

Now, the Hard Part...
**Watching the most extraordinary political
upheaval in my lifetime and perhaps in
American history unfold in real-time.**

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The outcome of the 2024 election was stunning. The mood of the electorate is unmistakable; voters want a fundamental change of direction. To lead that change, they've selected Donald Trump, a most unlikely hero. Four years ago, he was written off once and for all and the target of countless efforts to keep him written off — criminal and civil prosecutions with contrived convictions, assassination attempts, endless smears — but he somehow managed to stay the course and win the election.

Circumstances have conspired to present the new president with both boundless opportunities and immense challenges. Right now, he's got the wind at his back, and he and his policies are enjoying newfound popularity. He may even benefit from a brief post-inauguration honeymoon.

It won't last. The opposing side wants none of that fundamental change; it detests the voters' choice of candidate and direction. The lines are drawn, knives are sharpened, and methodical resistance is assured at every step. And so, now comes the hard part.

One of Trump's challenges is that his plate is impossibly full, and he wants it all. He reminds me of the guy at the all-you-can-eat buffet who can't resist anything — he comes back to the table with a tray loaded with three main courses, all the trimmings for each and every dessert available.

There's no denying Trump's voracious appetite or his proven talent for multitasking, but the trap here is that there's only a fine line between multitasking and chaos. For that reason, I'd offer the suggestion that he — and we — keep our eyes on the ball, the imperatives, those things that **MUST** be fixed for the survival and enduring success of this great country.

And what are those issues? That's a judgment call, but in my thinking, there are five:

1.) Preeminent world leadership.

In order to protect world peace in this very dangerous world, we must restore America's position to that we earned in World War II, at the expense of hundreds of thousands of American lives. Now, our challenge is to keep in check the hostile tag team of China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea.

In the simplest terms, doing so has two key components: rebuilding an American military capability that is second to none and demonstrating a demonstrable willingness to exercise that military might, if necessary, to protect our nation, our allies, and world peace. Until we do both, our allies will not trust us, and our adversaries will not fear us. They are watching us from all sides.

2.) Border security.

American security and safety require a total reversal of the previous administration's policies that effectively left our southern border open to intrusion by upwards of 10 million illegal entrants. In parallel, we must deal with the tens of millions who took advantage of our unprotected border.

Trump has promised "*the most massive deportation in history,*" and he's signaled that it will start immediately after his inauguration. His objective has broad public support, but for that to succeed, I believe our emphasis should be less on "*massive*" and more sharply focused on the reduction of risk by targeted removal of illegal immigrants who pose a danger to our nation.

3.) Balanced economic and energy policy.

These are separate but clearly interconnected needs.

First, on the economy, we must aggressively and effectively stop spending our way into economic collapse. This will require significant and painful reductions in actual spending. Trump's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) is a huge step in the right direction, headed by people with real-world knowledge of how to get it done — but it will have to stand up to frantic opposition from the other side.

On energy, we must take advantage of our immense resources and become energy-independent, replacing the war on fossil fuels with policies and practices that focus on the practical reduction of harmful emissions. In parallel, we must dramatically shift our climate change policy, shifting from outlandish spending on futile efforts to control the earth's climate to realistic measures to accommodate the inevitable effects of a climate that has been changing for the earth's entire lifetime.

In combination, rebalanced energy policies and practices will be the most effective way to rein in inflation.

4.) True American justice.

We are not a banana republic, and we must stop acting like one. Therefore, it is imperative that we restore an American justice system worthy of our nation's core principles. In my view, the previous administration's weaponization of our justice system is disgraceful — and its faux concern that the incoming administration will return the favor (punctuated yesterday by the outgoing president's sweeping and preemptive pardon of family and cronies) is wholly without merit.

5.) Restored public trust.

This is an overarching, vitally important issue. Over the past four years, Americans have repeatedly learned to be skeptical about what they are told by their elected leaders, which is inimical to democracy.

It is also perhaps the simplest of the five to address. The new president must do what he's promised in every way possible and remain in constant, open, and truthful communication with the public. Trump's 75-day post-election period has served as a masterclass in communications, with frequent press releases, candid responses to all questions, constant visibility, and full transparency — an enormously powerful posture for any politician, particularly one who has been the target of two assassination attempts.

If he continues, public trust will be healthy again.

In my view, those are the must-dos for a president dedicated to the objective of restoring America's greatness. By itself, it's a very ambitious plate. As for his smorgasbord of other plans and promises, yesterday's blitz of executive orders has already jump-started it all, and his new cabinet and staff will keep those balls rolling.

Former President Joe Biden may have been correct when he said, "*We're facing an inflection point in history, one of those moments where the decisions we make today are going to determine the future for decades to come.*" But just not the way he had in mind.

No matter: All's well that ends well.