**These things are clear**

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As I sit to write this piece four days after the election, Joe Biden is leading in enough states to make it clear that he will win enough electoral college votes to become the 46th President of the United States. What was also clear is that Republicans will likely retain control of the Senate and the Democrats, while still the majority in the House, have lost some of the seats they had picked up in 2018. We are a deeply divided country. That much should be clear.

If this were a normal election year, that might be the end of the story. Alas, it is not. In 2020, nothing is normal and this crazy election is not going to be over for a while.

Donald Trump is not now nor has he ever been psychologically able to accept the reality of losing or being second best. Even when he doesn’t win or isn’t the best, he has been prone to create “an alternate reality” in which he convinces himself: that he really has won; that he was a victim of someone else’s cheating; that someone else is responsible for the setback; or that he is the victim of a conspiracy.

[Israel to build new settlement near Gaza](https://nation.com.pk/09-Nov-2020/israel-to-build-new-settlement-near-gaza)

In a very real sense, Donald Trump has been preparing the ground for contesting a loss ever since he was first elected president in 2016. Not able to accept that Hillary Clinton had won more popular votes, he charged that millions of his opponent’s votes were fraudulent. He even appointed a partisan presidential commission to validate his claim. Despite the fact that the commission was comprised of his supporters, it disbanded after several months unable to prove any widespread cheating. Nevertheless, Trump has continued to make this same charge about fraudulent 2016 votes.

Recognising the danger posed by the growing pandemic, legislatures in several states, with bipartisan support, had approved plans to provide voters with a mail-in option. Polls show that Democrats, apparently more concerned with the health risks of in-person voting, took advantage of this option. At the same time, a sizable majority of Republican voters waited until election day to cast their ballots. Because the in-person votes were counted first, on election night, as expected, Trump was in the lead. But as the mail-in votes were slowly counted, Biden’s totals eventually eclipsed Trump’s putting Biden in the lead.

[Global coronavirus cases top 50 million](https://nation.com.pk/09-Nov-2020/global-coronavirus-cases-top-50-million)

In response, Trump angrily tweeted “STOP THE COUNT” and in some cities his supporters stormed polling places echoing this demand. The president’s lawyers filed numbers of lawsuits demanding, among other things, that many legally cast mail-in votes be disqualified. And on Thursday, Trump delivered shocking remarks from the White House calling into question the integrity of the entire election. A number of Republican governors and senators were so stunned that they felt compelled to quickly reject the president’s behaviour.

What’s clear is that President Trump will not accept losing, will not concede, and will use every available path to challenge the outcome. What is also clear is that when Joe Biden is sworn in as President, he will inherit this division and the dysfunctional political system that has spawned it. Gone are the days when despite differences Republicans and Democrats worked together to solve pressing problems facing the nation.

[Can’t shake hands with those who bring country into trouble: Ali Muhammad](https://nation.com.pk/08-Nov-2020/can-t-shake-hands-with-those-who-bring-the-country-into-trouble-ali-muhammad)

To succeed, Biden may have to play by the rules Republicans have created. To get things done, he will be forced to issue Executive Orders by-passing the Senate where it is possible to do so. This was what Obama was forced to do. He will also need to use Executive Orders to undo the damage to our regulatory and immigration systems by President Trump’s excessive use of Executive Orders.

At the same time, not only President Biden and Democrats, but Republicans as well, will need to deal with the reality that Trumpism will remain a potent force in American politics. When the GOP funded and organised the Birther Movement and the Tea Party to counter Obama’s appeal, they ushered in a wave of race-based populism. This may have served the Republican’s short-term goal of taking control of Congress in 2010, but the angry beast they created back then, devoured them first. Across the country, fearful of alienating this base, more traditional conservative Republicans felt forced to take increasing hardline uncompromising stances.

[PM Imran Khan presents real concept of state of Madinah: Speaker NA](https://nation.com.pk/08-Nov-2020/pm-imran-khan-presents-real-concept-of-state-of-madinah-speaker-na)

New and more virulent movements have taken root in this base—from the QAnon conspiracy cult, to the xenophobic and racist Christian Patriot churches, and militant groups like the Proud Boys, the bogaloo bois, and a host of armed militias that have sprung up nationwide. All of which have received varying degrees of endorsement from the president.

The fact that Donald Trump won the votes of over 70 million Americans means that while he has lost the election, his appeal will remain. Republicans will either make a concerted effort to tame this phenomenon or they will see not only the continued drift of their party toward extremism, but the danger of violence in cities across the US. This too is clear.

It seems clear that, as Donald Trump said a few weeks ago “This will not end well.” Far from being over, this election may very well continue to play out for weeks to come. Trump and the GOP have been telegraphing their strategy for over a month now. They will continue to challenge the validity of the vote in court. They will demand recounts. They will incite their followers to demonstrate at vote-counting facilities. In the end, many Americans will lose faith in the electoral process and America’s democracy will be tarnished in the eyes of the world. That much is clear.