

'My guiding principle is don't do things that are stupid': Quotes of the Week

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Was this the week we saw the beginning of the end of wearing masks in public? Probably not, as the Biden administration has at least a month before it decides whether to extend the mask mandates for people on planes and trains, if not in their personal automobiles.

This week, that hesitancy started to make the White House look like an outlier, though, as blue-state governors announced they were ready to revoke mandates in their states to one extent or another. Many of the requirements will stay in place through the end of the month, and several states are keeping some mandates in place while rolling back others. However, the news that children in Nevada would get to take their masks off was welcomed by some of those students who were directly affected.

Up north, truckers pouring into Canada's capital made plenty of noise themselves as a "Freedom Convoy" protest clogging the streets of the country's capital stretched into its second week. Support for the truckers bloomed as Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau dug in on his opposition to the group. The government cracked down on the truckers' supporters and further complicated their ability to access funds they've raised from a second donation platform after a spat with GoFundMe drove donors elsewhere.

Lurking in the background was the continued presence of Russia — a mass on Ukraine's borders that Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced Friday could invade "any day."

Here are the quotes of the week:

"We stand with you, your guests, and your legion of fans in desire for real conversation. So we'd like to offer you 100 million reasons to make the world a better place. How about you bring all your shows to Rumble, both old and new, with no censorship, for 100 million bucks over four years?"

— Streaming platform **Rumble** attempting to lure Joe Rogan away from Spotify.

"While I strongly condemn what Joe has said and I agree with his decision to remove past episodes from our platform, I realize some will want more. And I want to make one point very clear — I do not believe that silencing Joe is the answer."

— Spotify CEO **Daniel Ek**, attempting to stem the tide of criticism against Rogan.

"I only sleep all day because I don't even have the strength to get out of bed. I only eat three handfuls of pasta a day because it's just impossible to eat the rest of the food. My stomach hurts, I'm very pale, and I have huge black circles around my eyes. I want all this to end. I cry every day. I'm very tired."

— Russian biathlon competitor **Valeria Vasnetsova** said about conditions for athletes at the Olympics.

"I expressed my point of view. ... To suggest that a violent attack on the seat of democracy is legitimate political discourse is so far from accurate."

— Utah Sen. **Mitt Romney** on the Republican National Committee's decision to censure Reps. Liz Cheney and Adam Kinzinger.

"Macron is dancing around the edge of formally committing to the reality that Ukraine will not join NATO in the policy-relevant future. By contrast, the Biden administration inexplicably elevates this narrow question to the abstract principle that countries should be able to choose their own alliances, which is false, as NATO requires unanimity among members for admitting a new member."

— **Justin Logan**, a Cato Institute senior fellow on different approaches to confronting Russian aggression.

"If Russia invades — that means tanks or troops crossing the border of Ukraine again — there will be no longer a Nord Stream 2. ... We will bring an end to it."

— President **Joe Biden** explaining what, exactly, the United States will do if Russia invades Ukraine.

"The position that I have is that you're ultimately held accountable to voters in your district."

— Rep. **Elise Stefanik** when asked about the RNC's vote to censure Cheney and Kinzinger last week.

"Iran's levels of enrichment are now higher than they have ever been. Their breakout times are shorter than they've ever been. ... And, from our point of view, we can't allow these talks just drag out whilst Iran continues its enrichment program. So we've made it clear that this needs to be resolved and needs to be resolved soon."

— British Foreign Office minister **James Cleverly** on the need to resolve talks with Iran before it becomes capable of making a bomb.

"My guiding principle is don't do things that are stupid and that take the subject off of what we want it to be on."

— Senate Minority Leader **Mitch McConnell** on why he opposed shutting down the government over debt ceiling negotiations.

"I don't think you have the most senior scientist in the administration during a pandemic invested in a certain vaccine maker. It looks like something he should have divested immediately."

— **Delaney Marsco**, the senior legal counsel on ethics at the watchdog Campaign Legal Center, said about Eric Lander, the top White House scientist, who held on to shares of BioNTech (without disclosing them) while promoting the vaccine.

"As we get out of the full-blown pandemic phase of COVID-19, which we are certainly heading out of, these decisions will increasingly be made on a local level rather than centrally decided or mandated. There will also be more people making their own decisions on how they want to deal with the virus."

— Dr. **Anthony Fauci** on the COVID-19 pandemic winding down

"I think the very best thing we should be doing as a party too [is] focusing on what the American voter wants."

— **Kevin McCarthy** told reporters when asked if the censure would be divisive for the Republican Party.

"Many Texans donated to this worthy cause. I am acting to protect Texas consumers so that they know where their hard-earned money is going, rather than allowing GoFundMe to divert money to another cause without the consent of Texas citizens. I will get to the bottom of this deceitful action."

— Texas Attorney General **Ken Paxton** announcing that he is opening an investigation into GoFundMe.

"The main point right now is this is not going away, and it's never going to go away, until we get the correct result and fix our elections. I mean, it's just that simple. You have so much more coming out. Here we are a year and a half later, and we still are getting more evidence of just how fraudulent this was."

— **Liz Harrington**, a spokeswoman for former President Donald Trump, on the continuing hunt for fraud in the 2020 presidential election.

"The first thing they're going to get is, the worst of [President] Joe Biden will be over. Progressive movement will be stopped."

— McConnell on what will happen if Republicans regain control of the Senate.

"I don't think that the way he has raised the issue of Crimea and, as he would put it, the potential nuclear war, that this is accidental. However, his assessment regarding how exactly the alliance works and how exactly the alliance accepts new members may not be 100% in touch with reality."

— A senior European official on Russian President Vladimir Putin's understanding of NATO.

"Going back five years, it was astonishing how Barack and Michelle had chosen to descend into this sort of vacuous life of hanging out with celebrities. ... Why would a former president want to spend an inordinate amount of time hanging out with Bruce Springsteen?"

— **David Garrow**, the author of *Rising Star: The Making of Barack Obama*, on Barack Obama's post-presidency lifestyle choices.

"It's not like we're dealing with a terrorist organization. We're dealing with one of the largest armies in the world. It's a very different situation, and things could go crazy quickly."

— Biden on why Americans should rush to leave Ukraine.

"Yes, I am. I'm rejecting them."

— Biden, speaking with NBC about firsthand military reports accusing his administration of making mistakes during the Afghanistan withdrawal.

"People have to know we didn't go out and solicit the money. This is money that came from white guilt, white corporation guilt, and they just poured money in."

— Black Lives Matter co-founder **Patrisse Cullors** on the financial windfall the organization received in 2020.

"As we've said before, we're in a window when an invasion could begin at any time — and to be clear, that includes during the Olympics."

— Secretary of State **Antony Blinken** warning Russia could invade Ukraine when the world least expects it.