

III. United States

Biden's State of the Union Address

Exposes 'Unlearned Lessons' of Statecraft

by Harley Schlanger

March 15—To read the accounts in the mainstream press of President Biden's State of the Union address, delivered before both Houses of Congress on March 7, or to listen to the babble of the media's talking heads, one could conclude that what was of utmost significance was that Biden did not topple over while speaking, or mangle every name he mentioned. *Newsweek* in its coverage stated that the speech "put to rest questions about his mental fitness." He was described by supporters of Biden and in pro-Biden media as "defiant," "feisty," "fiery," "scrappy," and "energetic."

As one might expect, the anti-Biden gaggle had a different take, describing his delivery as "shrill," "en-



White House

President Joe Biden's State of the Union address expressed the largely unchallenged control of the U.S. by the Military-Industrial-Financial Complex's permanent war policy.

raged," "bitter," and "impatient." These binary descriptions diverted attention from the substance of his speech, showing how successfully his handlers had "lowered the bar" of expectations, while his opponents gloated about the latest poll numbers, which found his approval rating had hit an all-time low of 37.4%.

Missing from such "analysis" was a serious evaluation of the mostly unchallenged control of U.S. policy from the top by the forces of the Military-Industrial-Financial Complex (MIFC), and the commitment of both

U.S. political parties to conduct wars to defend the post-1991 imperial Unipolar Order, despite the danger that these wars could spiral to a nuclear World War III. Such coverage blunts awareness among U.S. voters of the robust opposition to the Anglo-American policies coming from the Global South, and emerging increasingly in the U.S. and Europe.

Biden opened his speech by portraying himself as a wartime President in the image of Franklin Roosevelt (FDR). When FDR addressed the Congress in January 1941, said Biden, "Hitler was on the march. War was raging in Europe." Roosevelt's purpose was "to wake up Congress and alert the American people that this was no ordinary time. Freedom and democracy were under assault in the world...."

"And yes, my purpose tonight is to wake



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President Franklin Roosevelt delivers his "Four Freedoms" State of the Union address, January 6, 1941, expressing U.S. policy as freedom of speech and worship, and freedom from want and fear.

up the Congress and alert the American people that this is no ordinary moment either.... [F]reedom and democracy are under attack at—both home and overseas.”

Putin as Hitler

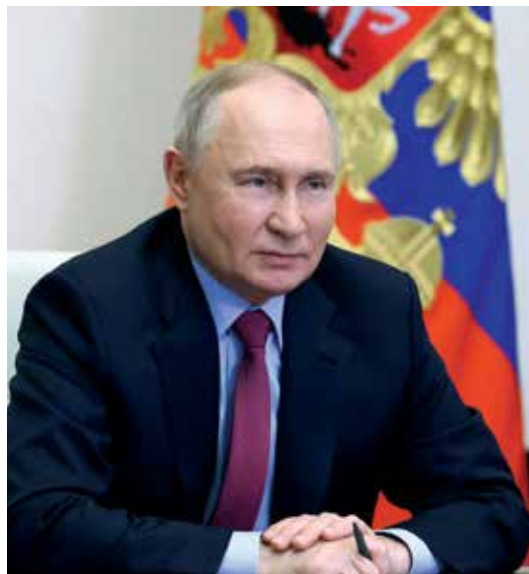
From there, Biden launched into the talking points of the so-called liberal democratic establishment, identifying Putin as Hitler to ludicrously justify the U.S.-NATO Permanent War policy of the last three decades.

“Putin of Russia is on the march, invading Ukraine and sowing chaos throughout Europe and beyond. If anybody ... thinks Putin will stop in Ukraine, I assure you: He will not.”

Ignoring growing talk in western capitals that the Ukraine proxy war against Russia is hopelessly lost, he continued to fan the flames: “But Ukraine can stop Putin. Ukraine can stop Putin if we stand with Ukraine and provide the weapons that it needs to defend itself.... But now assistance to Ukraine is being blocked by those who want to walk away from world leadership,” he continued, castigating Donald Trump and the Republicans in the House who have held up Biden’s request for an additional \$60+ billion in aid to Ukraine.

He accused Trump and his allies of “bowing down to a Russian leader,” referring to Trump’s attack on NATO members for not paying “their fair share,” to support NATO, when the former president stated he would not defend them if he were President, and that he would tell Putin he can do “whatever the hell you want.” Biden praised NATO, describing Trump’s comments as “outrageous, it’s dangerous, and it’s unacceptable.

“I say this to Congress: We have to stand up to Putin. Send me a bipartisan national security bill. History is literally watching.... If the United States walks away,” he said, reviving the discredited Cold War rhetoric about the “domino theory,” “it will put Ukraine at risk. Europe is at risk. The free world will be at risk,



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Vladimir Putin, President of Russia, ludicrously identified by Biden as a new Hitler.

emboldening others to do what they wish to do us harm.

“My message to President Putin ... is simple: We will not walk away. We will not bow down. I will not bow down.”

Continued Support for Permanent War

After running through a pre-programmed laundry list of his campaign issues—including contentious matters of abortion, border security, and green transition, and praising his allegedly brilliantly successful war on inflation and revival of the U.S. economy he returned to war, and future wars. We are addressing “man-

aging crises abroad,” in the Middle East and China. While decrying the “heartbreaking” murder by Netanyahu’s forces of “thousands and thousands of innocents,” and pledging there will be “no U.S. boots on the ground,” he defended Israel’s “right to go after Hamas.”

Contesting Trump’s recent statements that no American President has ever stood as strongly for Israel as he did, Biden described himself “as a lifelong supporter of Israel.... No one has a stronger record with Israel than I do,” boasting that he is the “only American president to visit Israel in wartime.”

He proceeded to define his view of protecting American interests as acting to “contain the threat posed by Iran,” and ordering strikes to “degrade the Houthis capability and defend U.S. forces in the region.” As for China, he asserted that his administration is defending “peace and stability across the Taiwan Straits,” and has been “tougher on China than my predecessors” in protecting American interests from unfair competition.

Ignoring the Lessons of History

Taken as a whole, this speech, and the critical tweets against it emanating from his opponent Trump in the upcoming election—Trump argued that Biden’s “weakness” led to Putin’s move against Ukraine and the Hamas attack on Israel—demonstrate a profound

and dangerous ignorance of the “lessons” of recent history. This perilous stupidity was effectively addressed in two articles posted in the UK, which remains an aggressive partner of U.S. neocons and the MIFC in its imperial wars.

In a damning critique of the concerted effort to escalate the proxy war against Russia in Ukraine, titled “NATO is growing reckless over Ukraine,” published March 5, *Guardian* columnist Simon Jenkins wrote that “Ukraine has come to seem ever more like a NATO mercenary for Western generals wanting to boost their budgets and relive the Cold War games of their youth.”

Focusing on the leaked discussion by German Air Force generals about deploying long-range Taurus missiles in Ukraine, Jenkins argues that “Western Europe has no conceivable interest in escalating the Ukraine war through a long-range missile exchange.... It has no strategic interest in Kyiv’s desire [and that of NATO’s command—HS] to drive Russia out of the majority Russian-speaking areas of Crimea and Donbas. It has every interest in assiduously seeking an early settlement and starting the rebuilding of Ukraine.”

After scuttling the delusions behind the War Hawks’ policies, he concludes, “The crass ineptitude of a quarter of a century of Western military interventions should have taught us some lessons. Apparently not.”

Former UK Ambassador Craig Murray, in an equally pithy assertion of reality that he titled, “The Panic of the Ruling Class,” posted on his website on March 12, used the election of long-time anti-war leader George Galloway to Parliament in a by-election to underline the panic setting in over the failed war strategy of the West. Denouncing the moves in the UK to suppress “free assembly, free speech and free voting,” which the Establishment sees as a threat, he wrote that the “political class are now in a panic, and lashing out everywhere.”

Referring to the theme of Galloway’s campaign—the necessity for a ceasefire in Gaza and an Israel-



CC/UK Parliament

George Galloway, a long-time anti-war leader, was elected to the UK Parliament March 12. Former UK Ambassador Craig Murray sees Galloway’s election as a marker of that failure of the West’s war strategy that has panicked the elite.

Palestine two-state solution—he concluded, “Our hearts and minds remain with the people of Gaza. Their suffering and their heroism not only shines in itself, but it has cast a much needed light on the complete failure of Western democracy.”

When read in the wake of Biden’s defense of war, these two articles challenge the citizens of the West to reject a macho contest—testing which candidate can more forcefully stand up to defend the collapsing Rules-Based Order—and instead, to fight for a new security and development order. That challenge is the lesson to be drawn from recent history, which is being rejected by the discredited pro-war establishment.



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