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US mid-terms enter final stretch, with truth, justice and the American way almost completely hidden from view

How is it that these US mid-terms are generating more sound and fury than any other mid-terms in recent memory?

That US is divided is not new news, but just how divided it is becomes increasingly clear every day, as partisan news services push out bespoke messages with views that never seem to come close to meeting on common ground.

In part, of course, President Trump's style of politics has heightened tensions. In particular, he's shown a canny ability to draw the media into the debate as an issue in itself.

This has added a heightened tension and anxiety to much of the commentary, and it's certainly no longer clear at all where Americans should go for unbiased reporting. Whether or not the news is "fake" is moot. But impartial, it ain't.

One of the defining things about both candidate Trump and President Trump has been his interaction with this new dynamic. It's probably true that algorithms of social media encouraged the left in the US to live in more of a bubble than the right, simply because their bubble reflected the broad spectrum of US media.

Mr Trump's response has been to counterattack hard on Twitter and through the medium of Fox News and, when he occasionally steps over the mark, to claim that he wasn't actually being serious anyway.

Who knows if he really thinks it's okay to body slam journalists, or whether the caravan that is advancing on the US really represents the existential threat he says it does?

Who knows too if the tweet he put out on 21st October warning of voter fraud is to be taken altogether seriously.

To be sure, it will be forgotten if the Republicans win big.

But if they don't, there is a distinct possibility that some on the right will claim that the "Deep State" Mr Trump has occasionally invoked has stolen the election.

It's not that the US hasn't had issues with counting votes in the past. There was the famous hanging chad episode that secured George W Bush the Presidency and relegated Al Gore to the role of environmental campaigner.

But this time round, the dialogue around any such claims and counter-claims that get made will be very different. Then, the issue was largely one of the accuracy of the vote-counting machines and the competency of the administrators. Conspiracy may have been whispered, but it wasn't a word that entered into the mainstream, in spite of the immense consequences that followed.

Now though, the context is very different. Neither side even allows that the other has any moral case to make, and both sides frequently assert that the other is out of touch with reality. And this is not just hyperbole at the high point of campaign rallies. No, it's part of the every day dialogue.

All of which begs an interesting question about losing: does either side know how to do it any more? Mr Trump, for all his posturing about corruption and swamps, has thus far only been a winner when it comes to US elections. At some stage he will lose, as all democratic politicians do in the end. It seems unlikely that he will he walk off the stage gracefully. The more pertinent question is how much of the edifice of US politics will he take down with him?



If Republicans lose these mid-terms we will start to get an insight into that issue. But conversely, liberals, and particularly those further to the left seem now to be driven by an almost quasi-religious zeal, virtue-signalling all day and condemning as morally lost all those who disagree with their chosen line.

For these people, prejudice and racism have emerged as the original sins of Western civilisation. To deny the legitimacy and force of those sins is to be cast out beyond the liberal pale. There is not much grounds for losing with good grace here either.

With markets dipping, the dollar somewhat weaker, the gold price up and oil up too, the economic backdrop to all this remains fascinating. Will Mr Trump pull off a new trade deal with President Xi of China, as the traders selling the dollar hope? If he can, he will be one step closer to realising his own vision of making America great again.

Whether or not he can take enough of the country with him remains the most fascinating political question of our time.

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