

Meet & Greet for Vice-President Joe Biden

April 5, 2010

Ambassador Howard Gutman

Thanks Bill. I have pointed out before that Administrations are regarded as successful if 50% of their political selections are top notch. And with you and Ivo Daalder, this administration is batting 66% in Brussels.

It is an honor and thrill to welcome VP Biden to Belgium.

It is really a thrill to have the opportunity for each of us to say "thank you."

Because for you, career State Department employees, and for all of us who work abroad, we know firsthand what a joy and an honor it is to represent the United States under the Obama-Biden Administration.

What a true source of pride it is for each of us, as people come up to us daily and say once again that they love our country.

And plainly, much of the credit goes to the President, as through his honesty and transparency, through his inspiration in rebuilding hope and global collegiality, the President has done so much to change the face of America abroad.

But a great deal of credit in fact goes to Vice President Biden. For while President Obama could offer much in the way of inspiration and hope, as a new figure on the international stage, he could not offer much to leaders abroad in the way of track record and familiarity.

And that's where Vice-President Biden came in.

For the world, for world leaders, Vice-President Biden has long represented that track record and familiarity. The face of a friend.

As Ambassador, I rarely resort to props.

But this 7 page list is just too amazing to pass up.

As of September 23, 2008 – 6 months before he became Vice-President -- then Senator Biden had already met with 150 world leaders.

Even before becoming Vice-President, Vice-President Biden had met with nine Israeli prime ministers, four Soviet leaders and two Russian presidents, a few kings and a queen, Pope John Paul II and the Dalai Lama, and even Moammar Gaddafi and Serbian president Sloban Milosevic.

Can there be any serious doubt that VP Biden is the number 1 Statesmen in the United States.?

And if you are the greatest statesmen in the United States, can there be any serious doubt about your standing as the world's primary statesmen?

Can there be any doubt for example why Israel has planted a circle of trees in Jerusalem in memory of the Vice-President's mother; Catherine Eugenia Finnegan Biden.

And let me just add a personal note about the type of person that the Vice-President is. He is the type of man who after a long and tiring flight, amidst a blustery Belgian evening, could take the time to take the first picture on the tarmac with a 16 year old kid, a kid who will feel blessed for the rest of his life.

And whether or not you are an ambassador, if you are a parent, it becomes so obvious that Vice-President Biden is also a good man.

So it is my honor to introduce a good man, a great statesman and our vice president, Joe Biden.