

ADDRESS TO SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

Foreign Policy after the Election

by John C. Whitehead

Thank you both very much. Those were splendid introductions. You did some research that I didn't know you would find out about, and that was good quality. You were very complimentary to the speaker, maybe overly so, which is a good habit to get into in a diplomatic world.

I am delighted that I can show you today that there really is a John C. Whitehead whose name is attached to your school, and to tell you how very proud I am that the dream of Seton Hall, to have a school that teaches young people about foreign policy and diplomacy, and capitalizes on your proximity to the United Nations, and specializes in multinational organizations, has really become a reality.

As I look around the hall, I am delighted to see how many of you come here from other countries, I suppose in part due to our closeness to the UN. The room looks a bit like the UN itself. I am sure you are finding that you are forming international friendships that will last all your lives.

Not all dreams become realities in this world of ours, but yours has. With 400 students, half undergraduates and half graduates, you already rank right up there with the other long-established foreign policy schools in the United States. And the others better watch out because you are going to pass them before long. I understand that the graduate school is already the most selective of any of the graduate programs at Seton Hall and is getting more so every year.

I am very proud to have my name attached to such a fine school, and I thank everyone who has been involved; Monsignor Robert Sheeran, whose support from the very start has been wonderful, and Dean Clay Constantinou, a brilliant, imaginative and highly successful leader, and to all of you in the administration and on the faculty, for your dedication and for the quality of your work.

Finally, to all of the students assembled here today, without you — and this is rather trite — but without you this place would not be much. And how you use your lives in the years ahead will be what determines the final evaluation of the school. And I feel very optimistic about that.

I am so very proud to have this splendid school named after me. Its existence represents two things in my life that are very important to me: One, is our need to strengthen all international organizations, including at the top of the list, the

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United Nations, so that they may play a more important part in the world of the future. And the other is the importance of better education of young Americans in what goes on in the rest of the world, particularly on the issues of foreign policy.

Well, let me turn to the subject of my remarks today, foreign policy after the election. My dream has always been that some day the entire world will become one and live together with peace and freedom for all people. Many dreams are idle dreams, but I do not believe this one is an idle one. Already remarkable technical developments of the last hundred years have brought the world closer together. First the telegraph, then the telephone, then transcontinental air flights, then radio, the television, then fax machines and now the Internet have brought people everywhere closer together.

Information about what happens almost anywhere in the world is available almost instantly everywhere. No longer are people isolated in their own little communities. In rural China you see television antennae everywhere. In the most desolate parts of Afghanistan, people talk on their cell phones. In the poorest villages of Bangladesh, people huddle around the village radio and listen to the BBC. The word gets around as never before. Nothing can be kept secret for long. We are all closer together than we used to be. In the world of communications we have already become one world.

It is happening too in the world of economics, where the benefits of free trade are now evident to consumers everywhere, where each country can concentrate its output on what products and services it does best. This results in the best quality at the lowest price without being frozen out or restricted by artificial tariffs in other countries. Free trade is now with us. It is here to stay, and everyone, everywhere is benefiting.

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It is only in the world of politics that national boundaries continue to exist, where tensions over national boundaries risk war. I am convinced that in the next hundred years the importance of national political boundaries will fade away as have the boundaries between people based on poor communications and restrictions on trade. It is already happening in the United States over the last 200 years, where what were once fifty independent states, and originally thirteen independent states, have now banded together to form what some still call the perfect union.

It is happening in Europe, where only a few months ago ten more countries joined the European Union. It is happening in Asia as ASEAN develops, as the two Koreas show signs of softening enmity, as India and Pakistan seek ways to resolve their problems in Kashmir, and as Mainland China and Taiwan find the right path to peaceful coexistence. It is happening too in Latin America and even in Africa.

People everywhere want desperately to live in peace with their neighbors and to improve their standards of living. As they see the benefits of cooperation with other countries, instead of tensions and violence, they press their governments to move in the direction of peace. They will not permit in the future their political leaders to stand in the way of achieving the kind of peace and prosperity that is now there for them to participate in.

If the world can become one in communications and one in economics, it should be able to do the same in government. While the creation of a single world living together in peace and prosperity may still be a somewhat distant dream, I believe it is coming more quickly than many may think. It is to speed that process that the United Nations was created and its existence has never been as essential as it is today. The United States must lead the way and take its rightful place as a strong and positive leader in the United Nations and all of its affiliated organizations. This Seton Hall school can play an important roll in training future leaders and is a most important ally in the cause of world peace and freedom.

Let me use my remaining time to make a few remarks about a more general question: What I think it means to be a superpower, a question that we face now, and that the administration faces as they think about what their policies will be in the next four years. What does it mean to be a superpower? And I hope the administration is thinking of things like this as they think about the next years.

I've always felt that one of our greatest achievements as a nation was the fifty years of the Cold War..Our overwhelming military power was always there in the background, and its existence surely affected the outcome, but it was never used. I consider those fifty years to be a triumph of diplomacy.

Yes, we are a superpower. Indeed, we are the only superpower; militarily, economically, scientifically, in every way. We are able to do almost anything we want to do, anywhere in the world, and we have every right to be proud of what our great country has achieved in the nearly 230 years of our existence. But power is a funny thing. If we flaunt it too much, we will begin to lose it. That has been the history of mankind throughout the ages, going back to the Roman Empire and more recently to Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union. Powerful nations, which flaunt their power, do not last very long.

On the other hand, if we use our power infrequently, and only in a benevolent way, in the interest of other nations as well as our own, it can last for a very long time. Shouldn't we begin to think now, not only of what is good for the United States, but what is good for the world as a whole? Shouldn't we act more as a leader, a benevolent leader with less arrogance, less of an attitude that we have all of the right answers, a little more listening and not quite so much talking?

I've always felt that one of our greatest achievements as a nation was the fifty years of the Cold War and the fact that with patience and determination we kept it cold, for the alternative would have been a hot war, which would have been devastating for all of us. Our overwhelming military power was always there in the background, and its existence surely affected the outcome, but it was never used. I consider those fifty years to be a triumph of diplomacy. We tend sometimes to be prouder of the wars we have won with the use of our military power than of the wars we avoided through patient diplomacy.

The last several years have had their unhappy moments for those of us who believe that diplomacy, given time and patience, will almost always prevail. It is better to seek support elsewhere around the world for what we think should be done, rather than have to take unilateral action ourselves. Furthermore, it is better to support and try to lead the United Nations and other international organizations, and to have their support of our objectives rather than their opposition.

These are opportunities we have as the only superpower that we did not have when we were only one of several superpowers. As we have become relatively stronger and more dominant in every way we can afford to take the risk of working the diplomatic path a little harder and a little longer. I suggest that it is now time to reappraise the significance of our strong superpower status and use it more effectively to achieve a more peaceful and a more stable world. Thank you very much.