all the time. Reactions from the last several personal events from Selma on – the 100 club, the firefighters, etc., have been quite strong, but these things are seen by only a few. But they mean that when more people will see HRC directly, more and more will conclude the same.

The biggest problem we have is the troika that has been set up to tear Hillary down. It is a vast right and left wing conspiracy. Listening to Brett Hume say that Obama is surging while Hillary failed to do X is almost comical and certainly transparent. The right knows Obama is unelectable except perhaps against Atila the Hun, and a third party would come in then anyway. The left is hell-bent on proving Clinton fatigue, and everyday they dredge up muck rather than look at Hillary and what she has accomplished.

### **But the world is how it is; our job is not to complain about it, but to change it.**

We can either leave things as they are, or start our response operation going, calling every reporter every time they write nonsense, commenting on wrong info, sending out info sheets. Right now we are not only not fighting back on Obama, we do not seem to be fighting back on a constant basis for ourselves.

We have minimal surrogates, no air presence. Josh has offered to help our people get this going.

But this requires a strategic decision that we will defend ourselves – at least from the right wing attacks and distortions. Right now we are just taking all this with limited defense. Brooks wrote a critical column in our favor, but we are not generating more such columns. We may have plenty going on behind the scenes, but it is not yet bearing fruit. This is not about our scrap with Obama, but curbing the right wing doing a job on us.

### **SO WHAT DO WE DO?**

Understand and pursue our winning coalition, move from the money primary to the ideas primary. Get some major TV appearances that are big enough to drive numbers. We will try the town hall first, see how it goes.

### **OVERALL STRATEGY FOR WINNING**

As this race unfolds, the winning coalition for us is clearer and clearer. There are three demographic variables that explain almost all of the votes in the primary – gender, party, and income. Race is a factor as well, but we are fighting hard to neutralize it.

We are the candidate of people with needs.

We win women, lower classes, and Democrats (about 3 to 1 in our favor).

Obama wins men, upper class, and independents (about 2 to 1 in his favor). Edwards draws from these groups as well.

Our winning strategy builds from a base of women, builds on top of that a lower and middle class constituency, and seeks to minimize his advantages with the high class democrats.

If we double perform with WOMEN, LOWER AND MIDDLE CLASS VOTERS, then we have about 55% of the voters.

The reason the Invisible Americans is so powerful is that it speaks to exactly how you can be a champion for those in needs. He may be the JFK in the race, but you are the Bobby.

### **POSITIONING**

The modern buzz word is that it is not about policies but positioning. This of course plays right into Obama's territory. He is all sizzle and no steak. And he wants to convince everyone that's all you need.

I will say it again – I believe we should reach out to be as likeable as possible. But reach too far in this dimension, and you risk really getting into Gore and Kerry territory. You have an upbeat style now on TV that is immeasurably better than in the past. Just be comfortable with it. We are going to do an unscripted town hall with voters that can be a very good event for us. But we did win speech to speech with Obama at firefighters, so it is no longer the case that just because it is a speech we have to fear it. He was a fish out of water with that group.

He has a positioning: a new generation, new, outsider.

Our positioning: experienced leadership you can count on, someone who can break barriers for you.

Hillary is the person we turn to because we need someone to stand up for us. Someone who has the smarts and the strength to get it done. This is a dangerous, uncertain, complex world, and Hillary

knows how people have been ignored while the President pursued his far-flung agenda. This is no time

rookies. She will see what needs to be seen, do what needs to be done. She will do it because she knows what to do. She may not be a new face, but she will give this country a new start.

**SO HOW DO WE WIN:**

- 1) Start with a base of women.
  - a. For these women you represent a breaking of barriers
  - b. The winnowing out of the most competent and qualified in an unfair, male dominated world
  - c. The infusion of a woman and a mother's sensibilities into a world of war and neglect
  
- 2) Add on a base of lower and middle class voters
  - a. You see them; you care about them
  - b. You were one of them, it is your history
  - c. You are all about their concerns (healthcare, education, energy, child care, college etc.)
  - d. Sense of patriotism, Americana
  
- 3) Play defensively with the men and upper class voters
  - a} Strength to end the war the right way
  - b} Connect on the problems of the global economy, economics
  - c) Foreign policy expert
  - d} Unions

Contest the black vote at every opportunity. Keep him pinned down there.

Organize on college campuses. We may not be number 1 there, but we have a lot of fans – more than enough to sustain an organization in every college.

Ideology is a factor here – Obama does best among moderate, higher income men. They see Hillary as too "old school liberal" vs. Obama as "new school" undefined. The more he tacks left, the more he could lose those voters. We are more of a liberal movement because of the high numbers of women we have, and they are more progressive on the war and healthcare. The more we are sensible on deficit, global economy, the more we can bring these independent voters back.

NEXT OPERATIONAL STEPS

- 1) Adopt the language of this message. We are basically there. Stump has the outline of:
  - A. We live in dangerous time with uncertainty on all fronts. Our children no longer have the assurance that they will be better off. Experience is critical.
  - B. HRC brought up in the cold war, in middle of America, steeped in basic American values
  - C. Bush has ignored the average American (Invisible Americans).
  - D. Hillary Clinton is about the issues that matter. She will give this country a new start.
  - E. Her experience tells you that you can count on her to do what she says.
  - F. This can be the campaign and she can be the candidate that breaks the barriers that hold us back and separate us.
  
- 2) Begin the ideas primary
  - A. Finish healthcare and deliver major speech
  - B. Plan major speeches on Energy, Economy, Fulfilling the bargain to the working and middle classes, a new foreign policy framework.
  - C. Roll out several smaller issues every week, keeping them mostly positive

Want to do one for children, one more male-oriented

- 3) Create the movement. The list of 1million women is critical to the success of this campaign. And this is starting. We are testing Web ads now. We are behind,but there is time.
- 4) Healthcare, Education, Economics become critical parts of the campaign. Limit Iraq messaging to once a week.
- 5) Aggressively court unions, and especially those with high female membership. Put more working class messages and issues in speeches to facilitate. Getting significant Labor support will shift momentum of race.
- 6) Fight back on the college campuses – organize a chapter of Dems for HRC on 1000 colleges, set up their own web site and let them run it. We can quickly organize 25,000 college students for us.
- 7) Position HRC as less alone – can we get some elites to travel with her more and introduce her – Madeleine Albright types.
- 8) Form Independents for HRC – and look for some talent to run this. We need to have a specific appeal to the campaign to this segment that is important in NH and California.
- 9) Get done what we discussed before – new TV personality, enhanced surrogate operation, begin to challenge Obama on the issues like Iraq, gently, put out the story of what we are doing so people see the bigger picture. Prepare Bio for rollout sooner than later.