

## Weekly Commentary 48

### *On Presidents 47 and 48, The Felon and the Hillbilly*

As I wrote last week, Donald Trump will be President No 47, the first time in 120 years that there is going to be a second non consecutive term in American history. It is therefore history in the making. And it is the first time that a felon has won a presidential election.

Or that a self proclaimed hillbilly from Appalachia becomes his VP, which given the momentum of the Trump win and his age, and with the Republicans taking the Senate and clearing the path for their policies and governance, will likely make JD Vance the next president, No 48. So while I said that the two candidates Trump and Harris do not excite the world, we are likely to be only four years away from another JFK-esque lookalike, who will bring optimism and hope to the world. I was only 6 years old when JFK was president and I still remember even in faraway and then backward Singapore, JFK, as well as his subsequent assassination, were electrifying and sad. I think we will return to a world where we will have a chance to reinvigorated to that world of hope and optimism after Donald Trump sets the stage for his 39 year old VP, JD Vance, to step into his shoes.

But first the events of the past 24 hours in which by just after 2am EST, Donald Trump was declared the winner in the most tightly contested election in nearly forty years. As a matter of fact, I never thought it was that close. From before the Biden debacle at the presidential debate, and Kamala becoming the candidate, it was clearly an election where Trump would have a good chance, more than 50-50, if you had been following the signs, of winning the presidency. I am not claiming perfect hindsight as I was unequivocal about who would win.

Here's what I wrote on Saturday 1 Nov:

**Given the write-ups in the media sources cited above, I am of the view that 5<sup>th</sup> Nov will end up with a landslide for Trump in the electoral college race. It would be an amazing result for a man who was thought to have ended his political career after being made the victim of witchhunts, culminating in being impeached twice, made a felon by numerous lawfare suits and almost assassinated twice. The comeback reflects someone who displays presidential qualities of steadfast thinking and courage, accompanied by a cool sense of humour Trump has shown strength and heroism, including during the first assassination attempt, when he has the presence of mind to raise his fist to shout Fight! We will never surrender. That's fantastic composure, enough to deserve another shot at the presidency. More recently, when his campaign invited a comic who called Puerto Rico garbage, Biden had responded that the MAGA base was garbage. In reaction, Trump dressed up as a garbage collector and**

**drove around in a spotless garbage truck. That was good marketing. In contrast, what has his opponent done? Kamala Harris behaves like a nonentity. Trump deserves to win, and he will. I can be mistaken, but that's my take.**

I did get it right, and the guesswork was fun. Especially since my conclusions were against every mainstream media's prediction that it was a tight race impossible to call.

Honestly, it was not that tight. The writing was on the wall that Trump would make it to a second non-consecutive term. If you had thought it was tight, then you are simply the victim of propaganda. You have been lied to.

I did not fall for it.

What made the talk of a tight race so obviously warped to me? It was in the last few weeks, that I regarded all that talk to be just panic among the Democrats. In fact on the eve of the election, one of the most strident of the supporters of Harris, the NYT, wrote an editorial that said this:

## **THE NY TIMES**

Opinion | The Editorial Board

You already know Donald Trump. He is unfit to lead. Watch him. Listen to those who know him best. He tried to subvert an election and remains a threat to democracy. He helped overturn Roe, with terrible consequences.

Mr. Trump's corruption and lawlessness go beyond elections: It's his whole ethos. He lies without limit. If he's re-elected, the G.O.P. won't restrain him. Mr. Trump will use the government to go after opponents. He will pursue a cruel policy of mass deportations. He will wreak havoc on the poor, the middle class and employers.

Another Trump term will damage the climate, shatter alliances and strengthen autocrats. Americans should demand better. Vote.

The New York Times editorial board is a group of opinion journalists whose views are informed by expertise, research, debate and certain longstanding values. It is separate from the newsroom.

**The NYT...That's one of the top news organizations in the United States. And that's all it can say? And they were trying to take down Donald Trump in just those few sentences? Come on... The NYT was trying to persuade half of America. Would that have been enough? Absolutely not. If any of these editorial writers had been shot and bloodied, what do you expect them to have done on the spur of the moment? The**

ability of Trump to suffer that death defying attempt on his life and still have the presence of mind to raise his fist to say,

Fight fight fight, we will never surrender within a couple of minutes of the assassination attempt is a testimony of his inner strength, his passion for the job and strong will. Those are the qualities that define greatness. I consider him a man bordering on greatness. And he deserves to win.

His winning of the election yesterday is one of the greatest political comebacks in all history. That too is defining greatness.

People on the left have called him all kinds of names, including Hitler. The worst thing that has been said about Trump is that he is a liar. Well, all politicians are liars anyway. But to call him Hitler is the greatest misrepresentation of the facts that has ever been made. Trump did not even start a war. Was he involved in a genocide of 6 million people like Hitler did? He was the one who agreed to move the Israeli capital to Jerusalem. If he were anti-Semitic, he would not have done that. So being Hitlerian is not true. So who is lying? It is the liberal media, as they have lied about the war against Russia for nearly 3 years now.

So when they came up with desperate pleas to the voting folks to come out and stop Trump, it smacks of panic. And when you have panic, you know that it is not going well for your side – ie Kamala. It did not start on the eve of election night. They were propagandizing the message for days and days. That's why I never bought into the story of a very tight race. It was a giant hoax to get Democrats to come out and vote to stop the momentum that Trump has. Once you realize that, you can analyse this election quite easily. It was Trump leading since the DNC convention which anointed (not voted) Kamala in. And they were just bullshitting the country to pull him down.

Trump also won the popular vote, an impossible feat for Republican contenders for the Presidency. Basically, the MAGA movement got a full popular mandate. It is not just a win. It was an astounding victory.

As the two winners, Trump and Vance, said in their victory speech, it was the greatest political comeback in history. Incredible

Let us trace how the Donald won the election.

Here are some key statistics of the victory:

Electoral college: 302 Trump, 232 Harris

Popular vote: Trump won the popular vote, almost impossible for the Republican party which was why in Commentary48, I had written that if the polling indicated

that they were neck to neck, it would actually mean that in the electoral college, he would win. Turned out to be correct.

Swing states: Seven in total – Trump swept clean.

Recounts: None ie it was decisive. The process was so clear that the election was won as soon as Pennsylvania was taken at 2.15 am EST. The contest between Al Gore and George Bush was tight, not this one.

What did the mainstream media say about all this besides the fact that they need to bring down Trump?

Here is an article from the Hill:

## **Trump wins presidency for second time, completing improbable comeback**

by Brett Samuels - 11/06/24 1:25 AM ET

Former President Trump has won the presidency, securing a second term nearly four years after he left Washington under a cloud of ignominy and with an uncertain political future, according to Decision Desk HQ (DDHQ).

DDHQ made the call after declaring Trump the projected winner of Pennsylvania and Alaska, which got him to exactly 270 electoral votes.

Trump defeated Vice President Harris in an election that saw a number of unexpected developments: A criminal trial involving Trump during the campaign, two assassination attempts against the former president and a change atop the Democratic ticket after President Biden dropped out of the race.

He becomes the first president in more than 120 years to lose the White House, and then to come back and win it again, after President Grover Cleveland in 1892.

Trump secured the 270 electoral votes needed to win the White House following a roughly 100-day sprint of a campaign between him and Harris, with polling in seven key battleground states showing very little separation between the two candidates right up until Election Day.

The former president ultimately won a convincing victory, flipping Georgia back into his column, holding North Carolina and shattering the “blue wall.” He was projected to narrowly win the popular vote, something he failed to do in 2016 and that Republicans have only done once since 1992.

The former president and his running mate, Sen. JD Vance (R-Ohio), capitalized on voter discontent with higher costs, a surge in migration at the southern border and instability abroad during the Biden administration to pitch voters on a return to his policies.

Exit polls showed Trump making huge gains with Latino voters, bolstering his margins in rural areas and running nearly even with Harris among young men, a demographic Trump's campaign aggressively courted.

Trump has pledged to carry out the largest deportation operation in the nation's history, to extend the tax cuts he signed into law in 2017, to impose universal tariffs on foreign imports, to roll back protections for transgender youth, to shut down the Education Department and to curb environmental regulations. He has also signaled he will seek to stock his administration with loyalists.

Trump overcame what was expected to be a huge deficit with female voters. Harris leaned into the issue of abortion rights after three of Trump's picks for the Supreme Court joined other conservatives in overturning the Roe v. Wade decision in 2022.

This was the first presidential election to take place since the end of Roe.

The election of Trump could give the GOP president a chance to strengthen the conservative grip on the high court, as Republicans regained the majority in the Senate.

Trump narrowly won the White House in 2016, but lost his reelection bid in 2020. He spent the weeks after that election pushing unproven claims of widespread fraud, culminating in a violent attack on the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, where his supporters tried to stop the certification of Biden's victory.

He was indicted on federal charges in Washington, D.C., in 2023 over his efforts to remain in power after losing the 2020 election. But Trump has signaled he will swiftly move to fire special counsel Jack Smith, who is overseeing the matter, kneecapping a major legal case against him.

Trump's rhetoric and conduct during his first term has drawn scrutiny from several former Cabinet officials and top aides, including some who compared him to an authoritarian. He was indicted in four separate jurisdictions in 2023 and was convicted in New York City on 34 felony counts in May. He was impeached twice during his first term and left office with a favorability rating below 40 percent. And he left Washington in 2021 without attending his successor's inauguration.

A number of politicians and pundits all but declared him politically dead, with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) lashing out at Trump in a February 2021

speech from the Senate floor. McConnell did not vote to convict Trump in his impeachment trial over the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the Capitol, however.

If Trump had been convicted, it could have ended his political career and prevented him from running for the White House again. Instead, he now stands to further shift the GOP in his image, while McConnell's position as Senate leader will end in January.

In a sign of how wrong some were in predicting Trump's political demise, he coasted to the GOP nomination thanks to a loyal base of supporters, and he appeared to be on a glide path to the presidency in July, when he survived an assassination attempt, rallied the full force of the party behind him at the GOP convention and led Biden in the polls.

But Biden dropped out later that month and was replaced by Harris, who galvanized Democratic voters and raised record sums of money. Trump struggled initially to respond to the change in opponent, and his rocky performance at a September debate further frustrated Republicans as the race tightened.

Trump gained in the polls in the closing weeks of the campaign, however, showing strength with Black and Latino voters. Both are key voting blocs that helped propel him to victory.

His campaign relied on a previously untested strategy of partnering with outside groups to reach voters in battleground states, a method that managed to overcome the stronger infrastructure of the Harris campaign.

At 78, Trump is the oldest person in the country's history to be elected president, slightly older than Biden was in 2020. He has declined to release detailed medical records despite previously saying he would have no problem doing so.

Trump will become just the second president in the nation's history to serve two nonconsecutive terms, but will be term limited by the 22nd Amendment, meaning he cannot seek reelection in 2028.

**With Donald Trump's election win, America knew exactly who it was voting for**

By North America correspondent **Carrington Clarke**

**1h ago** **1 hours ago**

Americans went into this election eyes wide open about Donald J. Trump and they have decided to give him his old job back.

On face value, this is an improbable political comeback.

Trump — the convicted felon who has been found liable for sexual abuse, who encouraged his supporters to march on the US Capitol to try to stop the peaceful transfer of power after he lost the 2020 election — will be likely returned to the most powerful job in the world.

He has outperformed the polls and appears to have broadened his appeal. It's a remarkable victory.

His critics may want to paint his resurrection as an aberration or a sign of electors who aren't paying attention.

While his 2016 victory may have been fuelled by a willingness to take a gamble on a political unknown, this time the American people know exactly what they are getting and they have collectively decided they want him to be their president.

## **How Trump won**

Trump is just the second US president to win back the White House after being voted out of office. He's also cemented his position as the most consequential US political figure in decades.

Over the past decade, Trump has up-ended the US political map. He has transformed the Republican party in fundamental ways.

It was once the party of free trade, and its leader now calls "tariffs" the most beautiful word in the English language. The party that once attempted to spread democracy and police the world's trouble spots is now isolationist.

Trump was able to successfully capitalise on discontent with how the country had been run since he left office. Particularly when it came to the economy and immigration.

He appears to have successfully convinced the American public his return will mean lower prices. A welcome concept for a country that suffered through a period of four-decade-high inflation. Unfortunately for Biden and Harris, even though inflation appears to have been steadied, the public has not yet gotten used to the new higher level of prices. **(As they said, it's the economy, stupid.)**



While many of the economy's fundamentals like unemployment and growth are strong, inflation is political poison. Kamala Harris never seemed totally comfortable when discussing the economy. (She is totally clueless and deserves to lose.)

Immigration may well prove to be the major misstep by the Biden/Harris team. They came to office and overturned many of Trump's hardline immigration policies. They had mocked his plans for a border wall and softened restrictions. Illegal immigration swelled during their term, reaching a monthly high in December last year of nearly 250,000 people (This is the other key factor that led to Trump's victory – the Democrats screwed up on the southern border.)

Despite obvious public discontent, Democrats refused to describe the issue as a crisis until earlier this year. After a bi-partisan congressional deal was torpedoed by Trump, Biden finally took unilateral action, using presidential executive power to harden the response.

Crossings across the southern border then dramatically dropped but it seems to have been too late. Exit polls suggest immigration was still a major issue for voters at this election, and that helped Trump sail to victory. (The election was never that close. It was the inflation and the southern border that did Kamala Harris in.)

### **How he broadened his appeal**

While superficially this election win looks similar to the one against Hillary Clinton in 2016, there has been a substantial change to his support base.

The Republican Party has become the home of white working-class workers who seem to think the flamboyant billionaire understands their plight. But this result also indicates Trump has widened the support base – particularly among black and brown men.

There were expectations that his weakness among women would cost him but it appears to have been more than offset by male turnout.

Trump showed his strength in the south. Not only does he appear to have held onto the swing states of North Carolina and Georgia, but perhaps the most extraordinary result was Florida; over three elections he has taken Florida from a purple state to deep red.

### **Analysis on global issues**

#### **The scandals didn't matter**

Trump is a showman who doesn't value saying 'on message' like his counterparts. Nor playing within the confines of what is considered polite politicking.



There were multiple controversies during this race that were seized upon by his political opponents.

In his debate with Harris, he said Haitian immigrants were eating pet cats and dogs in Springfield, Ohio. There's no evidence that's the case — he never apologised.

Then, a comedian at Trump's highly publicised rally at Madison Square Garden used the American territory of Puerto Rico as a punchline, calling it a "floating island of garbage". Democrats seized upon the joke as evidence of Republican disdain for Puerto Ricans.

In the last week of the campaign, he assailed Republican critic Liz Cheney as a war hawk and followed up with "Let's put her with a rifle standing there with nine barrels shooting at her, OK? Let's see how she feels about it. You know, when the guns are trained on her face."

His opponents said the violent imagery was threatening. His campaign denied it was.

None of these scandals seemed to impact his support. Perhaps the public doesn't believe any of them were disqualifying. Perhaps they think other issues like the economy and immigration are more important.

Whatever the case may be, the American people know Donald Trump to a detail that is quite unprecedented. This isn't a vote steeped in ignorance.

After attending many of his rallies over recent months, there is a notable cohort of the population who genuinely adores him, who see him as their nation's saviour.

But they weren't the reason he was able to eke out this victory; there were many people who voted for Donald Trump, who aren't blindly enamoured by him.

They have experienced four years of the alternative and decided he deserved another shot.

(Indeed, he does. I had written about the economic and foreign policy fallout of a second Trump presidency on 1 Nov and we are going to head into a better world now that Biden and Harris are history. So this election is all good if you understand that a lot of the misunderstanding over Trump in this first term were the result of liberal propaganda.)

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