Beat: Politics

CENTRE'S PRIMARY PANIC:CAN FRANCE'S MODERATE CAMP AVOID LE PEN/MELENCHON RUN OFF

HERVÉ MORIN CALLS FOR A COMMON CONTEST

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USPA NEWS - As France's Presidential elections 2027 is hitting kicking off, (Election day, 18th April, 2nd May 2027) the crucial question, to be raised, as we are publishing, is whether the central bloc (Horizon Party ed by Edouard Philippe, former PM, Renaissance Macron's party led by Gabriel Attal, former PM, Les Centrist led by Herve Morin former Minister of Defence & Army, Les Republicains, led by Bruno Retailleau former Minister of Interior) too scattered has reached the point where its greatest danger may not be an opponent, but division. With the first round of the 2027 presidential election scheduled for 18 April, Herve Morin, president of the Normandy region and leader of Les Centristes, (Near Right) is calling for an open primary of the centre and right. His warning is stark: unless the moderate camp chooses a single candidate, it could be shut out of the second round by the radical left and the far right.
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have either declared themselves candidates or entered the race through primary processes, though the final ballot will depend on securing 500 elected officials' endorsements across at least 30 department or overseas

HERVE MORIN'S CALL: ONE PRIMARY, ONE COMMON PLATFORM, MAKES SENSE
Herve Morin (Centrist's boss) has launched a petition for a primary bringing together figures from the centre and right. His case is not simply procedural. He argues that a shared contest would oblige potential candidates to defend a common charter of values, test their support openly and then unite behind the winner.

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Forty five (45) who might be candidates, only if they got the 500 signatures)

have either declared themselves candidates or entered the race through primary processes, though the final ballot will depend on securing 500 elected officials' endorsements across at least 30 departments or overseas territories. In such a crowded field, each additional candidacy can turn a political family's strength into its weakness.

HERVÉ MORIN CALLS FOR A COMMON CONTEST AS PHILIPPE, ATTAL AND RETAILLEAU PURSUE SEPARATE ROADS TO 2027 The objective is to prevent vote fragmentation. Herve Morin's scenario is clear: if Edouard Philippe, Gabriel Attal, Bruno Retailleau, David Lisnard and others compete separately, none may gather enough support to reach the run-off. In that event, the centre could be reduced to watching a second round between Marine Le Pen and Jean-Luc Melenchon two candidates whose political projects stand far from the moderate camp Morin wants to preserve. His proposal is therefore both an appeal for unity and an admission of vulnerability.

EDOUARD PHILIPPE'S REFUSAL, ATTAL'S AMBIGUITY
Edouard Philippe, leader of Horizons and mayor of Le Havre, has rejected the primary proposal. His strategy is based on the opposite calculation: he wants to be treated as the natural candidate of a broad centre-right coalition, rather than as one contender obliged to survive an internal contest. Polling places him ahead of other central-bloc figures in several scenarios, including an estimate of 17 percent when he runs without Gabriel Attal. That advantage explains why he sees little reason to submit to a process that could weaken his presidential stature.

Gabriel Attal, the Renaissance leader and former prime minister, speaks repeatedly about gathering moderate voters and preventing the political extremes from taking control. Yet he continues to build his own campaign, including public meetings and policy proposals aimed at younger voters. This produces an obvious contradiction: the rhetoric is one of unity, while the political practice remains one of

separate candidacies.

BRUNO RETAILLEAU: THE RIGHT'S CANDIDATE, NOT THE CENTRE'S SOLUTION
Bruno Retailleau, the designated candidate of Les Républicains (LR) , is part of the mathematical problem even if he is not naturally part of the Macron-era centre. LR members selected their party president as their presidential nominee in April 2026, without holding a primary. Bruno Retailleau's campaign rests on a conservative message focused on authority, immigration and national sovereignty; he has sought to distinguish this from the Rassemblement National while defending a firmer right-wing identity.

His polling range broadly between 7 and 10 percent in the scenarios currently cited illustrates the challenge. Bruno Retailleau possesses a party structure and an identifiable line, but he does not yet have a clear route to the second round on his own. The same is true, in different forms, of Attal and other centre-right contenders. Philippe may lead the moderate group, but leading a divided bloc is not the same as qualifying for the presidency.

THE MODERATE CAMP'S CLOCK IS TICKING
The issue is not whether a primary is inherently democratic. It is whether the centre can afford one candidate too many. Morin is betting that an open primary could turn rivalry into a hierarchy and prevent the moderate electorate from scattering across several political brands. Edouard Philippe is betting that primaries weaken leaders and that his own advantage will eventually force others to rally behind him. Attal is trying to keep both options alive: speak of unity, preserve autonomy.

No one has yet settled the argument. But the pressure is rising because the rest of the political landscape is moving. Jean Luc Melenchon is organising rallies and a program convention; Rapheel Glucksmann has won his social-democratic primary; Bruno Retailleau has the LR nomination; and Marine Le Pen remains the focal point of far-right polling strength. The centre's problem is not a lack of candidates. It is a surplus of ambition and no agreed method for deciding who must step aside…/

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UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
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