

Democrats March Toward Cliff

Exclusive: Barack Obama once called Hillary Clinton “likable enough,” but a new poll raises doubts about that, as the Democratic frontrunner’s net-negative has nearly doubled to 24 points, reports Robert Parry.

By Robert Parry

As Democratic-insider “super-delegates” give Hillary Clinton a seemingly insurmountable lead for the presidential nomination, the former Secretary of State’s negative ratings continue to soar to stunning levels, hitting a net 24-point unfavorable in the new NBC-Wall Street Journal [poll](#).

It is hard to imagine someone who is viewed unfavorably by a clear majority of voters (56 percent) and with a net-negative of 24 points winning the White House, except that most voters also don’t like the top Republican choices either. Donald Trump sports a 41-point net-negative and Sen. Ted Cruz is at minus-23 points. (By contrast, of the two trailing candidates, Sen. Bernie Sanders gets a net-positive 9 points and Gov. John Kasich a net-positive 12 points.)

But a major difference between Trump and Clinton in the latest poll is that Trump’s numbers haven’t moved much while Clinton’s net-negative has almost doubled in the last month. In other words, the more Americans get to see of Clinton the more they don’t want her.

While Clinton’s dismal approval ratings haven’t seemed to have shaken the Democratic establishment, which continues to line up behind her long-anticipated coronation, some outside analysts see the party leaders blindly marching toward a cliff.

Despite Sanders’s string of victories, Clinton still leads him in elected delegates, but her daunting lead comes from her dominance of “super-delegates,” party insiders who are not chosen by primaries or caucuses but still get to vote at the convention. According to The Associated Press tally, Clinton has 1,289 elected delegates to Sanders’s 1,045, but she has the backing of 469 “super-delegates” to Sanders’s 31. To win requires 2,383 delegates.

So, if Clinton’s eventual nomination is inevitable, the Democrats will be putting up a candidate who is broadly disliked by the American people. That means a Clinton candidacy will require massive spending on negative ads to make the Republican candidate so frightening in the eyes of most Americans that they will vote for Clinton out of fear, not hope.

There's also the irony that although most attention has focused on the Republican need for a brokered convention – to block a Trump nomination – an argument could be made that the Democrats would benefit from a brokered convention themselves.

If neither Clinton nor Sanders could clinch the nomination on the first ballot, that could open the process to allow the party to select an alternative who has not been in the race, someone such as Sen. Elizabeth Warren, an economic populist who is beloved by Sanders's backers and a woman who might be acceptable to Clinton supporters wanting the first female President.

Still, such a possibility does not appear to be in the cards. The odds remain heavily weighted in favor of Clinton securing the nomination and the Democrats then trying to make the best of her soaring unfavorable numbers.

In a 2008 debate, addressing a question about Clinton's high negatives, then-Sen. Barack Obama condescendingly opined that "you're likable enough, Hillary." But it turns out Obama may have been overstating the case. With her current unfavorable level at 56 percent – and only 32 percent holding a favorable view – many voters seem to be saying, she's not likable enough.

Investigative reporter Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories for The Associated Press and Newsweek in the 1980s. You can buy his latest book, *America's Stolen Narrative*, either in [print here](#) or as an e-book (from [Amazon](#) and [barnesandnoble.com](#)).

In Case You Missed...

Some of our special stories in March focused on the twists and turns of Election 2016, the propaganda wars over Syria and Russia, and President Obama's odd attitude toward Washington's "playbook." (Editor's Note: The "denial of service" cyber-attack against us prevented our publishing during the first week of March.)

["Clinton Stalls on Goldman Sachs Speeches"](#) by Chelsea Gilmour, Mar. 7, 2016

["Sleepwalking Toward Catastrophe"](#) by James W Carden, Mar. 7, 2016

["Taking Aim at Russia's 'Underbelly'"](#) by Jonathan Marshall, Mar. 9, 2016

["Two Corrupt Establishments"](#) by Robert Parry, Mar. 9, 2016

["Trump's Fear of a 'Brokered' Convention"](#) by Peter W. Dickson, Mar. 9, 2016

["Neocons Red-Faced Over 'Red Line'"](#) by Robert Parry, Mar. 10, 2016

["Hillary's Double-Standard on Protests"](#) by Robert Parry, Mar. 11, 2016

["Trump and a Clash of Values"](#) by Nat Parry, Mar. 14, 2016

["What's the Matter with John Kerry?"](#) by Robert Parry, Mar. 14, 2016

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["Will We Miss President Obama?"](#) by Robert Parry, Mar. 19, 2016

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2016

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[“Kerry Balks at Supplying MH-17 Data”](#) by Robert Parry, Mar. 25, 2016

[“The Pentagon’s Budget Time Bomb”](#) by Chuck Spinney, Mar. 26, 2016

[“Bernie Sanders as Commander-in-Chief”](#) by Robert Parry, Mar. 28, 2016

[“Obama in Arabia”](#) by Kristen Breitweiser, Mar. 29, 2016

[“A ‘Silent Coup’ for Brazil?”](#) by Ted Snider, Mar. 30, 2016

[“Pakistan’s Ticking Nuclear Time Bomb”](#) by Jonathan Marshall, Mar. 30, 2016

[“Derailing Peace Deal in Colombia”](#) by Jonathan Marshall, Mar. 31, 2016

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Coming Up Short on Spring Fund Drive

From Editor Robert Parry: We’re wrapping up our Spring Fund Drive this week, but we’re still more than \$10,000 short of our \$25,000 goal. So, if you can, please help us close that gap. Contributions of all sizes are welcomed and appreciated.

You can make a tax-deductible donation by using a [credit card online](#) (we accept

Visa, Mastercard, American Express and Discover) or you can mail a check to Consortium for Independent Journalism (CIJ); 2200 Wilson Blvd., Suite 102-231; Arlington VA 22201.

For readers wanting to use PayPal, you can address contributions to our account, which is named after our e-mail address: "consortnew@aol.com". We are also registered with PayPal's Giving Fund under the name Consortium for Independent Journalism. (Since we are a 501-c-3 non-profit, donations by American taxpayers may be tax-deductible.)

We also are offering as a thank-you gift for donations of \$125 or more a book and a DVD on how two pivotal presidential elections – 1968 and 1980 – were distorted by what look to be near-treasonous schemes to undermine U.S. negotiations with foreign governments. (Neither of these well-documented cases was touched by CNN in its series of electoral dirty-dealing.)

But you can review the evidence yourself by getting a signed copy of my latest book, *America's Stolen Narrative*, and a DVD of a PBS documentary that I co-wrote entitled "The Election Held Hostage." (If you want the gift set, please follow up your donation with an e-mail to us at consortnew@aol.com with instructions on where to mail it. We'll pay the shipping charges.)

Another way to help is to buy one of my books – *Fooling America*, *Lost History*, *Secrecy & Privilege* or *America's Stolen Narrative* – through the Web site and we'll also send you a copy of *Neck Deep: The Disastrous Presidency of George W. Bush* **for free**.

So you can get two books for the price of one and a portion of each sale will go toward the fund drive.

Again, thanks for your support and for making our two decades of honest journalism possible.

Robert Parry is a longtime investigative reporter who broke many of the Iran-Contra stories for the Associated Press and Newsweek in the 1980s. He founded Consortiumnews.com in 1995 to create an outlet for well-reported journalism that was being squeezed out of an increasingly trivialized U.S. news media.

Saudi Arabia Coerces US Over 9/11

Saudi Arabia is threatening to financially punish the U.S. if it holds the kingdom to account for its 9/11 role, coercion that hovers over President

Obama's new visit to the Saudi "allies" and that 9/11 widow Kristen Breitweiser condemns.

By Kristen Breitweiser

On Saturday, Mark Mazzetti wrote an article that appears on the front page of the *New York Times* called, "Saudis Tell U.S. To Back Off Bill On 9/11 Lawsuits." The shocking title alone should make American citizens sit up and take notice.

When did the U.S. government start taking orders from foreign nations? Did I miss something? Have we become a foreign territory of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia? Did Saudi Arabia somehow become a branch of the U.S. government with sway over the President, Congress, and the Judiciary?

Mazzetti documents disturbing details that reveal a U.S. government not just taking and carrying out Saudi orders, but a U.S. President being brought to his knees by Saudi extortion. Mazzetti also summarizes the Obama Administration's decision to support the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia over the 9/11 families' right for justice and accountability for the 9/11 attacks.

The Saudis get such royal, preferential treatment because they've stomped their feet, threatened to pull all their money out of the U.S. economy and bankrupt the world if not given their way. As ridiculous as that threat sounds, the Obama administration is apparently very scared by it.

Currently, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been dismissed from the 9/11 families' lawsuit via their Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act (FSIA) protections. As a result, the court has yet to have the opportunity to see the evidence against the Kingdom with regard to their alleged role of financing the 9/11 attacks.

This sets a dangerous precedent since it means that as long as a foreign nation is not listed as a "known state sponsor of terrorism," they are completely immune from being held accountable for any bad behavior or illegal acts they perpetrate inside the U.S. – yes, even the mass murder of 3,000 people on 9/11.

Suffice it to say, this isn't your typical young Saudi prince getting a parking ticket for his gold Lamborghini. This is the Saudis getting a pass for funding mass murder – with the blessings of the U.S. Government.

At a time when most can't get Washington to agree on much of anything, the 9/11 families have been able to gather Members of Congress – both Democrats and Republicans, and as polar opposite as Al Franken and Ted Cruz – to work together on a vital piece of legislation called Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism (JASTA). Quite a feat. But then again, 9/11 has the unique ability to unite

almost everyone together under that one broad undeniable theme: being a true American.

JASTA removes the protection of the FSIA from any nation (regardless of their status as an ally or named state sponsor of terrorism) that participates in a terrorist attack when the terrorist attack is perpetrated on U.S. soil. JASTA makes clear that U.S. citizens remain the priority not foreign nations that fund terror. Specifically, JASTA removes the Saudis' use of the FSIA as a shield of immunity – allowing them to be brought to court to finally answer charges for their alleged role in the 9/11 attacks.

Clearly, the Saudis are deeply concerned about JASTA since it would mean all the incriminating evidence gathered against them and their alleged role in the 9/11 attacks would finally be revealed and presented in an open court of law – nearly 15 years after the crime was committed. Indeed, many who have seen this evidence have commented that Americans will find the information “shocking” and that the “revelations will require a complete re-appraisal of the U.S./Saudi relationship.”

Why should this vital information be kept from the 9/11 families and the American public by President Obama? Why should evidence of the mass murder of 3,000 people be kept out of a court of law? Why does the Obama White House oppose holding the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia accountable for their funding of terrorist acts, including the terrorist attacks of 9/11? Why isn't the U.S. government protecting the rights of the U.S. victims of terrorist attacks?

It is bad enough that Wall Street tycoons got off the hook in 2008 because they were “too big to fail.” But, to re-victimize the 9/11 families in order to protect the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia because they are “too invested in the U.S. economy to be held accountable” is appalling. It is extortion – plain and simple.

We struggle to understand why the U.S. government led by President Obama would so willingly drop to its knees and bare its neck to the shiny sword of Saudi extortion. What has become of our country?

America needs elected officials and leaders who recognize that U.S. citizens are their constituents – not oil-rich nations that bankroll terrorists. America needs to send a clarion message to the world – if you murder our citizens, you will answer for it. And America should never succumb to extortion by terrorists.

Are we to do away and dispense with all laws and accountability everywhere leaving us with a sort of Wild West environment where murder by the wealthy is OK, and rule of law is secondary to greed and power?

We call upon every member of Congress and all presidential candidates to endorse JASTA and to publicly rebuke such Saudi extortion. And we ask President Obama, to ignore the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's undue influence and extortion attempts by passing JASTA now.

Kristen Breitweiser is a 9/11 widow and activist who – working with other 9/11 widows known collectively as the “Jersey Girls” – pressured the U.S. government to conduct a formal investigation into the terror attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. Follow Kristen Breitweiser on Twitter: www.twitter.com/kdbreitweiser. [This article originally appeared as a blog post at HuffingtonPost.]
