

As former Majority Leader Alben Barkley of Kentucky said 80 years ago this November, facing a filibuster, which successfully blocked anti-poll tax legislation—the majority leader, Alben Barkley, from Kentucky, said:

I am glad I have made this fight. I have made it in behalf of what I believe to be the broad and true foundations of a true democracy.

Senate Democrats fighting for voting rights is not over. We will keep fighting until voting rights are protected for every single American. And one day—hopefully, sooner rather than later—we will succeed.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

MARCH FOR LIFE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, tomorrow, our Nation's Capital will once again host many thousands of Americans gathering peacefully to support the most basic human right—the right to life. For 49 years, the March for Life has united people from diverse backgrounds, different faiths, and all 50 States to celebrate the dignity of human life and confront the ways our society fails to protect it.

This year, the marchers will arrive in a Washington controlled by a Democratic Party that has grown increasingly radical on this issue. Today's Democrats work overtime to keep our country one of just seven nations on the planet that have abortion on demand even after the unborn children can feel pain. Our shameful company includes China and North Korea. Fewer than 30 percent of Americans endorse this view, but Democrats have made it party dogma.

On President Biden's watch, Washington Democrats have even turned against the longstanding bipartisan Hyde Amendment. Both parties used to agree that at least Federal taxpayers should not be forced to fund abortions. Now Democrats on both sides of Pennsylvania Avenue declared war on even this.

So I warmly welcome the marchers from Kentucky and across the country. This radical version of the Democratic Party needs to hear your voices now more than ever.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Today marks exactly 1 year since President Biden be-

came our forty-sixth President. This all-Democratic government has had 365 days to start delivering on some of their core promises.

So what were those promises, in their own words? "Crushing the virus," "strengthen[ing] our alliances," and, above all else, "lower[ing] the temperature" and reuniting a divided country.

Remember, upon taking office, this administration had historic tailwinds at its back. President Biden inherited lifesaving vaccines and a distribution system that was already up and running. He inherited a string of bipartisan rescue packages, including one that was only just a few days old. He inherited an economy that was prime for a roaring comeback. Those were the promises. That was the inheritance.

So let's take a look at the progress report. Last spring, against expert advice, the Biden administration dumped another mountain of borrowed cash on an already white-hot economy. As a result, we are now being hammered by the worst inflation in 40 years. Practically everything families need and want have gotten much, much more expensive. Constant shortages disrupt family shopping. Households are being hit with soaring heating costs if they stay home and soaring gas prices if they go out. Our economic trajectory looks shakier today than it did when Democrats were sworn in.

Of course, we have continued adding back jobs from COVID lockdowns. That was certainly going to happen. But job creation has massively underperformed Democrats' own projections for job creation with their super costly springtime stimulus package.

When 2021 was said and done, the country had added roughly the same number of jobs that we were on track to create before Democrats implemented one policy or spent one dime. They managed to literally blow \$1.9 trillion but only barely beat the starting trajectory they inherited.

They call that spending a COVID package, but less than 10 percent of the money went to the actual medical fight, and that certainly shows.

Americans are entering their third year of this pandemic with too few tests, too few treatments, too many new cases, and too many school closures; muddled guidance on boosters that caused FDA experts to resign in protest, and needless divisive vaccine mandates that were not even constitutional.

One year in, the coronavirus is decidedly uncrushed.

And COVID wasn't the only epidemic sweeping American streets. Take violent crime. Far-left rhetoric and anti-law-enforcement local policies have led major cities to set all-time records for homicide in 2021.

Or take fentanyl. This deadly imported poison was the leading cause of death for Americans aged 18 to 45, last year. The No. 1 killer of Americans in their prime—fentanyl.

So why aren't Democrats treating this like an emergency? When was the

last time President Biden even talked about this?

And drug deaths are not the only consequence of our weak borders.

Candidate Biden's rhetoric incentivized a historic flood of illegal immigration, and then President Biden's weak policies lit the fuse. The result? The biggest surge in illegal border crossings in 60 years—60 years.

All these issues are priorities for American families, but the Biden administration spent most of 2021 focused on none of those. Washington Democrats spent months chasing a reckless taxing-and-spending spree packed with far-left policies that citizens never wanted. We spent half of 2021 trying and failing to blow \$5 trillion on windmills and welfare.

When that effort faded, Democrats abruptly pivoted and started shouting that American democracy was on death's door. They propagandized that some evil anti-voting conspiracy was sweeping America, and the only solution to this grand crisis was a gigantic partisan election takeover bill that Democrats had conveniently written years before the events which they say now prompted it.

The American people didn't buy the fake hysteria. One-half of one percent of the country thinks election laws are our top issue. In fact, more Americans believe voting laws are too loose than too tight.

Oh, but Democrats went all in on this obsession. A few days ago, the sitting President of the United States called millions of Americans his domestic enemies and analogized—analagized—U.S. Senators to Jefferson Davis.

Well, last night, the fake panic drove 48 Senate Democrats to walk the plank on a failed effort to shatter the Senate itself for short-term power. And now Washington Democrats appear to be launching an absurd and reckless campaign to delegitimize the next election in advance, in case they lose it. Sound familiar?

Yesterday, the President told reporters that he might not accept the 2022 election results as legitimate if his election takeover bills do not pass Congress first. It all sounds eerily familiar.

This morning, the House majority whip followed suit. He was asked if the legitimacy of our elections is contingent on Washington Democrats passing these bills, and he replied: "I am absolutely concerned about that."

The Democrats who preached countless sermons about accepting voter decisions are now saying the midterms may be illegitimate, unless they win.

So America, after all of this, do you feel unified? Do you feel healed? Do you feel like our core institutions are being protected?

Now, Senate Republicans have met this administration more than halfway. In 2021, the Senate built and passed a major infrastructure bill. We passed bipartisan legislation on competing with China.

But beyond that, this administration deliberately chose to build their whole

governing strategy around the party-line reconciliation process.

So the President cannot deflect blame for his disappointing first year. The American people know where the buck stops, and if our Democratic friends do not change course, before long, the buck will stop somewhere else.

Now, on a related matter, President Biden also campaigned on strengthening America's partnerships and renewing our global leadership. Well, how has the administration done?

The administration that campaigned on restoring alliances abandoned a coalition of loyal partners with its disastrous and fatal retreat from Afghanistan.

The Biden administration green-lit Vladimir Putin's Nord Stream 2 pipeline, and the Democrats blocked us from sanctioning it. This pipeline will help Putin gain even more leverage over Western Europe and, of course, further isolate Ukraine.

As we speak—right now—Putin has amassed more than 100,000 Russian troops along the border of Ukraine. If these forces cross into Ukraine, it will not be a new invasion or a "re-invasion." It will represent a major escalation of an ongoing occupation.

Ukraine has been fighting a Russian-backed war on its own now for 8 years. Eight years ago, I tried to warn President Obama that Putin is only deterred when the world imposes real costs—real costs—on his misbehavior.

But the Biden Administration sent Ukraine nonlethal support, and the sanctions it imposed and coordinated proved not to be as tough as advertised. The Obama-Biden administration failed to end Putin's invasion or compel compliance with the Minsk accords. Now the Biden-Harris team must not repeat the Obama-Biden grave mistakes.

But yesterday, on live television, President Biden telegraphed passivity—telegraphed passivity—and weakness, exactly when our allies can least afford it. Our President seemed to state—and, I pray, unintentionally—that he expects Putin to escalate in Ukraine, and, in any case, Putin can do what he wants.

Here is what the President said: "That decision is totally, solely, completely a Putin decision. . . . I suspect it matters which side of the bed he gets up on."

What on Earth does that mean?

Further, the President said: "My guess is he will move in."

The President said: "My guess is he will move in. He has to do something."

So President Biden thinks Putin has to do something. What does that even mean? Why is our President speculating like a passive observer on the sidelines?

He isn't a pundit. He isn't Putin's psychoanalyst. He is the President of the United States.

So will America hold Russia accountable if it escalates? Here was the mes-

sage from our Commander in Chief: "It depends on what Russia does. It's one thing if it's a minor incursion—a minor incursion—and then we end up having to fight about what to do and not do, et cetera."

"It is one thing if it is a minor incursion"? Does this mean President Biden will not actually authorize the tough response that his own administration officials have spent weeks—weeks—promising?

This was a moment to deliver a powerful warning to the Kremlin that Ukraine's sovereignty is inviolable; that we would stand with her people; that the cost of escalation would be devastating.

It was a moment to reassure our partners in Kiev and our allies along NATO's eastern flank that America had their back.

It was a moment to call for NATO's unity, not to expose and appear hamstrung by NATO's divisions. It was a bizarre and devastating performance—especially, I would add—for our friends on the frontlines.

President Zelensky's Defense Minister has already shot back. This is from Ukraine's Defense Minister:

We should not give Putin the slightest chance to play with quasi-aggression or small incursion operations. This aggression was [already] there since 2014. This is the fact.

I suspect our own Secretary of State, who is in Europe to meet with our allies and the Russian Foreign Minister—was also shocked by what the President had said. Minutes later, White House staff put out a frantic statement laying out a completely different position than what President Biden had just expressed. By then, of course, significant damage had been done.

But, alas, the damage can be undone. The President of the United States is never powerless. President Biden needs to clean up his remarks. He needs to clearly state American resolve and clearly demonstrate American leadership. He should call President Zelensky and NATO's allies most threatened by Russian aggression. He should rally allies and partners around the world to defend Ukraine and the international system that is being threatened by Putin.

His administration should be using every waking moment right now—right now—to expedite our delivery of real defensive capabilities to Ukraine.

The President must cut the indecision and redtape that has slowed us and our partners down. President Biden should finally, at long last, get around to nominating an Ambassador to Ukraine, a position he has left empty for 12 crucial months.

He should send U.S. forces to shore up NATO's eastern flank—not if—not if and when Putin escalates, but right now, before it is too late.

He should encourage our treaty allies to do likewise. But while alliance unity is important, the lowest common denominator of NATO's most nervous

members cannot be allowed to restrict American action.

Whatever course other nations choose to chart, we cannot afford to let Moscow underestimate our resolve to impose serious—serious—crushing costs in response to any further incursion against Ukraine.

Our friends and America's reputation deserve nothing less.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. REED). The Republican whip.

MARCH FOR LIFE

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, tomorrow, the streets of our Nation's Capital will be filled with Americans from across the country who have come to Washington, DC, to march for life. They come to nudge the conscience of our Nation, to remind all of us that every day in this country, baby girls and boys are being killed by abortion.

The March for Life, of course, is just one small facet of the pro-life movement, which works every day in this country to offer help and hope to moms in need. Pro-lifers collect supplies for pregnant moms. They pay for prenatal care. They assist moms with housing. They help moms continue with their schooling or find employment. They provide a listening ear to support a mom going through a difficult time.

The March for Life is just one small facet of that work, but it is an important one because abortion is an injustice that happens behind closed doors. It is not something that we see happening, and so it is all too easy to forget that every day in this country, hundreds of babies are being killed by abortion.

The CDC reports that almost 630,000 babies were killed by abortion in 2019 alone—630,000. That number is so big, it is almost unfathomable. To put 630,000 in some kind of perspective, that is equivalent to roughly 70 percent of the population of my State of South Dakota killed in 1 year—630,000 unique, unrepeatable human beings; future doctors, nurses, farmers and teachers and plumbers and busdrivers and research scientists, beloved sisters and brothers and nieces and nephews, future moms and dads. That is a lot of lives lost.

So events like the March for Life are fundamentally important because they provide a public witness to the truth about abortion. They remind all of us of what can be all too easy to minimize or ignore or forget, and that is that in this country, we are denying our most vulnerable citizens their most basic right.

You would think by now that we would have learned our lesson about deciding that one group of human beings is expendable; about deciding that some human beings are excluded from the protection and dignity that every member of the human family should enjoy. Unfortunately, history makes clear that great sins are often repeated. But we don't have to stay silent in the face of them. Indeed, we