Bernie Sanders.


This vision of an enlarged New Deal now struggling to emerge is simultaneously a systematic critique not only of the Republican Party but of the Democratic Party. During the recent months of Democratic presidential candidates’ debates, some of the candidates projected only a shadow of the possibilities of our country for the people’s freedom and equality, others asserted pieces of this wholeness, but only Elizabeth Warren got close. If you wish to make an informed choice, *Our Revolution* is essential.

For more, read Bernie’s *Where Do We Go From Here: Two Years in the Resistance* (2018), giving 38 important events and statements from June 2016 to August 2018.

--Dick 3-12-20

Bernie Sanders and Joe Biden Comparison and Contrast by Abel Tomlinson.

March 9, 2020.


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I. War & Peace

BIDEN

Important Short Film on Biden’s Leading Role for Iraq War:


WORTH THE PRICE? Joe Biden and the Launch of the Iraq War (Narrated by Danny Glover)

WORTH THE PRICE? is a short documentary reviewing the role of then-Senator Joe Biden (D-DE) in leading the United States into the most devastating foreign policy blunder of the last twenty years.

Produced and directed by Mark Weisbrot and narrated by Danny Glover, the film features archival footage, as well as policy experts who provide insight and testimony with regard to Joe Biden’s role as the Chair of the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in 2002.

www.worththeprice.org

Joe Biden championed the Iraq war. Will that come back to haunt him now?

Mark Weisbrot

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/feb/17/joe-biden-role-iraq-war

The Iraq war has been a prominent, even decisive issue, in recent US presidential elections. That will make Biden’s history a liability
Joe Biden has an issue that hasn’t played out yet in this election: his role in the launch of the Iraq war.

The Iraq war has been a prominent, even decisive issue, in some recent US presidential elections. It played a significant role in the surprise presidential primary victory won by a freshman senator from Illinois named Barack Obama in 2008. His heavily favored Democratic primary opponent, Hillary Clinton, had voted in the US Senate to authorize the war, and Obama didn’t let her forget it during that contest.

In 2016, Donald Trump invoked the Iraq war against opponents in his own surprise victory in the Republican primary. And then he used it against Clinton, most likely with significant effect, in the general election that followed.

Biden did vastly more than just vote for the war. Yet his role in bringing about that war remains mostly unknown or misunderstood by the public. When the war was debated and then authorized by the US Congress in 2002, Democrats controlled the Senate and Biden was chair of the Senate committee on foreign relations. Biden himself had enormous influence as chair and argued strongly in favor of the 2002 resolution granting President Bush the authority to invade Iraq.

“I do not believe this is a rush to war,” Biden said a few days before the vote. “I believe it is a march to peace and security. I believe that failure to overwhelmingly support this resolution is likely to enhance the prospects that war will occur …”

But he had a power much greater than his own words. He was able to choose all 18 witnesses in the main Senate hearings on Iraq. And he mainly chose people who supported a pro-war position. They argued in favor of “regime change as the stated US policy” and warned of “a nuclear-armed Saddam sometime in this decade”. That Iraqis would “welcome the United States as liberators” And that Iraq “permits known al-Qaida members to live and move freely about in Iraq” and that “they are being supported”.

The lies about al-Qaida were perhaps the most transparently obvious of the falsehoods created to justify the Iraq war. As anyone familiar with the subject matter could testify, Saddam Hussein ran a secular government and had a hatred, which was mutual, for religious extremists like al-Qaida. But Biden did not choose from among the many expert witnesses who would have explained that to the Senate, and to the media....continued:

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/feb/17/joe-biden-role-iraq-war

‘Their blood is on your hands': Veterans confront Joe Biden over support for Iraq war

Group confronts former vice president for past support 'enabling a war that killed thousands of our brothers and sisters'
Military veterans confronted Joe Biden over the former vice president's past support for the Iraq War, which the Democratic presidential nominee had voted to support when he was a senator, a move that one anti-war veterans group says should disqualify him from the presidency.

During a campaign event in Oakland, California on 3 March, Michael Thurman asked Mr Biden: "We are just wondering why we should vote for someone who voted for a war and enabled a war that killed thousands of our brothers and sisters [and] countless Iraqi civilians."… "You are disqualified, sir," Mr Thurman said as Mr Biden was ushered from the event. "My friends are dead. ... Their blood is on your hands."..."We fought in your damn wars," Mr Thurman said. "You sent us to hurt civilians." ...


Biden gives George W. Bush a “Liberty Medal,” and War Veterans Protest


Dozens of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans blockaded entrances to the "Liberty Medal" ceremony in Philadelphia on Sunday, where Joe Biden was honoring war criminal George W. Bush. Part of About Face: Veterans Against the War (formerly Iraq Veterans Against the War), the veterans stayed in the streets for hours making noise and speaking out against the endless war policies that parties have so-often pursued. #veteran #veteransday #antiwar

https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=259008198303700

BERNIE

Bernie leads Iraq War opposition in U.S. Congress
Flashback: Rep. Bernie Sanders Opposes Iraq War
217,096 views Nov 14, 2015

Thirteen years ago, on October 9, 2002, then-Rep. Bernie Sanders strongly opposed the invasion of Iraq and made the following statement on the floor of the House of Representatives.
Excerpt: "Mr. Speaker, in the brief time I have, let me give five reasons why I am opposed to giving the President a blank check to launch a unilateral invasion and occupation of Iraq and why I will vote against this resolution. One, I have not heard any estimates of how many young American men and women might die in such a war or how many tens of thousands of women and children in Iraq might also be killed. As a caring Nation, we should do everything we can to prevent the horrible suffering that a war will cause. War must be the last recourse in international relations, not the first. Second, I am deeply concerned about the precedent that a unilateral invasion of Iraq could establish in terms of international law and the role of the United Nations. If President Bush believes that the U.S. can go to war at any time against any nation, what moral or legal objection could our government raise if another country chose to do the same thing?

Third, the United States is now involved in a very difficult war against international terrorism as we learned tragically on September 11. We are opposed by Osama bin Laden and religious fanatics who are prepared to engage in a kind of warfare that we have never experienced before. I agree with Brent Scowcroft, Republican former National Security Advisor for President George Bush, Sr., who stated, "An attack on Iraq at this time would seriously jeopardize, if not destroy, the global counterterrorist campaign we have undertaken."

Fourth, at a time when this country has a $6 trillion national debt and a growing deficit, we should be clear that a war and a long-term American occupation of Iraq could be extremely expensive.

Fifth, I am concerned about the problems of so-called unintended consequences. Who will govern Iraq when Saddam Hussein is removed and what role will the U.S. play in ensuing a civil war that could develop in that country? Will moderate governments in the region who have large Islamic fundamentalist populations be overthrown and replaced by extremists? Will the bloody conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Authority be exacerbated? And these are just a few of the questions that remain unanswered.

If a unilateral American invasion of Iraq is not the best approach, what should we do? In my view, the U.S. must work with the United Nations to make certain within clearly defined timelines that the U.N. inspectors are allowed to do their jobs. These inspectors should undertake an unfettered search for Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and destroy them when found, pursuant to past U.N. resolutions. If Iraq resists inspection and elimination of stockpiled weapons, we should stand ready to assist the U.N. in forcing compliance."

II. Climate Change
BERNIE SANDERS’S CLIMATE PLAN IS MORE RADICAL THAN HIS OPPONENTS’ — AND MORE LIKELY TO SUCCEED

Kate Aronoff August 22 2019, 3:33 p.m.


IF YOU TRIED to design a program with the aim of offending the top brass of the world’s most powerful corporations and the politicians whose careers they bankroll, you’d get something like what Bernie Sanders unveiled today in his $16.3 trillion Green New Deal platform. That’s part of the point. “We need a president who has the courage, the vision, and the record to face down the greed of fossil fuel executives and the billionaire class who stand in the way of climate action,” the plan’s opening salvo states, going on to echo a famous line from Franklin Delano Roosevelt. “We need a president who welcomes their hatred.”

Sanders outlines an expansive system, building on the resolution introduced by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Sen. Ed Markey in April, that would generate publicly owned clean energy and 20 million new jobs, end fossil fuels imports and exports, revivify the social safety net, redress historical injustices like environmental racism, and make prolific investments toward decarbonization at home and abroad — among many, many other things. It would not only transition American society away from fossil fuels but renegotiate decades-old nostrums, championed by the right, about the respective roles of the government and the economy.

“It definitely is the biggest and boldest plan and vision out there,” Evan Weber, political director for the Sunrise Movement, told The Intercept, “both in the sheer scale of it and also in a lot of the mechanisms for achieving that scale, that really seem like [Sanders is] pushing the boundaries of how American society currently is structured.”

There are novel, meaty policy proposals that make Sanders’s proposal stand out from an already ambitious field: a cash-for-clunkers and financial assistance program to scale up electric vehicle usage, and plans to boost public transit ridership 65 percent by 2030; a requirement that the Congressional Budget Office work with the Environmental Protection Agency to give new legislation a “climate score,” like the budget scores it currently doles out; and abiding by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to ensure the free, prior, and informed consent by Indigenous peoples....Continued: https://theintercept.com/2019/08/22/bernie-sanders-climate-policy/

NAOMI KLEIN INTERVIEWS BERNIE SANDERS ON CLIMATE CHANGE
III. Healthcare

BIDEN

'What More Do You Need to Know?' Health Insurance Stocks Drive Wall Street Rebound on Biden Super Tuesday Wins

"Biden is the preferred candidate for the financial markets."

By Eoin Higgins, staff writer Wednesday, March 04, 2020 By Common Dreams

Health insurance industry stocks surged Wednesday morning in the wake of former Vice President Joe Biden's strong showing in the Democratic presidential primary's Super Tuesday contests, opening up 600 points after traders appeared to bet the candidate's resurgence would box out any chance of single-payer universal healthcare.

"What more do you need to know," tweeted journalist Jack Mirkinson of the market's spike.

Sanders has made Medicare for All a centerpiece of his campaign. The healthcare industry has poured millions in ad buys against Sanders after the Vermont senator won primaries in Iowa, New Hampshire, and Nevada.

"The industry has long seen Biden as their white knight," said Dr. Adam Gaffney, the president of Physicians for a National Health Program and an outspoken Medicare for All advocate…Continued: https://www.commondreams.org/news/2020/03/04/what-more-do-you-need-know-health-insurance-stocks-drive-wall-street-rebound-biden

IV. Trade

BIDEN
Biden’s NAFTA Vote Is a Liability in the Rust Belt

Joe Biden has emerged as the Democratic front-runner thanks to a perception that his working-class roots and chummy relations with labor leaders make him the likeliest candidate to take back the Upper Midwest and beat Donald Trump. But that scenario is complicated by the former vice president’s decades-long record of backing free-trade deals that have helped hollow out the manufacturing core in several important electoral states.

From his support for the North American Free Trade Agreement as a Delaware senator to his backing of the Trans-Pacific Partnership as Barack Obama’s vice president, Biden played a key role over the last 30 years in advancing a trade agenda that’s now being reassessed by many experts and early proponents as its costs, including job losses, are becoming clearer.

Biden’s record on trade is already drawing attacks from the left and right. Besides Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, a former House member, Biden is the only one of the 22 Democrats running for president who voted for Nafta. The 1993 pact reduced barriers with Mexico and Canada, increasing trade and economic growth in all three countries. But it also led to an exodus of U.S. manufacturing jobs to Mexico and hurt wages for U.S. workers who held on to their jobs. Throughout the 2016 presidential campaign, Trump pilloried Nafta as a “disaster” and “the worst trade deal ever,” a message his top advisers believe was pivotal in helping him carry critical Rust Belt states once considered Democratic strongholds.

“Nafta still resonates in the industrial Midwest and Rust Belt,” says Stanley Greenberg, a veteran Democratic pollster who recently conducted focus groups on trade in Michigan and Wisconsin. “There’s still a lot of anger because it symbolizes, for many people, the indifference about the outsourcing of jobs and the favoring of elite economic interests in international trade agreements.”…Continued: https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-05-14/biden-s-nafta-vote-is-a-liability-in-the-rust-belt

BERNIE

Bernie Beats Trump (and Biden) on Trade

There is simply no question that Sanders's approach to trade prioritizes workers and the environment, and not corporate convenience.

By Scott Casleton

Sunday, March 08, 2020By Common Dreams

https://www.commondreams.org/views/2020/03/08/bernie-beats-trump-and-biden-trade
It is an indisputable fact that over the last few decades American workers have seen their wages stagnate and jobs disappear. Unfortunately, they have found little relief in the policies of either the Democratic or Republican parties. Quite the contrary, at least since Bill Clinton's promotion of the North American Free Trade Agreement (known as NAFTA) in 1994, American policy makers have been doing much to hurt and little to help the ailing American working class.

In order to see why Bernie is the best choice for laborers in America, his stance on trade must be distinguished from both Biden's waffling and Trump's hollow rhetoric.

This has been combined with a media narrative that does more to confuse than clarify American trade policy. Any presidential candidate, Democrat or Republican, that criticizes existing or pending trade agreements is duly labeled a "populist" and sidelined as beyond the pale of rational policy discussion. It has become standard practice to lump Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders together, tarring them both as populists, with the obvious implication that Sanders is just the left-wing version of that unhinged Republican.

Indeed, serious policy discussion was abandoned in favor of pat formulas about the populist disdain for trade. Witness James Surowiecki of the New Yorker: "Both Trump and Sanders downplay the enormous economic benefits of globalization for American consumers of all incomes, and their proposals are vague and could well be harmful if implemented."

This is sheer nonsense. And it is more important than ever to dispel such claims, given the narrowing of the 2020 Democratic field, with Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders competing to be the champion of American workers. In order to see why Bernie is the best choice for laborers in America, his stance on trade must be distinguished from both Biden's waffling and Trump's hollow rhetoric.

The basic fact is, both as a legislator and vice president, Joe Biden has supported free trade agreements like NAFTA (under Clinton) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (under Obama). And yet as a presidential contender, Biden has backed away from these deals to avoid alienating American workers. It is not difficult to see that this is sheer political expediency. Barack Obama used the same strategy in his run in 2008.

Sanders, by contrast, has been consistently critical of trade deals that are crafted to benefit corporations rather than workers. He was clear in 1993 about why he opposed NAFTA, arguing that the "essence of NAFTA is that American workers will be forced to compete against desperate and impoverished Mexican workers," which "will only benefit the ruling elites" of those countries. And during the 2016 primary, Hillary Clinton did an about-face on the Trans-Pacific Partnership—which she had praised as the
V. **Israel-Palestine**

**Bernie Sanders won't attend AIPAC conference, saying Israel lobby provides platform for “bigotry”**

Sanders slams leading pro-Israel lobby for foregrounding bigots who "oppose basic Palestinian rights."

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**IGOR DERYSH** FEBRUARY 25, 2020 10:00AM (UTC)


Sen. Bernie Sanders, the apparent frontrunner in the Democratic presidential race, said on Sunday he would not attend this year's American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) conference, saying that the group offers a platform to leaders who "express bigotry."

Sanders wrote on Twitter that he would not attend the conference held by the pro-Israel lobbying group because he is "concerned about the platform AIPAC provides for leaders who express bigotry and oppose basic Palestinian rights." The comment appeared to reference Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who Sanders ripped as "racist."

"The Israeli people have the right to live in peace and security. So do the Palestinian people," he said. "As president, I will support the rights of both Israelis and Palestinians and do everything possible to bring peace and security to the region."…Continued: [https://www.salon.com/2020/02/25/bernie-sanders-wont-attend-aipac-conference-saying-israel-lobby-provides-platform-for-bigotry/](https://www.salon.com/2020/02/25/bernie-sanders-wont-attend-aipac-conference-saying-israel-lobby-provides-platform-for-bigotry/)

**BIDEN AND KLOBUCHAR WILL SPEAK VIA VIDEO AT PRO-ISRAEL AIPAC CONFERENCE AFTER SANDERS AND WARREN SAY THEY WON'T ATTEND**
Former Vice President Joe Biden and his fellow Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Amy Klobuchar have opted to address the 2020 American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) Policy Conference, while several other candidates pledged to stay away after calls from progressive groups to boycott the event.

AIPAC announced on Twitter Friday that the candidates would be delivering video messages to the conference. Former New York City Mayor Mike Bloomberg is expected to take part in the conference in person. Sen. Bernie Sanders, Sen. Elizabeth Warren and former South Bend, Indiana Mayor Pete Buttigieg have all announced that they will not be participating.

Biden calls Sanders’ pitch to leverage Israel aid ‘bizarre’

By BILL BARROW

December 7, 2019

OELWEIN, Iowa (AP) — Joe Biden said Saturday that it is “bizarre” for Bernie Sanders to propose withholding U.S. military aid from Israel if the government there doesn’t moderate its treatment of Palestinians.

The remarks highlight a nuanced but significant distinction between the Democratic presidential contenders. Biden and Sanders support a “two-state solution” for Israel and the Palestinians, and both men have criticized political leaders on each side of the long-standing conflict. But Biden’s take, offered during a question-and-answer session with Iowa voters, hewed a more traditional U.S. establishment line by reaffirming a financial commitment to Israel regardless of its actions toward Palestinians.

The former vice president, while casting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as a “counterproductive” and “extreme right” leader and accused Palestinian leaders of “fomenting” the conflict and “baiting everyone who is Jewish,” while suggesting that some on the U.S. political left give the Palestinian Authority “a pass” when criticizing Israeli leadership.

“In terms of Bernie and others who talk about dealing with Zionism, I strongly support Israel as an independent Jewish state,” Biden said in rural northeastern
Iowa. He added, “The idea that I’d withdraw military aid, as others have suggested, from Israel, is bizarre. I would not do that. It’s like saying to France, ‘Because you don’t agree with us, we’re going to kick you out of NATO.”

Sanders, a Vermont senator, elevated the matter in late October when he said the U.S. should “leverage” its billions of dollars in annual Israeli aid. “My solution is to say to Israel: ‘You get $3.8 billion every year. If you want military aid, you’re going to have to fundamentally change your relationship to the people of Gaza.’ In fact, I think it is fair to say that some of that should go right now into humanitarian aid.”...

Continued: https://apnews.com/f78dd392f8250caf2c8a9f9655e6fe

VI. Social Security

FACT CHECK: JOE BIDEN HAS ADVOCATED CUTTING SOCIAL SECURITY FOR 40 YEARS

Ryan Grim

January 13 2020, 8:00 a.m.


AS EARLY AS 1984 and as recently as 2018, former Vice President Joe Biden called for cuts to Social Security in the name of saving the program and balancing the federal budget. Last week, Sen. Bernie Sanders highlighted Biden’s record on Social Security in prosecuting the case that Biden isn’t the most electable candidate. The issue could be raised again in Tuesday night’s debate.

After a Sanders campaign newsletter continued the attack on Biden’s Social Security record, the Biden campaign complained to fact-checkers at Politifact that his comments were being taken out of context. Placed in context, however, Biden’s record on Social Security is far worse than one offhand remark. Indeed, Biden has been advocating for cuts to Social Security for roughly 40 years.

And after a Republican wave swept Congress in 1994, Biden’s support for cutting Social Security, and his general advocacy for budget austerity,
made him a leading combatant in the centrist-wing battle against the party’s retreating liberals in the 1980s and ’90s.

“When I argued that we should freeze federal spending, I meant Social Security as well,” he told the Senate in 1995. “I meant Medicare and Medicaid. I meant veterans’ benefits. I meant every single solitary thing in the government. And I not only tried it once, I tried it twice, I tried it a third time, and I tried it a fourth time.” (A freeze would have reduced the amount that would be paid out, cutting the program’s benefit.)… Continued: https://theintercept.com/2020/01/13/biden-cuts-social-security/

**Bernie Sanders Introduces Bold New Bill to Expand Social Security.** FEB 13, 2019 NEWS


In an effort to strengthen one of the nation’s most popular programs as the GOP pushes for cuts, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and several congressional Democrats on Wednesday introduced the Social Security Expansion Act to ensure that seniors can retire in dignity and “everyone with a disability can live with the security they need.”

Confronting an economic landscape in which half of older Americans have no retirement savings and 20 percent of seniors are forced to live on income that barely exceeds the federal poverty line, Sanders’ legislation would significantly expand Social Security benefits and ensure the program remains solvent for at least the next five decades by subjecting all income over $250,000 to the Social Security payroll tax.


**VII. Big Money and Wall Street**
Here Are The Billionaires Backing Joe Biden’s Presidential Campaign

Michela Tindera  Forbes Staff


This article reflects Federal Election Commission filings as of Sept. 30, 2019. Go here to see the latest billionaire donor count:


Forty-four (Now over 60) billionaires and their spouses have donated to Joe Biden’s presidential campaign, according to a review of the latest federal filings, making the former vice president one of the biggest billionaire beneficiaries of the 2020 field.

The list includes famous names like former Hewlett-Packard CEO Meg Whitman, ex-Google CEO Eric Schmidt and arts patron Eli Broad. There are also lesser-known tycoons like casino and real estate scion Neil Bluhm and Marcus & Millichap founder George Marcus, who have hosted $1,000-a-head fundraisers for the former vice president, according to pool reports. Marcus described Biden as “probably the most sterling individual that we could imagine would occupy the office of the White House.” Altogether, Forbes found 26 billionaires and 18 billionaire spouses who have contributed to the campaign (Now over 60 billionaires total)....Continued:


'Money Is Not Speech and Corporations Are Not People': Sanders Unveils Plan to Get Corporate Money Out of Politics

"You can't take on a corrupt system if you take its money."
Holding up the small-donor campaign model his campaign has revolutionized as proof alternatives exist, Sen. Bernie Sanders on Monday unveiled an ambitious new plan to get "corporate money out of politics."

The Sanders plan aims to end the corrupting influence of dark money by dramatically curbing the ability of corporations to dominate giving to political parties, replacing the Federal Election Commission with a new enforcement agency, establishing public funding for all federal elections, and pushing for a Constitutional Amendment that makes clear that "money is not speech and corporations are not people."

"Our grassroots-funded campaign is proving every single day that you don't need billionaires and private fundraisers to run for president." —Sen. Bernie Sanders

The Sanders campaign said in a statement that the new slate of proposals—which can be read in full here—are designed to end "the greed-fueled, corrupt corporate influence over elections, national party convention, and presidential inaugurations" that currently exists and deliver to the public an election system the puts the America people at the center.

"Our grassroots-funded campaign is proving every single day that you don't need billionaires and private fundraisers to run for president," Sanders said. "We've received more contributions from more individual contributors than any campaign in the history of American politics because we understand the basic reality that you can't take on a corrupt system if you take its money."...Continued:
Joe Biden is reportedly considering appointing businessman Michael Bloomberg and JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon, both billionaires, to powerful leadership positions should Biden win the Democratic presidential nomination and defeat President Donald Trump in November.

Axios reported Monday that the former vice president and his campaign advisers are weighing Dimon for treasury secretary, a cabinet position tasked with overseeing the U.S. financial system. Biden is also considering Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and Bank of America vice chair Anne Finucane for the top Treasury post.

Bloomberg, who dropped out of the presidential race last week and immediately endorsed Biden, "would be top possibility to head the World Bank" under a Biden administration, according to Axios.

Progressive observers were appalled, if not surprised, by the preliminary list of potential Biden appointees, which Axios reported just 24 hours before Democratic primary contests in six states.

"This shouldn't surprise anyone. This is who the Dem Party is," tweeted Glenn Greenwald, co-founder of The Intercept. "The establishment wing of the party didn't fall into line behind Biden despite the fact that he'd put Bloomberg and Jamie Dimon in his cabinet. They did it because of that. This is who they are, their ideology."…Continued: https://www.commondreams.org/news/2020/03/09/all-you-need-know-biden-reportedly-weighing-billionaires-michael-bloomberg-and-jamie?

"Organized Money vs. Organized People": New Sanders Memo Details Stark Choice Between Biden and Bernie

"Voters face a decision between Bernie's working-class movement and his message of change, and Biden's effort to—in his own words—make sure that 'nothing will fundamentally change' for the billionaire class."

By Jake Johnson, staff writer Published on Tuesday, March 03, 2020 By Common Dreams

Sen. Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign sent a memo to staffers and surrogates Monday evening spotlighting "stark" policy differences between Sanders and Joe
Biden on Social Security, trade, and other major issues after the former vice president received a wave of high-profile endorsements on the eve of Super Tuesday.

"Voters face a decision between Bernie's working-class movement and his message of change, and Biden's effort to—in his own words—make sure that 'nothing will fundamentally change' for the billionaire class that buys elections."

—Sanders campaign memo

The memo (pdf), authored by Sanders campaign manager Faiz Shakir and senior adviser Jeff Weaver, characterizes Biden's endorsements from Pete Buttigieg, Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Beto O'Rourke, and former Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid as part of an effort by the former vice president to "coalesce the Washington establishment and its big donors around his campaign to protect the status quo."

"Heading into Super Tuesday," the memo continues, "the choice in the Democratic primary is now crystal clear: voters face a decision between Bernie's working-class movement and his message of change, and Biden's effort to—in his own words—make sure that 'nothing will fundamentally change' for the billionaire class that buys elections."

"With Biden bankrolled by a super PAC and boosted by billionaire donors, the primary is far from over," the document declares. "We are now entering the phase of the primary in which the differences between Bernie and Biden will take center stage."

David Sirota, speechwriter and senior adviser to the Sanders campaign, echoed that message in social media posts on Monday.

"It is organized money versus organized people," Sirota tweeted, "as it always ends up being in every consequential battle in history."

The memo points to Biden's decades-long record of advocating for cuts to Social Security, a history the Sanders campaign argues could harm Biden's chances in a potential general election match-up with President Donald Trump.

"Joe Biden spent 30 years trying to cut Social Security, while Bernie fought those cuts and pushed to expand the program," the memo says.

The document also highlights Biden's votes as a Delaware senator in favor of the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the 2003 invasion of Iraq, and the 2005 bankruptcy bill. By contrast, Sanders voted against each of those.

"These differences make clear that the choice between these two candidates is stark—it is a choice between the party's core economic and social justice agenda, and the Washington establishment's agenda that aims to protect and
enrich the wealthy and well-connected," the memo says. "The differences also spotlight how Bernie's agenda is a far more popular general election agenda than Biden’s."

Read the full memo: https://www.commondreams.org/news/2020/03/03/organized-money-vs-organized-people-new-sanders-memo-details-stark-choice-between

VIII. Mental Health and Character

Biden Is Showing Signs of Cognitive Decline. This Should Worry Anyone Who Wants to Beat Trump

"If these were just isolated incidents, perhaps they could be chalked up to lack of sleep or the side effect of some medication. But there’s a pattern here and we need to confront it if we’re going to put our faith in this man to not only beat Trump but also govern the country."

By Justin Ward / medium.com / Mar 4, 2020
https://www.filmsforaction.org/articles/bidens-brain-is-breaking-down/

“We hold these truths to be self-evident. All men and women are created, by the...you know...you know the thing.”

On the eve of Super Tuesday, Biden gave a speech before a massive crowd in Texas. Riding high off the momentum of his big win in South Carolina and a wave of last-minute endorsements from his erstwhile primary opponents, he finally had his chance to seize the mantle of frontrunner from Sen. Bernie Sanders. He needed to say something rousing and patriotic, so he went with an old standard: The Declaration of Independence.

But he struggled to recite the words every child in America memorized in grade school: “We hold these truths to be self-evident. All men and women are created, by the...you know...you know the thing.”

Lesser missteps have killed whole presidential bids in the past— the textbook example being the “Dean scream”—but there was a near-total blackout among center-left outlets like CNN and MSNBC. Conservative media ran wild with it,
foreshadowing the kind of attack ads that will appear in the general if Biden should get the nomination.

The only mention in mainstream media the *Daily Show*, which showed a clip of it *along with several of the former vice president’s recent “gaffes.”* It was played for laughs, with host Trevor Noah mugging at the camera comedically, but with so much on the line right now, this is no joke.

Sure, politicians are under a lot of stress and they occasionally make some egregious flubs, like the time Obama said *he had been to 57 states*. But when it’s happening with great frequency to a politician pushing 80 who previously had surgery for a brain aneurysm, maybe it’s a sign of something more serous.

These aren’t just gaffes. So far Biden has:

- Forgotten *which state he was in*
- Forgotten *Obama’s name*
- Called *Chris Wallace “Chuck”*
- Said he was a “candidate for the United States Senate” and if you don’t like him, *you can vote for the “other Biden.”*
- Made up an easily debunked story *about being arrested in South Africa*
- Claimed *150 million*—about half of the American population—had been killed in gun violence since 2007
- He’s had numerous strange and hostile encounters with voters, including calling one “fat” and another a “*lying dog-faced pony soldier*”

If these were just isolated incidents, perhaps they could be chalked up to lack of sleep or the side effect of some medication. But there’s a pattern here and we need to confront it if we’re going to put our faith in this man to not only beat Trump but also govern the country.

With all four remaining contenders over age 70, the candidates’ health is a legitimate topic to discuss, but so far the focus has overwhelmingly been on Bernie Sanders, who had a stent procedure last fall. Debate moderators have quizzed him about it. His health has been the subject of countless articles.
He’s almost daily being hounded to release more medical records, which his campaign has likened to “birtherism.”

If Bernie’s heart is fair game, then so is Joe’s brain.

The mainstream media tells on itself with this double standard. From James Carville calling Sanders’ Nevada win a “victory for Putin” to Chuck Todd likening Bernie’s supporters to Brownshirts—outlets like MSNBC and CNN have shown a naked hostility to Sanders.

Since Biden represents the establishment’s best bet to deny Sanders the nomination, the centrist media will go to great lengths to downplay his cognitive decline while presenting Bernie as knocking on death’s door.

This is a political contest, not a marathon. The more relevant qualification here isn’t whether your ticker is in top shape but whether you have the mental acuity to appear in public on a daily basis and coherently make the case for your platform.

Sanders hasn’t fallen ill since his procedure. He has, however remained mentally sharp, maintaining flawless message discipline. He’s prepared for every question and always expertly pivots with grace to his core issues whenever there’s a risk he might falter.

The same can’t be said for Biden. Even his own campaign staff has little confidence in his ability to communicate with the public. The Hill reported back in August 2019 that they were “nervous” about his “verbal flubs” and that he tended to make them more often “later in the day.”

Handlers can often be seen pulling Biden away when he gets into tense confrontations with ordinary people. He has repeatedly told voters to “go vote for someone else.”

So far, his campaign has preferred small, intimate events to the kind of gigantic rallies Sanders has staged. The rationale is ostensibly strategic—“retail” vs. “wholesale” politics—but there is another explanation, i.e. that they’re trying to limit his exposure.

As Politico notes, his campaign hopes to avoid damage caused by Biden’s “longstanding penchant for going off-message in unscripted environments,”
which is a diplomatic way of describing his rambling diatribes and extended anecdotes that don’t seem to go anywhere.

But when the general election comes, it will be harder to stage-manage Biden. He’ll have to do more and larger events. It will be harder to contain him once he’s facing the press every single day. The facade of basic competency won’t stand up to scrutiny once the spotlight is on him twenty-four seven.

He’ll likely face more questions about his son Hunter and his relationship with the Ukrainian company Burisma, which nearly 60 percent of independent voters consider a scandal. If he responds to these questions with anything other than a concise, calculated answer, he’ll be perceived as crooked.

Of course, Trump is most likely suffering from some kind of dementia as well, but he’s better at managing it. Trump’s ability as both showman and conman enables him to mask his incoherence or transform it into an entertaining spectacle. Biden tries to come off as presidential—to project gravitas—which is hard if you’re having trouble stringing sentences together.

Aside from his dubious claim to electability, Biden’s selling point is supposedly his political moderation, but Trump has already started to use his condition to construct a different narrative. He told a crowd at his North Carolina rally this week that Biden actually won’t be running the country—he’s too senile. Instead, his Marxist handlers will be in charge.

I honestly don’t think he knows what office he’s running for. He’s not going to be running it. Other people are going to. They’re going to put him into a home and other people are going to be running the country and they’re going to be super left radical crazies.

As ridiculous as this attack is, it will be effective on some. If not, Trump will use a different smear. He’ll say Biden is corrupt—ex. the “Senator from MBNA”—or that he represents the liberal elite. Biden needs to be able to manage his own personal narrative or else Trump will create it for him, and he can’t do that if he isn’t quick on his feet.

Sanders has proven much better at this. In the debates, he has deftly redirected the many redbaiting attacks against him from his Democratic opponents. Most recently, he was accused of being soft on leftist dictators for
saying positive things about Cuba. His response was to point out that Obama said similar comments and then shift the focus to Michael Bloomberg’s dealings with Saudi Arabia and China.

So while all candidates have liabilities, Biden’s are all compounded by his biggest: his mental decline.

The Democratic establishment could make an issue out of this if they chose to. It’s not a matter of ableism or tact. There were no qualms about using Trump’s mental fitness (or lack thereof) as a pretext to get him removed from office.

Instead, great pains are taken to minimize or obfuscate Biden’s cognitive decline. It speaks to the establishment’s priorities that they are willing to overlook a catastrophic fault in their preferred candidate. It’s not that he’s their best chance to beat Trump but rather that he’s their only chance to defeat Bernie Sanders.

BERNIE SANDERS BEATS DONALD TRUMP AND DEMOCRATS ON CHARACTER AND EMPATHY IN NEW POLL
BY JAMES WALKER ON 2/16/20 AT 5:23 AM EST

Bernie Sanders performs better than any of his 2020 rivals on the issues of personal character and empathy, according to a new poll.

The USA Today/Ipsos survey published on Saturday found voters had greater admiration for the Vermont senator's personal characteristics than they did for President Donald Trump or other contenders in the Democratic primary field.
Asked for their views on the character of candidates, 40 percent of those polled said they admired Sanders while just 26 percent said the same about the commander-in-chief.

Former Vice President Joe Biden came in second place, with 31 percent of voters admiring his character while 30 percent said the same of Sen. Elizabeth Warren and former South Bend mayor Pete Buttigieg….Continued: