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Analysis of today
Assessment of tomorrow

By: Tomorrow's Affairs Staff

Mike Pence is possibly the biggest threat to Donald Trump's candidacy

Donald Trump's era continues with historical precedents. After the first case of a former US president being indicted, Trump and his Vice President Mike Pence will be the first ex-presidential pair to enter the race for the party's nomination for a new term as competitors.

An eloquent conservative from Indiana is entering the race against his former boss, despite the slim odds he has at this point.

But one year before the Republican convention, where the party's presidential candidate will be chosen, is enough time not to underestimate the prospects of an experienced politician.

Trump and Pence would not be in this position, not even as rivals, if, 7 years ago, they had not complemented each other, mitigated each other's flaws, and entered the White House.

Mike Pence proved to be an ideal vice president for Donald Trump because his strong social conservatism and reputation in the evangelical community cushioned Trump's shortcomings, such as his 3 marriages.

On the other hand, Trump has caused most of the anger of the Republican electorate with his noisy populism, offering a return of pride and a government that listens.

Attack on the Congress - the main point of conflict

This time, neither Trump nor Pence will have someone with them who could cover their shortcomings. Now they are facing each other.

The race of the former presidential duo will more or less revolve around the dramatic events of January 6, 2021: the violent attack on the US Congress and an attempted coup.

Both of their candidacies revolve around that event, and no matter how hard they both try to win over Republican voters with policies on all other issues, January 6 will decide the winner.

From the first day since he submitted his official candidacy, Mike Pence cannot be considered a direct competitor to Donald Trump, as he only has single-digit support.

However, his refusal to support his president in dramatic events, choosing instead loyalty to the rule of law, has marked the careers of both Pence and Trump after they left the White House.

Some of the attackers on the US Congress shouted, "Hang Mike Pence", following the command of their leader Trump.

Betrayal of Trump is an important asset to Pence

The conflict within the Republican electorate that started then and continues to this day is about the fundamental principles of American democracy, called into question by Trump's will in the November 2020 elections and escalated on January 6 of the following year.

Trump's high approval rating of more than 30% among Republicans, and his long and convincing lead amongst other contenders for the presidential nomination, suggest that his coup legacy is still a significant motive for many to face another confrontation with the "estranged establishment".

In the black-and-white movement, Mike Pence by the side of a flamboyant populist that's backed his boss at crucial moments, and most cherished values," said Pence in Washington last October while he was still a long way from his formal candidacy.
However, Pence's attitude regarding the violence on January 6 is his most significant vulnerability among Republican voters, because he did not denounce violence committed by Trump supporters, but only talked about "lawlessness".
To capitalise fully on his attitude towards violence against the system, inspired by Trump, Mike Pence will have to make clear that he is against Trump's reform presidential campaign.
Pence's loyalists, such as Jeanette Nunez, Florida's lieutenant governor, considered the 2020 election "fair and square" and voted against certifying Joe Biden's victory in Congress.
Pence himself has declared he was not to blame for Trump's loyal and hard-working vice president for 4 years.
"The Trumpists are angry with him. The Republicans have begun to turn on him in the first days after the assault on the Capitol by a mob of Trump supporters, the attack he claims he was powerless to prevent.
"It's a hard path", said Chip Felkel, a Republican strategist.
"His authenticity, experience, and conservative credentials are second to none in the field, and those things will stand out as the campaign unfolds," said Michael Ricci, a communications strategist.

Passage through the strait

Mike Pence could find a way through this strait if he builds his performance around the position he expressed before the November midterm elections when he said that the Republican Party should not be led by "unprincipled populists".

Although he did not mention Trump's name, Pence made it clear that he was referring to the former US president in his congratulations to the South Korean leader on the occasion of his country's becoming a member of the Executive Board of the World Health Organisation.
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