

Media Let Biden Talk One Way and Govern Another

Joe Biden has this knack for talking like a moderate but governing like a left-wing progressive.

In his interview with George Stephanopoulos on ABC's "Good Morning America," President Biden, trying to show that his nearly \$2 trillion COVID-19 relief bill was something most Americans liked, said that "78 percent of the people say they support this program. Fifty-two percent of Republicans."

It would have been nice if the interviewer, who used to be a Democratic operative, had followed up with something like this: "Do you think those Americans know that convicted felons in prison will be getting relief checks? Do they know that that part of the bill was passed without a single Republican vote? And why was it important to include that in a COVID-19 relief bill in the first place?"

Regarding the border, President Biden had this message to migrants heading north: "I can say quite clearly, don't come."

But Stephanopoulos didn't follow up with another important question: "Do you really believe that if you offer free medical care to anyone who gets into the country, legally or otherwise; that if you offer amnesty not only to the so-called Dreamers but also to migrant farm workers; that when you instruct Immigration and Customs Enforcement not to deport immigrants for crimes such as driving under the influence and assault, and when you publicly state that you would stop construction on Donald Trump's border wall – did you really not think that all of those things would encourage the surge of immigrants on our southern border that we're now witnessing?"

NBC News has reported that "Multiple news organizations, including NBC News, have requested access to or photos from inside overcrowded border processing facilities holding unaccompanied migrant children; they have been denied."

So, Stephanopoulos should have asked President Biden: "Why are you making it difficult for reporters to see what's going on inside those overcrowded facilities?"

And here's one more question that wasn't asked: "You say you want to unify the country but, yet, in your recent nationwide address on the one-year anniversary of the pandemic, you didn't give former President Trump any credit for rolling out the vaccines in record time. Why not? Don't you think that would have been a gracious gesture that might help bring both sides a little closer together?"

Since Biden became president on Jan. 20, too much of the media have given him a pass. From his early reliance on executive orders that he likened during the campaign to the tools of tyrant, to his avoidance of press conferences and a joint-session address to Congress, to his refusal to address coherently and unequivocally such crucial issues as whether schools should reopen, most journalists have not pressed him or his administration for answers or explanations. Even now, when everyone knows that the southern border is in crisis-mode, the president and his administration is getting away with non-answers or dissembling that, rightfully, would have provoked days of criticism of his predecessor and Jim Acosta-style accusations on-camera during White House press briefings.

It isn't just the media's reputation that's at stake in all of this. It's the right and the need of Americans to know what their president and his or her minions are thinking and doing about things that will affect the nation directly, even significantly. And when presidents are allowed to ignore, deny or misrepresent without any questioning by the press,

Americans are done a terrible disservice.

There are more questions that someone like my former CBS News colleague, Mike Wallace, would have asked in that ABC News interview but that George Stephanopoulos didn't.

And there's a reason President Biden has gotten away with talking like a moderate while governing like a progressive. The friendly, softball interview he just did on ABC News is one of those reasons.