Twitter Thread by Darren Samuelsohn

Darren Samuelsohn
@dsamuelsohn

Kamala Harris is the president-in-waiting. Here's how the VP is balancing building her own brand against serving as a loyal soldier on Team Biden. https://t.co/2HTKlpmEd9 by @rbravender & @TinaSfon ($) @businessinsider

Kamala Harris is the president-in-waiting.

It's the awkward reality that has always come with being second-in-command. The vice president's principal job function is to be ready to step in if she's needed.

At the same time, Harris can't appear over-eager to get the top job, and Democrats bristle at questions about whether she's interested in a future White House run or whether Biden — the oldest president in US history at age 78 — intends to try for a second term in 2024.

So — just like (the male) veeps who came before her — Harris & her team must walk the fine line of protecting her image & building a brand while also portraying her as a loyal Biden soldier & dismissing any speculation that she's eyeing another presidential run of her own.

Harris was "an icon before she even set foot in the White House," said Joel Payne, a Democratic strategist who worked on Hillary Clinton's 16 campaign. "I think she's a bridge to the next generation of Democrats" and a bridge to progressives, women, and people of color, he added.

Fans and foes will be watching for whatever high-profile project Harris takes on as her signature issue to set her up for what will inevitably be seen as a future presidential run. Those close to her and the White House are not divulging anything. At least not yet.

Given Biden's own history as VP & Harris' historic role, the president & his team are trying to make it clear she is his full partner. That's in part b/c Biden wants to help her avoid the indignities that have historically come w/ the office, according to Dems close to the admin.

On top of that, Democratic insiders say, Biden has a lot to do, and he'll need her help.

"This is a two-person job. It's really a 2,000 person job," said Greg Simon, whom Biden hired to lead the White House

Cancer Moonshot Task Force during the Obama administration.

Simon pointed to the hefty workload: a pandemic, the economy, climate change, racial justice, etc. "You can no longer just treat the vice president as a president-in-waiting, they need to be as presidential as they can be the entire time," said Simon, also a former Gore adviser

Subscribe for the full @businessinsider story on the early days of the Biden-Harris relationship now that it's moved from the campaign to the transition and into the White House. Here's how: https://t.co/aC5iwU4Ch6