

Democrats Are Stuck in November With the Incumbents – and the Sisyphean Burden of Running on Biden's Record



by Conrad Black

President Biden's State of the Union message was indeed, as has widely been claimed, a home run – but for the Republicans. The president seems to have squashed at least until it will be too late to revive it, any possibility of elevating anyone else except Mr. Biden and probably, Vice President Harris also, to the Democratic nomination for the national offices this year. The Democrats are not only stuck with the incumbents, they are stuck with the Sisyphean burden of running on the record of this administration.

The ravages of inflation, the 8 million to 10 million illegal migrants, the psychotic fixation on insane environmental goals, terrible urban crime rates, decayed education at all

levels, and war and threats of war around the world: this is what they have to sell. The salesmen are the authors of it. The Republicans could not seek a more vulnerable opponent on his record than Mr. Biden.

If, as he was widely urged to do, the president had said about Christmas time that he had achieved his principal objectives, had the great honor of holding the highest office within the gift of any people in the world, and felt that it was time to retire, all the discussion of his cognitive abilities and of the sticky-fingered habits of the Biden family in the influence-peddling operation they appear to have been conducting around the world for many years would have lost any relevance and ceased to be a significant irritant to the Democratic election campaign.

All these clouds, though, will continue to lurk over the campaign. The fact of being able to remain standing and read from a teleprompter with less verbal slurring and stumbling than usual does no more than clear the lowest bar to establish eligibility for election.

There is a second and equally important reason why the State of the Union message is good news for the Republicans. Presumably because of the high vulnerability of the record of the present administration in every policy area, the president's address said almost nothing about the state of the union. It was devoted altogether to an unrestricted whitewash of some of his own errors and a wild series of whoppers and misdirected partisan hay-makers aimed at the Trump Republicans.

For what has always been intended and used as a relatively impartial beginning-of-the-year summary of the condition of the country as the president sees it, this was a completely unprecedented occurrence. As all Democrats of Mr. Biden's vintage usually do, he opened with an invocation of the great but fading name of Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Mr. Biden's thin pretext for doing this was that in FDR's State of the Union Message in 1941, he warned of the dangers of the totalitarian powers and particularly of Hitler's German Third Reich. From this, Mr. Biden professed to be speaking with comparable vigilance for the national interest in warning of the dangers of the Russian leader, Vladimir Putin.

From here it was a short step to insinuating that President Trump is unreliable in resisting Russian aggression in Ukraine. This was the closest that the president and his advisers apparently thought it was safe to go in stringing together their preposterous flimflam, Hitler = Putin = Trump.

On that occasion, President Roosevelt also said: "We must always be wary of those who with sounding brass and tinkling cymbal, would preach the 'ism' of appeasement." It is the failure of Presidents Obama and Biden to grasp that lesson that has led to the incessant ant-like provocations of Iran and its terrorist proxies including Hamas, and along with the debacle in Afghanistan, has encouraged the Russian government to invade Ukraine and the Chinese government noisily to contemplate an attempted subjugation of Free China.

After three years of progressive American self-enfeeblement, it is implausible for Mr. Biden to roar like a lion in support of the inadequate stances he has adopted in practically every policy area. The result of the president's fire-breathing pyrotechnics and histrionics, in directly insulting the Supreme Court whose justices were sitting in front of him and claiming that the Republicans who comprised a narrow majority of those physically present were a party of extremists, is that he has effectively handed Mr. Trump the standard of comparative moderation; this is the exquisite irony of the State of the Union Message.

In heaping absurd allegations of authoritarian ambitions on his chief opponent, Mr. Biden surged into the lead as the most vocal extremist among the national candidates. He made the

customary Democratic prostration before the advocates of unfettered abortion-on-demand at the taxpayers' expense. Yet all polls indicate that Americans approve the Trump policy of an unconditional right to abortion for 16 weeks in substantially greater numbers than the Democratic position on abortion.

Most viewers would have been aware the president was not telling the truth when he said that the Supreme Court's vacation of the *Roe v. Wade* decision banned abortion. Most would also know that his imputation to the Trump administration of responsibility for the horrible crisis of illegal mass migration, "the newcomers," as administration jargon now refers to these 8 million to 10 million illegal residents, was also false.

The recent administration compromise of accepting almost two million illegal immigrants annually is an outrage and supporting it is the greatest blunder of the career of the outgoing Republican Senate leader, Mitch McConnell. Mr. Biden's effort to suck and blow simultaneously on the Gaza War exposes the Democrats' attempt to retain domestic Jewish and Muslim support. Hamas inflicted a savage act of war on Israel, which is observing civilized conventions and Mr. Biden has no standing to tell Israel how to conduct the war.

Americans know well enough what the real State of the Union is, and they naturally hold this president responsible for most of the deterioration in the state of the country since the 2020 election. For the Republicans, this could not have been a more fortuitous occasion.

They have had reassurance that their opponents will be the most vulnerable possible candidates, And in trying to prove his continued vigor and effectiveness, the president has simultaneously taken a number of extreme positions in attacking Mr. Trump that are not popular with the country and that betray Mr. Biden's ardently pursued posture of moderation

and good sense.

On Thursday night, Mr. Biden looked like the desperate extremist and Mr. Trump the sensible truth-teller. If the only way that Mr. Biden can appear to be adequately energetic and mentally empowered to execute the presidency is to hurl at Mr. Trump wild-eyed accusations at Mr. Trump that everyone knows, from Mr. Trump's previous four years in office, to be unfounded, then the administration is doomed. On its record to date, it deserves no better and that appears to be the opinion of an increasing number of American voters every week.

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