

MSNBC's *Morning Joe*

03/02/22

6:03:02 a.m.

2 minutes and 8 seconds

JOE SCARBOROUGH: It was a return to normalcy for a State of the Union address. Not a lot of puffing of one's chest out, talking about — the — the President talking about the president nonstop. Very few Mussolini-type gestures up there. You had a unifying speech. A defense of western democracy. A guy who embraced Americans as being champions of democracy in Ukraine and fight for western values, for liberal values. Then he moved on to, again, a unifying message about Made in the USA, which took up a substantial portion of the middle of his speech, which people supported. And, then at the end, he said what those Democrats in those swing states desperately needed him to say to help Democrats have a shot at keeping the House when he talked about we don't want defund the police, we want to fund the police and then he went on to talk about, it's been too long. Let's open schools and keep them open. And then, of course, that rousing closing. A very unifying speech last night.

(....)

7:18:41 a.m.

2 minutes and 14 seconds

CLAIRE MCCASKILL: And I do want to point out, I think one of the things we haven't talked about enough in this, is the reason that Putin was so pro-Trump is he was counting on Trump to get the United States out of NATO. That's what Putin wanted. That's why he waited. He thought if he could get Trump a second term, he would finally bust up NATO and that's how he builds his empire back. And that is what this nutjob wants. He wants to go back to an empire. He wants all the countries that broke away from the USSR to come back under the Russian umbrella and the key to that is busting up NATO. And Donald Trump was his best friend —

MIKA BRZEZINSKI: Yep.

MCCASKILL: — in trying to bust up NATO. That's why he didn't go under Trump. That's why he is going now because he saw this as his last opportunity, when he believed there was still divisions within NATO and divisions of such in the United States that would weaken us.

BRZEZINSKI: Chilling.

MCCASKILL: We weren't as prepared as we should have been, but we're — I think we are a hell of a lot more prepared than Putin thought we would be.

BRZEZINSKI: It's chilling, but everything Trump was doing as it pertains to Russia and secret meetings and cozying up to Putin —

SCARBOROUGH: Yep.

BRZEZINSKI: — getting dirt on a political rival, it kind of explains where we are today. It set the scene. It set the stage.

SCARBOROUGH: Yeah and John Bolton actually laid it out very clearly. There — there's a reason why he was trying to gut NATO for four years and why he openly had contempt for NATO.

BRZEZINSKI: Trashed it.

SCARBOROUGH: And the reason why is we're seeing right now just how powerful NATO can be when the United States is behind it.

EUGENE ROBINSON: Absolutely.

SCARBOROUGH: In fact, NATO is now more powerful after Donald Trump was talking about trashing it, more powerful today than it's been at any time probably since the early 1960s.

ROBINSON: At least. I mean, it is —

SCARBOROUGH: At least.

ROBINSON: — amazing. I saw Condoleezza Rice the other day said the Biden administration had — had brought NATO together in a way that — that — she — was amazing and that hadn't been possible since the end of this — since the beginning of NATO. She said it on fox to a surprised looking host, but —

SCARBOROUGH: Yeah.

ROBINSON: — but no, it is — it is extraordinary.

(....)

7:38:20 a.m.

2 minutes and 6 seconds

BRZEZINSKI: Reverend Al, your thoughts on the President's comments last night, especially about funding the police. Did he say enough on issues pertaining to black lives mattering?

AL SHARPTON: I think that his statement about voting rights was very important. I would have loved him to elaborate more. But he did talk about the freedom to vote and he talked legislation and John Lewis. Because we must remember, as we are talking about protecting democracy Ukraine, we have laws being changed to repress the vote right here in the United States. You can't be a global democratic defender and a domestic allower of — of repressing the vote. We had a primary in Texas yesterday where, according to some reports, over 30 percent of the early voters, their ballots were thrown out because of the voting laws. So, we have a domestic threat to

voting as we protect the right of the people — to self-determination in Ukraine. I think that we have to be consistent, so I'm glad he raised that. In terms of funding police, I think the devil is in the details. I think he said, at the same time, you've got to deal with police reform. Funding them to do what? They must work on a — on the ground with community groups because we must deal with reforming police. But at the same time, deal with public safety. Just last week, a federal jury convicted police for being accomplices or complicit with the death of George Floyd by a policeman. So, we can't act as though we're not dealing with all these issues at one time. So I'm glad the President addressed them. I think that he could elaborate more. But I'm glad he raised them because you can't have the State of the Union without dealing with the voting crisis that we're in and the police misconduct and public safety crisis that we're in at the same time.

(....)

7:42:59 a.m.

3 minutes and 6 seconds

SCARBOROUGH: Mike Barnicle, I was struck by how unifying this speech was. Joe Biden's been criticized over the past year by pundits for running as a moderate, governing the first year, talking like a — a progressive, being too extreme for a lot of people in the suburbs who voted for him. But you look at last night, he talked about funding the police. He talked about strengthening borders. He talked about bringing insulin prices down. He talked about making big pharma negotiate on Medicare costs. He talked about making billionaires — like, these are what we call in the business — the political business 90/10 issues. He talked about freedom in Ukraine. He talked about made in USA. How important it was to have it stamped in there, made in USA. He touched on a couple of issues that are 50/50 issues that might divide Americans. But, for the most part, this reminded me of Bill Clinton's school uniform speeches, the era of big government was over where Clinton was mocked, where we Republicans derided him for saying those sort of things. But it connected with the middle people — middle class people. It connected with middle America. I thought, despite all the harumphs morning, I thought last night was an important reset for the Joe Biden presidency.

MIKE BARNICLE: Joe, you saw last night in 62 minutes the difficulty and the expanse of the job of being president of the United States. It's a hard job. It's daily. It's a fire hose of issues and problems, all day, every day, including weekends. Doesn't go away. So, in 62 minutes, you saw the commander in chief talking about Ukraine. You saw the President of the United States talking about domestic issues, about funding the police, getting kids back into school and you saw Joe Biden citizen — happy birthday to the young boy who was there with diabetes. You saw the expanse of his personality in full blossom. Angry about Ukraine. Really angry about Putin. Frustrated about empty office buildings here in New York and throughout the country. Frustrated that more kids haven't been in school full time for awhile. Frustrated about the normal issues that plague American families. Gas prices. You saw it all last night in 62 minutes. I think it was a very, very solid night for the President of the United States, for the commander in chief, and for Joe Biden, citizen of America.

SCARBOROUGH: Open the schools and keep them open. I also thought there was a nice

moment, Mika, where we actually saw Joe Biden saying, I know we were divided. We can't change that. Let's come together as a country and recognize this as the deadly disease that it is and let's do it in a bipartisan way. And you had Republicans and Democrats standing up for that moment. It was a nice touch by members of the chamber.

BRZEZINSKI: He looked for a lot of opportunities to unify.

(...)

8:14:23 a.m.

2 minutes and 49 seconds

ANDREA MITCHELL: He should have done more on Ukraine. What he did on Ukraine was brilliant, was rallying, was bipartisan. It just felt he left it too soon to go through a more traditional State of the Union. I get that he wanted to revive his Democratic agenda, domestic agenda. I thought very smart on funding — funding the police, very smart on COVID, could have not dealt with the other stuff.

BRZEZINSKI: Right.

MITCHELL: Just focus on talking about why we care, why should we care about Ukraine.

BRZEZINSKI: It's a massive —

MITCHELL: This is —

BRZEZINSKI: — world moment.

MITCHELL: — yeah — this is — this is a moment in history.

BRZEZINSKI: Yes.

MITCHELL: He is perfectly positioned by his training, by his leadership on the Foreign Relations Committee, by his devotion to all these issues and this is his moment. And why do we care this is democracy versus autocracies. This is a moment we haven't seen since, you know, the fall of the Berlin Wall.

SCARBOROUGH: So, so let's —

MITCHELL: I covered Reagan. I covered all of the armed control negotiations. Why does this matter?

SCARBOROUGH: — let's — let's talk about that for a second. You have perspective. Those of us at the table, not you all — not you, of course, but those of us who are older, we've seen through the decades.

MITCHELL: You are very kind, by the way.

SCARBOROUGH: We have seen the Cold War up to 1989. We saw freedom sweep across central and eastern Europe. We saw authoritarianism creep back in, starting in 2014, 2015. There, in central Europe, we saw it here in the United States. Talk about, though, how it almost seems, Andrea, like this is sort of the coda to 1989, that we actually — all the things that populists across the west have been proven wrong that NATO works, the E.U. works, these western institutions started by Harry Truman and started in the post-war world are actually working better today than they've ever worked before.

MITCHELL: And for any of the criticism, all of the criticism we didn't do enough for Ukraine soon enough, NATO is as strong as it is right now because of all the spade work done by this administration —

SCARBOROUGH: Right.

MITCHELL: — to repair the damage over the last four years, the previous four years, all that work, all those trips and the meetings that Blinken went to and Secretary Austin and all the others, that's the kind of work to repair those and there was damage done with the Afghanistan withdrawal with our NATO allies because we didn't give them enough notice —

SCARBOROUGH: Right.

MITCHELL: — of the way we were withdrawing and they were in that fight. So, you know, but we repaired that and then I just don't think, I mean, this is not to say that it wasn't you know a serviceable speech, but I just felt that he should have lived in that moment longer and he still can.

SCARBOROUGH: Right.

MITCHELL: This isn't the end of the story.

(....)

8:22:30 a.m.

1 minute and 14 seconds

SCARBOROUGH: I'm curious how much support will there be for a long engagement in the United States helping the Ukrainians in this fight for freedom?

SHARPTON: I think there will be a lot of support because I think that, clearly, we want to represent democratic principles around the world. I just hope we can also have that support here at home and that we fight for the right of Ukrainians but also fight for the right of people in Texas and North Carolina, Georgia, etc. to vote. I am also concerned about the fact that we have gotten reports that some of the African students were being blocked from Ukraine —

BRZEZINSKI: Yeah.

SHARPTON: — and I am grateful that we reached out to the State Department, secretary Blinken's office. There's going to be a zoom call later today or tomorrow on that on what the United States will do. I'm grateful for Mika who, even before I talked to you about it, had already talked to her brother who's an ambassador in Poland about this and people in the U.N.. I think it's a challenge both for the Ukrainian people at the border and a challenge to Democrats in the United States that we must be consistent. You cannot stand up to Putin and have a little Putin-ism in your own backyard.