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Democrats Pile on Bernie in Latest Debate

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At the Democratic debate Tuesday night in advance of Saturday's presidential primary in South Carolina, five of the Democratic candidates on the stage took aim at Senator Bernie Sanders for his continuing praise of communist dictators.



Sanders recently defended his previous remarks in which he praised the late Cuban Communist dictator Fidel Castro's literacy program. While admitting that Cuba was "authoritarian" under Castro, and that he was "opposed" to that, Sanders said it was "unfair to simply say everything is bad, you know? When Fidel Castro came into office [i.e., when he assumed the role of dictator], you know what he did? He had a massive literacy program. Is that a bad thing?"

But that is not the only Communist dictatorship that Sanders has praise for. He has also had some kind words for Communist China. "The facts are clear, that they have taken more people out of extreme poverty than any country in history." Of course, the Communist regime in China has killed at least 35 million or so of its own people.

Sanders' praise for Castro's literacy program caused Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas) to respond in a tweet, "It really makes a difference when those you murder at the firing squad can read and write."

Of course, one should not be surprised that a prominent Republican such as Cruz (whose own father was one of the hundreds of thousands of former Cuban citizens who now live in the United States after fleeing the communist dictatorship established by Castro) to take issue with Sanders' praise of the brutal dictatorship in Cuba. What made the Democratic debate in Charleston, South Carolina, co-hosted by CBS News and the Congressional Black Caucus, interesting is that Sanders' fellow hopefuls for the Democratic Party nomination also zeroed in on Sanders' positive words for a communist regime, with stiff criticism.

The Democratic candidates' attack on Sanders for his support of the communist governments in Cuba and China generally were grounded in two concerns.

First, the Democrats expressed the fear that a Sanders-led Democratic ticket would lead to not only his defeat at the hands of President Donald Trump, but additionally could hurt Democrats up and down the ticket, including the possibility of losing the House of Representatives. Words such as "catastrophic" peppered the debate, with allusions to the rout endured by the Labour Party in the United Kingdom led by far-left leader Jeremy Corbyn in the recent House of Commons elections.

Former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg even suggested that Russian President Vladimir Putin is working to get Sanders the nomination of the Democratic Party, just so he could then lose big to Donald Trump (presumably Putin's favorite candidate to be president). "I think that Donald Trump



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thinks it would be better if he's president — I do not think so. Vladimir Putin thinks that Donald Trump should be president of the United States. And that's why Russia is helping you [Sanders] get elected, so you'll lose to him." Bloomberg added, "Can anyone in this room imagine moderate Republicans voting for [Sanders]?"

Former South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg chimed in. "If you want to keep the House in Democratic hands, you might want to check with the people who actually turned the House blue. Forty Democrats who are not running on your platform — they are running away from your platform as fast as they possibly can — let's listen to them, when they say they don't want to be out there defending your programs." Buttigieg added, "I am not looking forward to a scenario where it comes down to Donald Trump with his nostalgia for the social order of the 1950s, and Bernie Sanders with a nostalgia for the revolutionary politics of the 1960s.... We're not gonna win these critical House and Senate races if people in these races have to explain why the nominee of the Democratic Party is telling people to look at the bright side of the Castro regime."

Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota went beyond the question of whether Sanders would lose to Trump to question his proposed spending promises. Speaking of Sanders' explanation on the previous night as to how he would pay for all of his grandiose spending proposals, Klobuchar said, "The math does not add up — in fact, just on *60 Minutes* this weekend, he said he wasn't gonna rattle through the 'nickels and dimes.' Well, let me tell you how many nickels and dimes we're talking about. Nearly \$60 trillion."

Klobuchar then said, "Do you know how much that is, for all of his programs? That's three times the American economy. Not the federal government. The entire economy."

Interestingly, the one candidate who offered no criticism of Sanders' wild-eyed socialistic spending proposals was Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts. Warren does not call herself a democratic socialist like Sanders, preferring the term "progressive" to describe her programs proposals, which essentially are no different than Sanders' ideas.

For that matter, despite their criticisms of Sanders, the other candidates offer many of the same policy proposals as the avowedly socialist Sanders, but prefer to dress their proposal up as being more "moderate."

While the debate centered around Sanders, the acknowledged front-runner for the Democratic Party nomination, former Vice President Joe Biden attacked Sanders' past support of a bill backed by the National Rifle Association that granted gun manufacturers legal protections from liability lawsuits. To make his point, Biden claimed that 150 million people "have been killed" in America by guns since 2007. "More than all the wars, including Vietnam, from that point on."

Biden's numbers of 150 million are, of course, preposterous, as that would be about half the entire population of the United States. Such ridiculous statements that are so common coming from Biden are part of the reason that his campaign has done so poorly so far. It is widely assumed that Biden has to win in South Carolina to keep his presidential hopes alive, going into Super Tuesday next week.

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