

"Not so fast, my friend." This is a popular expression of ESPN sportscaster Lee Corso to describe his anticipated surprise announcement for his legions of football fans that sends college football into a tizzy. For political observers, New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg's op ed announcement in Thursday New York Times might qualify for the Corso response. It is apparent from Bloomberg's announcement, as well as illuminating background information from the Associated Press on the same day and same subject, that up until his announcement, Bloomberg was struggling mightily with the decision to run. Although I am not involved in any of the political races, it does occur to me that there is still a strong possibility that a Bloomberg for President may still be alive. My source--intuition and logic. Consider the following:

- Mayor Bloomberg's supporters have been blatant in conducting the required preliminary research and organizational work to launch such a national campaign, as has been reported by press accounts for months. They will be able to in a moment's notice get the Mayor on the ballots of all fifty states.
- Mayor Bloomberg is the only probable candidate with the personal wealth to fund a viable campaign, even starting at this late time--keep in mind however, the election is still 9 months away.
- With a recent national network news account somewhat critical report on Senator Obama's track record as an Illinois state senator and conservatives not enthralled with John McCain all of the major candidates now carry significant 'blemishes' on their public and political resumes, making the time right for a new face.
- Mayor Bloomberg did not become a billionaire by happenstance--he is reportedly a bright, determined and organized businessman, and is well-informed about the intricacies of ballot access rules.
- Despite saying that he will not be a candidate for President, Mayor Bloomberg will not issue a Shermanesque statement.
- Mayor Bloomberg reportedly supported the right of Ralph Nader running for president, adding more confusion for the entry of a well financed, organized candidate from the media rich northeast.
- Mayor Bloomberg loaned his political apparatus to Connecticut Senator Joseph Lieberman in 2006 during his Independent run for the United States Senate to learn the ins and outs of an independent campaign.
- With the accelerated discussion of running-mates among the major campaigns, rumors have swirled about a possible "dream ticket" of Mayor Bloomberg and former Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia and indeed the two have met and spoken about a possible dream ticket.

The strategic significance of Bloomberg supporters initiating the ballot initiative, perhaps as early as Tuesday, March 4th, is that is the earliest the effort could start a petition drive in the critical state of Texas, with one of the earliest deadlines. The Mayor said, in his Thursday New York Times piece, that he wanted to influence the parties and their respective presidential campaigns. Perhaps unlike any other political figure in America, including Ralph Nadar, Mayor Bloomberg could render almost unlimited influence over the national campaign. Is it possible that he might even render more influence over some of the national issues, than even the candidates themselves? "Not so fast, my friend"...think about it. Could it be that a sustaining Bloomberg ballot drive could be the best and maybe only hope for those citizens feeling somewhat disenfranchised to still influence this most critical election.

From a political standpoint, Bloomberg passes the laugh test. Unlike Ralph Nader or some independent conservative who may run because they perceive John McCain as too liberal, a Bloomberg candidacy would not be a quixotic quest. He would have as I mentioned the money, billions in fact to run a credible campaign. He would offer a viable electable alternative to the two major parties along with a track record of accomplishment in New York City. Further, he would be the perfect problem solver candidate versus the charismatic but unproven Obama and the cranky Washington Senator John McCain. He would be competitive with a chance to win New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Missouri, California, Washington, Oregon, Wisconsin, Michigan, and yes even Florida.

Although I disclosed that my source for this information is my own, I do acknowledge that I have previously had conversations with people associated with the Mayor. Unlike, perhaps Governor Huckabee and others, I do not think Mayor Bloomberg needs to run to send a message or influence the respective party platforms. With his wealth, astute timing, and extraordinary good luck, described above, it just probably is the right time for the announcement of his candidacy...on or about March 4th, 2008.

The announcement by Mayor Bloomberg will be the equivalent of the shot heard around the political world. For Barack Obama it will be like waking up on Christmas and all of the presents are missing for it will be Bloomberg not Obama getting the coverage on March 5 despite the fact that Obama will have finished off Hillary Clinton (that it will be yesterday's news). For John McCain, it will mean that he is even more yesterday's candidate and how does his cash strapped campaign compete against Obama's millions let alone Bloomberg's billions. For voters it will mean that they can be prepared for more twists and turns before Election Day.

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