

US mid-term elections a good result for Donald Trump



President Donald Trump pumps his fist as he speaks during a campaign rally.
Picture: AP

[Greg Sheridan](#), Foreign Editor, 12:00AM November 8, 2018

This was a very good result for Donald Trump and the Republicans — a fighting, fierce result that held the Senate and resisted the expected blue wave in the house.

The Democrats won the House of Representative but without anything like the electoral tsunami that was forecast.

The grand narrative of the Trump haters — that the President is a unique aberration in modern American life and will be snuffed out by a remorseful electorate at the first opportunity — just doesn't square with reality.

Even control of the house is a two-edged sword for the Democrats.

Republicans were overjoyed when they massacred the Democrats in Bill Clinton's first mid-term election in 1994. They hated Clinton almost as much as modern Democrats hate Trump. But congressional harassment of Clinton under the Republicans ultimately turned voters off. It was seen as unfair. The subtext, even then, was the culture wars and it energised and motivated pro-Clinton voters as much as it did anti-Clinton voters.

The prospect of Nancy Pelosi as the chief spokeswoman of the Democratic Party for the next two years must be the very stuff of Trump's fondest dreams.

The result of Republican congressional overreach in the 1990s was a triumphal re-election for Clinton.

History seldom repeats precisely, but it so often rhymes.

Trump's achievements in this mid-term election were remarkable. He united the Republican Party behind him. But it is quite misleading now to continue to talk of a hostile takeover of the Republican Party by Trump.

For the Republican Party itself has also taken possession of Trump.

All his big achievements — corporate tax cuts, orthodox conservative judges for the Supreme Court, business deregulation, environmental deregulation and a huge boost for the military — are all core Republican policies.

Trump has contradicted key Republican orthodoxy in two main areas — the way he talks about US alliances, and the tariffs he has imposed. In the end, all the US alliances are intact and some are even in better shape than when Trump took office.

And tariffs are hardly unknown in modern American politics.

Trump's style and tone remain unique, sometimes brilliant and sometimes repellent.

But this is a very good result for Trump overall, and a return to normal in American politics.