

Biden frustration with Fox News breaks through surface

[President Biden](#)'s irritation with questions and coverage from Fox News is starting to break through the surface.

Biden in the last week has twice snapped at reporters for Fox News and was caught on a live mic on Monday describing the network's White House correspondent Peter Doocy in decidedly impolitic terms after a question about inflation, which is widely seen as cutting into the president's approval ratings.

"Will you take a question on inflation?" Doocy asked Biden on Monday. "Do you think inflation is a political liability ahead of the midterms?"

"No, it's a great asset," Biden said sarcastically into a microphone. "More inflation. What a stupid son of a bitch."

Last week, Jacqui Heinrich, another Fox reporter, asked Biden why he was "waiting" for Russian President [Vladimir Putin](#) "to make the first move" as tensions between Russia and Ukraine escalated in recent days.

"What a stupid question," Biden said in a response that was captured by audio pool reporters in the room.

A combative tone between a Democratic president and Fox News is nothing new, and Doocy downplayed any lingering tensions after the president called him to talk about his remark.

"He called my cellphone, and he said, 'It's nothing personal, pal,' " Doocy told Fox News colleague and prime-time host [Sean Hannity](#) on Monday

night. "And we went back and forth, and we were talking about just kind of moving forward."

When asked to provide comment on Biden's recent outbursts at their reporters, a spokesperson for Fox News pointed to Doocy's on-air comments.

Biden's brusqueness with some questions from the press has not been limited to Fox. Just last week, he brushed off questions from two conservative outlets during a marathon press conference.

Biden didn't acknowledge a question from the New York Post, which is owned by the same parent company as Fox, that linked his son Hunter Biden's business dealings with transparency from China about COVID-19's origins.

And, when a Newsmax reporter asked him about his mental fitness — a topic that has received a lot of coverage on conservative media — he also brushed it off.

"I have no idea," he said when asked why he thinks segments of the American electorate have concerns about his cognitive fitness.

Biden has also sometimes shown pique with reporters from other outlets.

After a June summit with Putin in Geneva, Biden seemingly expressed frustration with a question from CNN reporter Kaitlan Collins, who asked him what made him "confident" Putin would change his behavior.

"I'm not confident," Biden said, turning around and then shouting: "What the hell, what do you do all the time? When did I say I was confident? What I said was ... what will change their behavior is if the rest of the world reacts to them and it diminishes their standing in the world."

"If you don't understand that, you're in the wrong business," he added to Collins.

As he did with Doocy this week, Biden later apologized to the CNN reporter.

White House press secretary [Jen Psaki](#), who often has her own tense back-and-forth banter with Doocy during press briefings, downplayed any friction Tuesday.

"Peter spoke to this, the president called him, he conveyed to him that 'it was nothing personal, man' and also acknowledged that all of you are going to ask him a range of questions," she said.

Conservatives delighted in the Biden-Doocy moment on Twitter, pointing to liberals who they say expressed fury over former [President Trump](#)'s name-calling of the media as endangering democracy.

Trump did take tensions between the White House and the press to a new level, though as recently as 2000 then-GOP presidential candidate George W. Bush was caught on a hot mic calling New York Times reporter Adam Clymer a "major-league asshole." In 2015, [President Obama](#) was caught telling a CBS correspondent a question about policy toward Iran was "nonsense."

Some used the episode with Doocy to highlight what they say is a double standard in how the press has reacted to instances of Biden getting short with the press compared to Trump.

"I don't think any president should be calling any reporter a dumb son of a bitch," CNN anchor [Jake Tapper](#) said late Monday. "Standards for decency don't have to do with whether or not you like the people who are being treated poorly."

Psaki earlier this month told reporters that “resetting the tone with the media was a big priority” and defended the White House’s record on how it has interacted with reporters.

“Our objective is to ... re-instill normalcy and engagement with reporters, whether we agree or disagree, whether there is a partisan tilt to an outlet or not,” she said.

Todd Belt, a professor and director of political management at George Washington University, said that Biden’s name-calling could point to a new strategy.

“It signals particularly to his base that there’s a change in tone. He did indicate in his press conference last week that there was going to be a change in tone and a change in strategy and they were going to be more combative,” Belt said. “This is what a lot of Democrats want. They were frustrated with the fact that he had been operating behind the scenes.”

Biden is facing a difficult midterm election cycle where there is a real danger Democrats could lose their congressional majorities. A new poll from Pew on Tuesday found him with a 41 percent approval rating.

- [Sunday shows - Biden Supreme court nominee, Russia sanctions dominate](#)
- [Hogan says 'stakes are too high' for another Trump presidency](#)

The White House’s downplaying of the fight also suggested the remarks were less strategic and more genuine irritation.

“It's punching down. He is the president of the United States. Most powerful person on Earth, arguably. For him to be insulting journalists is not a good look,” said Brit Hume, a longtime political analyst for Fox who spent more

than two decades at ABC News beforehand.

“It didn't help Donald Trump when he did it, and he did his share of insulting journalists, and I don't think it's going to help this president to do that,” Hume said.