

## TOP LINE

Election security has taken a prominent role as fall approaches. “Voting day” has fallen into the gray as both in-person and mail-in voting has become a highly disputed legal issue. Toxic political polarization, and a bitterly divided Presidential election, were compounded this past week by the death of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. This vacancy has forced additional issues into the vicious political battle that has already absorbed matters of racism, policing, masks, lockdowns, and methods of voting.

Against this backdrop, the integrity of U.S. elections has taken on a heightened significance. Voting officials typically require days, to weeks, to certify election results. Any projected timeline is likely to be extended, as a result of the increased use of mail-in ballots and Covid-19 protocols. [The FBI and Department of Homeland security warned this week that foreign hackers are expected to disseminate misinformation during this time](#), including “reports of voter suppression, cyberattacks targeting electing infrastructure, voter or ballot fraud, and other problems intended to convince the public of the elections’ illegitimacy.”

Meanwhile voting has already begun in a number of U.S. states even as Congress seeks to rush through the confirmation process to fill the U.S. Supreme Court vacancy left by the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Contention over the court nomination has only increased in significance following President Donald Trump’s refusal on Wednesday to guarantee a peaceful transfer of power if he loses to Joe Biden in November. This intransigence prompted several prominent GOP leaders to insist otherwise, emphasizing that a peaceful transfer of power is a fundamental tenet of U.S. democracy as underpinned by the rule of law and U.S. Constitution.

Despite such assurances, business leaders should consider the potential ramifications of a contested election in terms of business relationships and operations. On the street level, the likelihood of protests and potential for violence is heightened; this increases the potential for destruction of property and livelihoods. In

the realm of geopolitics, the disruption of trade agreements and supply chains is a real risk. For Wall Street, a contested election and resulting constitutional crisis could spark uncertainty at a critical moment for the markets. Businesses should prepare for operational challenges that spring from political and economic uncertainty.

*Question to Consider:*

*How does political instability affect business on the street level, in the realm of geopolitics, and in the stock market?*

## **COVID-19: THE HIGHLIGHTS**

Over [200,000 people have died in the U.S. from coronavirus](#), even as reports of new cases have climbed in parts of the U.S. and Europe that were spared earlier outbreaks. The Director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) predicted last week that [most Americans will not have access to a Covid vaccine until mid-2021](#), although a vaccine itself may be available by late 2020. This warning contrasted assurances from the White House that an initial vaccine would be ready to distribute immediately. The availability – or lack thereof – of a vaccine looms against the backdrop of an impending Presidential election where [approximately 30 million Americans remain unemployed, entire industries are at a standstill](#), and the handling of the coronavirus pandemic is a hotly debated issue.

## **BEYOND THE NOISE: THE NEW NORMAL**

During a year of toxic political polarization, [President Donald Trump's refusal to guarantee a peaceful transition of power](#) is leading America to a crossroads in its democratic process. The President's comments were significant enough to provoke a response from a number of GOP officials, who insisted that a peaceful transfer of power is a fundamental tenet of the U.S. democratic process. Nevertheless, [if the election is close and contested, it could test American democracy more than any race in a century](#). A contested election has the potential to provoke additional protests, upend U.S. trade relationships, and disrupt the markets even more than the Covid-19 pandemic already has done. As such, U.S. business leaders should prepare for continued instability through 2020.

### **TRUSTED RESOURCES: for numbers & guidance**

[Johns Hopkins University](#) – Coronavirus Resource Center

[World Health Organization](#) – COVID-19 Pandemic

[Center for Disease Control](#) – Coronavirus (COVID-19)

*Please contact Secure Source International at [info@securesource.com](mailto:info@securesource.com) to schedule a leadership roundtable with our intelligence and security experts to dive into these topics and discuss security and safety related best-practices.*