

Biden Had One Job...



Next week will mark the one-year anniversary of Joe Biden being sworn into office, and any fair analysis of his first-year job performance would have to acknowledge that his failures greatly outnumber (and outweigh) his successes.

Two of his biggest failures – Afghanistan and the crisis at the Mexican border – were almost entirely of his own making. If Biden had just listened to his military advisors on the first issue, and kept in place the Trump-era border laws on the second, his presidential legacy would be off to a much better start. Not to mention, there's be far less human suffering going on in Afghanistan.

Less applicable directly to Biden is the ongoing COVID-19 health crisis, at least when it comes to the infection, hospitalization, and death numbers. Yes, the president promised he'd "shut down" the virus, and therefore took political ownership of its rebound and incremental spread. That was a mistake, though I think he had lots of good reasons to be optimistic at the time; it was new variants and political and ideological resistance to the vaccines that sent

things back in the wrong direction.

As I said during the previous administration, most mitigation and containment strategies during a health crisis should be formulated and implemented at lower levels of government, while the federal government's focus should be on providing resources and strong, clear public messaging.

In this arena, Biden had a pretty low bar to clear. While the vaccines were developed under his predecessor (and thankfully so), that same predecessor publicly downplayed the seriousness of the virus for a year, publicly blew off his own administration's health recommendations, called for blue-state uprisings, threw super-spreader events (resulting in his own serious infection), pushed "miracle" remedies that were neither miracles nor remedies, and turned COVID pressers into outrageous carnival acts.

But even with that low bar, Biden has managed to drop the ball. Federal guidance and messaging is still a mess (often inconsistent and lagging well behind the changing science), and promises like increased rapid-testing capabilities aren't being fulfilled – at least not in a timely manner.

And of course, there are those monster spending initiatives that Biden has spent an extraordinary amount of time on, while the national debt skyrockets, and Americans struggle with inflation and half-empty store shelves.

In other words, things haven't gone well.

What's politically tragic about all of this is that, despite the many challenges our country faced prior to him taking office, Biden really only got elected to fulfill just one job: not being Donald Trump.

By that, I mean a perceived return to normalcy, competency, and respectfulness – things Biden actively campaigned on, and that most Americans deeply longed for after years of Trump,

seemingly every day, taking a blow-torch to anything and everything that got in the way of his egotistical sense of self-worth.

Biden addressed this in his inaugural speech:

“We can join forces, stop the shouting and lower the temperature. For without unity there is no peace, only bitterness and fury. No progress, only exhausting outrage. No nation, only a state of chaos. This is our historic moment of crisis and challenge, and unity is the path forward. And we must meet this moment as the United States of America. If we do that, I guarantee you we will not fail. We have never ever, ever, failed in America when we’ve acted together.”

Though there wasn’t much evidence of Biden being a uniter, he was well positioned to become one as president. Millions of Americans who voted for him absolutely wanted that lower temperature he talked about, and with his often diplomatic rhetoric during the campaign, and razor-thin party margins in congress, he could have absolutely delivered it (or at least begun to).

But a year into his presidency, it’s become pretty clear that he has chosen a different route.

Earlier this week, in a speech in Georgia, President Biden framed those who disagree with Democratic proposals on voting rights this way:

“So, I ask every elected official in America: How do you want to be remembered? At consequential moments in history, they present a choice: Do you want to be on the side of Dr. King or George Wallace? Do you want to be on the side of John Lewis or Bull Connor? Do you want to be on the side of Abraham Lincoln or Jefferson Davis?”

The rhetoric was shocking, but unfortunately not surprising. After all, it was just a few months ago that Biden shamelessly

labeled relatively mundane voter restrictions as “Jim Crow 2.0”. Similarly, in this week’s speech, much of what Biden likened to some of the most vile examples of racism and segregation in U.S. history are proposals to repeal election laws that were put in place specifically for facilitating pandemic-era voting. In other words, if you support a return to the status quo of about 15 months ago, you’re on the side of George Wallace, Bull Connor, and Jefferson Davis.

Granted, some states are going a bit further, like moving toward requiring identification to vote. It’s perfectly fine to oppose voter ID (though I don’t), but when you make the claim that something like voter ID is profoundly racist, you should probably first consider that the vast majority of black voters actually support it.

Regardless, this is not a lowering of the temperature.

It’s really quite something that we’ve gone from “unity is the path forward” to essentially, “You’re an evil racist if you don’t agree with me” in just a year’s time. And unfortunately, with few political wins to brag of, and the midterm elections coming up (which aren’t looking good for Democrats), such needlessly polarizing rhetoric will probably become more common from Biden and the rest of the Democratic party as they desperately search for a political foothold.

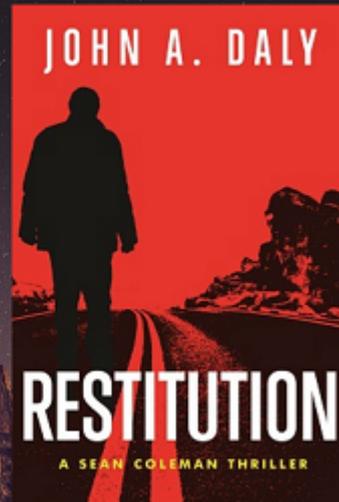
Biden was in the unique and highly favorable position of having just *one* job as president, and unfortunately for the country, he has failed at it.

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— Jim Geraghty
*senior political correspondent of
National Review and author of the
"Dangerous Clique" thriller series*



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