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Pro-con on Biden's Russia remarks



Ukraine and Georgia sure made an impression on Joe Biden. On his trip home from those democracies, the vice president played Lear's jester by speaking the truth about their erstwhile master, Russia. In an interview, Biden pointed out that the U.S. and Russia aren't strategic equals. "I think we vastly underestimate the hand that we hold," he said, noting that Russia's economy and population are "withering." As for the arsenal

Russia inherited from the U.S.S.R., Biden said, "They can't sustain it." Biden's commonsense observations undermine President Obama's rationale for a "reset" with Russia built on arms control and a softening of U.S. support for Eurasia's democracies. For example, why lock in lower numbers of U.S. nuclear warheads and delivery vehicles such as bombers and missiles in a new arms deal if Russia can't afford to maintain its stockpile of either? Biden may not like the comparison. But in his willingness to speak the truth about Russia, Biden reminds us of Dick Cheney. — Wall Street Journal [editorial](#)

Vice President Joe Biden recently claimed that, because Russia's economy is "withering," Moscow will have to bend to the West, specifically on issues relating to the former Soviet republics and the reduction of its nuclear arsenal. But what Biden seems to be forgetting is the important role that Russia can play in the war in Afghanistan. Russia has no obligation to bend one way or the other. The country still exerts strong influence over most Central Asian states, including those directly bordering Afghanistan. In fact, Russia recently allowed — after nearly eight years of war — the United States to use its airspace to transport troops and military equipment into Afghanistan. After Biden's comment, there appears to be a gap between the administration's objective of stabilizing Afghanistan and the means with which it hopes to achieve it. Graciously antagonizing Russia risks prompting officials in Moscow to either retract their concession on Afghanistan, to pressure Central Asian republics to act in kind, or both. — [Malou Innocent](#), RealClearWorld.com

By [Rhonda Holman](#)

Posted Yesterday at 6:03 a.m. Filed under [Foreign affairs](#), [President Obama](#)

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Monkeyhawk

Posted August 3, 2009 at 7:29 am | [Permalink](#)

After a decade-and-a-half of Newtie Gingrich, Tom (the Hammer) DeLay, and Shrub/Cheney, journalists forgotten politics without marching in lock-step obedience.

Far from being a "loose canon," Biden's remarks reveal a presidency that

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