

## DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE USA IN THE CONTEXT OF PRESIDENTIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS: CONCLUSIONS FOR UKRAINE

### Authors:

**Institute of American Studies**

### Summary

The 2024 US presidential and congressional elections could significantly impact future US support for Ukraine.

The elections promise to be extremely competitive, especially after Joe Biden's withdrawal from the race and Kamala Harris's nomination as the Democratic Party candidate. On the Republican side, Donald Trump is actively campaigning, focusing on contrasts between his past administration and the current one.

Key states such as Arizona, Ohio, Michigan, Nevada, and others will determine the election results and, consequently, future US policy towards Ukraine.

### Recommendations for Ukraine:

- 1) ***Continue dialogue with both parties:*** Regardless of the election results, it's important to maintain constructive relationships with both Democrats and Republicans. Donald Trump will remain an influential political figure that requires attention.
- 2) ***Strengthen bilateral cooperation:*** Propose specific cooperation formats to the US, especially in the field of joint weapons production. This could be an important argument for any future president.
- 3) ***Active advocacy work:*** Continue to inform American society and legislators about the importance of supporting Ukraine, focusing on shared interests and successful examples of cooperation.
- 4) ***Readiness for changing US priorities:*** If Trump returns to power, the US focus may shift to countering China, potentially reducing support for Ukraine. Alternative scenarios for ensuring security and further assistance need to be prepared.
- 5) ***Congressional influence on Ukraine support:*** Attention should be focused on interacting with Congress, as future aid funding depends on it. Trips by Ukrainian

officials and diplomats to various US regions should continue to strengthen support at the local level.

These measures will help maintain and strengthen US support for Ukraine regardless of who becomes the next president.

## What Should Ukraine Follow in the 2024 US Elections?

The 2024 US presidential election is scheduled for Tuesday, November 5. Dynamic events, including the assassination attempt on Donald Trump, his unpredictable decision to nominate J.D. Vance as the Republican Party's vice-presidential candidate, and Joe Biden's withdrawal from the race have already become unprecedented and make the 2024 campaign election process almost unpredictable.

Traditionally, elections are held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. On November 5, 2024, Americans will elect a president, vote for a new composition of the House of Representatives with 435 legislators, and vote for 33 senators. That is, in addition to the presidential election and a complete renewal of the lower House of Congress, a third of the Senate, which consists of 100 seats in total, will also be renewed. Voters will also vote for gubernatorial candidates in 13 states.<sup>1</sup>

The US President is elected through a complex and multi-level system called the Electoral College, where candidates compete for the votes of 538 electors, of which they need to receive a majority, i.e., 270, to win. Electoral votes in each state are distributed according to population. Usually, candidates pay attention to several "swing" states that can vote differently every 4 years. This is because there are states that can be considered traditionally Republican in presidential elections, and similarly, there are states that can be considered Democratic. In 2024, the so-called swing states are considered to be Arizona, Georgia, Nevada, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.<sup>2</sup>

The primaries, or preliminary elections, culminating in Super Tuesday on March 5, gave voters the opportunity to choose party candidates. Then, almost without any competition, Joe Biden from the Democratic Party and Donald Trump from the Republican Party won.

## 2024 Presidential Elections

After President Joe Biden's withdrawal from the race and his direct support for Vice President Kamala Harris, who became the Democratic Party's leader, the election has become more competitive and intense.

---

<sup>1</sup> Schaeffer, K. (2023). The Changing Face of Congress in 8 Charts. *Pew Research Center*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/02/07/the-changing-face-of-congress/>

<sup>2</sup> Davis, E. Jr. (2024). *7 States That Could Sway the 2024 Presidential Election*. *U.S. News & World Report*. <https://www.usnews.com/news/elections/articles/7-swing-states-that-could-decide-the-2024-presidential-election>

Republicans successfully nominated Donald Trump for the 2024 presidential election, but this process was not without events that could influence voters' final behavior in November. The assassination attempt on Trump, as well as the choice of J.D. Vance as the vice-presidential candidate, crystallized some of the candidate's narratives and added several new important elements to his campaign<sup>3</sup>.

The Democratic Party, whose political platform focuses on strengthening and preserving civil rights, social welfare systems, and climate change measures, found itself in a critical state.

*Biden's exit from the 2024 campaign allowed Democrats to significantly change the course of the race and improve their chances in the presidential election.*

President Biden's decision to leave the presidential race after a controversial debate performance against Trump logically raises questions about leadership and the Democratic Party's movement towards rejuvenation.

Harris's candidacy brings a historical and potentially transformational aspect to the election. Being the first Black woman to become a presidential candidate from one of the two major parties, her campaign is likely to continue the main narratives of Biden's policies that are acceptable to the Democratic electorate. At the same time, in the 2024 campaign and potentially as president, she will be forced to emphasize her own policy priorities, which will likely strengthen the Democratic support base.<sup>4</sup>

The Republican Party, which is mostly associated with conservative policies, namely tax cuts, limited government influence, advocacy for gun ownership rights, and restrictions on immigration and abortion, has firmly united around Donald Trump. Trump's significant advantage and subsequent official nomination at the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, underscore his continued and significant influence on the Republican Party.

Trump's election campaign focuses on contrasting the achievements of his administration with the current Democratic Party rule. This is primarily done to mobilize the existing electoral base and expand it at least slightly.

The Republican strategy is aimed at active rallies, social media advertising directed against opponents in key "swing" states to gain the necessary Electoral College votes for victory.

Regarding the so-called third parties in the U.S. 2024 election, in addition to the main party candidates, independent politicians such as Robert F. Kennedy Jr., nephew of former President John F. Kennedy, add complexity to the electoral landscape. Although historically independent candidates have not achieved significant success in elections, Kennedy's

---

<sup>3</sup> USA Today (2024). *Donald Trump - A 2024 Presidential Election Guide*. <https://www.usatoday.com/elections/voter-guide/2024-11-05/candidate/donald-trump>

<sup>4</sup> Rogers, K. (2024). How the Biden Campaign Transformed into the Harris Campaign. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/23/us/politics/biden-harris-campaign-transformation.html>

presence, who has one of the highest support figures in the 21st century, could affect the distribution of votes in decisive states.<sup>5</sup>

## Senate elections have a direct impact on the term of the next U.S. President in 2024

The Senate consists of 100 senators, which historically formed as a result of the Great Compromise of 1787 (or Sherman Compromise). It was then decided that the upper house of Congress (the Senate) would have two representatives from each state, while the lower house (the House of Representatives) would distribute the number of representatives according to population.<sup>6</sup>

Over the past 50 years, the Senate's composition has usually been evenly split between Democrats and Republicans.<sup>7</sup> Currently, with a 50-50 composition, the Democratic Party has an advantage in the upper house due to the final vote of the Vice President, who effectively holds the position of President of the Senate.

The upper house is considered more influential than the lower house due to the smaller number of legislators, the powers of oversight over the federal budget and the executive branch through the approval or rejection of candidates appointed by the president. Despite this, the most important function of initiating legislative initiatives must always be done in tandem with the House of Representatives, as blocking or ignoring the vote on a bill by either chamber means its failure.

## Senate elections are no less important than presidential elections

In the 2024 election, the composition of the Senate will be crucial in the newly elected president's ability to influence the agenda and advance their initiatives. It's still unclear who will be able to win and form a majority, and several important electoral races could determine these results.<sup>8</sup>

### *State of Montana*

Democratic Senator Jon Tester, known for his political career in Montana, faces a huge challenge in his bid for a fourth term in the Senate. His opponent is Republican Tim Sheehy, a former serviceman and businessman supported by Donald Trump. Tester's incumbency and

---

<sup>5</sup> Mannweiler, L. (2024). Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s Presidential Campaign: By the Numbers. *U.S. News & World Report*.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2024-04-26/robert-f-kennedy-jr-s-presidential-campaign-by-the-numbers>

<sup>6</sup> Nelson, W. E. (1987). Reason and Compromise in the Establishment of the Federal Constitution, 1787-1801. *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 44(3), 458-484. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1939766>

<sup>7</sup> Hillman, N. (n.d.). Party control in Congress and State Legislatures (1978-2016). UW-Madison.

<https://web.education.wisc.edu/nwhillman/index.php/2017/02/01/party-control-in-congress-and-state-legislatures/>

<sup>8</sup> Weisman, J. (2024). 10 Senate Races to Watch in 2024. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/article/senate-races-2024-election.html>

strong local ties are significant assets, but the strengthening of the Republican position in the state and Trump's influence make this race competitive. Tester needs significant support from independent voters and must also count on votes from moderate Republicans to win.

### *State of Ohio*

Senator Sherrod Brown, a popular Democrat among the working class, is defending his seat in a state that tends to elect Republicans. His opponent, Republican Bernie Moreno, supports Trump and has significant personal wealth to finance his campaign. Brown's task is to maintain his working-class base and counter Moreno's business-oriented narrative. The outcome will largely depend on Brown's ability to stand out and connect with Ohio voters during a competitive campaign.

### *State of Arizona*

The retirement of Democratic Senator Kyrsten Sinema, who announced she would become an independent politician and not represent either party, has initiated a competitive struggle between Democrat Ruben Gallego and Republican Kari Lake, a convinced Trump supporter. Arizona's battleground status in the presidential race will significantly influence this Senate contest. Gallego's appeal to Latino voters and his military experience will be key factors, while Lake's controversial position on the integrity of the 2020 election could polarize the electorate, making voter turnout and engagement important elements of the final choice.

### *State of Michigan*

The race to replace retiring Democratic Senator Debbie Stabenow involves Republican primaries with candidates of varying degrees of loyalty to Trump. The Democratic Party favorite is Congresswoman Elissa Slotkin. Her experience in national security issues gives her good standing among moderate voters, but the results of the Republican primaries will determine the dynamics of the race. The Republican candidate's allegiance to or against Trump will largely influence voter dynamics in this critically important state.

### *State of Nevada*

Democratic Senator Jacky Rosen will face Republican Sam Brown, a war veteran with a compelling personal story and minimal political baggage. Rosen's incumbency provides an advantage, but Brown's new face and war hero story could change the dynamics of voters looking for new leadership.

Several other important Senate electoral races will take place in states such as Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Texas, Florida, and Utah. The 2024 electoral cycle presents a complex interaction of powers, political loyalties, and voter sentiments in a highly polarized environment. The results will not only shape the balance of power in the Senate but will also



reflect broader national trends and electoral changes. Each race carries unique challenges and opportunities, making strategic campaigning and voter engagement crucial for both sides.

## Republicans want to expand their fragile majority in the House of Representatives, while Democrats will fight for the opportunity to form their majority

The composition of the House of Representatives is 435 legislators; this number is proportional to the population of each state. To obtain a majority, one party needs to win 218 seats.

In the current 118th Congress of the House of Representatives, which will complete its work on January 3, 2025, Republicans have a small majority with 220 mandates, Democrats have 212, and three seats remain vacant.<sup>9</sup> The lower house is headed by the Speaker, who is elected from the majority. They have the power to put bills to a vote, and they are also the third person in the state, and theoretically could temporarily hold the position of president in case of the inability of the head of state and vice president to perform their duties. The House of Representatives has equal power to the Senate in lawmaking and can block initiatives in the absence of a majority of votes.

In the 2024 election, Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives are going to defend their slim majority. The battle for control of the House of Representatives will be tough, and several key confrontations are attracting significant attention.<sup>10</sup>

In Texas, incumbent Congressman Tony Gonzales faced a re-election problem due to Brandon Herrera – a person fighting for gun rights. This race will show who will represent the Republican Party, as Gonzales's moderate position on gun legislation after the Uvalde school shooting has drawn internal criticism.

Democratic Congressman Henry Cuellar, accused of bribery, remains an important figure in Texas's representation in the House of Representatives. Republicans Lazaro Garza and Jay Furman will compete in the second round of the primary election, where the winner will challenge Cuellar. The district, which was previously not a Republican target, now has potential for a Republican Party victory due to Cuellar's legal problems.

In Ohio, a special election will be held where the winner will replace Republican Congressman Bill Johnson. Republican Michael Rulli and Democrat Michael Kriepchak will face off in a confrontation, potentially increasing the chances for Democrats.

---

<sup>9</sup> Foran, C., Wilson, K. and Talbot, H. (2024). Narrowly divided House makeup shifts again with new vacancy. *CNN*. <https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/05/politics/narrowly-divided-house-new-vacancy/index.html>

<sup>10</sup> Reuters (2024). Eleven US House of Representatives Races to Watch in 2024. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/ten-us-house-representatives-races-watch-2024-2024-04-30/>

In the suburbs of New York, Democratic rivals John Avlon and Nancy Goroff are competing to unseat Republican Nick LaLota. This district is a primary target for Democrats in their quest to reclaim the majority in the House of Representatives.

Democratic Congressman Jamaal Bowman, who represents a district encompassing part of New York and its suburbs, faces a strong challenge from George Latimer. He criticizes Bowman's position on Israel and infrastructure, making these primaries an important contest in the Democratic Party.

In Colorado, Republican Lauren Boebert plans to change districts to avoid difficult primaries and run for Congressman Ken Buck's vacant seat. This decision could cost the Trump supporter a victory in the election.

In addition to the mentioned races, important competitions will take place in the states of Washington, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania. A trend can be observed that all important confrontations are taking place mostly in "swing" states, which will be decisive in the elections for president, Senate, and House of Representatives.

All these races collectively demonstrate the key dynamics of both Republican and Democratic strategies, highlighting intra-party conflicts, legal challenges, and the struggle for control over districts where voters may change their preferences. The results of these confrontations will significantly affect the composition and leadership of the U.S. House of Representatives.

### **Joe Biden is not running in 2024. What is his political legacy?**

After coming to power in 2021, Joe Biden's administration aimed to improve the situation with migrants and act with greater humanity compared to the previous administration of Donald Trump. In particular, Biden stopped the construction of the border wall and helped reunite about 100 migrant families who were forcibly separated during the Trump administration.<sup>11</sup>

However, Joe Biden's presidency coincided with the largest movement of displaced persons since World War II, when millions of people fled economic decline, political instability, and gang violence in their countries. Between February 2021 and October 2023, 2.5 million people were admitted to the U.S., and 2.8 million were deported or sent back.<sup>12</sup>

After Donald Trump's administration, Biden decided to change the approach to migrants to a more humane one. On the first day of his presidency, Biden sent a bill to Congress to

---

<sup>11</sup> Kahn, C., & Rose, J. (2021, December 29). *President Biden promised to reform immigration policy. How has that been going?* National Public Radio. <https://www.npr.org/2021/12/29/1068895454/president-biden-promised-to-reform-immigration-policy-how-has-that-been-going>

<sup>12</sup> Robertson, L. (2024, February 27). *Breaking Down the Immigration Figures*. FactCheck.org. <https://www.factcheck.org/2024/02/breaking-down-the-immigration-figures/>

modernize immigration policy and suspended deportations of migrants for 100 days, which drew significant criticism, mostly from Republicans.<sup>13</sup>

The Biden administration decided to try to address the root causes of this problem. For this, in particular, U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris made several visits to Central America to promote economic opportunities in the countries from which most migrants come, and promised to help Mexico with reforms to reduce the flow of migrants. For humanitarian reasons, Biden also refused to send children who crossed the border back to Mexico, emphasizing the need to ensure border security and dignified treatment of migrants.

The Biden administration also dealt with the consequences of Donald Trump's "zero-tolerance" policy. As part of this, a task force was formed, which included representatives from the Departments of Homeland Security, Health and Human Services, and the State Department, to reunite migrant families who remained separated and determine how to compensate for the damage caused by this policy. However, such a humane position of Biden was perceived by Republicans as too open and quickly tested. For example, in April 2021, he allowed more migrants from Haiti to enter the U.S. due to increased banditry in their country, but as a result, this led to the creation of a camp under the Del Rio bridge, where about 20,000 Haitians gathered in just 16 days.<sup>14</sup>

## Internal political split on migration in the U.S.

The political polarization of the migration issue significantly complicated Biden's efforts. Republicans blocked his initiatives to solve the crisis, accusing the administration of insufficient border security. The Governor of Texas even organized the transportation of migrants to states ruled by Democrats, which caused outrage not only among Republicans but also among the liberal elite.<sup>15</sup>

As a result, the Biden administration was forced to allocate more funds and accelerate the process of issuing work permits. The political shift became evident when Republicans demanded increased border control in exchange for support for military aid to Ukraine. However, no matter how "cruel" Biden's measures on migration may seem to Democrats, for Republicans, they still remain insufficient.

Thus, despite attempts by the Biden administration to strengthen border control, deny asylum to migrants, and negotiate with Mexico to reduce the flow of migrants, the migration crisis was not successfully resolved.

---

<sup>13</sup> Biden, J. (2021, January 20). *Fact Sheet: President Biden Sends Immigration Bill to Congress as Part of His Commitment to Modernize our Immigration System*. The White House. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/01/20/fact-sheet-president-biden-sends-immigration-bill-to-congress-as-part-of-his-commitment-to-modernize-our-immigration-system/>

<sup>14</sup> Kanno, Z. (2024, January 31). *How the Border Crisis Shattered Biden's Immigration Hopes*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/30/us/politics/biden-border-crisis-immigration.html>

<sup>15</sup> Aguilera, J. (2022, September 12). *Inside Migrants' Journeys on Greg Abbott's Free Buses to Washington*. *Time*. <https://time.com/6211993/greg-abbott-migrants-buses-texas-dc-new-york/>



For many voters in the U.S., the issue of migration remains a priority, as confirmed by Gallup Institute studies, where immigration surpasses all other issues as the most important problem in U.S. domestic policy.<sup>16</sup>

## Democrats are again trying to secure youth support

The issue of student debt also significantly affects voters, especially young people. The amount of student debt in the country is approximately equal to the size of the economy of Brazil or Australia. According to U.S. government data, as of 2022, over 45 million people collectively owed \$1.6 trillion. In the summer of 2022, the Biden administration announced a plan to forgive \$10,000 in debt for borrowers earning less than \$125,000 a year, which raised concerns about possible inflation exacerbation.<sup>17</sup>

The Democratic Party traditionally relies on young voters, as it was the support of voters under 30 that secured Joe Biden's victory in 2020. To attract support from people of this age, his administration twice initiated a debt forgiveness project.

In June 2023, the Supreme Court, where the majority of judges were appointed by Republican presidents (6 out of 9), canceled this plan due to its "illegality", stopping aid to more than 40 million Americans.<sup>18</sup>

The Biden administration was aware of the inevitability of lawsuits against their policy, but almost a year later, in April 2024, the White House proposed an alternative plan that envisaged debt forgiveness of about \$7.4 billion for 277,000 borrowers. They would be eligible for such assistance as they had already been enrolled in one of the loan repayment or forgiveness programs that the administration created or modernized while trying to implement its initial mass loan forgiveness plan. And although Biden's alternative plan proposes to use the Higher Education Act of 1965, which regulates most federal student loan programs, it was temporarily blocked by a federal appeals court.<sup>19</sup>

Student debt remains a significant obstacle to Democratic ratings, as inflated expectations regarding Biden's initial proposals have led to voter disappointment.<sup>20</sup> It's difficult for Democrats to convince voters that Biden has fulfilled his obligations when out of tens of millions of people who initially thought they would benefit, debts were forgiven for only a small fraction of them.

---

<sup>16</sup> Jones, J. M. (2024, February 27). *Immigration Surges to Top of Most Important Problem List*. Gallup News. Retrieved July 24, 2024, from <https://news.gallup.com/poll/611135/immigration-surges-top-important-problem-list.aspx>

<sup>17</sup> George, A., & Lubik, T. A. (2022, October 11). *Student Debt Cancellation and its Inflation Impact* | Richmond Fed. Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond. [https://www.richmondfed.org/research/national\\_economy/macro\\_minute/2022/mm\\_10\\_11\\_22](https://www.richmondfed.org/research/national_economy/macro_minute/2022/mm_10_11_22)

<sup>18</sup> Paz, C. (2023, June 30). *Student loan forgiveness: The Higher Education Act, Biden's new plan for student debt, explained*. Vox. <https://www.vox.com/23762367/student-loan-forgiveness-supreme-court-biden-cancellation>

<sup>19</sup> Bernard, T. S. (2024, July 18). *Biden's Student Loan Repayment Plan Blocked by Federal Appeals Court*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/18/business/biden-student-loans-save-block.html>

<sup>20</sup> Kanno, Z. (2024, February 21). *Biden Cancels \$1.2 Billion in Student Loan Debt for 150,000 Borrowers*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/21/us/politics/biden-student-loan-forgiveness-debt.html>

Biden's promises regarding abortion have become increasingly relevant as the election campaign approaches, and this issue really concerns voters, especially women. According to the latest data from a May Gallup Institute poll on Americans' attitudes towards abortion, 65% of women support "pro-choice" (the right to abortion<sup>21</sup>), as do 86% of Democrats, while only 12% of Republicans support the possibility of abortions "under all circumstances".

Among Democrats, there are still disagreements about legalizing abortion. Biden seeks to restore the rights that existed before the repeal of the 1973 "Roe v. Wade" court case, which did not allow states to restrict the right to abortion. However, among Democrats, many abortion rights defenders consider these rights too narrow.<sup>22</sup>

Whatever the decision of the left forces, the White House claims that it would be a noticeable improvement compared to the Trump administration, which led to a wave of stricter abortion laws in states across the country.

Against the background of growing pressure on Biden from Democrats demanding further steps and consideration of new ideas regarding access to abortion, Biden emphasized that Congress must codify the right to abortion, but currently there are not enough votes in the Senate for this. Therefore, it can be said that on the issue of abortion, the Biden administration is very difficult to achieve significant changes<sup>23</sup>.

In summary, these unresolved domestic political problems affect voters' opinions about the Democratic Party. This is of great importance for Ukraine, as stable internal support for the respective party is necessary to continue U.S. assistance to the Ukrainian side.

Republicans are also skillfully using certain problems in the Biden administration, which directly affects voters' opinions, as well as support for Ukraine. An example of this is the pressure on Biden to strengthen border control as a condition for Republicans to approve aid packages for Ukraine. It can be assumed that voters will demand from the future Democratic Party candidate more concentration on domestic policy issues.

## Foreign Policy of the Biden Administration

Foreign policy shapes not only the image of the U.S. in the world but also the internal ratings of parties. In the early days of his presidency, Joe Biden repeated the words "America is back" as the main principle of his foreign policy, seeking to restore the role of the U.S. as a hegemon after Donald Trump's chaotic leadership, as well as restore allies' faith in a "predictable" U.S. foreign policy. However, the old international order no longer exists in its former form, and the role of hegemon is now much more difficult to restore.

---

<sup>21</sup> *Abortion Trends by Gender*. (2023, July 7). Gallup News. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/245618/abortion-trends-gender.aspx>

<sup>22</sup> Korecki, N., Kapur, S., & Nicholas, P. (2024, April 9). *'Major hurdles': The reality check behind Biden's big abortion promise*. NBC News. <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/joe-biden/biden-big-abortion-promise-fact-check-roe-v-wade-rcna146668>

<sup>23</sup> Kim, J. (2022, July 8). *Biden signs abortion access-related executive order with incremental steps*. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2022/07/08/1110455155/abortion-rights-biden-executive-order>

Before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Biden's foreign policy strategy focused on the tasks of:

- ending conflicts where the U.S. was involved,
- informing Americans about the impact of foreign policy decisions on their lives<sup>24</sup>,
- uniting democracies and establishing cooperation between them to confront autocracies.

The U.S. government signed an agreement with the Taliban on the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, which led to the rapid replacement of the democratically elected government of Afghanistan by the Taliban. The chaotic nature of the troop withdrawal negatively affected trust in the Biden administration and its foreign policy strategy. Democrats' opponents have already used this to accuse Joe Biden of being the cause of Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine.<sup>25</sup>

The Biden administration also took a course on the so-called "foreign policy for the middle class". To implement it, in April 2021, the White House invested in domestic production and job creation through the "Inflation Reduction Act" and the "CHIPS and Science Act".<sup>26</sup>

However, after Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the October 7 attack on Israel, the administration's foreign policy changed somewhat, focusing on supporting European alliances and mobilizing support for Ukraine. The administration also introduced innovations in releasing intelligence about Russia's intentions.

Biden's foreign policy increasingly focuses on defending the free world from autocracy, particularly from Russia and China. His so-called "foreign policy doctrine" aims to strengthen ties between democracies to counter autocracies. Biden seeks to ensure security and economic cooperation at the highest level, avoiding direct conflicts with Russia and provocative statements regarding Taiwan.

After October 7, Biden fully supported Netanyahu, which created political risks within the democratic coalition and in the world. The conflict between Israel and Palestine created a political crisis for the administration, as their support for Israel appears contradictory to the rhetoric about a rules-based international order<sup>27</sup>.

The Biden administration also aims to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific region, improving cooperation with Korea and Japan. The trilateral summit in August 2023 was the culmination

---

<sup>24</sup> Blinken, A. J. (2024). *Secretary Antony J. Blinken at a Conversation on U.S. Foreign Policy at the Brookings Institution - United States Department of State*. State Department. Retrieved July 25, 2024, from <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-at-a-conversation-on-u-s-foreign-policy-at-the-brookings-institution/>

<sup>25</sup> Schroeder, P. (2023). *America's Withdrawal From Afghanistan Did Not Spur Russia's Invasion of Ukraine*. Foreign Affairs. Retrieved July 24, 2024, from <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/americas-withdrawal-afghanistan-did-not-spur-russias-invasion-ukraine>

<sup>26</sup> Baer, D. (2021). *Tracking Biden's Progress on a Foreign Policy for the Middle Class*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2021/04/tracking-bidens-progress-on-a-foreign-policy-for-the-middle-class?lang=en>

<sup>27</sup> Rhodes, B. (2024, June 18). A Foreign Policy for the World as It Is. *Foreign Affairs*, 103(4). <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/biden-foreign-policy-world-rhodes>

of these efforts aimed at preserving American influence in the region amid growing competition with China.<sup>28</sup>

Thus, the foreign policy of Joe Biden's administration is still directed at restoring U.S. global leadership. Supporting Ukraine in the war against Russia has become an important element of American foreign policy, demonstrating the U.S. commitment to the principles of democracy and international order.

The foreign policy of Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris will likely be a continuation rather than a departure from Biden's traditional policy. In particular, this applies to key issues of American foreign policy such as the current course on countering China's military build-up and political influence, military and political support for Ukraine, spreading democratic values, preventing autocratic regimes, and human rights abuses worldwide. Kamala Harris's foreign policy may differ on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Harris has repeatedly stated that the U.S. supports Israel's right to self-defense, but also emphasized the need for a ceasefire and preventing a humanitarian crisis in Palestine.<sup>29</sup>

## What does Trump's potential presidency mean for the Russian-Ukrainian war?

Many world leaders are already preparing for Donald Trump's possible return to the White House in 2024. But what does his potential presidency imply for Ukraine?

### *Trump's entourage in 2024: who to pay attention to?*

Trump's entourage in 2025, and thus the contenders for key positions in Trump's potential administration, will differ significantly from the 2017-2021 period. Moreover, even Trump's family, or rather the part that was public during Trump's first presidency, has changed. In the first administration, Trump's daughter Ivanka held the position of director of the Office of Economic Initiatives and Entrepreneurship in the White House. As for other members of his family who are more active in the 2024 campaign, it's primarily about those who have come into the spotlight. These are Donald Trump Jr., his fiancée Kimberly Guilfoyle, his brother Eric Trump, and his wife Lara Trump – co-chair of the Republican National Committee, which is essentially a position equivalent to party co-chair.<sup>30</sup>

Overall, if Donald Trump becomes U.S. President again, his foreign policy may undergo significant changes, especially regarding America's priorities in relations with other countries. One of his main advisors, Elbridge Colby, advocates for a complete reorientation of American

<sup>28</sup> *Fact Sheet: The Trilateral Leaders' Summit at Camp David.* (2023, August 18). The White House. Retrieved July 25, 2024, from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/08/18/fact-sheet-the-trilateral-leaders-summit-at-camp-david/>

<sup>29</sup> Lu, C. (2024, July 21). The Kamala Harris Doctrine. *Foreign policy.* [https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/07/26/kamala-harris-policy-china-russia-trade-immigration-israel-gaza-india/?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Editors%27%20Picks%20-%2007262024&utm\\_term=editors\\_picks](https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/07/26/kamala-harris-policy-china-russia-trade-immigration-israel-gaza-india/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Editors%27%20Picks%20-%2007262024&utm_term=editors_picks)

<sup>30</sup> Anderson, Z. (2024, July 20). *Which Trump family members could have influence in a second administration?* USA TODAY. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2024/07/20/trump-family-donald-jr-eric-ivanka-melania/74432294007/>

attention from Europe, NATO, and Russia to China. Colby believes that China, not Russia, is the biggest threat to the United States, and that the U.S. should focus its limited resources on preventing China's domination in the Asia-Pacific region. This means that if Trump returns to power, aid to Ukraine may be reduced as priorities shift to countering Chinese influence. Fred Fleitz, another key Trump advisor, has developed a detailed plan to end the war in Ukraine, which involves pressuring both sides of the conflict to achieve a peace agreement. According to his plan, the Trump administration could threaten Ukraine with cuts in military aid if it doesn't agree to negotiations, while increasing pressure on Russia by promising increased support for Ukraine if it refuses negotiations. This approach indicates a desire for a quick resolution to the conflict, even through compromises on both sides.

Regarding China, Trump may strengthen U.S. economic policy towards this country, particularly through significant tariff increases and other trade barriers. Robert Lighthizer, who is also an influential Trump advisor, supports the idea of complete "decoupling" from the Chinese economy to minimize U.S. dependence on China. This could lead to a serious exacerbation of economic and geopolitical relations between the world's two largest economies, which will have far-reaching consequences for global trade and security. All these changes could significantly affect international politics and the balance of power in the world, especially for Ukraine, which may find itself in a more difficult situation due to reduced support from the U.S.

## **Why are the 2024 U.S. elections so important for Ukraine and the rest of the world?**

The 2024 U.S. elections are set to be a historic and extremely competitive event, with important developments in both the presidential race and Congress. After President Joe Biden's unexpected withdrawal of his candidacy and his support for Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic Party has rallied around a potential transformation. Harris's candidacy as the first Black woman to lead a major political party's ticket brings a unique dynamic to the race, emphasizing Biden's policy legacy while also manifesting her own priorities.

On the Republican side, the nomination of former President Donald Trump underscores his continued influence in the party. His campaign is expected to focus on comparing the achievements of his previous administration with those of the current Democratic leadership. This will be done to strengthen his base and sway undecided voters.

Senate races in states such as Montana, Ohio, Arizona, Michigan, and Nevada are key. The results in these races are likely to affect the balance of power and the new president's ability to advance their plans. Each Senate race has serious contenders with unique challenges, and this reflects broader national trends and the polarized political climate in the U.S.

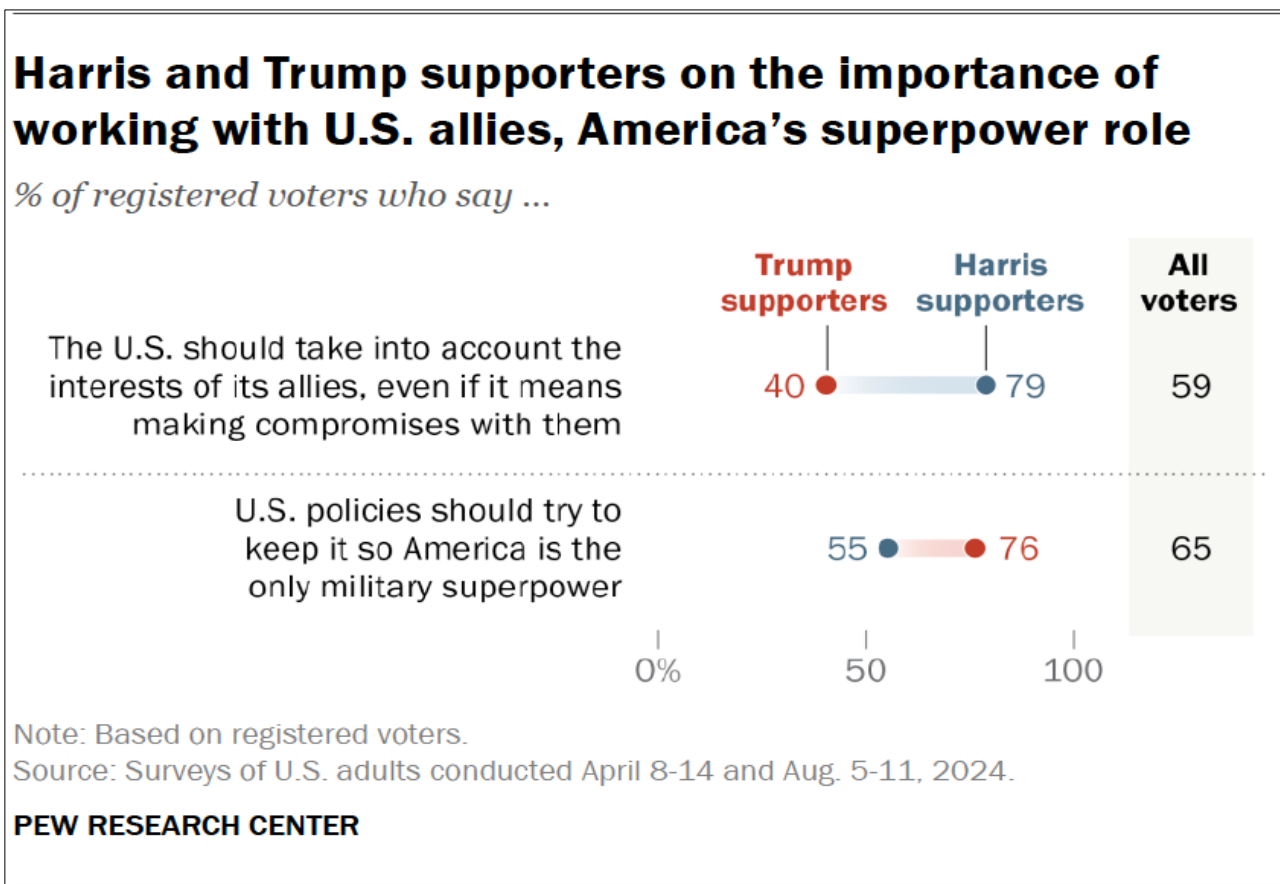


Elections to the House of Representatives, where Republicans are defending a slim majority, also highlight important contests in key states. These races will determine the legislative direction and leadership of the House, affecting the overall legislative process and policy initiatives.

Overall, the 2024 U.S. election cycle is characterized by intense competition, strategic campaigning, and significant voter engagement. The results will shape the future political landscape, influencing both domestic policy and the broader national trajectory. Voter turnout, demographic changes, and the effectiveness of each party's strategy in mobilizing support will be crucial in determining the final election results.

It's also worth looking at how American opinions are divided regarding the future role of the U.S. in world politics, as candidates, and subsequently officials, will act within the expectations set by voters.

Americans' views on the U.S. role in the world and the importance of military power differ significantly depending on age and political affiliation. Only 33% of young people under 35 consider it important for the U.S. to actively participate in world affairs, while among those aged 65 and older, this figure is 74%.<sup>31</sup>



<sup>31</sup> Pew Research Center. (2024, August 26). *The political values of Harris and Trump supporters*. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2024/08/26/the-political-values-of-harris-and-trump-supporters/>

Regarding party affiliation, 51% of Republicans and 60% of Democrats support an active role for the U.S. on the international stage. Meanwhile, 63% of Americans believe that the U.S. should remain the sole military superpower. At the same time, 69% of Americans believe that a strong U.S. military makes the world safer, but younger people among both Republicans and Democrats are less likely to support this view compared to older age groups.

© **Institute of American Studies**

**Authors:**

Institute of American Studies



The information and views set out in this study are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V. or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

**Institute of American Studies**

E-mail: [info@inam.org.ua](mailto:info@inam.org.ua)

<https://inam.org.ua/>