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April 18, 2016: Ted Cruz on the Second or Third Ballot

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4/18/2016—Ross Douthat saw this coming awhile ago. There is really nothing to stop Ted Cruz except Donald Trump on the first ballot. And that probably won't happen because not many Republicans fear a Cruz nomination more than a Trump nomination. And they are right. Cruz is a different kind of candidate. He could win. Calling him a wacko bird, as John McCain did, won't mean much to a lot of voters. The Republicans who don't like him will happily support him compared to Hillary Clinton, whom they really dislike, or Bernie Sanders, should he win the nomination. Well, I guess I should be happy that it will not be Trump, who is a dangerous man in a way Ted Cruz is not. But think about Cruz running the country. He calls for a return to the gold standard. Obviously he denies global warming. Fortunately, he is bad on immigration, which is the only issue that will really hurt him. (I know he is extreme on abortion, but any Republican candidate will have a similar position, or that person could not win the nomination). Cruz also means that the Republican Party will not necessarily have a bad election. After all, Hillary has already shown that she is not a great candidate. Against Trump, Sanders supporters would happily vote for her—would see the necessity of doing so. Not so against Cruz. I am leaving out how Trump supporters will feel about Trump's losing the nomination in a process they may feel is tainted. But how deep was their attachment to Trump? Will they translate Trump's desire to defend social programs into an understanding that Cruz is against their interests? Well, if Hillary understands that dynamic, she could get somewhere. But Hillary is fundamentally a free trader and Trump is not. That will probably foreclose an appeal like that.