



Could Steve Bannon Replace Sen. DeMint at Heritage?

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Following the alleged attempt to oust former South Carolina Senator Jim DeMint as the conservative think-tank's President, rumors began circulating in beltway political circles over the weekend that White House chief strategist, and former Breitbart News chairman, Steve Bannon may be offered the job as a way to clear out populism from the West Wing.

Fox Sunday host Chris Wallace invited Heritage Action CEO Michael Needham to address the rumor on Sunday, but he refrained from officially commenting on the reports.

"That there's a lot of speculation and rumor in the media that never misses a chance to divide and attack conservatives," Needham said. "The Heritage Foundation is an institution that is committed to formulating and promoting conservative policies and that is not going to change."

When pressed on the Bannon replacement rumor, Needham stonewalled Wallace, and refused to either confirm or deny the move.

"There's a lot of speculation and rumor, and I'm not going to add to the speculation and rumor," Needham responded repeatedly.

Stephen Moore, an economic advisor for the Heritage Foundation, speculated during an interview Monday with the WLS AM 890's "Big John and Ray" show that the rumors would be cleared up by Tuesday, when the think-tank's board next meets.

"Truly, I don't know what's going on," Mr. Moore said. "I honestly don't know what the whole story is there. There's a bit of turmoil, but sometime in the next 24-48 hours we'll know what's going on."

Bannon has reportedly been at odds with globalist additions to President Trump's cabinet such as Goldman Sachs alum Gary Cohn, Dina Powell, and senior advisers Jared Kushner and his wife Ivanka.

Following his demotion from the National Security Council's Principals Committee, Bannon pledged to fight for his position in the White House, noting in early April that he won't go quietly into the night, and that he loves a "gunfight".

"I have enough friends," Bannon told Olivia Nuzzi for a New York Mag profile in March. "I'm not doing this to have friends. I don't socialize a lot, I don't bring people into my life. This is like being in the Navy, this is like a duty. I don't enjoy this every day. This is not living; this is a kind of existence."

In addition to his previous statements pledging to fight for his position inside President Trump's cabinet, a move to head the Heritage Foundation would be at odds with previous statements by Bannon denouncing the organization.

In January 2016, Bannon inferred to the Washington Post that the Heritage Foundation was part of the entrenched political establishment in Washington which he has adamantly railed against in his career.

“We think of ourselves as virulently anti-establishment, particularly ‘anti-’ the permanent political class,” Bannon said. “We say Paul Ryan was grown in a petri dish at the Heritage Foundation.”

In 2013, Bannon reportedly told the Daily Beast that he wanted to “destroy” this political establishment

“I’m a Leninist,” Bannon said. “Lenin wanted to destroy the state, and that’s my goal, too. I want to bring everything crashing down, and destroy all of today’s establishment.”

Bannon has also previously described himself as an “economic nationalist”, which would be at odds with the Heritage Foundation’s free-market economic views.

Robert Draper, a contributor for The New York Times Magazine, recalled a past conversation he had with Bannon on the subject of his economic philosophy, in an article published on March 26, 2017.

“What’s that Dostoyevsky line: Happy families are all the same, but unhappy families are unhappy in their own unique ways?” Draper wrote Bannon said, noting that Bannon meant to refer to Tolstoy, not Dostoyevsky.

“I think the Democrats are fundamentally afflicted with the inability to discuss and have an adult conversation about economics and jobs, because they’re too consumed by identity politics,” Bannon reportedly told Draper. “And then the Republicans, it’s all this theoretical Cato Institute, Austrian economics, limited government—which just doesn’t have any depth to it. They’re not living in the real world.”

One thing Bannon may meld well with however is the stated slogan of the Heritage Foundation’s lobbying arm, Heritage Action For America, which operates under the paradigm: “If you can’t make them see the light, make them feel the heat.”