

## **Why Hillary Clinton will be elected president in 2016**

By Peter S. Cohan  
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I'm not a fan of Hillary Clinton. But I am less of a fan of the policies that will be enacted in America if her Republican opponent takes the White House in January 2017.

What we know as of April 12 is that a weirdly kept political secret in America is officially out of the bag — Mrs. Clinton is running for president. And based on the online video that marked her official announcement, she wants to be president to fight for the middle class.

First, let me be clear about why I am not a fan of Mrs. Clinton. Every time I watch her speak, I cringe, since I feel I am being lied to in a way that is not very persuasive. I think she has a burning desire to have the power and she has earned the right to be the first female president of the U.S.

I am guessing that her sense of entitlement comes from a combination of her accomplishments and her tolerance of painful life experiences. After all, she graduated from Yale Law School, gave up career opportunities to move to Arkansas, stayed married to Bill Clinton despite his alleged extra-marital activities, was elected a U.S. Senator and was appointed Secretary of State.

Yet I do not find the theme of fighting for the middle class to be a compelling rationale for why her candidacy is in the interest of voters. Instead, it sounds like Mr. Clinton convinced her that it would be a good campaign slogan, rather than a theme in which she really believes.

For that, you could do worse than Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren. Every time I hear Mrs. Warren speak, I feel great. She always strikes me as someone who sincerely cares about the less fortunate people in America, and she has demonstrated it by fighting successfully to create the Consumer Financial Protection Agency (CFPA) against very long odds.

Sadly for me and others, Ms. Warren does not appear likely to run for president in 2016. And if she did run, I am afraid her candidacy would ultimately serve to strengthen the Republican chances of victory.

This is because the traits that enabled Ms. Warren to argue for and help create the CFPA are the very same ones that would make it difficult for her to win a presidential election. She seems constitutionally incapable of making the compromises needed to get the support of more than a relatively narrow segment of the population.

This means that Mrs. Clinton is likely to glide without significant opposition to win the Democratic nomination.

This leaves us with the Republican nominees. So far, Rand Paul, Marco Rubio, and Ted Cruz have officially announced that they are running. And what is striking about them is their youth, their energy, and their passionate belief in policies with which I do not agree.

This brings to mind a March 2005 op-ed written in the New York Times by a former U.S. Senator from New Jersey, Bill Bradley.

In a nutshell, Mr. Bradley argued that the Republican Party is a pyramid that hires a presidential candidate at its tip to sell its ideas to America, while the Democratic one aligns itself around a star candidate who can build a winning coalition of voters.

As he wrote in the Times, after their 1964 loss, Goldwater Republicans tried to figure out how to sell their ideas to the public. In 1971, Lewis Powell, who later became a Supreme Court justice, wrote a memo for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in which "he advocated a sweeping, coordinated and long-term effort to spread conservative ideas on college campuses, in academic journals and in the news media."

This memo led to the creation of a five-level Republican pyramid. At its base were individual donors like the Koch brothers and foundations like the Scaife family and Olin foundations. The second level consisted of conservative research centers like the Heritage Foundation and the Cato Institute. Level three was political strategists like Karl Rove. The fourth level of the pyramid is the Republican news media — Fox News, Rush Limbaugh and the like.

And while the top of the Republican pyramid in 2016 has yet to be determined, as Mr. Bradley wrote, "Because the pyramid is stable, all you have to do is put a different top on it, and it works fine."

Mr. Bradley argued that the Democratic Party takes the pyramid and flips it onto its head — that is, its presidential candidate organizes the other four layers of the pyramid every election cycle. And as Mr. Bradley pointed out, the success of that candidate depends on his charisma — or lack thereof. When the inverted pyramid worked for the Democrats — John F. Kennedy, Jimmy Carter, Mr. Clinton, and Mr. Obama — it was an effective approach. But with less compelling candidates — Mike Dukakis and John Kerry come to mind — it flopped.

I believe that it would be more dangerous to elect a president who represents the Republican ideas of "destroy[ing] Obamacare, mak[ing] deep cuts in Medicaid, try[ing] to convert Medicare into a voucher system, cut[ting] taxes on the wealthy, slash[ing] programs that aid low-income families, roll[ing] back the 2010 financial reform — eliminating both consumer protection and the extra regulation applied to large, 'systemically important' financial institutions, and block[ing] efforts to limit greenhouse gas emissions," according to Paul Krugman, in the New York Times — than it would be to elect Hillary Clinton president in 2016.

Mrs. Clinton will be the next president for two reasons.

First, she controls the other four layers of the pyramid so well that no strong Democratic contenders will emerge. Second, I believe that she will be able to use those resources to assemble a winning edge from two groups of voters: people who are enthusiastic about her candidacy and those who oppose the policies that would be enacted if a Republican took the White House.