

Panelists

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Symposium Partners

The Political and Geostrategic
Observatory of the United
States at the French Institute
for International and Strategic
Affairs (IRIS)

The Academy of
Political Science

The Urban and Social Policy
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PANEL I

Analyzing the 2024 Election's Impact: Domestic Politics, Policy, and America's Global Image

AS PART OF A SERIES OF PANEL DISCUSSIONS organized by the Political and Geostrategic Observatory of the United States at the French Institute for International and Strategic Affairs (IRIS) and The Academy of Political Science, this symposium analyzed major issues of the 2024 presidential election. It was held in collaboration with the Urban and Social Policy Program at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) and the University of Quebec in Montreal. The first of two panels focused on the electoral campaign and potential domestic implications of the presidential election on the economy, immigration, social issues, and democracy. Additionally, the panel explored the perception of America arising from this election and the message it conveys to the world.

LINCOLN MITCHELL: It is almost nine years to the day since Donald Trump came down that escalator at Trump Tower and started spewing racist vitriol. Nine years is a long time. That is about the same amount of time between the passage of the Voting Rights Act and the resignation of Richard Nixon. In other words, it is all of what we think of as the 1960s. It is about twice the amount of time the United States was in World War II. Nine years is not something that just gets rolled back or a bell that gets un-rung.

I was listening to a podcast in 2016. We were freaking out about the possibility of a Trump presidency. Jim Carville was on the podcast. Carville was the political strategist behind Bill Clinton's election victory in 1992 who would tell you, "It's the economy, stupid." But what he said in 2016 was that if Trump wins, then everything we know as political consultants when it comes to elections—about how campaigns work and, implicitly, about academic political science—is wrong. I think about those words a lot because Carville was on to something. Everything we thought we knew in 2013, 2014, or 2015 is wrong. We are in a different world now. I want to stress that the changes are permanent. We are not going back to those "halcyon" days of the first decade and a half of the twenty-first century, or any time earlier.

The discourse around the 2024 election is dominated by the paradigm that democracy is at stake. I want to make a few points about that. I refer to the threat of fascism. I wrestled about using the "f" word for years, but now I am comfortable using it. The danger here is as much a meaningfully

authoritarian government as it is state collapse. That is something we do not think about in the United States. The words “civil war” for Americans evoke images from 150 years ago—the blue and the gray and state against state. For those of us who work in other countries that are post-civil war, that is not what civil wars look like anymore. They look like state collapse.

I want to go back to January 6, 2021 when Mike Pence heroically did the legal and constitutional thing of certifying Joe Biden as the winner of the election, for the simple reason that Joe Biden had won. What was said at the time, and even now, is: “If Pence had not done that, Trump would have had a second term. Trump would have stolen a second term.” But that is not true. If Pence had sided with the believers of what we now call the “Big Lie,” the country would have been plunged into instability.

The people who voted—who worked to win an election freely and fairly—would not have taken it. This would not have been like when the United States Supreme Court decided *Bush v. Gore* in late 2000, and everyone shrugged their shoulders. What was at stake on January 6, 2021 was the stability of the United States of America. We came very close to losing that. On the international stage, it may be our military and the size of our economy that makes America so powerful, but our biggest asset is also our stability. We cannot forget that if we want to understand things.

If democracy is on the ballot, which I believe is true for this election, and if the survival of democracy depends on one party or one candidate winning, then the country is not a consolidated democracy. When Bill Clinton and Bob Dole ran against each other for the presidential race in 1996, I did not know any partisan Democrats who said, “If Dole wins, democracy’s over.” And, I did not know any partisan Republicans among my Republican friends that said, “Gosh, if Clinton gets it, we’re going to be a fascist country.” That is now a real idea with which we have to wrestle. In the 2004 Ukrainian presidential election, there was a real sense in the Ukraine that democracy would be rolled back if Viktor Yanukovich won, and that it would be moved forward if Viktor Yushchenko won. That is not a consolidated democracy. When the state of the democracy depends on the outcome, it is no longer, or it is not yet, a democracy.

I would urge those of you who vote in the United States to vote. I would urge you to vote, if I may say so, for democracy. In 2020, when Biden got elected,

the headlines read: “Democracy is still alive.” “Democracy survived.” “Democracy won.” We will see similar headlines if Biden gets re-elected this year, but this is not accurate. If Biden wins, the hope for democracy remains alive. If Biden loses, it is a huge setback. We are not a consolidated democracy, and we will not be for at least a few more years.

I think we are way past the point in American politics where the different parties take different approaches to solving problems. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Republican Party had market-based conservative solutions to solving problems like climate change and poverty. And, we had a center to center-left party that took different approaches to solving those problems. That is not where we are anymore.

We could see a second Biden term trying to address a whole lot of policies—everything from climate change, infrastructure, wealth inequality, gun reform to combating Putin. But a Trump presidency is going to be about something very different. It is going to be about his tweeting. It is going to be about his avarice. It is going to be about remaking the polity—remaking the structure of American governance and American politics—and rolling back democracy. One more thing which gets overlooked a lot is that a tremendous amount of staff time in the White House, including at the highest levels, goes toward managing Trump. This includes concealing his physical and mental incapacity. And that is what a second Trump presidency is about.

There were a couple things which Trump did in his first term that we could see repeated in the second term, and that any Republican could do—such as appointing conservative Supreme Court justices and passing a massive tax cut. Those are things that Nikki Haley, Mitt Romney, Jeb Bush, or Tim Scott would do. But the real issue here is that with a Trump victory, policies are not addressed. The number one problem becomes wokeism, or something like that, rather than climate change, wealth inequality, or racism.

The MAGA movement is not going away, regardless of what happens in the 2024 election. I am going to quote a famous Quebecois singer. In the song “Everybody Knows,” Leonard Cohen says, “Everybody knows that you’ve been faithful, give or take a night or two.” I am not here to give relationship advice, but if you have been faithful, give or take a night or two, you have not really been faithful. If you are a country

that has been stable, give or take an administration or two, you are no longer stable.

MICHAEL NUTTER: Lincoln, thank you for laying out the reality of our situation. I agree with so much of what you said. Yes, democracy is on the ballot. I just do not know whether that drives people to the polls as a main theme. I think it is back to Jim Carville. It is about the economy. It is about how people feel. Did I have more money four or five years ago than I do today? The American public's recall and memory is shorter than any of us could possibly think. We have forgotten that in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the leader of the United States of America suggested that people might use bleach or light through their skin. We have forgotten the chaos and confusion of every day wondering what the President of the United States was either going to say or do.

I am obviously hopeful that President Joe Biden will be reelected. But the one thing I do know is that President Biden will go down in the annals of history as possibly the most boring president of the United States of America in the last 100 years. I have never worried about what Joe Biden was going to say or do. He is just providing leadership. Even in a split Congress, we should be reminded that this administration has probably passed more bipartisan bills of significance than any administration in recent memory. That is just doing the work. That is not figuring out who to be against today or what group to go after.

I was in New York City at the Jacob Javits Center on the night of the election in 2016. I was very active on the campaign circuit. I was a surrogate speaker for then Senator Hillary Clinton. And so many of us thought it is just not possible that the least qualified person ever to run for president of the United States would somehow be the most qualified person. I think we know what happened there, and obviously it can happen again.

Whether democracy is on the ballot or whether we are talking about the economy, we need to pay attention. There is a saying, "Those who fail to remember their history are doomed to repeat it." We need to be very serious and very careful. Notwithstanding there being 50 states and seven territories, this election will come down to the same six states that have decided elections in recent times—Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Michigan, Arizona, Georgia, and North Carolina.

Those six states will decide who will become the next president of the United States of America. New Yorkers, please vote anyway. But it will be those six states that ultimately decide.

The presidency of the United States is the only election where you can get more votes than the other person and not win. And that is because of the Electoral College, which was carved out of the stone of racism and the efforts to keep the southern states happy. At the time at least, they did not have to count Africans snatched from their home continent and brought here in chains. The Electoral College is critically important. You can lose the popular vote and win the Electoral College, which is what happened in 2016 when Donald Trump became president of the United States of America. We need to pay attention. And everyone, no matter what state or territory you are in, needs to vote.

ROMUALD SCIORA: I am also naturally positive. If Donald Trump is re-elected, I think we will see the United States becoming a semi-authoritarian country. We have to be precise because sometimes I read in the French or European media that Trump can be a dictator. We have some rare dictatorships in the world—China and North Korea. Russia is a very strong authoritarian country. Hungary and Turkey are authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes. When I say that we will see a semi-authoritarian regime in the United States, I think of something along the lines of what we see today in Hungary with Viktor Orbán. But it is at the corner.

When I came from France to America 20 years ago, I never imagined that somebody like Trump could become president of the United States. Three years ago, after what happened at the Capitol on January 6, 2021, nobody would have imagined that Trump could again run and lead in some polls today. Let us be honest, if the election were tomorrow, there is a big chance Trump could be re-elected.

History gives us a lot of examples of democracy failing in our world. I think we could end up with a semi-authoritarian regime. Think about the situation for LGBT people or for women. If Trump is re-elected, I think America in five years will not be the United States as we know it.

Trump's re-election may influence other elections in Europe. In France we have the rise of the

Rassemblement National, a radical right party that is today leading in the polls. We have an election in France in two months, and Marine Le Pen's party is currently at 31 percent in the polls. Emmanuel Macron's party is 17 percent in the polls. So imagine, Le Pen could be elected president of France in three years from now—a catastrophe for France, but also for America.

I am concerned that a Trump re-election will damage America as we love it, but also Europe. Can we avoid something like that? Maybe President Joe Biden will be reelected. Trump was not a parenthesis. The parenthesis was Barack Obama and Biden. And I am afraid that we are today witnessing the rise of a radical right in our Western world.

PASCAL BONIFACE: As a geopolitician, I am used to saying that there is little optimistic news. But when you look at international affairs, it is even worse. I am not a specialist of political science. I am more of an internationalist. But when I study the possibility of the next election in the United States, there are only bad options. It will be a catastrophe if Donald Trump is elected. But if he is not elected, it will be also catastrophic because he will refuse the democratic vote. He refused it four years ago. And it is even worse now than four years ago because the choice for him is either the White House or jail. Whatever the result, the United States will be in trouble. And if the United States is in trouble, the world is in trouble. I am very pessimistic.

When Trump began running for the Republican nomination eight years ago, nobody would have believed that he could win. People were saying, “Oh, it's a joke. The Republican Party is a serious party. He will never win the nomination.” And once he won the nomination, everybody was saying, “Oh, it's very good for Hillary Clinton because she's sure to win against Trump.” And in France the U.S. specialists were saying one day before the election, “It's good for Hillary, she will win,” and so on. It was sure. Then Trump wins. With the COVID-19 pandemic four years ago, it was not sure whether Trump would win against Biden because of the rise of unemployment and other factors. So U.S. democracy is at stake.

It is the same in France. As Romuald has said, Marine Le Pen's far-right movement is 32 percent in the polls. There is also another far-right movement with Éric Zemmour, which is even more rightist than Le

Pen. The former Gaullist party, Les Républicains, holds views that are very close to Le Pen's positions on Muslim people and social issues. The far-right is rising in France.

It is the same in Germany. The coalition between the Social Democrats, the Liberals, and the Greens have a rate of approbation of 13 percent. Racist anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant movements are rising in Germany.

In all the European countries, democracy is being challenged by the so-called populists, which is in fact a far-right movement. Their common point is to hate Muslim people, immigrants, homosexuality, woman's rights, and abortion. They do not want to be in the twenty-first century.

After a military coup in West Africa, I was very surprised to see people demonstrating not against the military ruler, but in favor of the military ruler. As a democrat we have to think about that. Why is democracy under threat? Why are people not willing to defend democracy? They want to vote for an anti-democratic movement.

Economic social issues are very important. There was a poll in Sciences Po eight years ago. Everyone voted for Clinton and no one voted for Trump. But the result was totally different. And someone has to say, “I don't know why Trump won. I know no one who voted for him.” Maybe we are living in an unreal world. Maybe we have to think about other people who have economic difficulties—the families struck by unemployment who have to raise their children with only one wage. Democracy without social equity is not a real democracy.

Democracy is contested in West Africa because it is linked to corruption. Those who are elected have big houses, big cars, and access to goods and opportunities which are refused to the people. If we want to fight for democracy, we have to make democracy more socially just and fairer than it is for the time being. If we forget the social issue, we will damage the democratic issue. It is a very big challenge.

In France, we have a two-leg election. First you choose, and in the second round you eliminate the ones you dislike the most. It is not like in England. In England, the one with the most votes wins the election. The two-leg election in France was a protection against extremists. This is no longer the case. And I fear that if nothing changes during the next three years, Marine Le Pen will be the first female president

elected in France, but it will not be a victory for human rights and for women's rights.

It is a paradox. Xi Jinping is very popular in China. Vladimir Putin is very popular in Russia. The leaders in democracies are unpopular, and the leaders in authoritarian regimes are popular. Why? We must think about why democracy is in this bad situation and about what we have to change to avoid that. Winston Churchill was right, democracy is the worst form of government except for all others. I do not know of any country in which democracy is not under threat.

There is some good news in Brazil and Poland. Even in Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro was very strong and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva won by a very thin margin. In Poland, it was very difficult for the opposition to take power, but they did it.

The United States is really disunited. In the United Kingdom, there is no common way between the Remainers and the Brexiteers. In France, it is very difficult to be in speaking terms when you do not belong to the same political family. If you do not agree on Russia or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, you could lose friends or even family members. We are not able to speak together if you do not agree. We have to be able to speak together again.

At the beginning of the century, democracy won some territory every year. Now the tide has been reversed and authoritarian regimes are more and more authoritarian. Russia and China were less authoritarian 10 years ago than now. Africa had more democracies 10 years ago than now. And so I am not very optimistic for democracy, and I am not very optimistic for the geopolitical future.

DISCUSSION

ROBERT Y. SHAPIRO: There is a consensus that democracy is at stake in this election. The conservative response to that is: The Democrats are worse. Joe Biden is a threat to democracy. And there are guardrails in place—the courts or the filibuster in the Senate—that could constrain whatever dire things the Donald Trump administration might do. If you read the editorial page of *The Wall Street Journal* and some of the commentators who offer their opinions, that is the response. In order to help vindicate that, they often

point to the extent to which Trump has made inroads among the traditional Democratic base.

The first question I have for Lincoln Mitchell and Michael Nutter is: What is your thinking about the argument that there is a realignment underway in American politics that has changed the nature of politics in terms of the base of support for the Republican Party? The Democratic Party is now a party not of working-class whites, but of the more intellectual elite segments of the population.

And secondly, how does all this affect the strategy of the Democratic Party in the upcoming election—where what is at stake is not only the presidency, but control of the House and the Senate. Even if there was no threat to democracy, the threat to both parties is that the other side will win control of the presidency, Congress, and the Senate. Recent presidents have had unified party government in which they were able to move government policy in a liberal or conservative direction in striking ways—for instance Barack Obama with Obamacare or Trump with the tax cuts. And Trump with the complete change in the judiciary.

MITCHELL: According to the data, 1964 is the last year that the Democratic nominee for president won a majority of the white working-class vote. There is a story the Democratic Party likes to tell about itself, which is that white working-class voters are a key part of their constituency. That is a good story. It fits a good narrative. It is empirically not true. The fetishization of the white working-class vote following Donald Trump's victory in 2016, and continuing now, always struck me as strange. Because if you look at the exit poll data, Republican nominee Mitt Romney got almost the exact same percentage of the white working class in 2012 as Trump did in 2016. So, when we talk about realignment, we have to focus on continuity as much as on change.

There is another piece of this that we have to recognize. The backbones of the Democratic Party—today and for much of this century—rests on two strong constituencies. One is the African American vote. And that number for Biden might, if everything goes completely wrong, dip as low as 80 percent. Eighty percent of a vote is still a base. When all is said and done, it is going to be much higher than 80 percent. The second pillar of the Democratic Party is white liberals. They are disproportionately Jewish and LGBT. They might

care about the environment and other liberal post-materialist issues. Those are the two main parts of the Democratic Party. The story that is told is a different one, because it is a more appealing one.

And you see elements within the Republican Party trying to push the idea that it is now a multiracial working-class party. Substantively, they are not at all. But that is spin. The policy substance is not there.

From a strategic perspective, I am less pessimistic about Biden's re-election chances than most. In 2008, Barack Obama took the Democratic coalition and changed it slightly depending on the state. For example, in California, the Latino vote remains an important part of the Democratic Party coalition. That is not true in Florida. In Michigan, Joe Biden joined the United Automobile Workers picket line—that will help Biden with white working-class voters in the Midwest. In other states, the African American vote can be brought back on different issues. In a competitive election system, the Republican Party cannot do so because of the racism that is in the DNA of the party. Biden has pushed back by getting a bigger chunk of the white vote. With 42 percent of the white vote in Biden's column, which is about where it was last time, it is going to be over fast.

NUTTER: Turn out, turn out, turn out. In the African American community, the true backbone is Black women. Black women are steadfast in their general support for Democrats, and certainly for President Biden. Former Vice President Joe Biden became President because of what happened in the South Carolina primary. That was Black women at work. They do not falter. They do not stray, in contrast to Black men. We will see what happens on election day. So far, and this has been developing since 2016, 2020, and now into 2024, there have been some alarming concerns about what is going on with Black men and the electorate in elections.

This is a turnout election. The issue for Donald Trump is that there is virtually no growth potential for him. He has who he has. The problem in many instances is that Democrats generally lack discipline and the ability to multi-focus. In light of all that has happened—the Trump presidency in 2016, the rollback of reproductive rights, and a whole host of other things—ask yourself today just how important were Hillary Clinton's emails and the server in her house? Just how important were all the things that were talked about

back in 2016 that then resulted in the stacking of the courts and the disastrous response to a worldwide pandemic, among other issues? Many Democrats were focused on things that did not matter

Republicans are focused. They are focused on the Big Lie. They are focused on their party. They are focused on their racism. Whatever it is, they just stick to it. In contrast, we want to run around all over the place. And now, it is that President Biden is too old. But whenever you see him, he is on the move. He is jogging. He is doing something. There is no chaos. There is no confusion. We know what is going to happen on any given day with him. In a legitimate world, there is no real contest between Biden and Trump. There is only a four-year difference between these two individuals. Yes, we knew how old Joe Biden was when many of us voted for him the first time. It is the way time works. Four years later, you will be four years older. It is just reality.

The Democrats just need to stay focused. We can maintain a base in the African American community while trying to get the suburban white women vote at the same time. We can do multiple things at the same time. It is a fifty-state, seven-territory strategy. What works in Pennsylvania may not necessarily work in Texas. It is a big country. It is time to move around all over the place. It is going to be about turnout, staying focused, and being disciplined. The Republican Party has been trying to overturn *Roe v. Wade* for 50 years. We cannot get Democrats to stay focused for 50 minutes on the same thing at the same time. Focus, turn out, win elections. That is what this is really all about.

SCIORA: I agree with what Michael said. Republicans are focusing on their idea. They are fighting for their idea of civilization. In the meantime, the Democrats are sitting on their idea and talking about Biden's age. You do not get the impression that they are fighting for the idea of democracy or that they understand where we are today. We are a civilization in crisis.

I do not think it is a question about Biden's age. It is a question of image. I am sure President Biden is fine and that he knows how to manage a country. That is not the point. I can see America from another perspective. We are in a country where a lot of people like strong guys. I am a Democrat and support President Biden, but I think President Biden looks tired. Trump looks like the strong guy. And unfortunately, it is not

a question of competency. It is a question of image. A lot of American people would like to vote for the strong guy.

Trump is not the most radical among the Republicans. There are others who are more radical than Trump. We should focus more on the question of Donald Trump's potential pick for vice president. Whoever he picks will be representative of the next generation, if not the future of the Republican Party.

BONIFACE: I agree with Romuald. It is not only a four-year difference. It is a difference in physical behavior. Biden is a wise man. He has been a good president. But, he does not seem to be in very good shape. He won four years ago during the COVID-19 pandemic by campaigning in his basement. He did not have to tire himself by campaigning everyday—taking planes, having meetings, or seeing people. I fear that Biden could fall descending the plane and that Trump will make fun of him.

When Biden was elected four years ago, I think a lot of people thought Biden would be only a one-term president. I think it is tiring to campaign across so huge a country. It will be difficult for Biden to campaign.

SHAPIRO: The election will not be decided by the popular vote. The 2016 election was decided by about 70,000 votes in three states. In 2020, the election was decided by 40,000 votes in three states. Based on what Mayor Nutter said, the Democrats are probably wishing there were more Black women and suburban women voters in Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Georgia, and Arizona.

Party politics has changed. In the 1972 election, following the reforms that resulted from the turmoil of 1968, I cast my first vote with an absentee ballot while I was in college. I voted for Democrat George McGovern for president and for Republican Senator Clifford Case from New Jersey, where people could vote across parties based on the candidates and their stances. That has changed in a decisive way since 1968—a key juncture. People have been talking about how this election is 1968 all over again, epitomized most recently by the protests on college campuses and what to expect at the next Democratic Convention in Chicago.

NUTTER: Chicago hosted the convention in 1996, and people were worried about 1968. It went fine. But there are certainly many similarities in 2024 to 1968. I

think we have made some progress in that time. And so, some of this is nostalgia. We are always looking backward for a reference point. I think 2024 will be different. Campuses are undergoing a variety of tensions for a whole lot of different reasons. But I do not know if this is 1968 all over again. There are some similarities, but I do not think that it is the same.

MITCHELL: There are some differences between 2024 and 1968. There was a moment of growing momentum for Joe Biden not to run for re-election. Biden was already thinking about the presidency in 1980. You do not run for this office for 40 years to serve one term. And frankly, you do not have a successful first term and then walk away. But there is this moment, and it is epitomized by Ezra Klein talking about an open convention in *The New York Times*.

But in my view, I never doubted that Biden would run for re-election. It is not going to be 1968 in Chicago again. In the 2024 convention, Biden is going to come in with a huge majority of the delegates. Kamala Harris will be the running mate. That ticket is set. There will be overwhelming support within the Democratic Party for that ticket.

Now, there will be demonstrations outside of the convention. There are a range of opinions within the Democratic Party on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The notion that the Democratic Party has been taken over by radical demonstrators is a very hard point to make when Joe Biden is the face of the Democratic Party.

QUESTION & ANSWER

It seems that all movements towards a fascist, right-wing government around the world lead to Vladimir Putin. Can you give us your thoughts on that?

MITCHELL: The phrase I use is a transnational fascist movement. An important node in that is Benjamin Netanyahu. When he ran the last time, he had posters of himself with Putin to show that he is a tough guy. All roads do lead to Moscow, to Putin. Russia is a client state of China right now, and that makes it a little more complicated.

Hillary Clinton lost in 2016 by a razor-thin margin. Had they done things just a little differently, Clinton would have won. To me, it is very clear that without Russian interference, Clinton wins that election. That does not mean that every allegation was true, but the margin was so narrow. But a consensus emerged among the Republicans that: “You are accusing us of this. We do not want to hear this.” Then early on in the Trump period, the punditry, media, and to some extent the academic world, did not want to wrestle with the gravity of what had happened.

If you believe Russia intervened and changed the outcome of the American presidential election, which I do, then everything is on the table. If you can ignore that, you can pretend that the Trump threat is not as bad. There was a tremendous push to do that.

Based largely on my experience in other countries, I published an article in February of 2017 in the *Huffington Post* saying Trump will not leave office if he loses. I pitched that article to many places, and they did not want to hear it. The reaction was often anger: “How can you say something like this?” Well, having studied this and worked in other countries, here are the signs. There was so much insistence in 2016 that it just cannot be this bad. The story got buried and nobody wants to dig it out again.

How can the traditional center, center-left parties, established parties take into account the concerns that resulted in what you had here in the United States, and that may happen in Europe as well?

NUTTER: Part of the cure is to just win elections. I do not mean to make it sound so simple. On the heels of what Lincoln said, we made the mistake once of thinking XYZ is not going to happen, or that it is not possible. That failed. You have to call things out for what they are with information and evidence, and not be reluctant about it.

As Democrats, sometimes messaging—or getting to the heart of things—does not seem to be our forte. We need to be much sharper, clearer, and crisper in terms of our messaging. We are not pushing back on the nonsense. If it is left on the table, it ends up being believed and it could seem like fact. We have to push back a lot harder.

Do you think we should get rid of the electoral college?

NUTTER: Yes, but it is not going to happen in 2024. We should have gotten rid of the electoral college a long time ago. That debate has been raging for a long period of time. But it is immaterial. If we stay focused on the six states that are going to determine this election, win the electoral college, and win the popular vote, we leave not one shred of a doubt about who won the election.

MITCHELL: The question is not complete if you only say, “Do you want to get rid of the electoral college?” What do you want to replace it with? What does that system look like?

Do you want a rank choice voting system? Do you want a first-past-the-post system? Do you want a run-off system? These are questions you have to ask. And then you need to be able to dismiss the false arguments in favor of the electoral college, which make no sense.

If you want to dedicate yourself to getting rid of the electoral college, move to Texas and volunteer. If Texas flips, Republicans can never win another presidential election. Texas is close right now. If Democrats win Texas, then suddenly you will hear from the Republicans how terrible the electoral college is.

SHAPIRO: I agree with that. It is not going to happen until the Republicans lose an election in which they get the majority of the popular vote and lose the electoral college.

What do you think would be the impact on the U.S.’s involvement in the ongoing Ukraine and Israeli-Palestine conflicts if Donald Trump were to win the 2024 election?

NUTTER: Trump has said he would resolve the Ukraine-Russia issue by telling Ukraine to give up some territory. Or that if NATO countries are not paying their dues, Russia should be able to just go in and take other countries. Now, we would say, “Well, that is crazy. That is not possible.” No, that is what he means. Sometimes, as Maya Angelou said, when people show you who they are, you should believe them. That is who he is. He lies every day and tells the truth at the same time.

What measures could Trump take to pivot to a fascist movement or something like that? Is it possible for Trump to pivot to a regime like that?

SCIORA: No, we will not end up under a fascist regime in four years. From my point of view, we will end up in a semi-authoritarian regime if Trump is re-elected. Trump in 2024 is not Trump in 2016. Trump prior to 2016 was wondering whether he should run with the Democrats or the Republicans. Trump picked up on what people expected him to be. Trump is radicalized. He is working with new people, and they have a project called Project 2025, also known as the Presidential Transition Project. It will be slow. Nothing will happen overnight.

We are in the middle of a civilizational crisis not only in America, but also in the western world. People have to understand that the next election in America and the choices we make in Europe are not just for the next four, five, or six years. We have already chosen the path of our future. And we have to make people around us understand where we are standing.

ABOUT THE PANELISTS

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