



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on January 25, 2013

Biden 2016? It's a Real Possibility

Mitt Romney had barely finished his concession speech last November when pundits began discussing potential Republican candidates for the 2016 presidential contest. Since Barack Obama emerged victorious, they waited a little longer to start considering the Democratic field; but now that his second and final term has begun, the speculation is going full steam ahead.



According to a lengthy [Politico](#) story, the Democrat currently showing the greatest interest in succeeding Obama is none other than Vice President Joe Biden.

Biden, according to a number of advisers and Democrats who have spoken to him in recent months, wants to run, or at least be well positioned to run, if and when he decides to pull the trigger. Biden has expressed a clear sense of urgency, convinced the Democratic field will be defined quickly — and that it might very well come down to a private chat with Hillary Clinton about who should finish what Barack Obama started.

“He’s intoxicated by the idea, and it’s impossible not to be intoxicated by the idea,” said a Democrat close to the White House. And the intoxication is hardly new. Officials working on the Obama-Biden campaign last year were struck by how the vice president always seemed to have one eye on a run, including aggressively courting the president’s donors. Obama aides at times had to actively steer Biden to places where he was needed — such as Pennsylvania — because he kept asking to be deployed to Iowa, New Hampshire, and other early states.

“He wasn’t just doing fundraising the campaign assigned to him,” said a campaign adviser. “He was inviting people to the mansion to hang out and have dinner.” Biden was way more into the donors than Obama was. “He embraced it with a tirelessness and a gusto that even the president didn’t,” another campaign official said.

Biden also threw a party at the Naval Observatory, the vice president’s residence, on Inauguration Day. Invited were “more than 200 Democratic insiders,” says *Politico*, including a significant number “from the traditional first nominating states.”

“I took a look at who was there and said to myself, ‘There’s no question he’s thinking about the future,’” New Hampshire state Sen. Lou D’Allesandro, one of the attendees, told *Politico*.

Although vice presidents often seek to succeed the presidents under whom they have served, Biden was not previously considered likely to do so. He is 70 years old now and will turn 74 in 2016. He has run for president twice before — in 1988, when he was caught [appropriating a British politician’s life story for his own](#) and discovered to be a serial plagiarizer, and 2008 — and (in *Politico*’s vernacular) “bombed” both times.

Then there’s the matter of competition for the nomination. Although outgoing Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has previously denied any intention to run for president in 2016, Democrats seem eager for her to give it another try. (She lost the nomination to Obama in 2008.) During Clinton’s testimony at the



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Benghazi hearings on Capitol Hill Wednesday, California Sen. Barbara Boxer told Clinton, “You will be sorely missed, but I for one hope for not too long” — a remark the chattering classes are taking as a [thinly veiled plug for a 2016 Clinton run](#). American Samoa Delegate [Eni Faleomavaega, Jr.](#), was even more direct, telling the secretary, “I salute you and I look ahead to 2016, wishing you much success and extending to you my highest regards.”

Clinton would certainly be a formidable opponent. “She is a rock star with higher favorable ratings and the capacity to clear the field if she goes all-in,” writes *Politico*. “She is also a she — and Democrats are eager to elect the first women [sic] after electing the first African-American.”

A Democrat close to both Biden and Clinton said it is extremely unlikely that they would challenge each other. “They’re both going to build up teams and see how it goes,” the Democrat said. “One of them will fade away, as it becomes more obvious which one of them should be the standard-bearer for the Obama legacy. I can’t see them both announcing for president. But both of them will have teams that try to get to that.”

While Obama cannot dictate who the party’s nominee will be, he can definitely influence it. And that raises *Politico*’s \$64,000 question: “Will the president really want a Clinton to replace him after spending eight years redirecting the party away from the centrism of Bill Clinton? After all, it was Clinton who declared the era of Big Government is over. And it was Obama, in his second inaugural speech, who declared it very much back on.”

Obama, of course, was only stating the obvious: The era of big government never ended, despite Clinton’s announcing its demise. But Clinton does have the reputation, whether deserved or not, of being a centrist, and some of that carries over to people’s impressions of his wife.

Biden, on the other hand, is viewed as a staunch liberal. As a senator he had a lifetime rating of 72 percent from the far-left Americans for Democratic Action and a lifetime rating of 13 percent from the American Conservative Union. He scored a 17 percent on *The New American*’s Freedom Index for the 110th Congress, which ended just before he assumed the vice presidency.

Moreover, observes *Politico*:

Biden, in many ways, is better positioned than anyone to carry out the liberal manifesto Obama detailed in his speech Monday. It was Biden who ticked off White House officials by blurting out support for gay marriage before Obama did — and Biden who put the gun control package together after the killings in Connecticut.

“Primary voters look at this administration and say Biden has been leading from behind,” said one Democratic adviser. “On gay marriage, and whatever success they have with guns, he has carried the liberal agenda, in some ways, more forcefully than the president has. And that matters to primary voters.”

The adviser added: “When he speaks to gay audiences, he’s seen as the hero. And he only becomes more heroic as the president embraces what they give Biden credit for pushing the president toward.”

In other words, while President Obama has, up to now, been somewhat reticent to implement certain of the left’s most cherished policies, a President Biden would be likely to plow ahead with them irrespective of their wider popularity. That might doom him to a single term, but a great deal of havoc can still be wreaked in four years.

Will Biden run in 2016? Only he knows for sure, and he may not even have fully decided yet. If he does



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choose to run, he will surely be one of the leading candidates this time around. And, according to *Politico*, his “greatest asset is his love of the game,” so whether he wins or loses, he’s sure to have fun trying.

Photo of Vice President Joe Biden at Inaugural Parade Jan. 21, 2013: AP Images



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