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Clinton won battle; Obama will win war

By: [Terry Michael](#)

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The dust-up over junior Sen. Barack Obama's big slip on the foreign policy banana peel in the CNN/YouTube marketing venture "debate" and former first lady in chief Hillary Rodham Clinton's faux shock at Obama's comparing her to George W. Bush for her vote in favor of the Iraq war may have scored Clinton first-round points on who is best equipped to face off against the world's bad guys. But it might be Obama who is going to rope-a-dope in round three or four.

If the specter of years 2009 to 2017 of the Bush-Clinton dynasties continues to scare voters away from the inevitability of Clinton II, the stubbornness similarity between Hillary and Lil' Bush could add serious fuel to that fire while reminding Democrats of Clinton's pro-war vote.

Just a few months ago, the Achilles high heel of the senator from New York was her refusal to apologize to anti-war lefties for voting to authorize Bush's elective misadventure into Mesopotamia.

Like the current occupant of 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., the former resident just couldn't bring herself to admit she had ever done anything stupid with regard to authorizing the geographically misplaced attack on The Terrorists. She acted on the best intelligence she had at the time, the apparently brainwashed but über-intelligent, foreign-policy-experienced Clinton protested in her unapologetic reaction to the Daily Kos-acks and others in the noninterventionist wing of the Democratic Party base.

Let's just move on, Sen. Clinton conveniently insisted, as she attempted to recast herself from tough Armed Services Committee warrior princess in 2003 to strong, have-it-both-ways feminist peacemaker in time to claim her rightful crown in 2008. (If you thought Annie Leibovitz had problems with Elizabeth of Windsor and her outfits, just picture poor Annie trying to deal with Her Majesty from Westchester and all the ideological wardrobe changes she's gone through.)

If I were Obama consultant David Axelrod -- or even the water boy in that corner of this slugfest -- I would be pounding away at Sen. Clinton's obstinacy as the best way to question the awesomely poor judgment she and so many other neo-con-lite Democrats in the Senate showed in writing a blank check for this misprojection of American military power.

I'm no foreign policy expert, just a humble teacher of college journalists, but I knew a WMD marketing ploy when I saw one. I recognized that Saddam Hussein was a two-bit thug like Charles Taylor of Liberia, not Osama bin Laden. And without a day in the United States -- or

even the Illinois state -- Senate and having never attended a single World Affairs Council luncheon, I had read enough about the tribal culture of the Arab world to understand we couldn't spread individual-liberty-loving pluralistic democracy in a state where Islamists demand a rigid theocracy.

So why didn't a woman with all of that self-proclaimed international affairs wisdom know enough not to vote for this war? And why can't she bring herself to say she was wrong?

Were I Obama, who opposed the madness from the beginning, I would hammer Clinton from Manchester, N.H., to Des Moines, Iowa, and from Columbia, S.C., to Reno, Nev., with a demand to know why she isn't woman enough to humbly express regret for such amazing misjudgment.

Obama made a stupid mistake in not qualifying an otherwise sane acknowledgment that he'd be willing to talk with our enemies. But that error of omission in the heat of a piece of cable TV theater pales in comparison to Clinton's complicity in sending thousands of young Americans to their deaths in the desert.

A former Democratic National Committee press secretary, Terry Michael is director of the nonpartisan Washington Center for Politics & Journalism and writes personal opinion at his "libertarian Democrat" blog.

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