

1 White House press briefing

2 09/02/22

3 Time N/A

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5 JEREMY DIAMOND: The President last night argued very forcefully that democracy is under assault, but  
6 what kind of concrete actions does he actually plan to take given that he describes this as essentially —  
7 as an existential threat to the republic?

8 [KARINE JEAN-PIERRE]

9 DIAMOND: So, other than urging Americans to vote and make their voices heard, the President has no  
10 plan to confront this threat that he described very forcefully last night?

11 [JEAN-PIERRE]

12 DIAMOND: Right, but what I'm asking is if there's any action behind his words?

13 [JEAN-PIERRE]

14 DIAMOND: And I know you guys have addressed to a certain extent, but because you're behind the  
15 podium, if you could address the criticisms and the questions about why the President delivered a —  
16 very much sounded like a politically charged speech as an official event, taxpayer-funded, with two  
17 Marines in uniform in particular flanking him and visible on camera throughout his speech.

18 JEAN-PIERRE: So, I'll take your first question. Look, the way we see it here and I would argue many  
19 Americans across the country see it is standing up for democracy is not political. Denouncing political  
20 violence is not political. Defending rights and freedom is not political. Making clear the challenges facing  
21 the nation is not political. We don't call any of that political. We see that as leadership and we see that  
22 as presidential. To your question about the Marines, look, the President gave an important speech last  
23 night, a critical speech at an inflection point and, you know, our democracy, our values, our values that  
24 our men and women who protect us everyday and fight for everyday believe in as well. The presence of  
25 the Marines at the speech was intended to demonstrate the deep and abiding respect the President has  
26 for these service — service members, to these ideals, and the unique role our independent military  
27 plays in defending our democracy, no matter which party is in power. Again, no matter which power —  
28 party is in power and it is not abnormal. It is actually normal for presidents from either side of the aisle  
29 to give speeches in front of members of the military and including President Donald — Ronald Reagan,  
30 President George H.W. Bush. It is not an unusual sight or is not an unusual event to have happened.

31 (...)

32 Time/NA

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34 KELLY O'DONNELL: Where does the President think the line should be drawn for having members of the  
35 military for what could be perceived as part of a stagecraft for an address? The former President was  
36 criticized for using the military many different times in many different settings and you're right. There

1 have been other instances and other presidents where members of the military — especially at the  
2 White House — but to be at a location in Pennsylvania where the Marine are not normally stationed,  
3 where does the President see the line for having members of the military included

4 JEAN-PIERRE: So, I just want to be very clear. You know, as you know, the President was at  
5 Independence Hall. You know the history, which is where some of our — some of our — the documents  
6 of some of our most critical rights and freedoms were debated and were drafted. And so, being at  
7 Independence Hall for this president, and you — you followed this president. You know how he thinks  
8 and you know how, you know, he is as an elected official. He believes that is important for him to speak  
9 very loudly to have actually the loudest voice when it comes to our democracy. And so, for him, this was  
10 not a political speech. This was an opportunity in prime time to talk directly to the American people and  
11 to be very clear — clear — with a clear voice, to talk about what is happening in our country today. And  
12 it was about our values as a country, about our democracy as a country. And so, that is what the  
13 President wanted to convey. And he believes the men and women who wear the uniform and protect us  
14 everyday, protect this country everyday, that's what they fight for as well. And so, this was an  
15 opportunity as he's having this conversation — leveling — right — a level conversation with the  
16 American people to do that. So, just want to — that's really the — the best way that I can explain how  
17 the President was thinking about this last night. You know, when it comes to — you know, when it  
18 comes to the soul of the nation, this is something the president has talked about, as I mentioned, for  
19 years. He has seen where we are headed as a country. He's been concerned where our democracy is  
20 going. And again, he took this opportunity to directly speak to the American people, understanding —  
21 understand that the Marines standing behind him are — you know, are men and women who believe in  
22 our democracy as well who fight for it everyday. So, that's — that's the thinking that I can give you  
23 behind that.

24

25 (...)

26 12:55:24 p.m. [via ABC News Live]

27 2 minutes and 32 seconds

28 ZOLAN KANNO-YOUNGS: Noting that the rhetoric in delivering speeches can — I understand the  
29 inspiration, the inspirational kind of motivation pattern there. But, frankly, can the American people  
30 expect any policy rule out underlying the speech, yesterday, in the days ahead, to actually address the  
31 threat to democracy?

32 JEAN-PIERRE: Look, I think what the President was trying to do at this moment, you've seen this before,  
33 is give Americans a choice. How do we move forward in this time — in this inflection point? And one of  
34 the ways that we have seen, time and time again, in history, is making sure people have their voices  
35 heard and that comes in many different ways. And, he believes, as President, it is important for him to  
36 be very clear and direct and to fight the hardest for our democracy. And so, that is what you saw. You  
37 saw a very strong message from the President. It was clear what he was saying to the American people.  
38 It's time to, you know, take a stance. It's time to take action and we also see that. We see that from  
39 polling, what the American people are anxious about, what they care about, is our democracy. So, it is

1 not unusual. It's something that we've seen over the last several weeks. So, the President is going to  
2 continue to have those conversations. He's going to continue to make sure that he makes that clear.

3 KANNO-YOUNGS: But what's the administration action, besides telling them to go vote?

4 JEAN-PIERRE: Well, I think we should not underestimate what that — what that can do, the power of the  
5 bully pulpit, the power of the President. And that action that he took last night, and what that could  
6 make happen — what that could lead to. We've seen that in the past. That's not unusual — right — to  
7 have a — a — to have a — a speech like this, to encourage people to act, to send a message, so that —  
8 you know, so that the American people understand what is happening in this country. And so, again, the  
9 President believes that it's his job to level with the American people about threats that he sees to our  
10 nation and our values and that's what you heard from him last night. And we believe it did, indeed,  
11 resonated. And so, again, this is something that he's going to continue to do. It is a powerful message  
12 that was delivered by the President.

13 (...)

14 Time N/A [via LiveNOW from Fox]

15 58 seconds

16 JOEY GARRISON: Isn't the speech in which the President concludes by saying, "vote, vote, vote"  
17 inherently political? He wasn't referring to any candidates. He wasn't saying vote for Dr. Oz. He was  
18 saying vote to reject the MAGA forces. I mean, isn't that a political speech?

19 JEAN-PIERRE: We don't think it's a political speech. When I was here yesterday, I actually said that he  
20 would mention voter participation and getting folks out there to make your voices heard. I said that at  
21 the podium yesterday when I was asked, what this speech was going to be all about. And look, that is  
22 the most powerful tool. The most powerful tool that Americans have is to make sure their voices are  
23 heard. It is. It is the most powerful action that an American voter can — an American can take and so  
24 that is what he is asking the American people to do.

25 (...)

26 1:10:51 p.m. [via Washington Post Live]

27 48 seconds

28 PATSY WIDAKUSWARA: President Biden laid out last night the problem that the country's facing:  
29 division, sectarianism, polarization. What is his message to adversaries around the world who are  
30 looking at this and trying to leverage the division in the country and also allies who are dismayed at the  
31 state of democracy in the U.S.?

32 JEAN-PIERRE: So, it's the message he has sent to the world since before January 6 about sacrosanct  
33 democratic norms and standing up for democracy as authoritarianism rises around the world and so, the  
34 same message. Nothing is new. This is the opposite of partisan and about values much, much bigger —  
35 much bigger and higher than that and that's — and that's his — that's him working to strengthen  
36 democracy in the world. That's what he's going to continue to do.

37 (...)