

The background of the entire page is a stylized, high-contrast image of the United States Capitol dome. The dome is rendered in a light blue/white color, set against a dark blue background filled with white stars on the left and horizontal red and white stripes on the right, mimicking the US flag. The overall aesthetic is graphic and patriotic.

**W** WARSAW  
INSTITUTE

— SPECIAL REPORT —

2024/12/18

**AWAITING THE NEW  
REPUBLICAN ORDER:  
SEIZING POWER IN  
TIMES OF TURMOIL**

**SZYMON POLEWKA**

With Donald Trump’s electoral victory, Republicans are poised to renew their bid to reshape the nation’s political and social elite. If successful and enduring, this transformation—already in motion—will likely extend far beyond the president-elect’s inauguration.



SOURCE: ALEX SEITZ-WALD, REPUBLICANS WIN CONTROL OF THE HOUSE, NBC NEWS PROJECTS, OVERTAKING DEMOCRATS BY A SLIM MARGIN, NBC NEWS [HTTPS://WWW.NBCNEWS.COM/POLITICS/2022-ELECTION/REPUBLICANS-WIN-CONTROL-HOUSE-NBC-NEWS-PROJECTS-OVERTAKING-DEMOCRATS-S-RCNA57223](https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2022-election/republicans-win-control-house-nbc-news-projects-overtaking-democrats-s-rcna57223)

This year’s election has provided Republicans with notable cause for celebration. Trump not only improved his performance across the vast majority of counties compared to 2020, but he also achieved a feat unseen for Republicans in two decades: securing victory in the cumulative national popular vote. Bolstered by triumphs in Senate and House races, the GOP emerged with a robust and enduring mandate, strengthening its appeal across nearly all demographics, with the exception of college-educated women. Conversely, Democrats face diminishing support among working-class voters, declining Latino backing, and a

widening gender polarization in politics—factors that play to Republican strengths.

Much of this political realignment can be attributed to the culmination of the post-2020 crisis. To many Americans, the prevailing liberal governance—rooted in a bureaucratic-corporate nexus—has deepened social inequalities and exacerbated economic hardships for the lower classes. For Republicans, this discontent represents an opportunity to challenge the liberal narrative that has shaped American politics since the post-war era and recapture the nation’s political direction.



AMERICAN PROGRESS, A CHROMOLITHOGRAPHIC PRINT, CIRCA 1873, DERIVED FROM JOHN GAST'S 1872 PAINTING OF THE SAME TITLE.

## The Emergence of a New Republican Empire

Many within the Republican Party view Trump's victory as the dawn of a new GOP-dominated era, akin to the decades following the Civil War or the Democratic ascendancy post-New Deal (1933–1939). U.S. political history has indeed been shaped by two overarching periods of dominance: the Republican era (1860–1932), which emerged from the Civil War, and the Democratic era, which followed the New Deal and continues—with interruptions—today.

William Appleman Williams, in *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, articulated a cyclical

perspective on American political frameworks. Drawing from Williams' insights, two American "empires" can be discerned. The first, the Republican Empire, emerged after the Civil War, driven by Manifest Destiny and territorial expansion across the continent. This period was defined by its commitment to social conservatism, laissez-faire economics, federalism, and adherence to the Monroe Doctrine.

In contrast, the Democratic Empire, born of the New Deal reforms, emphasized global economic influence over territorial conquest. It championed

economic interventionism, social progressivism, bureaucratic expansion, and the Bretton Woods system, which underpinned the post-war international order.

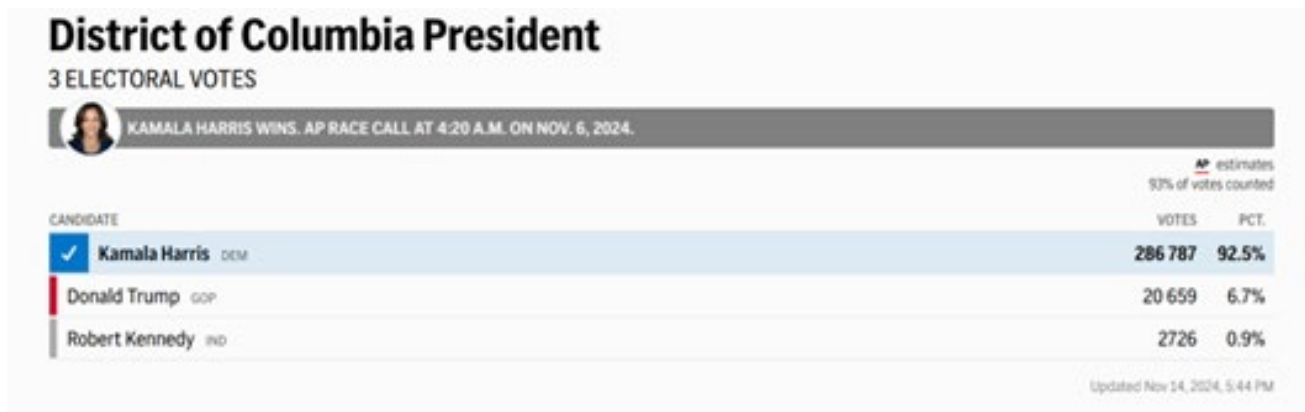
Both empires arose from profound internal crises. The Civil War, claiming over 620,000 lives, paved the way for the Republican ascendancy, while the Great Depression, peaking with 24.9 percent unemployment in 1933, solidified Democratic dominance. Today, the United States finds itself amid a prolonged cycle of crisis, beginning with the 2008 financial collapse and intensifying during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Amidst a permanent crisis, social frustration heightens as bureaucratic elites align more with social justice movements, embracing an ever more radical leftward orientation. The divergence between the working class’s aspirations and the elite’s actions fuels an intensifying demand for power to be seized by anti-establishment circles, which in this election, once again gravitated toward Donald Trump and the reinvigorated Republican Party. The prevailing social sentiment is clearly reflected in the Republican slogan “Make America Great Again,” which has pervaded public discourse since 2016, invoking the notion of a new American order that may materialize as a new Republican empire.

## Battling the Bureaucracy

Despite winning nationwide, Donald Trump secured just 6.7 percent of the vote in the District of Columbia, where Kamala Harris dominated with 92.5 percent. As reported by the Congressional Research Service in February 2024, about 162,161 people were employed in the public sector, making up approximately 21 percent of Washington D.C.’s workforce.

In his first term, Donald Trump aimed to dismantle the entrenched bureaucratic structure. A notable strategy for diminishing bureaucratic influence was the relocation of government agency headquarters outside the District of Columbia. A case in point is the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the agency dedicated to managing federal lands, which relocated its headquarters from Washington, D.C., to Grand



SOURCE: ASSOCIATION PRESS, AP ELECTIONS 2024, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PRESIDENT  
[HTTPS://APNEWS.COM/PROJECTS/ELECTION-RESULTS-2024/DISTRICT-OF-COLUMBIA/?R=0](https://apnews.com/projects/election-results-2024/district-of-columbia/?R=0)

Junction, Colorado. Only 41 people out of 328 employees opted to move to Grand Junction following the BLM's 2019 decision. Eventually, in 2021, Joe Biden reversed a Trump-era move, putting the agency again in Washington, D.C.

The federal bureaucracy, alongside academic and corporate elites (often referred to as the “white-collar” establishment), remains aligned with Democratic interests. Yet, even within these sectors, economic instability and the advent of artificial intelligence have fueled frustrations, particularly among younger, academically credentialed voters. This demographic, despite facing significant student debt and shrinking career opportunities, remains loyal to the Democratic Party. Yet Biden's attempt to address their concerns through

a student loan forgiveness program was ultimately struck down by the Supreme Court.

In a bold post-election move against the bureaucracy, Donald Trump appointed Elon Musk to lead the Department of Government Efficiency, tasked with enhancing administrative efficiency through monitoring and reporting on its performance. The Department's operational timeline is aligned with July 4, 2026, when the nation will commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. In light of Musk's unorthodox management style, particularly evident at Twitter/X, it is plausible to expect the strategic foundations of a bureaucratic overhaul.

## A Peaceful Seizure of Power?

As social polarization sharpens, so too do anxieties about the democratic mechanisms involved in the seizure of power. These concerns are articulated with respect to both the electoral process and the very transfer of power itself. The trigger for these anxieties emerged on January 6, 2021, during the attack on the Capitol. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic revealed the weaknesses in democratic processes when faced with a crisis. Among Trump's foremost arguments undermining the election's legitimacy was his criticism of mail-in voting, which he considered a fertile ground for potential abuses.

Trump's 2024 victory reignited apprehensions over the power transition, particularly disadvantaging the liberal camp. In the week after the election, Donald Trump visited the White House for an Oval Office meeting with President Joe Biden, where both pledged to ensure a smooth transition of power—a departure from 2020, when no such meeting occurred.

A common suggestion when analyzing political polarization today is to compare the right to male personality traits and the left to female traits. These features are particularly observable in conflict situations, such as the shifting of political power from one ideological faction to another. During the Capitol riot in January 2021, the right's negative masculine traits—impetuosity, authoritarianism, and the pursuit of dominance—came to the forefront. The events of January provided liberals with a chance to portray the assault as an example of right-wing “fascism,” while also invoking negative left-wing feminine traits such as manipulation, insidiousness, cunning, and emotionality. In the ongoing transfer of power, a shift appears imminent, with left-wing liberals losing ground to right-wing Republicans. Thus the transition process is likely to run smoothly up until the inauguration on January 20, 2025. After that, the dynamics should shift as meaningful changes start to unfold.



**PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN AND PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP SHAKE HANDS DURING A MEETING IN THE OVAL OFFICE, NOVEMBER 13, 2024.**

**SOURCE: SAUL LOEB, TRUMP RETURNS TO WASHINGTON FOR THE 1ST TIME SINCE HE WON THE ELECTION, NPR [HTTPS://WWW.NPR.ORG/2024/11/13/NX-S1-5188609/TRUMP-BIDEN-OVAL-OFFICE-MEETING](https://www.npr.org/2024/11/13/nx-s1-5188609/trump-biden-oval-office-meeting)**

The Democrats are expected to adopt a strategy that plays on public emotions, which could trigger a violent escalation in moments of crisis, akin to the George Floyd case. The riots ignited by Floyd's murder and the 2021 Capitol attack starkly illustrate that the line between protest and violence has been irrevocably crossed, thereby intensifying the social unrest within the country. A multitude of ongoing crises and the steady erosion of economic stability fuel strong emotional responses in individuals, which, if unresolved, ultimately spill over into violent actions.

Ultimately, the fate of the elites and the democratic order will rest on how the Democratic Party navigates the continuing transformations. The present democratic elite finds its most prominent representation in Joe Biden. In the 2020 election,

he demonstrated the strength necessary to not only unite the Democratic Party but also to triumph over Donald Trump. Joe Biden's win, however, came at the expense of his age, which served as a reminder of the entrenched, unyielding progressive system he represented. In response to recent shifts, a Democratic realignment to the right would not only affirm a Republican triumph but also herald the commencement of the country's evolution into a post-liberal epoch. By sticking to the current ideological path or allowing for further radicalization, the parties risk escalating tensions, which could culminate in violence during extreme situations. The possibility of a prolonged, uncontrollable scenario threatens to profoundly redefine the path the nascent, rejuvenated empire will follow.

## References:

---

Association Press, AP Elections 2024, District of Columbia President

<https://apnews.com/projects/election-results-2024/district-of-columbia/?r=0>

Leubsdorf Ben, Wilson Carol, Current Federal Civilian Employment by State and Congressional District, Congressional Research Service, September 23, 2024. Accessed: November 20, 2024.

<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R47716>

Shoop Tom, That time the vast majority of federal employees worked outside Washington, Government Executive, August 3, 2023. Accessed: November 20, 2024.

<https://www.govexec.com/management/2023/08/time-vast-majority-federal-employees-worked-outside-washington/389080/>

The White House, Remarks by President Biden and President-Elect Trump in a Meeting, November 13, 2024. Accessed: November 20, 2024.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2024/11/13/remarks-by-president-biden-and-president-elect-trump-in-a-meeting/>

USA Facts, How many people work for the federal government?, November 15, 2023. Accessed: November 20, 2024.

<https://usafacts.org/articles/how-many-people-work-for-the-federal-government/>

Williams Appleman William, The Tragedy of American Diplomacy, Dell Publishing Co., Inc, New York 1972

© COPYRIGHT 2024 Warsaw Institute

The opinions given and the positions held in materials in the Special Report solely reflect the views of authors.

# WARSAW INSTITUTE

Warsaw Institute  
Wilcza St. 9, 00-538 Warsaw, Poland  
[office@warsawinstitute.org](mailto:office@warsawinstitute.org)



KOMITET  
DO SPRAW  
POŻYTKU  
PUBLICZNEGO



Narodowy Instytut Wolności  
Centrum Rozwoju Społeczności Obywatelskiej



Rządowy Program  
Rozwoju Organizacji  
Obywatelskich  
na lata 2018–2030  
**PROO**

THE TASK IS FINANCED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FREEDOM  
- CENTER FOR CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAM  
FOR THE DEVELOPMENT FOR CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS PROO1A FOR 2018-2030.