## Opinion: The state of Christie's national potential will be fiercely debated



New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie gives the annual State of the State address Jan. 13, in Trenton. He addressed topics ranging from state pensions to new drug addiction solutions. (Photo by Andrew Burton/Getty Images file photo)



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## By Carl Golden

In the days immediately preceding Gov. Christie's delivery of the State of the State address, a consensus emerged that he would use the platform to convey his message beyond New Jersey and demonstrate to the rest of the nation his grasp of the overriding issues afflicting the country and his readiness to take them on.

He met with partial success.

His office pre-packaged his record in a video —as it has done in prior years —and the governor conducted a pre-speech private briefing with national political reporters while excluding New Jersey media.

The address itself offered the rather gauzy rhetoric that could be found in speeches by any of the other potential presidential candidates.

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There were the usual broadsides at President Obama, followed by Christie's diagnosis of what ails the country —a deep-seated anxiety that has led Americans to fear an uncertain future and to question whether the federal government is capable of dealing with it.

He was struck, he said, by the extent and seriousness of the angst as he travel around the country listening to people in all walks of life pour out their uneasiness and bewilderment about why America wasn't doing better.

The antidote, according to Christie, is a spiritual renewal which can only be brought about by the goodwill and noble purpose of those who eschew political advantage and  $embrace\ bipartisan ship\ to\ end\ the\ gridlock\ that\ has\ paralyzed\ the\ national\ government.$ 

And, while largely bereft of details or solutions, he hinted he's the person to lead the renewal.

His record in New Jersey, he said, validates his point. Working with a Democratically controlled Legislature since he took office five years ago, Christie ticked off a list of accomplishments:

- a cap on property-tax rate increases;
- reform of the public pension system over the fierce objections of organized labor;

The consensus that his speech was aimed at a broader audience was proven largely correct. Whether he aimed too high will continue to be debated with increasing intensity as 2015 unfolds.

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