



Hillary the Stealth Candidate

By Michael Tanner

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While much of the media has been obsessed with tracking down Republican positions on such crucial issues as evolution and President Obama's religion, one searches in vain for hints of Hillary Clinton's position on . . . pretty much anything. That is not to say that potential Republican candidates haven't botched what should have been easy, commonsense answers, but shouldn't there be at least a little bit of curiosity about where the all-but-inevitable Democratic nominee stands on actual issues that will affect the future of this country?

It is early, of course, and Republicans themselves have not yet laid out detailed positions on most issues. It's no surprise, therefore, that Hillary has not yet put together a specific platform for her campaign. Still, there are enough hints out there to discern a flavor of what she will offer.

Clinton has flirted with Elizabeth Warren-style populism, even declaring, "Don't let anyone tell you that it's corporations and businesses that create jobs." But populism is not an easy fit for the crony-capitalist Clintons, so she appears to be settling into something called "inclusive capitalism." This idea, developed by the Center for American Progress, and championed by many of Hillary's top economic advisers, is less overtly hostile to the rich. Instead, it calls for corporations to put less emphasis on short-term profits and shareholder value and instead to invest more in employees, the environment, and communities.

That should not be interpreted to suggest that Clinton would be business friendly. Companies would be required to provide paid parental leave, universal paid sick days, and more paid vacation days; this on top of the inevitable demand for a higher minimum wage. Businesses would also be pressured to add labor representatives to their boards.

On other issues, Hillary has been in full stealth mode. She has given rhetorical support to the need to reduce the deficit, calling it a national-security issue. But she has offered few ideas for how to reduce spending, though she has hinted at a willingness to include entitlement reform in a "grand bargain" to reduce the debt. In 2013, she told an audience at Colgate University: "What has worked is a compromise where yes, we raise revenues for a certain period, we go and look at entitlements to see what is fair and can be done without really disadvantaging either existing

beneficiaries or people who are going to rely on those programs.”

But when push comes to shove, she has opposed big changes to Medicare or Social Security. One is left with the distinct impression that her idea of compromise simply means raising taxes. For example, she opposes personal accounts for Social Security, but says she is open to lifting the cap on Social Security taxes. She has had little to say recently about Medicare, but has been a supporter of Obamacare (though she carefully allows that it may need some changes).

This will leave the eventual Republican nominee with a difficult choice. He will have to find a way to force Hillary to become specific about her more radical positions — but do so without seeming to be too aggressive. (Remember Rick Lazio?) And he will have to find a way to energize the Republican base without alarming the broad middle of the electorate that may see Hillary as history-making. That’s a tall order, and Republicans should keep this in mind as they choose their nominee.

But it would certainly help if the media decided to pay attention to actual issues.

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