



By: *Tomorrow's Affairs Staff*

It's never a good bet to bet against America, and possibly against Biden too



The US president Joe Biden indicated quite clearly in his State of the Union Address that he is serious about running for president in 2024.

His speech to Congress was dominated by his ambition to overcome divisions and unite the nation on the most important issues.

“When I came to office, most everyone assumed bipartisanship was impossible. But I never believed it. That’s why a year ago, I offered a Unity Agenda for the nation”, said Biden.

His political proclamation was not just an "empty story", because Biden has an enviable "unifying" record behind him. During his tenure so far, as many as 300 laws have been passed in Congress, supported by both parties.

For some reason, he is still not capitalising on the results of his presidency through ratings. His latest approval ratings seem a lot lower than they should be in terms of the number of problems solved, or at least the ones he chose to solve.

According to RealClearPolitics, his approval rating is around 44%. According to Gallup, it is 41%.

It is possible that this gap between the things he has actually done and the citizens' perception of what he has really done so far, added to the uncertainty of whether Biden really has the ambition to run again are "to blame".

In a 73-minute long State of the Union speech, he pretty much eliminated that dilemma, so it is no wonder his ratings soared after Tuesday's address to Congress.

“If this was indeed a kick-off to a re-election campaign, as now seems likely, Biden has thrown down the gauntlet. He was energetic and not afraid to engage with Republicans in a back and forth of ad-libs from the podium”, Dan Rather and Elliot Kirschner concluded in a review of Biden's speech.

US internal issues also influence its foreign policy

Biden did not devote much time in his speech to the most important foreign policy issues. He only uttered a few sentences about Ukraine and China, and a sentence or two about success in preventing illegal immigration from the south.

US global engagement was the largest part of Biden's address, particularly economic issues, which are the principal source of interest for US citizens.

When he said that he would continue to bring jobs back to the US, or called on his countrymen to buy American goods, Biden was simultaneously referring to his administration's strategies, primarily towards China and relations with partners in Asia.

“China has become less bellicose of late”, stated the Wall Street Journal in a commentary on Biden's speech.

The credit for this "pacification" of the country that the US marked as the biggest foreign policy threat falls to Biden, and to the changed foreign political circumstances, on which the US, under Biden, has had a huge influence.

China became "less bellicose" in the period after the meeting between Biden and Xi Jinping at the G20 summit in Indonesia last autumn, after which communication at high state level remained very lively.

The New York newspaper, however, rightly concluded that China has not become “less aggressive in its actions, as its spy balloon provocation shows”.

But this incident happened "just in time" for Biden to draw points from it in his speech in Congress, despite considerable pressure in the US.

“I am committed to work with China where it can advance American interests and benefit the world. But make no mistake: as we made clear last week, if China threatens our

sovereignty, we will act to protect our country. And we did.”

Judging by Biden's speech in Congress, the incident with the spy balloon would not seriously disrupt the course that both countries have taken for several months, which was to lower security tensions and return to cooperation, not conflict, on important global issues.

“I am committed to work with China where it can advance American interests and benefit the world,” are the words of President Biden, which hint at a rapid return to high-level communication that was disrupted by the balloon crisis and the postponement of the visit of head of the State Department, Antony Blinken, to Beijing last Friday.

Leadership position in further support to Ukraine

As for Ukraine and its defence against Russian aggression, the US will not alter its attitude towards Kyiv and its leadership position in the broad international coalition supporting its defence.

This was also symbolically emphasised by the presence of the Ambassador of Ukraine to the US, Oksana Markarova, in Congress, whom President Biden personally addressed.

This gesture was also a message to the conservative group of Republicans, which opposes the further provision of US aid to Ukraine.

It was also an announcement that the US will firmly hold its leadership position among the allies so as not to falter in sending military and other aid to Kyiv.

“Our strength is not just the example of our power, but the power of our example. Let's remember the world is watching. Together, we did what America always does at our best. We led. We united NATO and built a global coalition. We stood against Putin's aggression.

We stood with the Ukrainian people.”

In the part of the address that he devoted to foreign policy issues, Biden received a bipartisan standing ovation, when he said, “It's never a good bet to bet against America”.