

HILLARY'S MODE OF GOVERNANCE: BOOZY X CHROMOSOMES MAKING PEACE

The NYT has an article describing how a bunch of apparently moronic Hillary aides believe they will govern when she becomes President. I say moronic not just because – in a week when Hillary's spouse scored an enormous own goal by chatting up Attorney General Loretta Lynch on the tarmac in Phoenix – numerous Hillary aides said Hillary might keep Lynch as AG.

Democrats close to Mrs. Clinton say she may decide to retain Ms. Lynch, the nation's first black woman to be attorney general, who took office in April 2015.

No, I say moronic because the people behind this article apparently believe the following things will help Hillary – a candidate with historically high negatives – overcome historic partisanship.

Lots and lots of booze

This article reads almost more like a screenplay than news article, especially with its repeated portrayals of Georgetown-like cocktail parties in the White House lubricating political deals.

Mrs. Clinton would even schmooze differently than the past few presidents have. Not one to do business over golf or basketball, she would bring back the intimate style of former Presidents Ronald Reagan and Lyndon B. Johnson, negotiating over adult beverages. Picture a steady stream of senators, congressmen and other leaders raising a glass and talking policy in the Oval Office with her and her likely chief of

staff, John D. Podesta, as her husband pops in with a quick thought or a disarming compliment.

[snip]

Her greatest strength is that she really listens to people, she understands what their political and policy needs are, and she tries to find that space where you can compromise,” said Neera Tanden, a former top domestic policy adviser to Mrs. Clinton who is now the president of the Center for American Progress, a left-leaning policy institute.

“To be crystal clear: She has led many battles where you can’t compromise on principle,” Ms. Tanden added. “But she also loves socializing, loves having people and spouses over, and really loves talking over drinks.”

[snip]

Mrs. Clinton’s ability to use alcohol as a political lubricant came up repeatedly when allies and advisers were asked how she might work with Republicans. Her tale about a drinking contest with Senator John McCain of Arizona is now a Washington legend. (She said they called it quits before things got out of hand.) She believes that a relaxed, frank discussion is more authentic than trying to bond awkwardly with adversaries over sports – and more productive than keeping them at arm’s length, as Mr. Obama has often done.

“She likes to cajole, she likes to make deals, and she likes to make friends,” said Richard Socarides, a former policy adviser to Bill Clinton and a longtime supporter of Mrs. Clinton. “And she knows it’s much harder to go after someone who you basically like, who you’ve had a drink with.”

Sure, this is how things used to work. But I'm not sure cocktail parties can bridge the last two decades of increased partisanship, much of which has been targeted directly at the Clintons. I'm not even sure that many politicians drink as much anymore.

Lots of X chromosomes

Hillary also appears to believe merely increasing the number of women in the cabinet will lead to more hopey changey.

In her first 100 days, she would also tap women to make up half of her cabinet in hopes of bringing a new tone and collaborative sensibility to Washington, while also looking past Wall Street to places like Silicon Valley for talent – perhaps wooing Sheryl Sandberg from Facebook, and maybe asking Tim Cook from Apple to become the first openly gay cabinet secretary.

[snip]

“There’s that old saying, ‘Nothing about us without us,’” said Jennifer Granholm, a former Democratic governor of Michigan who supports Mrs. Clinton. “I mean, a woman as chief of staff, Treasury secretary, a woman at Defense – it would be incredible.” (Ms. Granholm is often mentioned as a possible cabinet pick for the Energy Department or another post, but she waved off a question about her interest.)

Look, having the first female Presidents will be one of the big highlights of an (expected) Hillary presidency for me. But there is no reason to believe that women – especially those that have achieved cabinet level success – are any less cutthroat than men.

Moreover, Hillary will face the same problem Obama did: the bench simply isn't that deep. While there are a number of likely cabinet

officials, like Granholm, who aren't currently engaged, to achieve 50% cabinet positions, you'd be cherry picking governors and members of Congress without the assurances they'd be replaced by more women. I'm far more interested in increasing the number of long term members of Congress who are women, for the near future, than achieving some magic 50% number. That will, in turn, ensure that another woman is ready to step up when it comes time for Hillary to retire.

Silencing Bill

Then there's the question about what to do about First Gentleman Bill. For some reason, even in the week of tarmackgate, Hillary's aides seem to think they can prevent him from stepping in it.

Clinton advisers say they do not expect Mr. Clinton to be constantly visible in the early months beyond whatever duties Mrs. Clinton gives him on economic policy and foreign affairs. The Clintons' priority is that he does not do anything that distracts from her agenda or overshadows her as the country gets used to having a former president (and a man) in the role of first spouse.

One role he will be welcome to play is as an icebreaker at the Oval Office happy hour.

Look, even aside from Bill's constitutional inability to avoid own goals, the notion that you could give him a big economic and/or foreign policy portfolio and at the same time have him keep a low profile is fantasy. Either you relegate him, exclusively, to running the never-ending cocktail party, or he will make some gaffes. You can't pick and choose with Bill.

Forging deals on the issue

that will be especially raw given Trump's expected campaign

Finally, there's the belief that after a year of having Trump rile up Republican nativists, the drunken Republicans frequenting the White House cocktail hour will rush to compromise on immigration reform.

Her calculation is that she will be dealing with a Republican Party that is deeply fractured and demoralized after the defeat of Mr. Trump, whose leaders will be searching for ways to show they can govern and to court Hispanics if Mr. Trump loses badly with them. Mrs. Clinton also thinks a huge Democratic turnout this fall would put the Senate back in her party's hands, while Speaker Paul D. Ryan and the Republicans would have a reduced majority in the House.

[snip]

Given how deeply immigration has divided the Republican Party, no other issue would probably reveal more about the ability of a President Hillary Clinton and a Republican-led House to work together.

On this, Hillary's aides might be right – but not so long as you imagine Hillary does anything to keep a viable GOP in place. Yes, the neocons who have already backed Hillary support immigration reform and other kinds of globalization. But after the campaign immigration is going to be far more volatile and raw than it was when Obama failed to pass immigration reform.

It could happen, but not without a significant realignment, one that would require far more ruthless punishment and far fewer martinis than Hillary seems to have in mind.

