



## Will JFK's Party Become Sanders' Party?

Sen. Bernie Sanders may be on the cusp of both capturing the Democratic nomination and transforming his party as dramatically as President Donald Trump captured and remade the Republican Party.

After his sweep of the Nevada caucuses, following popular vote victories in Iowa and New Hampshire, Sanders has the enthusiasm and the momentum, as the crucial battles loom in South Carolina on Saturday and Super Tuesday on March 3.



The next eight days could decide it all.

And what is between now and next Tuesday that might interrupt Sanders' triumphal march to the nomination in Milwaukee?

One possible pitfall is tonight's debate in South Carolina.

Sanders will be taking constant fire as a socialist whose nomination could end in a rout in November, the loss of Speaker Nancy Pelosi's House and the forfeit of any chance of recapturing the Senate.

Yet Sanders has often been attacked along these lines, to little avail.

He's shown himself capable of defending his positions, and attacks on Sanders may simply expose his opponents' own political desperation.

"Buchanan," Richard Nixon once instructed me after I went to work for him in 1966, "Whenever you hear of a coalition forming up to 'Stop X,' be sure to put your money on X."

Nixon recalled the Cleveland governors conference after Barry Goldwater defeated Nelson Rockefeller in the California primary. There, on the Cuyahoga River, Govs. Rockefeller, George Romney and Bill Scranton colluded absurdly to derail the Goldwater express.

A second event is the anticipated endorsement of Biden by Rep. Jim Clyburn, the most influential black politician in South Carolina, who warns that nominating a socialist like Sanders invites electoral disaster.

Yet Clyburn's endorsement could be a mixed blessing.

With it, Biden becomes the favorite in the primary where 60% of the vote is African American. If Biden cannot beat Sanders there, in his firewall state, with Clyburn behind him, where does Biden win?

Biden faces another problem: Billionaire Tom Steyer has pumped millions into South Carolina, hired black leaders and pledged to support reparations for slavery. Polls show Steyer with rising support



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among black voters who might otherwise have stood by Biden.

For Biden, South Carolina is do-or-die.

If he wins here, he is revived. Yet, still, he lacks the broad and deep support Sanders has and the funds Michael Bloomberg has to be competitive in all 14 states holding primaries March 3, including the megastates of Texas and California.

Sanders is predicting victories in both and has been gaining in the polls on Sen. Elizabeth Warren even in Massachusetts, her home state, which also holds its primary on Super Tuesday.

The basic question: With Biden, Buttigieg, Warren, Steyer and Klobuchar — none of whom has beaten Sanders in the popular vote anywhere, and all competing in South Carolina and Super Tuesday three days later — who beats a surging Sanders? When and where do they beat him?

Bloomberg can probably buy enough votes to win some states. But would the other Democratic candidates, who have fought for a year, stand aside to yield the field so this ex-Republican oligarch can save their party from Sanders? Why should they?

And where is the evidence that Bloomberg can beat Sanders? Or beat Trump?

Bloomberg's first debate raises questions of what, besides his \$60 billion, qualifies him to be on the stage or in the race.

The Democratic establishment worries that if the "moderates" in the race do not start falling on their swords, dropping out, and joining behind a single candidate — Biden, Buttigieg or Bloomberg — to challenge Sanders, they will lose the nomination to Sanders and the election to Trump.

The establishment is right to worry.

While Sanders' chances of becoming president are slim, the odds he wins the nomination and reshapes the party are good and have been improving weekly.

What model does socialist Sanders have in mind for the Democratic Party? Something like the British Labour Party of Jeremy Corbyn.

"Medicare for All." Abolition of private health insurance. War on Wall Street. The Green New Deal. Free college tuition. Forgiveness of all student debt. Open borders. Supreme Court justices committed to *Roe v. Wade*. Welfare for undocumented migrants. A doubling of the minimum wage to \$15 an hour.

Winston Churchill once observed: "Some regard private enterprise as if it were a predatory tiger to be shot. Others look upon it as a cow that they can milk. Only a handful see it for what it really is — the strong horse that pulls the whole cart."

Sanders sees free market capitalism as a fat goose that lays golden eggs and can be hectored, squeezed and beaten into producing lots more.

And those most widely receptive to his message — are the young.

Welcome to the Party of JFK as reconceived by Bernie Sanders.

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