

Biden's Fantasy World

Contributed by WSJ, NYPost
Monday, 06 October 2008
Last Updated Wednesday, 08 October 2008

Sarah Palin may not know as much about the world, but at least most of what she knows is true. In the popular media wisdom, Sarah Palin is the neophyte who knows nothing about foreign policy while Joe Biden is the savvy diplomatic pro. Then what are we to make of Mr. Biden's fantastic debate voyage last week when he made factual claims that would have got Mrs. Palin mocked from New York to Los Angeles? Start with Lebanon, where Mr. Biden asserted that "When we kicked -- along with France, we kicked Hezbollah out of Lebanon, I said and Barack said, 'Move NATO forces in there. Fill the vacuum, because if you don't know -- if you don't, Hezbollah will control it.' Now what's happened? Hezbollah is a legitimate part of the government in the country immediately to the north of Israel."

The U.S. never kicked Hezbollah out of Lebanon, and no one else has either. Perhaps Mr. Biden meant to say Syria, except that the U.S. also didn't do that. The Lebanese ousted Syria's military in 2005. As for NATO, Messrs. Biden and Obama may have proposed sending alliance troops in, but if they did that was also a fantasy. The U.S. has had all it can handle trying to convince NATO countries to deploy to Afghanistan.

Speaking of which, Mr. Biden also averred that "Our commanding general in Afghanistan said the surge principle in Iraq will not work in Afghanistan." In trying to correct him, Mrs. Palin mispronounced the general's name -- saying "General McClellan" instead of General David McKiernan. But Mr. Biden's claim was the bigger error, because General McKiernan said that while "Afghanistan is not Iraq," he also said a "sustained commitment" to counterinsurgency would be required. That is consistent with Mr. McCain's point that the "surge principles" of Iraq could work in Afghanistan.

Then there's the Senator's astonishing claim that Mr. Obama "did not say he'd sit down with Ahmadinejad" without preconditions. Yet Mr. Biden himself criticized Mr. Obama on this point in 2007 at the National Press Club: "Would I make a blanket commitment to meet unconditionally with the leaders of each of those countries within the first year I was elected President? Absolutely, positively no."

Or how about his rewriting of Bosnia history to assert that John McCain didn't support President Clinton in the 1990s. "My recommendations on Bosnia, I admit I was the first one to recommend it. They saved tens of thousands of lives. And initially John McCain opposed it along with a lot of other people. But the end result was it worked." Mr. Biden's immodesty aside, Mr. McCain supported Mr. Clinton on Bosnia, as did Bob Dole even as he was running against him for President in 1996 -- in contrast to the way Mr. Biden and Democratic leaders have tried to undermine President Bush on Iraq.

Closer to home, the Delaware blarney stone also invited Americans to join him at "Katie's restaurant" in Wilmington to witness middle-class struggles. Just one problem: Katie's closed in the 1980s. The mistake is more than a memory lapse because it exposes how phony is Mr. Biden's attempt to pose for this campaign as Lunchbucket Joe.

We think the word "lie" is overused in politics today, having become a favorite of the blogosphere and at the New York Times. So we won't say Mr. Biden was deliberately making events up when he made these and other false statements. Perhaps he merely misspoke. In any case, Mrs. Palin may not know as much about the world as Mr. Biden does, but at least most of what she knows is true.

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IRAN'S MOST USEFUL IDIOT?

September 2, 2008 --

Barack Obama may genuinely believe, as he promised in last week's acceptance speech, that he can prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. First, though, he'll have to overcome his running-mate's resistance.

Israel's Army Radio just reported that Sen. Joe Biden told Israeli leaders in 2005 that they would have to accept a nuclear Iran.

The report says Biden told the Israelis that he doubted economic sanctions would be effective against Tehran, "and I am against opening an additional military and diplomatic front."

Biden's camp yesterday termed the report "a lie."

But despite Biden's recent remarks that "Iran's acquisition of a nuclear weapon would dramatically destabilize an already unstable region," the fact remains that the senator has long shown antipathy for getting tough with Tehran.

Indeed, according to a devastating profile in The New Republic in 2001, Biden suggested, in the wake of 9/11, that "this would be a good time to send, no strings attached, a check for \$200 million to Iran."

He even voted against a resolution designating Iran's Revolutionary Guards a terrorist organization and calling for tough sanctions against it - one of only 22 senators to do so.

Biden has been pushing for "engagement" with Tehran - as opposed to sanctions - for more than a decade.

Yet, as a Teheran spokesman recently confessed, "During our negotiations, and so long as we were not subjected to sanctions, we could import technology."

And Biden opposes sanctions.

Go figure.

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