# Camp Clinton's ills

*by The San Diego Union-Tribune*

Bill and Hillary Clinton have a bad reputation for throwing folks overboard when the waters get choppy.

Remember Lani Guinier, a law school chum of the Clintons who was nominated for a key position at the Justice Department but had her nomination withdrawn after Republicans raised concerns about her views on affirmative action and racial redistricting?

The latest casualty is Patti Solis Doyle, who was until recently the campaign manager for Hillary Clinton's presidential quest. As the Clinton campaign and Latino Democrats were apt to point out, Solis Doyle was the first Latina to lead a presidential campaign.

That was a barrier that deserved breaking and kudos to the Clinton campaign and Solis Doyle, the daughter of Mexican immigrants, for breaking it. That historic distinction gave Solis Doyle additional standing to criticize a Spanish-language radio spot in Nevada paid for by Barack Obama supporters accusing the Clinton campaign of trying to disenfranchise Latino voters by trying to stop hotel and casino workers from holding caucuses on the Las Vegas Strip. Solis Doyle told reporters she was "personally offended ... and outraged" by the ads and urged the Obama campaign to condemn the tactics.

Now Solis Doyle is out. She stepped down over the weekend, saying in a note that the campaign "required enormous sacrifices from all of us and our families." She is the mother of two young children, who will no doubt be much happier under the new arrangement. Solis Doyle has been replaced by longtime Clinton loyalist Maggie Williams.

There is clearly a problem with Camp Clinton. But it wasn't Solis Doyle, who ran a fine campaign.

The real problem is closer to home. There are the occasional and unfortunate eruptions from Bill Clinton. The former president did a lot of harm to his wife's campaign by using his own "Southern strategy" to try to paint Obama as the black candidate with limited appeal to white voters.

Don't take our word for it. Former Virginia Gov. Doug Wilder has said he thinks Bill Clinton went too far and stirred up much resentment among black voters. And Michelle Obama raised eyebrows recently when she said she would have to think about whether to support Hillary Clinton if the she wins the Democratic nomination. A lot would depend, she said, on Clinton's "tone."

Meanwhile, Obama is on a roll. He swept through four nominating contests last weekend, and he has won 19 of 29 contests thus far. He leads Hillary in earned delegates and fundraising. She leads in overall delegates. But that is largely because of a lead in so-called super delegates who, while committed to Hillary Clinton at the moment, can change their minds.

Clinton has the right to change her mind about who manages her campaign. But if the Clinton camp is going to reverse its trajectory, then it's going to need more than personnel changes. It needs a new message, a new tone and a new strategy. It needs to stop trying to divide Democrats and start unifying them. And it needs to stop mocking Obama's optimism and what Hillary Clinton dismissively refers to as "rhetorical flourishes" and start offering some of its own.

Until it does that, the Clinton ship is going to continue to take on water, no matter who goes over the rails.

Reprinted from The San Diego Union-Tribune â€“ CNS.

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