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**Democracy has suffered**

The world has heaved a sigh of relief that Joe Biden has clinched the American presidency. Since the end of the World Wars, the US has been acting as a champion of democracy and has succeeded to a large extent in establishing it globally, even if flawed in many countries. It is nothing short of shocking then that President Trump is questioning the state of democracy in his own country and questioning the way votes have been counted.

Only one candidate succeeds in a democratic election. The losing candidate obviously gets depressed and loses face. A democratic spirit however demands that s/he magnanimously accepts defeat; ideally, he or she should concede the defeat. If it is too much to ask for, then the least the person can do is keep quiet.

President Trump unfortunately is acting like a bully who is bent upon wrecking the whole system if need be – simply to justify his defeat. America and its people would of course suffer with such a course of action, especially if his rhetoric leads to rioting. One can only hope that this will not lead to any violence, loss of life and property.

What is more disturbing however is its effect on America’s standing internationally. The message that President Trump is giving to the world is an alternative to handle defeat in an election. If this is how an American president acts, then what is stopping any other losing candidate acting in an analogous fashion in other countries, particularly those with short experience with democracy.

It is a sad reflection on democracy that one of the oldest democracies with extensive experience ends up electing a person like President Trump four years ago and even this year around 70 million Americans voted for him.

President Trump has lost the election but he definitely is popular in a huge segment of the American populace and has followers elsewhere as well. The reason pure and simple is racism. Many white Americans were shocked that a black person was elected as their president in 2008. They probably vowed to themselves: never again. Many Trump voters may respond to this by claiming that they are not racists and that they voted for him for other reasons: we all would then like to know those reasons as the president seldom mentioned his policies on other issues during the election campaign.

It is a scary scenario when so many people harbor racist motives to vote. And it has noticeably created a division: the media may not call spade a spade but it is for all to see. It is nothing but shocking that the urban areas which are mostly inhabited by African Americans voted overwhelmingly for the Democrats while the rural folk side with the Americans. The country instead of being unified is getting further divided.

More than ten million Americans have been infected by the coronavirus; around 246,000 Americans have so far died. A majority were in Democratic areas. It cannot then be a coincidence that President Trump and his supporters keep claiming that the Corona pandemic does not require a lockdown and life should continue as usual.

This is not a scenario which promotes unity within a nation. Why do some Americans need to launch a movement to explain that `Black Lives Matter’? Don’t we already know this? President Trump like many others is a racist. He hopefully will be history after Inauguration Day next year. The scary part is that other Republicans are toeing this line as well. There is no excuse to do so even if they are doing it for political gains.

Politics may be a struggle for power and has to be sometimes unprincipled but a line should always be drawn which must not be crossed. Democracy is the foundation of the American nation. President Trump is shaking this foundation to the core by claiming that elections have been stolen from him. Instead of condemning such claims, Representative Kevin McCarthy, the House minority leader, and Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, the Senate Intelligence Committee chair, are supporting it. Spineless Republicans who fail to take a principled stand at this important juncture in the history of the United States are equally to be blamed. What one expects from the leaders is to lead and not be led by fools.

The damage has already been done within the US; and globally to America’s standing. The world still has to endure President Trump till Inauguration Day. The Republicans should concentrate on damage control and support healing within the American nation. The worst thing they can do at the moment is to shore up President Trump’s narrative of the election being stolen from him.

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