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## Could Hillary Lose?

By Andrew Levine  
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Could Hillary lose? If she were running against a Republican whom the Party's grandees and the capitalists behind them liked, someone like Mitt Romney, the answer would be Yes.

After eight years of President Drone, the Republican would have a clear advantage. It wouldn't even matter if that Republican were to pander, say, to the Ted Cruz element in the GOP base, the way that Romney pandered to the Tea Party. The smart money would still be on him.

This year, however, the smart money has always been on Hillary – because everyone knew that, by hook or crook, the Democrats would nominate her over Bernie Sanders, no matter how many voters were feeling the Bern; and because the Republican field was comprised of Donald Trump

and a gaggle of flyweights too ridiculous even for a voting public that twice elected George W. Bush.

It is not even clear how much longer the Republican Party will be able to hold on, now that the cultural contradictions that have been accumulating ever since Richard Nixon launched his (and Pat Buchanan's) Southern Strategy half a century ago have finally come home to roost.

Four and eight years ago, "establishment" figures were still able to get their men (always men) nominated. But times change.

Even before the Trump phenomenon took hold, "respectable" Republicans were hanging on by the skins of their teeth. But that was then. These days, respectable Republicans, if any still exist, no longer stand a chance.

Had the Old Guard been able to hold out a while longer, even if only to nominate someone as feckless and unappealing as a Romney or a John McCain, Hillary would not be the shoe-in that she now is.

But they couldn't or wouldn't. Therefore, unless she messes up big time, Hillary is about to walk off with a landslide victory.

Were she running against a plausible candidate, the Obama connection would have been the least of her problems. That her economic and foreign policy views are at odds with the thinking of most likely Democratic voters would matter more. So would her unlovely personality and character. Like her husband, Hillary gives opportunism a bad name.

Hillary would have gotten nowhere, but for her alliance with Bill. Had she not been a First Lady (a fine job for a feminist!), she would never have become a lackluster Senator from a state in which she had never lived, much less a presumptive heir to the Presidency or a Secretary of State. It is not even clear that she would have been able to make much of herself in the corporate world.

For the résumé that she and her supporters boast of, she has mainly Bill to thank. But were she running against somebody who could actually win, his hovering presence would be a problem for her too.

The future First Gentleman is now sometimes fondly remembered; I, for one, cannot begin to fathom why. Apart from the harm he did as President – implementing the Reagan agenda and laying the groundwork for a foreign policy based on "regime change" – that too-slick-for-his-own-good horn dog brought ridicule upon himself and his office.

Bernie Sanders never brought any of this up, but anyone who truly wanted to stop the Clinton juggernaut would, along with Hillary's emails and "speaker's fees," and her role in the Clinton Foundation. "Slick Willy" has been a blessing for Hillary's career, but, in a tight race for the Presidency, he could also be a curse.

It is the same with the Democratic Party itself.

Even before her campaign organization and the Democratic National Committee (DNC) joined forces to defeat Sanders by fair means or foul, the Clintons owned the Democratic Party apparatus – not just at the national level, but at state and local levels as well. They also had a host of identity-based, mainly black and brown, political machines under their thumbs. And they could count on the abject servility of the usual suspects in the labor movement.

Over the years, these connections have served them well. But the more that the Democratic Party stands revealed as the embodiment of everything that large and increasingly militant swathes of the population abhor, these advantages are becoming burdens.

The transformation is happening before our eyes, but not fast enough to save the world from the next President Clinton, or from the Party she will lead.

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The Republicans' Cleveland convention was a festival of the loathsome and vile. No surprise there! Loathsome and vile is what Republicans are about — the lunatics who have taken over the asylum, and the more upstanding types as well.

Democrats are supposed to be, and generally are, better. But the saccharine goody-goodyism that they put on display in Philadelphia was, if anything, even harder to take than the rank viciousness in Cleveland the week before.

It is as if the DNC's convention planners wanted to see how much phoniness and hypocrisy they could pack into four days.

For mercy's sake, and because it would have been in their own best interest, they ought to have let a few more rays of light shine through.

There was North Carolina NAACP President William Barber's speech, of course; but that was about it. Or so, I believe. I confess that I could not bring myself to watch the DNC's dreadful infomercial for more than ten or fifteen minutes at a time, so I cannot say for sure.

In the same way, MSNBC (=MSDNC) and CNN could have discharged their propaganda missions more effectively had they reported more fully, and in a less condescending way, on the resistance inside the Wells Fargo Center and outside in the streets.

Without bursting Hillary's bubble, they could have deceived viewers into thinking that the Democratic Party actually does have a progressive side, and that it isn't as hopeless as it seems.

I found it fascinating to see that Rachel Maddow doesn't really need twenty minutes (and several commercial interruptions) to make inane twenty-second pro-Hillary points. Beyond that, however, there was nothing even moderately interesting that I saw that didn't also have a powerful emetic effect.

For obvious reasons, there are millions of Americans who would rather die horrible twitching deaths than vote for Trump or for any of the Republican stooges he sent packing. Most of those people don't see it yet, but it is similarly obvious that voting for Hillary and for Democrats who support her – genuinely, not just because they feel they must — is nearly as distasteful.

Therefore 2016 will be a banner year for Hillary and the party she leads.

The reason why, again, is Donald Trump.

The odd thing, though, is that Trump isn't that bad – not compared to Ted Cruz or his other rivals for the Republican nomination, and not compared to Hillary.

On trade, infrastructure and job creation, and, most important of all, on matters of war and peace – especially, but not only, with the Muslim world and Russia – he is actually the more progressive of the two. This is why hardcore neocons hate him and love her.

Trump even had the temerity, once or twice, to come out in favor of fairness for Palestinians. He later backtracked; but, for good reason, the Israel lobby remains wary of him.

His backtracking is hard to account for. The news has yet to reach the political class, but it is plain as can be that the once mighty Israel lobby is fast becoming a Paper Tiger. The fact that they will own the next President hardly matters, except in the very short run. Nothing can stop the lobby's decline, now that Americans — including many, maybe most, Jewish Americans — are becoming more informed and less tolerant of the injustices it promotes.

I would venture that Trump is shrewd enough to realize this, and therefore to understand that he didn't need to backtrack on Israel-Palestine. My guess is that the reason for his change of heart had mainly to do with daughter Ivanka and her rabidly Zionist husband.

The Donald does not need to be on AIPAC's good side or, insofar as there is a difference, on Sheldon Adelson's; but for family reasons (especially after the plagiarism incident with his latest trophy wife), and to seem less unpalatable to "undecided" voters, he does need to be on Ivanka's. The line promoted in corporate media outlets is that Trump poses a "unique threat to democracy." They don't explain how; but let that pass because there is a more pressing problem with the story they tell.

It is that the threat he poses is, at most, theoretical; while the threat Hillary poses is clear and present.

For the past quarter century, nothing has harmed democracy in America more than Clintonite neoliberalism, except perhaps the perpetual war regime that Bill and Hillary helped fabricate and that Hillary will soon be making a lot worse.

Trump does threaten democracy; there is no doubt about it. He brings out the inner fascist in a lot of over-the-hill white people.

But Hillary threatens it more – and not just because she is, by sympathy and conviction, a promoter of inequality and war.

Hillary is a villain armed. Trump is villainous too, but he has no power; and unless Hillary flubs spectacularly, he never will. Which is worse?

Judged according to the norms of what C. Wright Mills long ago called "the higher immorality," Hillary may indeed be the lesser evil. But so what!

Partly thanks to those norms and the lesser evil politics they underwrite, neocon war-mongering Hillary will soon have the means at hand for "ending the world as we know it," as they say in Clintonese.

She is a very dangerous woman.

Nevertheless, her supporters insist that she is one of the "good guys" (or gals?) and that Trump is anything but.

In a few years time, as the consequences of her warmongering sink in, I predict that they will have a very different view of her essential goodness — that she will, by then, be hated and despised, much as Lyndon Johnson, that other great bulwark against a "unique" threat to democracy, was.

Johnson was elected, in part, to save the world from Barry Goldwater, Hillary's first political love. Now Hillary tells people to vote for her to save the world from Donald Trump. Where is there a Brutus to ask how many more times must this most unlofty scene be acted o'er?

Johnson won by a landslide, just as Hillary will, and, before long, he could not set foot outside the White House. Hillary would do well to reflect on that. Wars that go badly and never end tend to do commanders-in-Chief in.

As for Trump, at least it can be said that if he somehow were to become President, he would be less inclined than Hillary to use his power for ideologically driven malevolent purposes.

Trump is a septuagenarian teenage boy with a petulant streak who never really grew up because, being politically connected and rich, he had no need.

But Hillary, for all her highfalutin jibber jabber about "American values," is resolutely wicked – in the manner of Henry Kissinger and Madeleine Albright and the other less notorious, but no less nefarious, war criminals that she admires.

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Trump has a knack for spouting off in ways that the kinds of people who put him over the top in Republican primaries and caucuses find appealing. But he is unable to reach out beyond that benighted circle.

Having been so much in the news for so long, hardly anyone is still undecided about his merits: everyone who is not with him finds him appalling. With Democrats and their media flacks waiting to pounce, this is a serious liability.

The only thing he has going for him, at this point, is, ironically, Hillary herself.

For mountebanks like Trump, all publicity is good publicity; and Hillary has the means, motive and opportunity to keep him in the limelight all the way to November 8.

Since she can hardly run on her merits or her ideas, she can only run *against* Trump. She needs him, not so much to win (she could hardly fail to do that), but to win big, so that she can govern more easily. Trump can therefore count on her to keep the focus on him.

And she can count on media support – not because media moguls love the Donald, they don't, but because he has been, and still is, a godsend for their ratings, and therefore for their bottom lines. In corporate circles, revenues are all. This is why those moguls and their talking heads need Trump, just as Hillary does. They are all part of the same vicious circle.

We can therefore count on there seeming to be a real contest between Clinton and Trump – until, in the aftermath of the election, it becomes plain to all that the outcome of the election was never really in doubt; that it was all just hype.

The last thing Democrats want is for frightened liberals to realize that they have nothing to fear, as it were, but fear itself. Were that realization to dawn, ever-larger numbers of voters would feel free to vote Green or Libertarian or to otherwise abandon the rotting hulk that the Clintonized Democratic Party has become.

This is, however, the very first thing that true progressives should want. Working to democratize American electoral politics by encouraging the demise of our disabling, corrupt, and morally degrading two party electoral system ought to be Priority Number One.

Reinforcing that system, in order to “stop Trump.” ought not to be a priority at all, not least because Trump is more than up to the task of stopping himself.

Ironically, he has already accomplished something even more “phenomenal,” as he would say, than that. He has effectively and (probably) irreparably destroyed the GOP.

In doing so, he has done more harm to America's duopoly party system than any Democrat, or the nominally “independent” Bernie Sanders, could ever dream of doing.

It happened inadvertently, but the fact remains: he led the way. Now is the time for those who fear and loathe him – supporters of the prelapsarian Bernie, above all — to do their part too.

Now that the impossibility of reforming the Democratic Party from within has been demonstrated beyond a reasonable doubt, and now that the party's moral and intellectual bankruptcy is becoming increasingly apparent, its demise is coming onto the political agenda.

That will require a protracted struggle, however; one probably lasting years.

So, for now, frightened liberals can still take comfort in the fact that there is no way that anything could happen that would put Hillary's election in jeopardy. If he doesn't drop out first, Trump will get *schlonged*.

However, strong “third party” showings this November would help get the anti-Clintonite (anti-austerity, anti-war, anti-imperialist) struggles that are bound to erupt in reaction to Hillary's past and future machinations off to a good start.

Better still, a strong showing by Jill Stein and other Green Party candidates could do more than Bernie ever could to make a movement for democratic socialism – and environmentalism and a foreign policy based on justice, not American world domination — a significant presence on the political scene.

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It will be hard for Hillary to flub enough to lose; Trump will see to that. But if anybody can do it, she can. Messing up is her forte.

And if somehow, against all odds, it happens that Hillary actually does blow a sure thing, it will be, ironically, because she demonized Trump too much — keeping him in the limelight too long, and pissing people off doing it.

Hillary's co-thinkers in the Republican establishment demonize him too. But their reasons are not quite the same.

They could care less that Trump is misogynistic or Islamophobic or that he stirs up nativist and racist animosities. Neither do they seem to mind that his only recipe for governing effectively is to make “better deals” than American negotiators have made in the past. They would be fine with all that, if he would leave their power intact.

Trump's anti-Hispanic rants might trouble some of them, not because they care about the people he maligns, but because there are so many Hispanic voters whose votes they don't want to lose, and because, in the near future, there will be many more.

Enlightened Republicans might also worry that their party will forever lose the votes of Muslim-Americans. There are quite a few of them too.

Trump and other Republicans have gotten a lot of mileage out of slandering Muslims, but, at some point, when the usefulness of the current round of “terrorism” hysteria subsides, Republicans may find themselves wishing that they had been more restrained.

Even George W. Bush and his cohort understood that. It was only after a Tea Party sensibility took hold that the GOP embraced Islamophobia. Trump didn't make this happen, but he has taken full advantage of the fact that it did.

In any case, Trump's noxiousness has almost nothing to do with the hostility he elicits within the party he now officially leads.

The problem with Trump, for anti-Trump Republicans, is that the GOP was their thing, in the Cosa Nostra sense, and Trump wrecked it – probably not by design, but by awakening repressed “populist” antipathies that establishment Republicans could no longer bend to their advantage.

The anti-Trump hysteria promoted by the Democratic Party is evidently more sincere; its sponsors probably are genuinely outraged by the nonsense that comes out of the Donald's mouth. Thus there is a genuine difference between the Republican and Democratic establishments: the Republicans are mean spirited; the Democrats are not. The problem with them instead is that, like many good liberals, they are flagrantly obtuse.

How else to describe people who are fine with the Clintons because, for the most part, Hillary and Bill talk a “caring” line – notwithstanding all that they have done for the one-percent at the expense of everyone else? This would include their role in exacerbating black, brown, *and* white poverty, and in bringing huge numbers of black and brown young men into the prison system.

Hillary *et. al.* berate Trump to the hilt; like Barack Obama, they declare him “unfit” to be President. Fine: Trump deserves it; he is unfit.

But Hillary is unfit too, though in a different way. She is unfit because she has already done more harm to more people than the Donald ever will. This would include many of the world's women and children.

Defending them is supposed to be her lifelong passion. Indeed, If people can believe that, it is no wonder that the DNC convention planners thought they could get away with piling on boxcars full of crap.

Even so, unless she is abducted by aliens or gets run over by a truck, Hillary is not going to lose this election, no matter how badly she flubs – not with Donald Trump for an opponent. No way; no how.