the most important challenge facing Biden and the
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Democrats will be just one agonizing seat short of a majority. There will be one, and possibly two runoffs in Georgia on Jan. 5 that could conceivably hand Biden a working 50-50 Senate majority. If Collins hangs on to her seat, however, a GOP Senate is a done deal.

One thing we can say with some certainty: What Democrats hoped for most of all, a Biden landslide, did not materialize last night. While they will celebrate removing the president from office if and when the results are certified, Democrats wanted a more resounding repudiation of Trumpism and a chance to govern with congressional majorities for the first time in a decade. President Trump is already sending ominous signals that he will refuse to go quietly, declaring victory in the middle of the night and proclaiming on Twitter this morning that he had won the election before states started counting "surprise ballots, " and he is likely to spend the next two months sowing doubt about the outcome, stoking further divisions in an already traumatized, volatile country, and doing as much damage as possible to Biden and the country on his way out.

Perhaps the hardest thing to accept might be this: Trump's disgraceful, years-long strategy of turning Americans against one another very nearly worked. Just four years ago, a fluke confluence of circumstances • the historic unpopularity of Hillary Clinton, the media's bizarre obsession with an email server she hadn't used in four years, the last-minute intervention of former FBI Director James Comey in the election, and two relatively well-known third party candidates • handed an unpopular and unprepared candidate and his party total control of Washington, D. C., despite lacking anything approaching majority support even on Election Day.

Rather than taking office with humility, President Trump interpreted his unlikely and unrepeatable victory as an invitation to speak to, govern for, and care about only his hardest-core supporters and to regard every other American and their hopes, dreams, and fears as not only irrelevant but illegitimate. He didn't spend a single moment of a single day in office reaching out to people who didn't vote for him, or pretending to care about states that he would likely lose in 2020. Each day of his presidency he discovered new and previously unimagined ways to undermine American democracy and to debase himself and his party.

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