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**Indicting Trump**

The United States Senate is scheduled to start hearings into former president Donald Trump’s second impeachment, passed by the US Congress. Though unlikely to be convicted by the Senate, the indictment itself is historic in nature as never before has a US president been impeached twice in his tenure.

Unlike Trump’s first impeachment, this time ten Republican congressmen and women have joined the Democrats in impeaching him, and Democrats are in the lead in the Senate which allows them to make procedural rules governing the Senate trial. Congress has indicted Trump for inciting insurrection against the first branch of the US government, and the attack on Capitol Hill at a time when lawmakers, presided by former vice-president Mike Pence, were in the process of certifying the November 3rd presidential election results, which Trump wanted them to undo.

Though the Congress and senators, including Mike Pence, refused to oblige Trump’s desire to overturn the elections, it is extremely disturbing to see eight Senators and 125 members of the Congress voting to overturn the election results, a dangerous precedent to undo the electoral college victory of Joe Biden. Their voting has opened the door to the unthinkable, something no one in their wildest dreams would have thought of – Congress seeking to overturn election results.

In the wake of the attack on Capitol Hill, Democrats are united in their stance to hold Trump accountable. Had they confined their reaction just to condemnation, there could have been more violent protests between January 6 and January 20. The mainstream US media is unanimous in its characterization of the attack on the Capitol as revolt against the US constitution. Even the centrist media attacked Trump with hard-hitting criticism, demanding Trump should resign and hand over power to Mike Pence.

Social media platforms have silenced Trump and his supporters by permanently banning them and removing their accounts; over 70,000 accounts were removed to limit the end false information and blatant lies about election fraud.

Ever since Trump came to power in 2016, analysts viewed him as a great liability for the Republican Party. Under him, the party first lost majority in the Congress in 2018, later the presidency and on January 5, the Senate. Georgia, a traditionally red state for the past 38 years, went blue – electing Biden and two first-time senators, handing Democrats majority in the Senate; it was the worst defeat for Republicans in any state during the Trump era. Trump had initially won Georgia with a margin of 250,000 votes. Two years after this lead, it was reduced to 50,000 in the gubernatorial race, and eventually Trump last by 12,000 and Democrats won two Senate seats with a margin of over 70,000.

Trump’s policies and style of politics brought some 13 million new voters for the Republican Party, still lower than Democrats, but these votes did not hand them victory in the five battleground states which dealt a blow to the Trump presidency and Republican majority. Except Utah Senator Mitt Romney, the rest of the Republican Party collaborated with Trump throughout his tenure and used his presidency to further the right-wing conservative agenda in American politics and in the judiciary. The appointment of over 200 judges across the country, including three judges in the US Supreme Court, was an ideological and institutional edge no other Republican president could give them in modern history.

For the past four years, Senator Bernie Sanders has been calling Trump “the most dangerous president in history”. But Republicans ignored such calls, and benefited politically from his office. The Republican Party is in a dilemma in terms of handling Trump after he is gone from the White House. Trump continues to be the most popular leader within the party. When it comes to Republican Primaries in the red-states, Trump is still a valid and wild card. There is not a single aspiring Republican who has won the party primary election without his endorsement. Standing against Trump will not be without lifelong political consequences for them, in particular the members of the Congress and several Senators who all will be up for election again in 2022.

If the Republicans in the Senate do not vote to indict Trump and bar him from holding public office for his rest of life, aspiring presidential candidates will have a hard time winning the primary against him, particularly Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, Maryland Governor Larry Hogan etc. Trump’s daughter Ivanka Trump already has her eyes set on the Senate seat from their newly adopted home state Florida, threatening the political life of current Senator Marco Rubio, himself a diehard Trump supporter and someone openly opposed to Trump’s Senate trial.

Trump is a chaotic order, madness with a method, that has engulfed the Republican Party. Indicting him in the Senate trial is an opportunity for them to render him irrelevant and deal with her daughter in the years to come, as the Trump dynasty has already become a political reality in American politics. Much depends on Lindsey Graham and Mitch McConnell, both recently elected. Will they join Mitt Romney and save the party’s future, or remain subdued by Trumpian terror, which at the end of day offers more of the same chaos?

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