



'Scared Majority': Is There a Chance for Donald Trump to Win?

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In 2016, America was preparing to elect its first female president. The overwhelming majority of polls showed that the majority of voters favoured Hillary Clinton. Leading forecasters used this data as proof that democratic America could not prefer a reality TV presenter and not-always-successful businessman to a woman who had devoted several decades to serving the country. Clinton herself was actively preparing to move into the White House, experts from Washington think-tanks were eyeing pre-assigned positions in the new administration, and the liberal media actively camouflaged the failures of Clintons election campaign with revelations of her opponents sex scandals and politically incorrect statements.

The morning after the elections, this idyll fell apart, and shortly thereafter, the four years of Trumps term in office began. Four years of tireless struggle have pitted the American establishment and liberal media with those who vowed to separate, as it seemed, the wheat of good old America from the chaff of the deep state. Over these years, America and the world have changed enough to make much of the world tired of America, and America tired of itself.

Today the situation seems to be repeating itself. Absolutely all the main polls (those which supposedly have the most effective, objective and proven methodologies) talk about Bidens 7-14% advantage over Trump. Negative assessments of the Democratic candidate are significantly less pronounced than those of Clinton four years ago. Trumps presidency is not easy emotionally: every day, the public is presented with new eccentricities of the President, talk about endless admiration for Putin, the insults he uses against his opponents and his attacks on the media. The year of the presidential election has turned out to be quite turbulent: mistakes have been made in the fight against the coronavirus infection, and criminal chaos persists on the streets of American cities, provoked by the killing of George Floyd in police custody and driven by the BLM movement and Antifa. While some Democratic Party officials can be considered partly responsible, consolidating the image of Trump as “evil” has been the last attempt of his opponents to contribute to the fight against the destroyer of American democracy.”

Each of these aspects of the electoral situation has a downside. The presidents rival is a politically weary and physically weak candidate with what is rumoured to be progressive dementia and whose only merit is that he is not Trump. This has been indirectly confirmed by the

detailed answers of the respondents to the same polls where Biden is leading. According to one such poll, only 36% of Bidens voters support him precisely as a nominee from their party, while 58% are ready to vote for him because of their fear that Trump will win again. In contrast, 74% of Trump supporters are planning to vote for Trump because they prefer him, and only 20% because they are against Biden. These figures vary in different surveys, but the trend is steady. Perhaps the ultimate motivation of the voter is not that important when it comes to mathematical vote counting. However, it is indicative in terms of the mood of the population, the attitude of different groups towards the candidates of their parties, the strength of the nuclear electorate of each of them, and support for the politicians of the two parties.

The picture becomes a little less rosy for Democrats when polls are viewed at the level of individual states. In the most pivotal states for the final outcome, the gap between the candidates is currently minimal. Even in Wisconsin, where the Democrats held their [virtual] convention, Biden was ahead of Trump by 4% (after the convention by 6%), and in Ohio the candidates have 47% each.

Likewise, express disapproval is not a deciding factor, compared with their metrics. Clinton's disapproval rating in 2016 was lower than Trump's (-22% for Clinton vs -31% for Trump), but this did not help her win. Although Biden's anti-rating (only -1%) is significantly lower than Trump's disapproval rating over the years, despite media campaigns, it has dropped by more than 20 percentage points to -11%. In other words, it is in the same range as before the 2016 elections, and Biden does not have a significant advantage at this point.

This is partly due to the "overdose" of the population toward Trump. In the hope that the population will get tired of Trump, the American media can achieve the opposite effect the population has become tired of them constantly stirring up negative information.

Noteworthy in this sense is another poll, where registered voters consider Trump a more capable candidate in the fight against crime, ensuring security and managing the economy. Its true that Biden in this poll is seen by voters as a more skilful conciliator of a divided country and as a person capable of mending racial relations in the United States.

All of the above is interesting for experts and informative for the general public, but it does not necessarily answer the main question can Trump be re-elected? It seems that there is a key to the answer, but, as in 2016, it is not always successfully measured by traditional sociological polls. Four years ago, this key was largely the phenomenon of the silent majority. Today, it could be called the frightened majority.

Speaking out in support of Trump in polite society has become bad taste. Some are afraid of social censure, some fear losing their jobs (it is not progressive to keep a politically incorrect employee in the service), and yet others because of shop solidarity. American journalists from the leading media themselves write about such sentiments mostly those few who prefer personal principles to a comfortable place of work.

The phenomenon of the echo chamber, when the same anti-Trump maxims are reinforced

through their repetition by teachers and students, are also discussed by colleagues from American universities. At the same time, it must be remembered that what is not always spoken aloud in a lecture is the speakers true opinion.

Only one recent poll, published by the (libertarian) Cato Institute, drew attention to the problem of the “silent majority”. According to the study, 62% of Americans admit that “the current political climate in the country does not allow them to openly express their beliefs, as others may find it offensive.

In 2016, this majority were the so-called shy Trumpists Trump supporters who were forced to hide their sympathies due to social disapproval, but once they were at the polling station, they poured out their souls on the ballot. In reality, it is unlikely that they were the majority in terms of numbers. However, they turned out to be more disciplined voters and, due to their high turnout, actually overturned the forecasts of the main polls. Just like then, Trump is today the go-to candidate for frightened Americans. He is their hope that they will stop being intimidated. They are his hope of victory.

Trump and the frightened voters have enough reasons to help each other. Both are worried about the excesses of revisionist, identity politics-driven approaches to historical memory, and the redirection of the development of the cultural and socio-political life of America provoked by the Black Lives Matter movement. Incidentally, this worries not only many whites, but also Latin Americans, who have not yet found a place in the new historical truth.

The young leftists who are driving Americas culture wars, have only a vague idea of what communism is: this is the leitmotif of many Internet discussion platforms, and not necessarily exclusively pro-Trump ones.

Yesterdays migrants from third world countries are sitting in the American Congress today and want our country to live according to the laws of some Somalia, from which they themselves left, the Trumpists say, singling out Ilhan Omar, a young legislator from Minnesota. The Somali-born woman, who moved with her parents to the United States at the age of 13, was sensationally elected to the House of Representatives in 2018 and is today paired with another Democratic star, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez; together, they promote bold socialist ideas in Congress.

Trumps electoral stance is not as disastrous as the Democrats say, but overall it is indeed weaker than it was four years ago. In addition, today his opponents treat him with great attention and seriousness, and direct more resources and energy to ensuring that he doesnt get a second term in office. Behind the brisk media campaign that has already buried Trump as president is an understanding of the fragility of the advantage that the Democrats now have. Therefore, the party leadership wants to eliminate even hypothetical options for Trumps victory in those areas where he has parity with Biden or even an advantage, including in the grey zone of the intimidated majority. In this sense, mobilising a high turnout and voting by mail, which opens up wide possibilities for manipulating voters votes, are the Democrats most winning safety technologies.

Trump has ambiguous baggage, given the list of successes and failures during his presidency moreover, it is often not always clear to which category certain things belong. There

really is a lot of Trump even more hype around him and many are simply tired of it. Finally, Trump has so famously set about breaking the longstanding foundations and rules of American policy, both at home and in the outside world (in his usual unceremonious manner) that the number of his supporters in Washingtons ruling circles, for various reasons, seems to have dwindled.

Joe Biden has been in politics much longer: he played and will play according to the old rules of Washington, he was among those who cultivated these rules for many decades. His play-book is well- known, the main directions of US policy under President Biden and the specifics of their implementation are generally clear. This is not the agenda of renewal and movement into the future portrayed by his campaign.

This is a hoped-for return to the comfort zone where America has been since the end of the Cold War. Since this zone no longer exists, everything must be done to make it appear again, even if this requires shaming the dissenters within the country and scrapping the comfort zones of other countries.

Not everyone in the United States likes the process and the consequences of such a renewal. Trump has two months to convince doubters that Bidens update is an oxymoron. Biden has the same deadline to prove that under Trump, America is becoming not greater, but more divided.