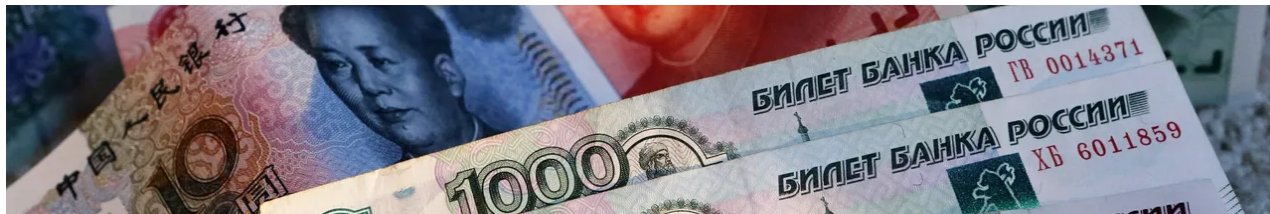


## Výjimky z cenových stropů ropy EU ukazují poptávku po ruské ropě v Evropě

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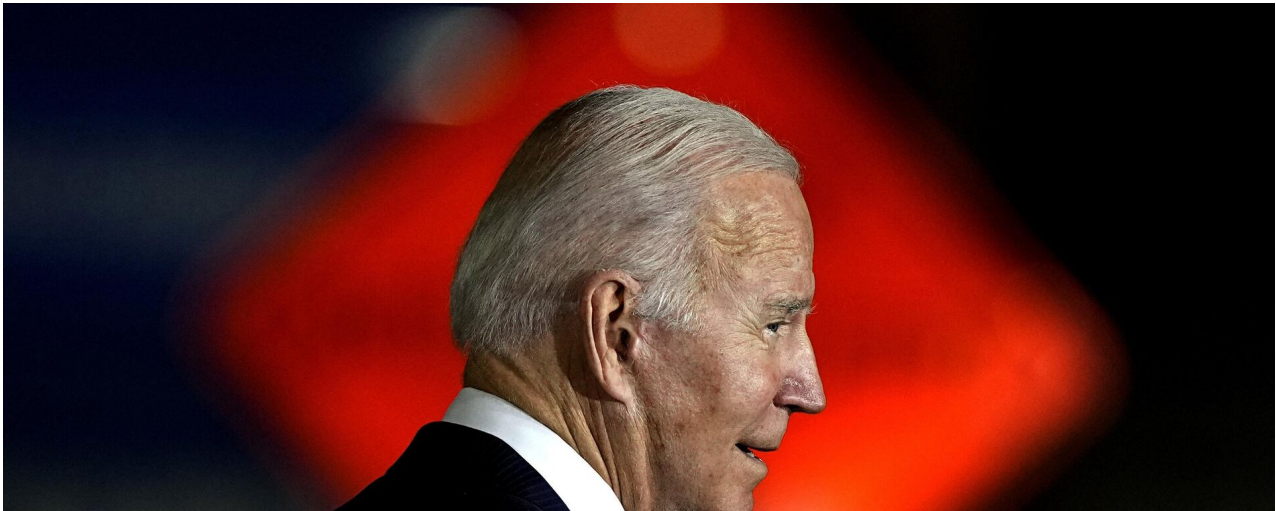


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"Opinions on the state of the union are filtered through the party identification of Americans, with 68% of Republicans viewing the state of the union negatively, while 58% of Democrats see the state of the union as either 'very strong' or 'somewhat strong'," Dr. Harvey Schantz, professor of political science at State University of New York at Plattsburgh, told Sputnik. "What has to be concerning to Biden and the Democrats, however, is that 66% of Independents, a crucial bloc of voters for winning elections, agree with the Republicans, that the state of the union is not strong enough."

"Entrenched partisan differences suggest that the target audience for Biden's speech was Democrats, in order to motivate, and among Independents, in order to persuade, and that Republicans were an afterthought, for there was little to be gained by trying to persuade them to support the President's program," the professor continued.



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## What Was Biden's Speech About?

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During his State of the Union speech President Biden called upon US lawmakers to work with him to finally rebuild the economy and unite the nation. *"We're the only country that has emerged from every crisis we've ever entered stronger than when we got into it,"* Biden claimed.

He argued that under his leadership the country managed to recover from the post-COVID economic slump, reduce unemployment, curtail inflation, and reach common ground with political opponents on a wide array of issues in the US Congress.

"Biden confronted the economy by advertising economic statistics and exhibiting empathy toward those in tough economic circumstances," Schantz observed. "Biden claimed that the economy is strong and he was particularly proud of his record of job creation. 'As I stand here tonight,' declared Biden, 'we have created a record 12 million new jobs – more jobs created in two years than any president has ever created in four years'."

According to the professor, job growth is connected to two of the most important economic indicators in presidential politics, i.e. the unemployment rate and the inflation rate. The professor noted that Biden "was able to announce good news on both of these."

"Biden used the latest unemployment figure of 3.4%, the lowest since 1969, and alluded to but did not directly use the consumer price index which had a slight dip of -0.1% in December 2022, although a high 6.5 percent over the previous year," explained Schantz.

Moreover, the president received bipartisan applause when he suggested getting "together" and negotiating how to cut the deficit. He even earned a standing ovation from the chamber when he said that "most cops" are "good, decent, and honorable people" which appears to be a break from the Democratic Party's previous "defund the police" agenda.

"Biden devoted little time to foreign affairs, discussing it for less than four minutes at about 10:05, an hour after the speech began and pledged to continue aid to Ukraine and continued wariness toward China," remarked Schantz.



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### **'Biden Lives in Parallel Universe'**

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Meanwhile, strong partisan divisions persisted during Biden's address: GOP lawmakers booed the president when he claimed that the Republicans are trying to cut Social Security and Medicare during the debt ceiling talks. Shouts "liar" were heard from GOP lawmakers as House Speaker Kevin McCarthy earlier promised not to slash these programs.

Similarly, Republicans chanted "secure the border" when Biden touched upon the migration issue and simmering crisis at the nation's southern frontier which he decided to visit only two years after taking the reins of the country. When the president mentioned fentanyl killing over 70,000 Americans a year, some GOP lawmakers shouted: "It's your fault!" in a clear reference to their concerns that illicit drugs come through the unsecured southern border.



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"Biden's speech confirmed something I've wondered about for years. Parallel universes do exist and we got a report from one today," Michael Shannon, a political commentator and Newsmax columnist, told Sputnik. "In Biden's universe unemployment is at a record low. He's creating jobs faster than Ray Kroc at McDonalds. And utility bills are lower."

"In our universe gas prices are up 40%, utility costs are soaring and the jobs Biden talks about are recycled jobs. They aren't new, they are jobs that were lost when [COVID-19] shut down the economy. Now that the economy is open the jobs that existed before are back. Biden is just a bystander. And using accounting tips from Bernie Madoff, in Biden's universe he's been cutting the deficit. In our universe an out-of-control deficit is feeding inflation," Shannon continued.

Furthermore, one cannot speak about national unity when a war on American conservatives, white people and political opposition, according to the commentator. American conservatives and GOP lawmakers are still concerned with the Biden administration's draconian treatment of January Sixers who took part in Capitol riots over apparent election irregularities on January 6, 2021. Likewise, the latest expose by Twitter owner Elon Musk shed light on extensive and potentially illegal censorship practices and growing collusion between Big Tech and the federal government.

Lots of troubling issues remained beyond the scope of the president's speech, according to the columnist. He particularly referred to a Chinese balloon, which exposed apparent gaps in the country's air defense system and the Biden administration's hesitance on how to react to the airship which the Americans believed to be a "surveillance" device. Beijing has repeatedly stated that the balloon was merely a meteorological airship.

"[Biden's] foreign policy is more of the same, weakness with China and wasteful spending with Ukraine," Shannon stressed.

From the conservative standpoint, Biden's speech didn't change any skeptical minds.

"Nezávislí voliči pravděpodobně projev vůbec nesledovali. Jeho partyzáni dostali, co chtěli. Projev jen posiluje politický status quo," uzavřel Shannon.