



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on December 23, 2023

## Establishment Angling for Trump/Haley Ticket, but MAGA Says “No” to Nikki

Short of Donald Trump being locked in a prison cell, few things would make the Establishment happier than to see Nikki Haley as Trump’s running mate in the 2024 election.

In recent days, the mainstream media has played up Haley’s supposed rise in the polls. Articles, such as one published by [The Hill](#) this week, claim that the former South Carolina governor and United Nations ambassador is “gaining ground” on President Trump.

“The survey, published Thursday by the Saint Anselm College Survey Center (SACSC), found Haley garnered 30 percent of the likely Republican primary vote, just 14 points behind Trump’s 44 percent support,” the piece at [The Hill](#) reads.

Despite Trump’s vocal lambasting of Haley during the campaign season, sources close to the 45th president say that, amid the polling, he has asked a number of people in his circle for their opinion on the possibility of Haley as a vice-presidential pick.

As [Politico](#) reports:

Her rise has caught the attention of the former president, who has recently quizzed people outside his campaign for their impressions of Haley, according to three people familiar with the conversations.

“What do you think of Nikki?” Trump has asked.

As the outlet notes, Trump has also asked his associates for their views on other potential VP choices, including Ben Carson, Tim Scott, J.D. Vance, Byron Donalds, Elise Stefanik, Kristi Noem, and Kari Lake. Haley, however, has recently been the biggest object of his focus, even while publicly he has shot down the notion of a Nikki Haley surge.

“Where’s the Nikki Surge?” he wrote on social media earlier this month. “I hear about it from the Fake News Media, but don’t see it in the Polls, or on the Ground.”

But among those closest to Trump, Haley is anathema, and big names such as Roger Stone, Steve Bannon, and even President Trump’s own son are advising him, both publicly and privately, to avoid the bait of offering her the VP slot.

Bannon, Trump’s former chief strategist and an influential figure in conservative broadcasting,



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previously warned that the Republican Party Establishment would try to cajole Trump into picking Haley as his running mate. Speaking to *Politico*, Bannon berated Haley for using “outdated Republican talking points” and promoting “Fox News-laundered neoliberal neocon policies that MAGA finds unacceptable.”

Stone, the legendary Republican strategy with longtime ties to Trump, told the outlet he would be “personally opposed to such a selection, because I believe that [Haley’s] views are so antithetically different than President Trump’s views,” although he emphasized he has not yet personally spoken to Trump about Haley.

And Donald Trump, Jr., the 45th president’s oldest son, told Newsmax he would “go to great lengths to make sure” his father doesn’t choose Haley. Even Tucker Carlson has weighed in on the matter, stating during podcaster Tim Pool’s program that he would “advocate against” Haley as a vice-presidential nominee “as strongly as I could.”

For her part, Haley has shot down talk of being Trump’s running mate, declaring that she’s not in the race to settle for second place.

“It’s not even a conversation, and it doesn’t matter what candidate wants me to answer it: I don’t play for second,” Haley said in a [conversation](#) with the Christian Broadcasting Network. “It’s offensive when anybody says that, ‘Oh, she wants to be vice president.’ You don’t do something like this to be vice president. You don’t sacrifice — emotionally, mentally, physically, with your family— everything to come in second.”

Haley’s relationship with Trump has been a long and complicated one. During the 2016 Republican presidential primary, Haley endorsed Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida. That didn’t stop Trump from picking the former governor of South Carolina — whose stint at the helm of the Palmetto State once made her a rising star in the GOP — as his ambassador to the United Nations, a position in which she served for two years.

After the events of January 6, 2021, Haley publicly lashed out at Trump, saying he would be “judged harshly by history.” Nevertheless, she seemingly tried to soften things out later when she said she wouldn’t seek the presidency in 2024 if Trump was in the race.

But after the 2022 midterms, when Republicans performed worse than hoped for, Haley made an about-face and declared her candidacy even though Trump was already in the race at that point.

Thus far, Trump has minimized talk of a VP, saying it’s too early for meaningful discussion on the matter. Given Trump’s preference for working with those who display loyalty to him, especially after the events following the 2020 election, it seems unlikely that he would settle on Nikki Haley for such a key position as vice president.

But that doesn’t mean the Establishment won’t try to make it a reality — at this point, they appear to have honed in on Haley as their go-to selection if they can get Trump out of the way.

And given that their pick isn’t popular, their next tactic will be to try to get Haley onto the ticket even if it’s as vice president. It’s the same tactic the Establishment used on Ronald Reagan: The Establishment wanted George H.W. Bush for president in 1980; when he failed to convince enough primary voters to give him a shot at president, they successfully maneuvered to get Reagan to choose Bush as his running mate — thereby giving the powers that be an important foot in the door in the Reagan White House. And, of course, Bush went on to become president after Reagan.



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Trump should avoid making the same mistake as Reagan lest he give the Establishment the opportunity to sabotage his agenda and reverse any gains he makes.



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