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Polls Show Sanders as the Strongest Candidate to Win Presidency, but Democrats Likely to Select Clinton as the Nominee

Kasich the Strongest Republican but Trump Likelier to win that Nomination

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Global Research, February 23, 2016

Region: USA
In-depth Report: U.S. Elections

The latest report by RealClearPolitics, which includes all polls this month on hypothetical Presidential match-ups in the November general election, indicates that of all the major-Party candidates in the U.S. Presidential contest (Clinton, Sanders, Trump, Rubio, Cruz, and Kasich), generally the strongest candidate in match-ups against each one of the leading candidates of the opposite Party is Democrat Bernie Sanders. The strongest Republican is John Kasich.

Democrat Hillary Clinton loses by 7.4% to John Kasich, by 4.7% to Marco Rubio, and by 0.8% to Ted Cruz, and she wins by 2.8% over Donald Trump.

Democrat Bernie Sanders wins by 6.0% over Trump, by 4.7% over Cruz, by 0.5% over Kasich, and ties with Rubio.

Consequently, the strongest of all of the candidates, at this point in the contest, is clearly Democrat Sanders (who beats-or-ties all Republicans), but the next-strongest candidate is Republican John Kasich (who easily beats Clinton and virtually ties Sanders).

At this stage in the contest, rational voters whose main concern is to beat the opposite Party will be voting for Sanders if they are Democrats, and for Kasich if they are Republicans.

The most-detailed of the latest polls is the one taken February 10-15 February by Quinnipiac. They summarize it at the opening of their report:

> American voters back Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont over Republican candidates by margins of 4 to 10 percentage points in head to head presidential match-ups, according to a Quinnipiac University National poll released today. The closest Republican contender is Ohio Gov. John Kasich who trails Sanders 45 – 41 percent.
>
> Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton trails or ties leading Republicans in the November face-off.

However, the Fox News Poll that RealClearPolitics includes as being one of this month's "General Election " polls wasn't that, but was instead a survey taken only of South Carolinians. It shouldn't have been included in this tabulation of "General Election" polls. So, the latest two general-election polls are actually Quinnipiac's and Suffolk University's (for

USA Today). That USA Today Poll, taken February 11-15, was summarized by *USA Today* by noting that Hillary Clinton is still the likely winner of the Democratic nomination because of her huge lead in the southern states — the early states, where almost all Democrats are Blacks and intend to vote for Clinton and against Sanders; consequently those southern Democrats might win the Democratic primaries and the nomination for Clinton, despite her being the weaker candidate against the Republican candidates and thus the likelier Democratic candidate to produce a Republican Presidency after November. *USA Today* also said: "Sanders does slightly better in match-ups against leading Republican candidates," but noted that Clinton gets 50% of likely Democratic primary and caucus voters while Sanders gets only 40%. Furthermore, in the primaries and caucuses voting within the next two weeks, almost all of the states are southern, so Clinton will probably sweep nearly all of them, which would likely convince Democrats in other states that she'd be the strongest candidate to run against the ultimate Republican choice. This is the reason why bettors have odds favoring Clinton to become the nominee.

According to those two recent general-election polls, there is also an overwhelming likelihood that Trump will win the nomination though Kasich would likely be the far-stronger candidate against the Democratic nominee, regardless of whether that turns out to be Clinton or Sanders.

So, it seems probable that both Parties will reject their strongest candidate — Sanders for the Democratic Party, and Kasich for the Republican Party — because the earliest states to vote will be in the deep south, where racial conflicts have generally been the strongest. Both Party-organizations — Democratic and Republican — made that choice, and it gives the advantage, in both Parties, to the candidates who have exploited racial conflicts the most effectively for their own benefits.

Investigative historian Eric Zuesse is the author, most recently, of They're Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010, and of CHRIST'S VENTRILOQUISTS: The Event that Created Christianity.

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