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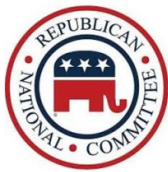
Presidential Horse Race 2016: Washington cartel plots to steal the Republican nomination

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Jeffrey A. Rendall | 4/1/2016

We end another consequential week in the 2016 Republican presidential race with a look at a potential plot by the establishment to upset the entire balance of the contest at this summer's Republican National Convention.

The other night during the CNN Republican Town Hall, both Ted Cruz and Donald Trump were probed on the possibility of someone coming into the convention and taking the nomination away from them – and whether they would support that nominee.



Headquarters of the Washington Cartel

Trump was asked about it in connection with his pledge to run only as a Republican, signed last September in a flashy ceremony with RNC Chairman Reince Priebus standing beside him. The Donald replied he would no longer honor his pledge because he didn't feel Priebus and the Republican National Committee had treated him fairly and thus was no longer bound by the deal.

(Note: Trump met with Priebus on Thursday, so it's possible he's changed his mind.)

And to be completely accurate, Cruz was asked about his thoughts on John Kasich staying in the race, whereby Cruz mentioned Kasich wouldn't even qualify to win the nomination under the current rules because he couldn't meet the party prerequisites of winning the majority of delegates in eight states.

Cruz felt he didn't need to answer the "support" question directly because it wouldn't be relevant – the eight state threshold meant only he and Trump would even be eligible for the nomination.

You may remember the "eight state" rule was instituted four years ago by Mitt Romney's supporters to prevent Ron Paul's well organized delegation from making trouble at the convention in trying to help their candidate share the stage with Romney.

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Conservatives cried foul at the time and the establishment thought they'd finally discovered a way to ensure their favored candidate would perpetually dominate future party conventions. After all, the establishment candidate would *always* win at least eight states, right?

Enter Donald Trump and Ted Cruz. With 2016 being the year of the "outsider," the establishment favorites, Jeb Bush and then Marco Rubio, never had a chance to win eight states outright. So much for those well laid plans from 2012.

Now there's talk the Republican elites want to ditch the "eight state" rule because they see it as no longer helping them.

[Kyle Cheney of Politico reports](#), "All four early appointees to the rules committee for this year's Republican National Convention told POLITICO they're prepared to weaken or scrap a rule that could limit the convention's alternatives to Donald Trump.

"The four took issue with a rule... requiring a candidate to win a majority of delegates in eight states to be eligible for the party's nomination — a threshold only Trump has exceeded so far...

"If the committee scraps the requirement entirely, it could open the door to multiple candidates, possibly even some who never entered the primaries, competing for the party's nomination at a brokered convention. And even a lower threshold would make it easier for Trump's rivals to challenge him."

True, these are the views of only four members of a rules committee that will eventually number 112, but their thoughts are very likely echoed by plenty of the elites in the Republican Party.

I don't know about you, but I smell a rat. The "eight state" rule was specifically put in place to prevent chaos at a convention and now the establishment's talking about getting rid of it in order to foster a likely nasty floor fight to determine the party nominee.

It's not only an affront to Trump, who has certainly earned his delegates through the conventional means of having people vote for him, but also to Cruz because he's the only other candidate who can and will meet the requirement.

So far, John Kasich has won only in his home state of Ohio, so there's practically no way, short of a complete turnaround in the race in his favor, that he can possibly satisfy the rule. Therefore, if the rule is changed, it will remove the requirement that delegates choose between the only two truly "eligible" candidates, Trump and Cruz.

In my mind, that would be a disaster. Welcome, Madame President Clinton.

For his part, Cruz says leave the rule in place or else risk a severe voter backlash.

[Eliza Collins of Politico reports](#) Cruz said to radio host Hugh Hewitt, "I think that would be a terrible idea for the Washington power-brokers to change the rules because they're unhappy with the candidates who the voters are voting for. If the Washington deal-makers try to change the rules to cook the books and try and insert their favorite deal-maker, I think there would rightly be a revolt of the voters."

This whole issue is a no-brainer. The Republican Party is going to have enough trouble as it is putting the shattered pieces of unity back together when this campaign eventually ends. Should the establishment switch the rules everybody already agreed to at the outset of the race, the nominee that emerges will have zero legitimacy even with most Republicans.

It would be like deciding to lengthen a thoroughbred horse race just as the field is about to cross the finish line. It brings the nag that brought up the rear back into the game because the lead horses are exhausted at the end and can't go any farther. How fair is that?

We know a few things. We know the establishment loves power. We know they'll do just about everything to preserve it and we know they'll try and spin their moves into some sort of neatly packaged media presentation to make it sound like what they're doing is really best for everyone.

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The voters won't buy it. It's time the establishment gets used to the idea it's going to be Trump or Cruz against Hillary in November. Anyone else and the general election is over before they even leave Cleveland on July 21.

'Women for Cruz' effort draws contrasts with Trump

It's common knowledge Ted Cruz has been campaigning in Wisconsin with Carly Fiorina this week, but he's also added his wife, mother and two young daughters to some events along with conservative values leader Rebecca Hagelin.

The effort isn't to pander to women the way Hillary Clinton always does, but to emphasize economic issues are extremely important to female voters, too.

Byron York of the *Washington Examiner* reports, "Campaign sources say the 'Women for Cruz' event had been contemplated for quite a while, but only came together in Wisconsin. More skeptical sorts might suggest the recent National Enquirer story alleging, without evidence, that Cruz has had a number of extramarital affairs had something to do with the scheduling.

"Plus, presenting Cruz with the women in his life extolling his fine qualities could only heighten the contrast with Donald Trump, who appears to have done enormous damage to his chances in Wisconsin with an out-of-the-blue attack on Heidi Cruz and a variety of intemperate statements relating to women..."

The "Women for Cruz" label may be new, though Heidi Cruz has been a crucial part of Ted's campaign from the beginning. Even his two daughters have shown up from time to time, most memorably in his Christmas themed ad where Cruz read a book ('The Senator who saved Christmas') to them.

Marco Rubio also prominently featured his family with his wife and four kids appearing after events and at debates. Likewise, Donald Trump obviously shows off the women in his life as well, especially daughter Ivanka (who just gave birth).

Nothing to see here, media.

York points out in his article that there isn't a gender gap in Cruz's vote, with about equal percentages of men and women favoring the Texas senator. Therefore, it seems the new emphasis on appealing to women must be due to one, the effective presence of Fiorina and two, the fact Trump is literally imploding before our eyes with his inexplicable attacks on Heidi and [strangely uninformed remarks on abortion](#).

One way or another, Cruz is exploring every avenue to make fresh appeals to voters. We'll see if it pays off next week in Wisconsin.

In the race to 1237, where to find the delegates?

For those who have been following the race-within-a-race to secure delegates, you know how difficult it can be to simply state who will win them and where.

Each state has a different method for securing delegates, the simplest being winner-take-all like we saw in Arizona, Florida and Ohio. Other states award a portion of their delegates to the popular vote winner and the rest by congressional district (think Missouri and Illinois). Other states allocate them according to caucuses and state conventions.

In the overall picture, it looks like the Republican race will continue at least through California.

Jonathan Easley of *The Hill* reports, "Republicans likely won't know whether Donald Trump will reach the 1,237 delegates needed to win the GOP presidential nomination outright until the final primary contests conclude on June 7..."

"About one-third of [the remaining 900] outstanding delegates will be allocated across five states in contests on June 7, the final day of elections, making it highly unlikely that Trump or anyone hits the threshold before then."



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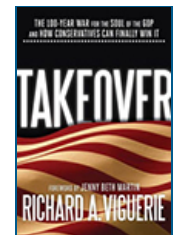
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Easley proceeds to lay out the scenarios for each group of states between now and June 7. With the wide diversity in methods on how delegates are won, there's just no way to forecast how each candidate will do, since many of them are awarded to winners of individual congressional districts.

Karl Rove probably doesn't even have data on each congressional district...but I bet the Cruz people do.

Therefore, even though Ted Cruz may not be competitive for a statewide victory in places like New York, he can still win delegates in geographic areas that wouldn't necessarily favor Trump.

I can't help but think momentum shifts will have something to do with how each candidate does going forward, making Tuesday's Wisconsin vote all the more important.

Should Cruz win handily there, he'll carry that much more momentum and viability into New York, which votes on April 19th.

At this stage of the race, voters want to pick a viable candidate – and a winner. It doesn't seem likely Trump will pick up many new voters, but we'll see if he has enough already in place to carry him over the top.

By all accounts, it will be difficult for either Trump or Cruz to reach that 1237 number. Then the real fireworks begin on July 18 in Cleveland.

Trump breaking loyalty pledge could cost him South Carolina's delegates

Finally this week, we all know Donald Trump says a lot of things without realizing the potential consequences, but his blurting out the other night that he would no longer honor his pledge to the Republican Party may cost him where it counts – his delegates.

[Harper Neidig of The Hill reports](#), "When Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump said on Tuesday that he would no longer abide by a pledge he signed to support the party's nominee, he may have cost his campaign at least 50 delegates, according to a Time report.

"The Republican Party in South Carolina, whose entire 50 delegates were awarded to Trump for his victory in February, required candidates to make the pledge in order to be on the state's primary ballot. Now that Trump has said he would break his promise, state party officials are exploring a legal challenge to withhold delegates from him."

Trump's meeting with Priebus on Thursday may have changed things, though we haven't heard anything official.

It's safe to say The Donald has learned a fair amount this week about what he can and can't say – all part of the process of running for president in America.

Better watch it, Donald.

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Convention rules.

Submitted by jon exner on Fri, 04/01/2016 - 11:00.

The rule that you must win at least 8 states is arbitrary at best and manipulative at worst especially if no one gets the requisite number of delegates on the first ballot.

*

That being said perhaps the rule should be that the only person eligible to become the nominee must have declared as a candidate before the primary season begins and run campaigns in all primaries and caucuses during the primary election season. The notion that someone could conceivably come into the race at the last minute and pick up the nomination is ridiculous.

*



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Unless of course all the candidates drop dead before the convention.

*

Otherwise what is the sense of any American citizen belonging to a political party where only the aristocratic political elite have the say in who will be the nominee? That sounds reminiscent of the communist parties in the old soviet union and the current red china regime.

*

Perhaps the states should set up a system for the independent or nonaffiliated voters to put forth an independent candidate and put them on the ballot in the November election.

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