

No China in Biden's 'Off Book' State of the Union



President Joe Biden delivers the State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress at the U.S. Capitol, Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2023, in Washington. (AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

by Roger L. Simon

I have to admit that I almost always find the State of the Union address a snore—except for the heckling that I enjoy, if only because it breaks up the recitation of nonstop clichés that are normally accompanied by members of the party in power jumping up to applaud like trained seals.

Basically, the speech is a laundry list of targeted legislation that everyone knows is unlikely to pass but is designed to appeal to identity groups whose own trained seals will then jump to their feet and flap.

This is punctuated by the president pointing out people in the gallery whose life stories are supposed to move us, or, to put it more precisely, make the president seem like a man of compassion.

It's often the most memorable part of the event; the speech not so much.

I can't think of any actual phrases worth quoting in any of the SOTUs since I have been alive—there has been no “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down that wall” or “You have nothing to fear but fear itself.”

This year was no exception. In fact, I thought it was a bit worse, rhetorically flat as the proverbial pancake except when President Biden—for reasons that were inscrutable—decided it was time to yell for emphasis.

The speech was evidently written by Vinay Reddy, a man who previously worked as director of strategic communications for the National Basketball Association, a seemingly irrelevant fact that may have more import, as I will explain later.

We were told in advance the speech would be a call to collegiality and bipartisanship, when it was anything but.

Instead of offering any of the promised compromises, Biden went in the opposite direction, going, as we used to say in Hollywood, “off book” by suddenly accusing Republicans of wanting to gut Social Security and Medicare, a flagrant lie he frequently enjoys employing.

At the SOTU, this political ploy got a round of boos, as it should have.

He also bragged how he deserved credit for closing the southern border, interrupting the deadly fentanyl epidemic, when he was, as everyone knows, the one who opened the border in the first place and kept it that way despite immense

criticism.

This one elicited laughs, as it also should have.

But worst of all was the great MIA—the elephant of elephants in the room—the Chinese Communist Party.

During his 80-minute speech, Biden devoted barely a minute to our greatest adversary by far and growing global threat to democracy.

The reasons for this omission on Biden's part are all too obvious.

First, was the great unmentionable—the little matter of the giant Chinese balloon with a still mysterious payload that just drifted across our country for nearly a week, transfixing us all and engendering all kinds of spin and, more than likely, lies from the administration and military officials and their media claque.

Why was that allowed to happen?

And, more importantly, there's the open question of whether Biden himself has long been part of their now well-known "elite capture"—he and his family having been the recipients of untold amounts of Chinese millions. That isn't helped by the endless allegations surrounding his son Hunter's laptop and the ensuing coverup by 51 (!) former intelligence officials who wrote a letter pretending the laptop was Russian disinformation.

One of them, [David Wise](#), has at least been honorable enough to admit that he knew he was lying at the time. The others have yet to apologize—or be punished in any way, for that matter.

(Incidentally, Russia stood in for China during the speech, with Putin serving as the global bogeyman. It almost seemed a deliberate distraction.)

But back to a third reason why Biden's SOTU may have hardly mentioned the most important foreign policy issue facing humanity—the speech's author, Mr. Reddy.

As noted, he worked in communications for the NBA, an outfit known to have overlooked the CCP's genocidal treatment of Uyghurs, Falun Gong, and so many others for basketball players' financial gain.

What better experience for writing for the president at this particular time? But it's not just now. He was also his chief speechwriter when Biden was vice president, the period when he was going to China in the company of Hunter and about which there are myriad questions.

He then went on to be a senior adviser and speechwriter for the Biden 2020 presidential campaign.

Reddy must know a lot that might be illuminating. My guess is that at some point, he will write a book. But, as with other works of the "political tell-all" genre, my advice is *caveat emptor*.

For the record, I thought Gov. Sarah Sanders was fine in her Republican response, if a teeny bit long. Her ending story of a secret trip she took with President Trump to visit the troops in Iraq was especially effective.

She, of course, made herself clear about the evils of the CCP. Unfortunately, she didn't have an audience of trained seals to applaud her. But then, maybe she didn't need it.

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