

## **Trump Won Landslide Victory to Become 47th U.S. President**

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On November 5, when the U.S. presidential and congressional elections were held with the world watching the United States with bated breath, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump became certain to defeat Democratic candidate Kamala Harris by a wide margin. At the time of writing, the counting of votes is still ongoing, with the election results being yet to be finalized. However, Trump declared his victory in Palm Beach, Florida, followed by Harris's statement conceding her defeat. "The outcome of this election is not what we wanted," Harris said in Washington on the afternoon of November 6. In effect, the outcome of the election became clear, paving the way for Trump to come back to the White House as the 47th president of the United States. Since Stephen Grover Cleveland served as the 22nd and 24th president, Trump is the first American in about 130 years to come back to the presidency after having served as president and then losing a presidential election. He is the second American to do so in history.

This presidential race had been called very close. Various polls, analyses, and reports up to the last minute on the voting day had shown that the approval ratings of the two candidates had been evenly matched. Any lead had been said within the margin of error. The election outcome had remained impossible to predict until the voting day. Trump and Harris supporters had been completely divided, with election campaigns continuing in a way that the United States had been split into two. Under these circumstances, due to the unique characteristics of the U.S. presidential election system, the outcome of the election had been seen as a matter of which candidate wins the seven battleground states, rather than nationwide approval ratings or the number of votes garnered across the country.

According to election results at the moment (8 a.m. on November 7, Japan time), Trump has secured 295 electoral votes, well above the simple majority of 270, against 226 for Harris. While there are 17 electoral votes left unaccounted, Trump may increase his electoral votes even more. In terms of the number of electoral votes, it must be concluded that Trump has won a landslide victory. Symbolizing this resounding victory is the fact that Trump won five of the seven battleground states. The five include Pennsylvania (with 19 electoral votes), which had been viewed as the most important for the final election outcome. The other four are North Carolina, Georgia, Michigan, and Wisconsin. In the other two battleground states, Arizona and Nevada, Trump is leading Harris. He could win all seven battleground states. Trump has thus secured all electoral votes in the battleground states, paving the way for his bigger-than-expected victory.

Various experts on U.S. politics have already given their views on the causes of Trump's resounding victory and Harris's defeat in the media. Only as a researcher on energy issues rather than an expert on U.S. politics, I feel that how to win over voters other than their respective strong supporters has had a great impact on the election outcome. Trump has blamed inflation, immigration, and Middle East and Ukraine issues on the failures of the current administration and continued to insist that he could change the situation. As Harris has served as vice president for the current Joe Biden

administration, Trump has emphasized that the presidency should not be given to Harris, who is plagued with successive failures. It is possible that these Trump assertions resonated with voters who were hesitant to vote for Trump or Harris. On the other hand, Harris joined the presidential race as the incumbent vice president. However, I feel that voters might have doubted if she had a clear vision of what exactly she would implement and change as president to lead the United States. Immediately after Harris replaced Biden as the Republican presidential candidate, there was a phase when Harris's popularity rose sharply. Later, however, her popularity declined, instead of growing further, allowing Trump to catch up with Harris and reverse the situation.

Trump is now set to lead the United States as the world's superpower again over the next four years. Given the enormous influence of the United States on international politics, the global economy, and security, every move of the next Trump administration will attract global attention. It is certain that Trump will pursue the America First policy to “make America great again.” This will exert important global impacts in a variety of policy areas. In the congressional elections held at the same time, Republicans have secured the majority in the Senate and are reportedly likely to win the majority in the House of Representatives as well. It is highly likely that the United States will have a unified government in which Republicans control the presidency, the Senate, and the House. It will be interesting to see how the next Trump administration will steer under the unified government.

Global attention will focus on what the Trump administration's policies will be in regard to various fields. Trump's climate change and energy policies are likely to shake the world in the future. U.S. climate change policy is expected to change most dramatically under Trump. After criticizing the current Biden administration's climate change policy harshly in presidential election campaigns, Trump is likely to dramatically change the U.S. climate policy direction next year. As he did during his first term as president, Trump may immediately withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement and indicate little interest in any ambitious decarbonization policy. Of course, there are certain limits on what the president or the federal government can do, allowing state governments and companies to retain their decarbonization initiatives. However, the U.S. government may greatly set back climate change initiatives. This will exert significant impacts on the international debate on climate change and decarbonization.

In the energy sector, various changes are expected to occur. The Biden administration, though recognizing the importance of fossil fuels to some extent based on realities, has failed to take a stance of strong support for fossil fuels. However, Trump is likely to inherit the “energy dominance” policy under his first administration and adopt policies that are conscious of the importance of fossil fuels. As is the case with decarbonization policies, the federal government's support for fossil fuels is separate from how U.S. oil and gas production will actually be affected. This is because it depends on each industry player, who moves in line with market realities. If the next Trump administration takes a stance that emphasizes fossil fuels, however, the Biden administration's moratorium on new liquefied natural gas export approval may not be a problem at all. Rather, how to expand U.S. LNG production may come back as an important policy issue. Another attention-attracting point is how the next Trump administration will treat the Inflation Reduction Act, known as one of the Biden administration's greatest achievements. There is a view that the IRA would be highly sustainable because Republican-led states have benefited from the IRA. Depending on priorities for the next Trump administration, however, the IRA may be affected in various ways.

While direct energy policies are extremely important regarding energy issues, we must not forget that the next Trump administration's foreign and security policies could greatly influence the international energy situation, since energy issues are international issues. For example, its policies

toward Iran and Israel could have significant impacts on the stabilization or destabilization of the Middle East in the future. Its policies toward Russia and Ukraine should not be overlooked, given their impacts on the international energy situation. Furthermore, the next Trump administration's China policy could have significant impacts on the future of the global energy situation through its impacts on overall security issues. The next Trump administration's responses to these issues should be watched carefully because they could have grave impacts on Japan and the whole world.

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