

An unprecedented talk raises the stakes in deepening battle

Let's face it, talk of democracy is something most of us thought would never cross our lips once we finished that high school civics class years ago.

Democracy was one of those "givens" in society, a bedrock principle of our governmental process that was above challenge and beyond reproach.

Until it wasn't.

The events of January 6, 2021 were clear evidence of that and served as a pointed reminder that the threats to democracy are real, alarming, and perhaps never-ending.

Those points were driven home by President Biden in a September 1 speech at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, the city that is home to the Liberty Bell, the symbol of freedom for more than two centuries. The President's prime-time address was framed as a "battle for the soul of the nation," pitting our fundamental democratic institutions against the forces of extremism in a struggle between "autocracy and democracy" that will have long term consequences for international order.

"As I stand here tonight, equality and democracy are under assault," President Biden said. "We do ourselves no favor to pretend otherwise.

"For a long time, we've reassured ourselves that American democracy is guaranteed," he said. "But it is not. We have to defend it. Protect it. Stand up for it. Each and every one of us."

America appeared ready for such a message, to finally address the culture wars and political polarization that is affecting our society. An NBC poll conducted last month indicated that "threats to democracy" was the No. 1 issue on the minds of voters, surpassing

the "cost of living." More alarming, a Quinnipiac University poll released last week found 67 percent of respondents think the nation's democracy is in danger of collapse, up nearly 10 percentage points since a January poll.

Accordingly, President Biden's speech was an alarm bell about an "extremism that threatens the very foundations of our republic."

Not surprisingly, his remarks about ongoing attempts to undermine American democracy were hailed by some and ridiculed by others depending on which political lens they look through.

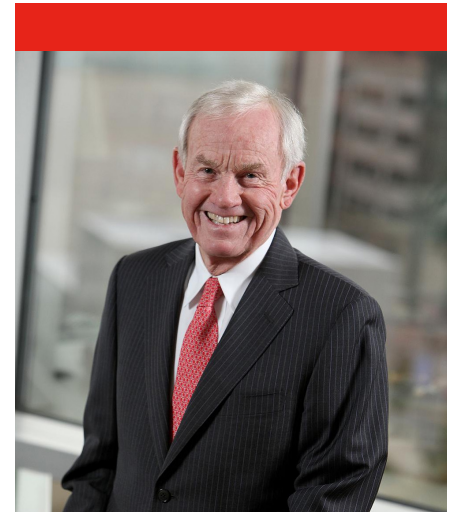
The partisan divide, however, has produced one unifying element – an acknowledgment that our fractured political state has emboldened the totalitarian regimes in Russia and China to flex their military might on the world stage.

Russia made the first move last February by invading Ukraine in a devastating land-grab attempt to bring a neighboring country to its knees.

China is now on the verge of playing a deadly game of "follow the leader," recently conducting a series of provocative military exercises off the coast of neighboring Taiwan in an attempt to intimidate the self-governing country 80 miles from its shores.

All of which points to the fact that the battle against extremism in the United States has morphed into a global threat posed by two superpowers with the nuclear capability to annihilate neighboring countries in a matter of minutes.

The need to curb their imperialistic impulses was an underlying message in the President's speech last week, just



as was his desire to counter political extremism and to restore a sense of normalcy and civility to public discourse in the U.S.

Those goals can only be achieved by electing candidates who have the country's best interests at heart, and who conduct themselves with honesty and integrity in their every act and deed.

Such standards serve as the framework for the Primerus Foundation, a nonpartisan organization designed to take democracy to new heights as we attempt to solve our most challenging problems. Success can only be achieved if we have an engaged electorate, voters who embrace the concepts of responsibility and accountability each time they make their voices heard at the polls.

With your support, we can begin building a bridge to political reconciliation, promoting a cooperative spirit that could go a long way in protecting and preserving our most sacred institutions.

Best regards,
Jack Buchanan, President