

UpDate - Vol. 12, No. 9, Page 1

October 29, 1992

Sen. Biden returns to campus during United Nations week

U.S. Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr. (D-Del.), a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee since 1972, said last Thursday he did not understand the importance of collective security for the nations of the world until he graduated from the University of Delaware in 1965.

In a speech celebrating United Nations Week, Biden said professor emeritus Leroy Bennett and other political science professors who taught him were wise to espouse the value of the United Nations as a valuable peacekeeping tool.

Meeting with world leaders, Biden said he has "on more than one occasion, been brought back in my mind to classes I took with Dr. Bennett," a man Biden called "well ahead of his time."

In his speech in Clayton Hall, "On the Threshold of the New World Order: A Rebirth for the United Nations," Biden said the world's leaders must adopt a new understanding of security. "Collective security today must encompass not only the security of nations," he said, "but also mankind's security in a global environment that has proven vulnerable to debilitating changes wrought by man's own endeavors.

"Thus, in setting an American agenda for a new world order, we must begin with a profound alteration in traditional thought," he said.

Speaking to about 150 faculty and students, Biden said the United States should "buttress stable democracy in the former Soviet empire" and "champion the cause of democracy in China."

Biden criticized President George Bush's Soviet policies, saying the "administration, if not absent, has been little more than an onlooker."

The senator said the United States should deliver more "educational and professional" assistance to the countries of the former Soviet Union. The goal, he said, must be to "foster the conditions and institutions necessary for a free economy and a free body politic to thrive."

Very little money would be needed from the American government to make great strides toward assisting in the privatization of the former Soviet Union, Biden said.

Together with other nations, the United States could help stabilize the currencies now used in the independent Soviet countries, he said. Other efforts could be aimed at establishing legal codes for business practice, taxation and property ownership, he said.

Biden said the collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War also give the United States an opportunity to slash the number of nuclear weapons now available. He said the START treaty ratified by the Senate early in October limits Russia and the United States to possessing no more than 9,000 nuclear warheads each, but said "more dramatic progress" could be made to reduce the nuclear threat.

"We should seek a steady, mutual draw-down to a ceiling of no more than 500 warheads (per side)," he said.

Representatives of the United Nations should be used to monitor the dismantling of the weapons, he said. "We should cut the Gordian knot of difficult dismantlement by acting immediately to sequester all warheads to be eliminated," he suggested.

Biden also advocated a global ban on the production of weapons-grade missile material and a comprehensive test ban treaty for all countries with nuclear capabilities. He said the United States and other countries should commit military forces to exclusive use by the United Nations' Security Council, which would enforce nuclear

agreements.

Since the United States is a permanent member of the council, with the power to veto multinational military action, Biden said there is no risk of having Americans troops drawn into conflicts the government does not wish to join.

Biden stressed that, if nuclear containment efforts fail, the United States "must be able to use force to stop rogue nations like North Korea" from collecting additional weapons of mass destruction.

The "new world order" also should include a new role for NATO, he said.

"NATO should abandon its anachronistic posture-the defense of allied territory against direct attack-to make a great leap forward and adopt peace-keeping outside NATO territory as a formal alliance mission," he said.

Biden also attacked Bush's handling of human rights' violations in China, as well as his environmental record.

"The president has opposed every congressional effort to impose serious sanctions or even link trade to more reasonable Chinese policies on human rights and the sale of dangerously destabilizing arms," he said.

"No one can expect that trade sanctions against Beijing would yield a sudden transformation of that regime. But American foreign policy should leave no doubt-and the Bush administration has left much doubt- that the United States stands squarely on the side of China's brave and aspiring democrats-to whom power will ultimately flow."

Of President Bush's refusal to sign treaties at the United Nations' Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Biden said, "Our blunder was both tactical and strategic."

"For the United States, it should become a paramount priority to promote American environmental technologies and services around the world," he said. "We do not, despite what the president or anyone else may say, have to choose between jobs and the environment."

In a question-and-answer period following the speech, one audience member drew applause for suggesting that Biden would make a good secretary of state if Bill Clinton wins the presidential election. Biden said he was flattered but did not think he would receive such an appointment.

-Stephen Steenkamer