



EDITORIAL: SOTU highlights hypocrisy in Washington

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On Tuesday night, President Donald Trump addressed the nation. His message seemed to be one of unity.

“Millions of our fellow citizens are watching us, gathered in this great chamber, hoping we will govern not as two parties, but as one nation,” Trump said.

It was a tone used rarely by Trump and his administration. In fact, just that morning, Trump had mocked Democrats for failing to win the Senate in the last election.

“Victory is not winning for our party,” Trump said. “Victory is winning for our country.”

The room erupted with applause.

“...we must reject the politics of revenge, resistance and retribution, and embrace the boundless potential of cooperation, compromise, and the common good.”

The initial calls for unity sounded pretty, in the way speeches from politicians always do: honeyed words and empty gestures, as if the American people would suddenly forget about the past two years.

It was almost possible to forget the nicknames Trump had given to some who sat watching his speech: Senator Elizabeth “Pocahontas” Warren, Senator “Lyn’ Ted” Cruz, Senator “Cryin’ Chuck” Schumer and many others.

It was easy to wonder if this Trump, the one giving the State of the Union, had met the Trump who has been serving as President of the United States since 2016.

Of course, unity is important. We shouldn’t have to reiterate our belief in bipartisanship and cooperation within government.

But a call for unity from this administration is destined to fall flat without immediate redemptive action — action we doubt the country will see.

After his words on unity, the President continued his speech boasting about his own performance, citing figures and making statements that were misleading at best, if not outright lies. For someone who has called media organizations “fake news”, he has —time and again — been the largest purveyor of the false information in question.

“Year after year, countless Americans are murdered by criminal illegal aliens,” claimed Trump, despite myriad studies with findings to the contrary.

As recently as June 2018, a study by the Cato Institute showed illegal immigrants were half as likely to commit a crime as a native-born American, according to Politico.

“The U.S. economy is growing almost twice as fast today as when I took office,” Trump also claimed. “We are considered far and away the hottest economy anywhere in the world.”

Growth in Latvia and Poland was almost twice as fast, as well as China and India. Further, a wide range of economic analysts estimate that the growth of the American economy — which grew at an annual rate of 3.5 percent in the third quarter of 2018 — slowed in the fourth quarter, and slowed even further in the first month of 2019, according to the New York Times.

Not everything President Trump has done in his first two years has been a mistake, and not every breath he has taken has been a lie. But it takes an incredible level of audacity and hypocrisy to speak to others about unity while being one of the most divisive figures in the country.

In the past, the office of the President of the United States has always been regarded as one of respectability and honor. What the office has become in recent years is deeply concerning.