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The Clock is Ticking: What Awaits the U.S. After the 2024 Election?

November 5, 2024, is the scheduled date for the next presidential election. Of course, it's too early to predict who will win, but it can be useful to speculate.

Given where things stand today and no disruptive developments occur, Joe Biden will run for reelection on the Democratic Party ticket and Donald Trump will attempt to seek a second term as the Republican candidate. One likely outcome is that Biden wins the election with a large margin and Trump suffers a very disappointing defeat.

Like in 2021, individual state election outcomes are awarded to "electors" whose votes are aggregated by the Electoral College and the candidate with 270 electoral votes is the winner. In 2025, the Electoral College outcomes will be sent to the Congress who will, on Monday, the 8th of January, formally elect the next president. On January 20, 2025, that person – in all likelihood, Biden — will be inaugurated as president.

One can well expect the Republican candidate, Trump, to claim that the 2024 election was stolen; that ballot-counting procedures were faulty; that some election officials were corrupt. For Trump and many within his diehard base, 2024 will be a replay of 2020. But it could be something worse, something much worse.

Trump's defeat in 2020 has had a number of significant consequences. It helped propel his ongoing candidacy, an effort to reclaim his "true" victory. More so, it legitimized state Republicans in, e.g., Florida and Texas, to pursue ever-more "conservative" policies. It also fostered an ever-increasing number of ultra-right-wing or "neo-fascist" groups across the country.

The Southern Poverty Law Center estimates that "there are 1,225 hate and antigovernment extremist groups currently operating in the U.S." These groups include racist

organizations (e.g., Klu Klux Klan), white nationalists (e.g., Active Club), racist skinheads (e.g., Confederate Hammerskins), neo-Nazi groups (e.g., Aryan National Army), militia movements (Frontiersmen), sovereign citizens movements (e.g., Circle of Sovereigns), conspiracy propagandists (e.g., Now the End Begins), “Constitutional sheriff” movement (e.g., Protect America Now), “antigovernment general” groups (e.g., American Revolution 2.0), neo-Confederate groups (e.g., identity Dixie), Christian identity groups (e.g., Christian Identity Church), anti-LGBT groups (e.g., Campus Ministry USA) and anti-immigrant groups (e.g., Boarderkeepers of Alabama) as well as antisemitic groups, “neo-Völkish” pagan groups, anti-Muslim groups and still others.

In 2020, one of these groups, the Wolverine Watchmen, a paramilitary militia, sought to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer at her vacation home in Antrim County.

In addition, there’s been an uptick in violent, racist terrorist attacks like the 2018 Pittsburg synagogue shooting, the 2019 El Paso Walmart attack and the 2022 Buffalo Walmart shooting.

Many white Americans, especially men, believe they are being “replaced” by women, African Americans, Jews and the growing number – and diversity – of immigrants who’ve settled in the U.S. over the last quarter century. It is embraced by Trump and other white conservatives.

Robert Pape and his associates at the University of Chicago’s Project on Security and Threats (CPOST) note in the revealing study, “Understanding American Domestic Terrorism,” that the belief was “a key driver” of the “committed insurrectionists” who stormed the Capitol on January 6th.

Going further, Pape found that “63 percent of the 21 million adamant insurrectionists in the country believe in the ‘Great Replacement.’” In June 2022, *Vice* reported that in a recent poll two-thirds (68%) of Republicans surveyed believed in the “great replacement” theory.

Fox TV host Tucker Carlson ranted on-air about replacement months before the January 6th attack. “In political terms,” he said, “this policy is called ‘the great replacement,’ the replacement of legacy Americans with more obedient people from far-away countries.” “They [i.e., liberal Democrats] brag about it all the time,” he added, “but if you dare to say it’s happening they will scream at you with maximum hysteria.” *The New York Times* identified more than 400 episodes of Carlson’s show in which he promoted the Great Replacement. One can expect the same or worse around January 8, 2025.

One can assume that a strong backstory of Trump's current campaign effort is acknowledging a key question: "What happens if he, yet again, is defeated in 2024?" In all likely, someone on the Trump team has prepared a "2021-Plan B: 2025 Victory" that is now buried in someone's files. However, by mid-year 2024, as Trump's electoral defeat becomes ever clearer, it will like be pulled from the files, copied and sent to many Trump operatives in and outside the Republican party.

One can well imagine that a "Plan-B" document lays out a set of options and actions in response to such a (likely) eventuality. One can only wonder how high on the list of options is a campaign to achieve victory through the Electoral College and successful replay of failed of January 6th insurrection.

What will such a plan require? What have the hardcore Trump supports learned from the failed January 6th effort? Are they now asking: How many Trump "freedom fighters" — armed troops — would need to assemble at the Congress? What weapons — if any? — would they need to bring?

And the great unknow regarding a replay of January 6th in 2025 will be the role of U.S. military, regional militia and DC police. Will they support the State or will a meaningful number desert and join the Trump insurgency?

Many active in the January 6th insurrection were affiliated with the Oath Keepers and the Proud Boys. CBS estimated (as of December 2021), "More than 80 of the defendants charged in relation to the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol have ties to the U.S. military — most of those with a military background were veterans." More troubling, how far would Trump ultra-militants be willing to go the next time? Would they seize — and hold hostage — V.P. Kamala Harris?

One can also well imagine that a Trump-team's "Plan B" action plan could well include scenarios that go beyond Washington, DC, in its effort to secure Trump's victory. The bumbling efforts of the Wolverine Watchmen may well have been studied and more carefully thought-through schemes developed. One such plan might include linking selected hardcore militant groups in a coordinated campaign to enforce Trump's fictitious "victory" at highly targeted state capitals and other sites (e.g., Wall Street).

Would such hypothetical actions in Washington and throughout the country be successful in forcefully installing Trump as president? Would their efforts signal a new civil war? Would it be a fascist war?

The U.S. in the 2020s is not Germany in the early-1930s. Capitalism in the U.S. is far more secure today, even with all the insecurities due to globalization and growing

inequality, than German was amidst the rise of fascism. America's "ruling class" appears to be more "loyal" to the status quo, to the "system," than to Trump and his the hard-right base.

If there is a replay of January 6, 2021, in 2025, it could be far bloodier and nation-wide but will likely not challenge State power. In all likelihood, the U.S. military, state national guards and local police forces will suppress such a far-right insurrection.

And Trump? He will once again claim innocence and, if not convicted under current pending cases, will face more serious charges and – who knows? – pack his airplane and flee to a more welcoming country.

David Rosen is the author of [Sex, Sin & Subversion: The Transformation of 1950s New York's Forbidden into America's New Normal](#) (Skyhorse, 2015). He can be reached at drosennyc@verizon.net; check out www.DavidRosenWrites.com.

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