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The U.S. Presidential Election 2020: Contested American Democracy

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English Abstract

The 2020 U.S. presidential election ended with a victory for Joe Biden and the Democratic Party. But most importantly, Trump won over nearly half of the total electorate despite his unprecedented policies and behaviors, demonstrating that the United States is still divided between two entrenched coalitions.

It was a tense battle of partisan identity that the two candidates embodied. A 200-year-old American democracy is in crisis. The root of the problem starts from the current two-party system and the imperial presidential system, which impair the spirit of mutual agreement and diversity that James Madison, the founder of the country, had pursued. The institutional solution is to replace the two-party system with the multi-party system by reforming the majority vote system to the proportional representation system. However, there is little chance that those with vested interests will agree on the shift to the proportional representation system. The legacy of a tense confrontation in 2020 adds to the uncertainty of American democracy. Biden promises to be a president of unity, but politics of identity will make it very difficult to fulfill. Integration is easy to promise, but hard to achieve. If Biden needs to appease Trump supporters with detailed policies, Biden's support base could fall apart. For Biden, a single-term president who seeks national unity, there are not many political resources

due to solid opposition from Republican Congress and a time limit. ❖

※ Translator's note: This is a summarized unofficial translation of the original paper which was written in Korean. All references should be made to the original paper.

※ This article is written based on the author's personal opinions and does not reflect the views of the Sejong Institute.