

Biden lays out a plan to renew American purpose

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For the first three nights of the Democratic National Convention, speaker after speaker hammered Donald Trump over his handling of the coronavirus pandemic, as well as what they portrayed as the president's defective character. As they contrasted Trump's failings with what they touted as Joe Biden's decency and good judgment, the proceedings leading up to Thursday's acceptance speech for the nomination painted the current state of the union in generally gloomy terms. That set up Biden to explain his plans to steer the nation in a more hopeful direction and to try to convince skeptics that he is up to the task of seeing them through. Biden accepted the Democratic presidential nomination on Thursday, a goal that he set his sights on decades earlier. In a forceful speech, he did not sugarcoat what awaited him should he defeat Trump in the general election, citing the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the sharp economic downturn resulting from it, the systemic racism that continues to endure in the United States, and the unfolding disaster of climate change. Biden used his speech to make the case that he would govern with a steady hand and would not follow Trump's lead in inciting partisan division.

While I'll be a Democratic candidate, I will be an American president. I'll work hard for those who didn't support me, as hard for them as I did for those who did vote for me, Biden said, adding, "I will draw on the best of us, not the worst of us. I will be an ally of the light, not the darkness."

His speech, in which he avoided using Trump's name, was classic Biden. It was aimed at the American middle class and at blue-collar workers, steering clear, for the most part, of identity politics and instead appealing to voters across the political spectrum.

If Trump were to be reelected, Biden said, working families will struggle to get by, and yet the 1 percent will get tens of billions of dollars in new tax breaks, and the assault on the Affordable Care Act will continue until it is destroyed, taking insurance away from more than 20 million people including 15 million people on Medicaid.

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