



By: *The Editorial Board*

Nikki Haley 2028



The Republican Party passed up the opportunity to reform itself and, as a result, to enter the pre-election period full of optimism, at the end of which it would have realistic hopes of returning to the White House.

Nikki Haley's **exit from the Republican presidential race** most likely decided the outcome of the US presidential elections next November in favour of the Democrats and their candidate.

The former governor of South Carolina and US ambassador to the UN under Donald Trump refused to endorse him, even as she announced her withdrawal. This might be her most significant asset for the next race in 4 years.

“It is now up to Donald Trump to earn the votes of those in our party and beyond who did not support him”, said Nikki Haley at her campaign headquarters in Daniel Island, South Carolina, announcing her withdrawal from the race after losing 14 of 15 states on Super Tuesday.

Ms Haley's style of withdrawing her candidacy gives her every reason to anticipate being the favourite in the next race for the presidential nomination.

Deflection from Trump

First, she almost definitely declined to support Donald Trump's candidacy, which set her apart from all previous competitors and the highest-ranking GOP representatives who supported Trump.

Haley created a clear distance between loyalty to the GOP and its values and loyalty to Trump, as the most popular candidate the party could currently have.

By emphasising that distinction, Nikki Haley has urged the GOP to make a much larger and more difficult deflection from Trump's populism and isolationism than Trump's high numbers indicate.

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Second, Nikki Haley tied her political future to moderate GOP voters and independent voters, even tapping into the Democratic electorate in part.

This potential was not demonstrated by anyone in the previous Republican primaries, which explains Halley's high numbers, particularly in recent weeks.

The GOP majority has made it clear they want to take the easy way out, choosing Trump's policy of easy solutions to complicated problems. It is, however, a leadership that will ultimately bring more complications and few solutions.

2024 is not 2016, but 2020 for the GOP

Convinced that by voting for Trump, they would repeat 2016, when he arrived in the White House, his supporters are actually living in 2020 when he lost the race for a second term.

Nikki Haley's campaign was calculated to explain that big difference to the Republican Party, but, at this point, its outreach was insufficient.

Even though almost all high-ranking GOP officials supported Trump's candidacy, some before and some after Super Tuesday, this does not mean that a strong unity will be achieved within the party, as expected by one of them (Ralph Norman, South Carolina Republican Representative).

Quite simply, Nikki Haley's high percentages in the states that voted last Tuesday (from 15% to 40%, and the victory in Vermont) indicate that the division that Trump has been creating

within the GOP is much deeper than a simple affection for one of the two competitors for the nomination.

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With Trump as a candidate in the November elections, the Republicans will enter into the race with a burden on their backs. It is the personal burden of their favourite candidate, not a burden they have imposed on themselves through their party's policies.

This burden made a unique attempt to overthrow the constitutional order of the country through the violent seizure of Congress on January 6, 2021, for which more than a thousand people, including Trump, have been indicted.

That burden consists of 4 indictments against Trump with 91 criminal charges, for which the trials are ongoing, with significant chances that he will be sentenced in each.

If Nikki Haley had won the nomination race, the Republicans would not have faced these burdens. This might be one of the most significant elements in the almost definite defeat of the Republicans in the presidential election.

Capital for 2028

Nikki Haley paid the price of insufficient determination to distance herself from her super-competitor, particularly at the very start of the race for the presidential nomination.

For too long, she shared with the other competitors the consideration of the favourite who persistently refused to participate in the debates, believing his ratings to be a sufficient excuse for arrogance.

Only after the first primaries in Iowa and New

Hampshire did Nikki Haley start to play harder regarding Trump. That was also the period of the greatest growth of her popularity, showing that numerous Republican voters expected to see a determined anti-Trump candidate who would directly confront him much earlier.

This upward trend came to a halt last Tuesday, and the GOP will learn the hard way next November that this was the path to victory, not the one represented by Donald Trump.



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She will then be 56, still very convincing to continue her advocacy that politicians older than 75 must pass a "mental competency test".

The new electoral defeat of the Republicans, which, with Trump as a candidate of personal revenge and less of an advocate of GOP policy, is quite definite, could enable Nikki Haley to enter the next round of elections as an alternative that offers success.

Even though 4 years is a long period in which more contenders for the Republican nomination will appear, Ms Haley is currently the only convincing representative of reforming the Republican Party.

Apart from that potential, in 4 years, her assets as a woman and a candidate belonging to a minority community will be valuable again.

The step back she experienced after being defeated by Trump is one of those retreats apparently inevitable for the GOP to return to the course from which it deviated during the adventure with Donald Trump, which would cost it another 4 years without its man in White House.