**[US regime change](https://www.dawn.com/news/1589722/us-regime-change)**

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DING dong. Donald Trump will be obliged to quit the White House by Jan 20, even if he never formally acknowledges his status as a loser and a oncer — a one-term president, the first one to achieve that accolade since George H.W. Bush in 1992.

Somewhat predictably, the incumbent has refused to accept the popular verdict, and much of the Republican Party has endorsed his recalcitrance. There was an element of poetic justice, though, in the fact that last Saturday the president’s personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani stood spouting his verifiable untruths in the parking lot of a garden-variety business on the outskirts of Philadelphia, hemmed in by a crematorium and a porn shop.

When confronted with the fact that television networks had named Joe Biden as president-elect, Giuliani retorted: “Come on, don’t be ridiculous. Networks don’t get to decide elections. Courts do.” In wishing to prove his point about a stolen election, the first witness Giuliani produced turned out to be a convicted sex offender.

You really couldn’t make it up. And as for the concept of courts, rather than the voters, deciding how an election goes, about the only time that occurred was 20 years ago, when the US Supreme Court halted a recount in Florida that would have led to Al Gore’s inauguration in 2001.

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The fact that the appalling George W. Bush has greeted Joe Biden as the next president has excited considerable attention, not least among those who tend to overlook the fact that since Ronald Reagan, the trend towards neoliberalism has been sustained by Republican and Democratic presidents alike.

Four years ago, too many Americans took Trump at his word

Back in 2008, Barack Obama rose to power on the strength of a popular movement that gave too much credence to his messages of ‘hope’ and ‘change we can believe in’, but then switched to the neoliberal norm, thus paving the way for Trump.

Four years ago, it seemed too many Americans took Trump at his word. They expected him to shake up the status quo. He did not. In fact, everything he did, from tax cuts for the very rich to outrageous concessions for carbon polluters, pointed to his misanthropic heritage. And he doubled down on his absurdity when the Covid-19 pandemic emerged.

The American death toll from the disease is approaching a quarter of a million souls — almost five times the number sacrificed in Vietnam for a grievously mistaken cause half a century ago. Yet Trump’s vote among almost every demographic increased this month from its 2016 level.

At more than 75m, Biden has scored more votes than any presidential candidate in American history. At about 4m behind, Trump is a close second. The Biden landslide that several opinion polls presaged never came to pass, but we are also left wondering whether Trump would have easily been re-elected had it not been for his horrifically misguided response to the pandemic — regardless of all his other failings, indiscretions and proto-fascist inclinations.

It’s worth noting that the vast majority of those who considered the economy their foremost priority apparently voted for Trump. One can only wonder why, given his indisputable inclination towards favouring his own ilk, ie the very rich. But then, this also reflects on the Democrats: despite irrefutable evidence of the Trump regime’s predilections, too many Americans deemed the Biden team incapable of adequately responding to their most pressing needs.

And yet, the corporate interests that prop up both the mainstream American political parties are determined to blame the Democratic Socialists for the absence of the predicted ‘blue wave’. Never mind that Biden rejected both Medicare for All and the Green New Deal, and often boasted about defeating Bernie Sanders in the primaries, without citing his party organisation’s Obama-backed conspiracy to blot out its progressive tendencies.

The Democrats have thus far scored one net gain in the Senate, and lost several seats in the House of Representatives. They will retain control of the latter — in which likes of Cori Bush and Jamaal Bowman will replenish the so-called progressive Squad — but may well lack a majority in the Senate, which will depend on the outcome of a couple of run-offs in Georgia on Jan 5.

Biden apparently intends to follow his inauguration with a blitz of executive orders that would, among other things, restore American adherence to the Paris climate change agreement, revive the US role in the Iranian nuclear treaty, and resuscitate its membership of the World Health Organisation.

Reverting to ‘normal’ won’t be enough, though. And it is far from clear whether Biden will be able, or willing, to take domestic measures that might compel Trumpism to beat a retreat. If not, we’ll be left wondering like little Peterkin, “But what good came of it at last?” And the response in Robert Southey’s poem — “Why that I cannot tell…/ But ‘twas a famous victory” — will not suffice.

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