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Trump and Haley: A Perfect Match

As running mates, they can unite voters, raise money, and dominate American public policy for years.

By Gordon Sondland

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Will Nikki Haley be Donald Trump's running mate? Conventional wisdom suggests not, and he said no last week. But that would miss a huge political opportunity. The two should join forces, because together they have three essential ingredients for victory.

First, fundraising ability. With Ms. Haley as the vice-presidential candidate, many so-called Never Trumpers would turn out for Mr. Trump, boosting the Republican National Committee's coffers along the way. Ms. Haley set the stage for this during the primary when mainstream Republican donors who supported George W. Bush, John McCain and Mitt Romney came out for her, checkbooks in hand. A recent Marquette Law School poll of registered voters showed Ms. Haley beating President Biden by 16 points in a hypothetical head-to-head match-up and Mr. Trump beating the president by 2 points. I believe a Trump-Haley ticket would have a 6- to 9-point advantage against Biden-Harris.

Second, longevity. With Ms. Haley at his side, Mr. Trump could dominate American public policy for a combined 20 years. Add up his first four years in office, his four years out of office (during which he was more visible than most past presidents), four additional years in the White House, and eight years of Ms. Haley as his successor, and Mr. Trump will have had a powerful influence on America and the Republican Party.

Third, when Mr. Trump and Ms. Haley join forces, their voters would unite under the same tent—and it's a massive one. Confronted with the possibility that Kamala Harris could become president during a second Biden term, even the most intransigent centrist Republican will run toward the Trump-Haley ticket. Ms. Haley is a person of color, she is a woman, and she represents traditional Republicans. Mr. Trump already has the MAGA crowd ready to vote for him. A Trump-Haley coalition could attract traditional Democratic backers offended by the Biden administration's far-left policies.

A Trump-Haley ticket represents significant upside to both. For him, a guaranteed win, a record-setting historic legacy, and a chance to finish the job.

For her, a running start at another presidential run with a demographically diverse support base and a financially sound party.

Mr. Trump isn't like other leaders, and not everyone understands how to work with him. Ms. Haley does. She accepted the post of ambassador to the United Nations on the condition that it be elevated to a cabinet-level role. Mr. Trump acquiesced, which gave her access to the president and insight into how he governs and manages. I believe they both enjoyed their rivalry during the 2024 Republican presidential primary. In fact, they each reached the maximum inflection point on disparaging the other. That is now behind them. Ms. Haley understands that with Mr. Trump, the axiom about "accomplishing anything if you don't care who gets the credit" is turned on its head: You can accomplish anything if Mr. Trump gets the credit.

Most other potential vice-presidential candidates haven't worked for Mr. Trump in the White House—or tangled with him on the campaign trail. Nor have they raised money from deep-pocketed GOP factions.

A Trump-Haley administration also might spare Mr. Trump from being seen as a lame duck in a second term. As his presumed successor, Ms. Haley would be supported by a Republican Party with reinvigorated finances and membership.

For years, Republicans have wondered whether MAGA champions and traditional conservatives can coexist. Can Matt Gaetz and Mitt Romney be happy under the same political roof? Yes, they can. MAGA doesn't need to change, and neither do traditional Republicans. They simply need to acknowledge that a Trump-Haley ticket would defeat progressive forces not only in 2024, but in 2028 and beyond. That prospect alone is worth some compromise.

Supporters of both movements in the Republican Party should keep their eyes on the prize and back the political union of a lifetime.

Mr. Sondland served as U.S. ambassador to the European Union, 2018-20.



Nikki Haley in Charleston, S.C., March 6. PHOTO: BRIAN SNYDER/REUTERS

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