

What happens if Trump cancels the midterm elections?

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What if a US president simply refuses to allow an election to take place?

This video is not a conspiracy theory. It is a risk analysis based on polling data, Trump's own record, and the legal powers he has already claimed. I examine what could happen if the 2026 US midterms are cancelled or ignored, how states might respond, the risk of constitutional rupture, and why this matters not just for America, but for the UK and Europe as well. Democracy only survives if it is defended.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tplh345Y4s0&si=3IRFIHcFXjQK4nSy>

This is the audio version:

https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=ek47v-1a372f5-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&fonts=Arial&skin=f6f6f6&font-color=auto&logo_link=episode_page&btn-skin=c73a3a

This is the transcript:

What happens if Trump cancels the midterm elections this year? There's a chance that he might. The speculation about this issue is high, and therefore, this video is about a risk analysis; it's not about creating a conspiracy theory.

The midterm elections are due in November, but the fact is that at present, the opinion polls point to a heavy Republican loss, and what we know is that Donald Trump does

not accept losing, and he will take this personally. So we have to ask the question that is on everybody's mind: Will he let the poll go ahead? And what will the consequences be if he doesn't?

Recent polling in the USA shows that the Democrats are well ahead of the Republicans at this moment, more than is normal at this time of the electoral cycle. Now, let's be clear. The midterm elections happen exactly halfway between presidential elections, that's why they're named, and therefore, they are an opportunity for the American electorate to kick back at a president who they're now not so enamoured with as they were two years beforehand. We know that happens. Donald Trump was never going to win these elections, but the fact is that the margins are widening rapidly.

The biggest movement is among independents, and the reality is that in the States, the independents, the people who are not aligned to either the Democrats or the Republicans by choice, are the people who really move elections and change results. Trump's support amongst them has collapsed, and so there's a real chance that the Republicans could at least lose control of Congress at these midterm elections.

These independents are not party loyalists, that's the point about them. They instead respond to competence, stability, and democracy, and they are unsurprisingly being repelled by a great deal of what Trump is doing, when he's literally sending his troops onto the street to shoot people dead. That's not acceptable to most decent, ordinary Americans: those who, amongst all other characteristics, are the independents in elections.

Trump's support among them is now exceptionally low at 18% or less. This is off the normal level of scale for a sitting president, and that signals electoral danger for Republicans. The fact is, Trump really does face a high probability of rejection in 2026, which could spell bad news, of course, for 2028, and the prospects for reelection, and he still fancies himself as having a chance at a third term, even though the Constitution prevents it.

But, importantly, what we also know is that Trump does not concede defeat. He has never accepted the 2020 presidential election result. He still talks about that election being stolen when very clearly it wasn't, and we saw the consequence on 6 January 2021, and insurrection followed. His angry crowd stormed the Capitol, and like it or not, he set up the situation where that happened. People died as a result, but he's praised those involved, and he's even pardoned them, even though elected officials were threatened, including his own Vice-President.

This is amazing, but Trump is amazing. He declares emergencies without evidence. He's invoked extreme executive powers before, and he keeps on talking about the Insurrection Act of 1807, which exists to manage genuine crises, but which he says can be used if there is dissent in a state. He could simply define the acts of the Democrats in opposing what he wishes as being dissent and a threat of rebellion, and therefore he

could treat it as insurrection and therefore say that the grounds for cancelling a poll exist. This is entirely within the boundaries of what Trump might think to be normal.

This is a refusal scenario. A scenario where Trump says that there isn't the possibility of a fair election in 2026. Now, he could either say this before the election, saying the situation is so bad that the Democrats are subverting the outcome of the election in advance by opposing his wishes, or he could refuse to accept the electoral result after it has happened, saying that there was vote rigging or whatever, as was his habit in 2020. In either case, there would be a case of constitutional rupture in the USA. And let's be clear, this would create a massive public response.

The US public is no longer passive, if ever it was. There have been very significant protests as a consequence of what has been happening in Minneapolis. People there have not accepted the presence of ICE on their streets - a force that Robert Reich calls a Gestapo with good reason. Mass demonstrations, there have been significant. There have been local strikes, a refusal to partake in the economy for days at a time, closing down schools, closing down businesses, closing down public infrastructure. This may be, though, what Trump calls the basis for insurrection taking place, and therefore tries to turn this into the precursor for cancelling the elections themselves.

He may say that these are violent, and he may say that this justifies repression, but in that situation, where he tries to take away people's rights as a consequence of their wish to exercise them, including their First Amendment right to appear on the streets and to express their opinion, then civil conflict is the obvious risk. The US is saturated with firearms. Political polarisation is extreme on occasions, and we've seen it, and militias already exist. The risk of internal armed conflict in the United States cannot be ignored. Civil war is unlikely, I think. I hope. I just put that on record; that's what I hope, but let's also be clear, it's not impossible.

So what else could happen? Well, as I've just said, there could be economic non-cooperation. There could be mass demonstrations. There could be mass non-compliance with the requirements of the federal government. There could be signs of literal refusal to partake in normal parts of everyday existence, including quite simply going to the shops or buying online or whatever else it is to indicate to business and to government, and the big businesses that support this government, that people do not wish for this type of government to persist. There could be economic disengagement, in other words. That's a real possibility. But again, we don't know what could happen.

The other possibility is that Trump could try to ban the elections, using the pretext that people have been demonstrating in advance, but the states could say that's not a decision he can make, because in the United States, it is the individual member states that make up the union that actually run the elections. They are not a federal choice, which is why there are different electoral systems in different states.

So, the elections could be run by the states, despite Washington saying, "You can't

have them." Now this could give rise to further conflict. There could be federal orders to stop voting, which may be ignored. This could create direct constitutional conflict. There could be a split between the red states, those which are Republican, and the blue states, those which are Democrat - their colours are the reverse of what we use in the UK to indicate political polarity - and there could be arrests of elected officials for obeying state law. We've seen that before in Georgia, for example, in 2020. So let's not pretend that this isn't a possibility, because it is. There could be a direct conflict between states and the federal government, and that in itself is also deeply dangerous.

What happens after that? We don't know. What we do know is that Trump has a hardcore, loyal base. Between 20% and 30%, perhaps, of the population are MAGA in some way or other, but not all Republicans are.

Broader support has already fractured and is nonexistent; it's declining rapidly. That's what we saw in Texas within the last week, where a hard red Republican area went Democrat blue. That was quite unprecedented. The swing was enormous.

The Constitution will become the focal point, that's my suggestion. Loyalty will shift from Trump to democratic principles instead; that's what I think will happen, and that is what will make this protest spread in the USA.

But at the same time, there will be international consequences of this. Many politicians from Keir Starmer onwards have tried to be allies of Trump, and he has normalised far-right authoritarianism. And he has emboldened similar far-right movements across Europe, from Reform in the UK to the AfD in Germany, to the far-right in France, and the far-right in many other countries. All of them line up to emulate what he has done. And they all have the same contempt for democratic constraint, and the US imposition of power through authoritarian measures could give rise to a spillover effect elsewhere. That is my concern, and the UK is definitely not immune.

The UK has remarkably weak democratic safeguards. The assumption within the UK's non-existent constitution is that "chaps will be good to each other and do the right thing". That's the assumption; there's no reason to presume that that assumption will now hold true.

We already know that first past the post is distorting representation in this country.

We know that the House of Lords is deeply unrepresentative.

We know that if there were an incoming Reform government, it could pack the House of Lords with its members to ensure that anything could get through Parliament if it wished.

We do know that executive power in this country is dangerously centralised.

And we do know that a government hostile to the best interests of the people of this

country could, as a result, entrench itself in a way that would make it very, very difficult to dislodge it.

That is the risk that we face, and this places a special responsibility on Labour at present because Labour are in government with a massive majority.

If we face this prospect of democratic breakdown, and we see it happening in the USA this year, and I think there's a real possibility of that in some of the ways that I've described, or in all of them, with massive potential consequences for the breakdown of law and order in that country, then Labour has to realise that it has to rise to the challenge of ensuring that there is the maintenance of law and order and democracy in this country.

That would require electoral reform as a matter of defensive necessity.

We would require proportional representation to guarantee that Reform could never get a majority in the House of Commons.

We would require House of Lords reform to make sure that no party in power could pack it with its supporters, to ensure that any legislation could be passed.

We do need reform to make sure that democracy can be reinforced before it is attacked.

My fear is that Labour will do nothing. That normalisation of hate will literally be normalised. I fear that street politics will replace ballots, and I fear democratic complacency at this moment, particularly from Labour politicians who are far too comfortable with the situation they are in. And I fear delay now more than confrontation, if anything, in this country, because delay is what's going to destroy our democracy.

Democracy only survives if it's defended.

Will Labour do that? I don't know.

Will US democracy survive? I don't know.

Will Europe learn from America's crisis? I don't know.

Will we have elections after 2029? I don't know, anymore than I know whether Trump will allow elections again if he cancels the midterms.

Will Keir Starmer choose defence over caution? I don't know, but I doubt it.

And this is not alarmism, it's a scenario analysis based on evidence.

Democracy is under coordinated attack. Silence and delay are choices and dangerous ones.

The politics of care requires the defence of democracy itself. And what if that does not happen? What then? Your guess is as good as mine. I can't see any good outcomes.

What do you think? There's a poll down below.

Poll

[poll id="311"]