



[U.S. President Biden Delivers His First State of the Union Address to the Nation](#)

Earlier this week on Tuesday evening, U.S. President Joe Biden provided a State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress – the first such formal report under his administration. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the last official State of the Union was given by former President Trump back in early 2020. One of the major foreign policy-related themes underlined in his remarks was the broad bipartisan support for Ukraine, as Biden touched on the widespread international unity as countries and entities around the world denounce Russia for its aggression and bellicose behavior. The United States and others have worked to impose punishments in the form of economic sanctions, the termination of the sale of advanced electronics, and the cutting off of Russia’s biggest banks from the international financial system. During the State of the Union address, Biden also announced that the United States would suspend all Russian aircraft from American airspace, and outlined the Justice Department’s intention to aggressively pursue oligarchs and assist European allies in seizing their assets. Some of the other main subjects that he delved into apart from the Russia-Ukraine crisis included inflation, the state of the coronavirus pandemic, and the global battle between democracy and autocracy.

A notable intention of Biden’s State of the Union address was to try and foster the chance at bipartisan unity regarding condemnation of Russia’s destructive invasion of Ukraine. President Biden argued that Russian despot Putin’s actions had actually served to strengthen the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance, as NATO remained prepared to protect its members from any potential further aggression. Understanding the large-scale hesitancy among Americans regarding direct engagement in a foreign conflict, particularly due to what has transpired in Iraq and Afghanistan, Biden asserted that troops being deployed in Europe were not there to fight in Ukraine but rather to defend NATO allies if necessary. The two main NATO allies that would appear to be in most imminent danger of possible further Putin aggression are Latvia and Estonia – who both share a border with Russia. Experts point out that Poland and Lithuania may face danger as well, considering that they border Belarus, which is widely considered a friendly satellite regime of the Kremlin. In his State of the Union remarks, President Biden also pledged to continue providing economic, military, and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine.

Another clear foreign policy theme of Biden’s State of the Union was the state of democracy vs. autocracy around the world. He touched on efforts to defend democracy, expressing that “in the battle between democracy and autocracy, democracies are rising to the moment and the world is clearly choosing the side of peace and security.” This appears to have been a direct reference to the global response to the Russia-Ukraine crisis, whereby denouncement of Russia’s actions has been largely overwhelming – especially from the democratic world. With respect to the overall state of democracy vs. autocracy however, a recent Freedom House report did show that the former remains in decline globally and that despite desire for it among many general populations, much still needs to be done in defense of it from authoritarianism.

President Biden attempted to frame his State of the Union address this week as a hopeful message, declaring that contemporary events were calling for a moment of responsibility from the United States and the rest of the free world.