

## Short Term Problems for Clinton, Long Term Problems for McCain

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Barack Obama's latest string of successes this weekend in the US primaries is more important for its symbolism than its return in delegates, according to Prof Scott Lucas, the director of the think tank Libertas at the University of Birmingham.

What will emerge after these latest contests and those coming up soon is a fascinating scenario. How will the super-delegates, who are appointed by the Democratic Party rather than elected by the voters, react? Most of them are currently committed to Hillary Clinton, but it is going to be really hard for them to go against Obama given the progress he is making."

More than 10 percent of the total number of delegates for the Democratic Convention are "super-delegates". At the present time, the majority are pledged to Clinton, but these promises are not binding and switching of loyalties may occur.

And there is another interesting twist, according to Prof Lucas. "The Florida and Michigan primaries, which Clinton won, were not recognised by the national party. It is less likely that Clinton can insist on these results being recognised in the summer if Obama continues to make such significant gains."

Tomorrow's primary in Virginia will be very telling, according to Prof Lucas.

"Clinton should have had Virginia wrapped up, given its proximity to the machine politics of Washington DC, but it's now in the balance. Indeed she gave up on Louisiana last week to devote all her efforts to Virginia." Prof Lucas adds, "If Obama wins Virginia, he turns a corner. And then he becomes my favourite."

On the Republican side, John McCain is in trouble despite his march to the nomination, according to Prof Lucas. Mike Huckabee, McCain's only significant challenger, took Louisiana and Kansas over the weekend, due in part to religious and social conservatives who do not trust McCain.

"These results aren't a disaster in themselves, but Senator McCain is facing a fractured party," says Prof Lucas. "Many in the Republican base may not support him."

More analysis of the US president campaign can be found at Libertas: The Centre for US Foreign Policy ([www.libertas.bham.ac.uk](http://www.libertas.bham.ac.uk)).

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### Further media information

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