

Reinventing “A Team of Rivals” to Defeat Trump

Can a multi-candidate unifying strategy lead to a Democratic victory November 3? Maybe YES.

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NOTE: This is an exploration of an approach, not a call to change the minds of those who have picked a single candidate.

The fast pace and not-so predictable path of the Democratic 2020 race has been analyzed and advocated a hundred ways by academics, investigative reporters, campaign consultants, former candidates. Borrowing from 2008 history, the 2005 book on President Lincoln and current headlines, what if: the top tier of March 2020 candidates can come closer together quickly, moving toward a “team of rivals” strategy aimed at winning the popular and the delegate vote.

Elizabeth Warren could and should play a central role in brokering a proposed team of this kind, based on the good of the country rather than only the career maneuvering of powerful players:

1) She is well positioned to help initiate this approach based on her recent statements-

“In a recent TIME interview, Charlotte Alter asked Warren how she’d feel if either of the two frontrunning (male) competitors at the time won the nomination, but adopted her now-legendarily detailed and voluminous plans. “Are you kidding? Fabulous!” Warren responded. “I think the question you’re asking me is, ‘If the things you want to get done actually get done, will your heart be broken?’ And the answer is, ‘No! I’ll lead the parade!’”ⁱ

On which leading candidate to endorse, she lightly responded, “Well it’s tough. Maybe I’ll just pull a New York Times and endorse them both.”ⁱⁱ

2) The goals for “Team of Rivals” are to project to the broad population of voters that there will be a united Democratic front, that will include progressive issues, some stability issues and will displace Donald Trump. The effort can allow or even encourage the sharp disagreements and then negotiations on individual topics such as international trade and universal Medicare.

3) The unity goal could be strengthened by early indications, and eventually promises, to include a majority of the top tier of five or six 2020 candidates in the 2021 Administration. This discussion would not be based on political favors or old-fashioned quid pro quo. It would be initially informal, then later a high-visibility venture to restore the diversity of policies, genders, cultural and professional experiences that were considered a strength of the Democratic field 4-5 months earlier.

4) This Team effort was not aimed at weakening either of the top two campaigns. Biden and Sanders continued to persuade voters and contributors, hold events large and small, debate as necessary, and seek and release lists of endorsers.

5) Because President-elect Obama implemented a team of rivals with his original Cabinet, this approach may attract the attention of others who already have suggested they do not wish to further divide the Democratic party and Independents by endorsing only Sanders or only Biden.

ⁱ [TIME Magazine online](#) “We have to be Willing to Take the Risk”, 2/10/2020

ⁱⁱ “[Team of Rivals](#)” gained public attention in 2005, when the widely praised book by Doris Kearns Goodwin was released. It described a biographical portrait of U.S. President Abraham Lincoln and the men who served with him in his 1861-65 cabinet (3 of whom ran against him). The structural idea made political headlines in 2008-09, when Barack Obama praised the book while appointing his diverse administration cabinet and team.