



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on August 24, 2011

Biden “Not Second-guessing” China’s One-child Policy

Speaking at Sichuan University in Chengdu, China, on August 21, Biden was discussing America’s debt problems when he made the following remarks, as published on the [White House and U.S. Embassy websites](#):



What we ended up doing is setting up a system whereby we did cut by \$1.2 trillion upfront, the deficit over the next 10 years. And we set up a group of senators that have to come up with another \$1.2 to \$1.7 trillion in savings or automatically there will be cuts that go into effect in January to get those savings. So the savings will be accomplished. But as I was talking to some of your leaders, you share a similar concern here in China. You have no safety net. Your policy has been one which I fully understand — I’m not second-guessing — of one child per family. The result being that you’re in a position where one wage earner will be taking care of four retired people. Not sustainable.

So hopefully we can act in a way on a problem that’s much less severe than yours, and maybe we can learn together from how we can do that.

The statement drew a sharp rejoinder from House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio).

“I’m deeply troubled by the comments reportedly made by the Vice President yesterday regarding China’s reprehensible one-child policy, which has resulted in forced sterilizations and coerced abortions and should not be condoned by any American official,” Boehner said. “No government on Earth has the authority to place quotas on the value of innocent human life, or to treat life as an economic commodity that can be regulated and taken away on a whim by the state.... The Obama administration should be focusing on jobs for the American people, not encouraging foreign governments to utilize abortion as a means of population and deficit control.”

Former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, a Republican presidential candidate who has moved in recent years from the “pro-choice” to the “pro-life” position on abortion, issued a statement calling the Chinese policy “gruesome and barbaric.”

“Vice President Biden’s acquiescence to such a policy should shock the conscience of every American,” Romney said. “Instead of condoning the policy, Vice President Biden should have condemned it in the strongest possible terms. There can be no defense of a government that engages in compulsory



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sterilization and forced abortions in the name of population control.”

Texas Gov. Rick Perry said “Biden’s refusal to ‘second-guess’ this horrendous policy demonstrates great moral indifference on the part of the Obama Administration.”

House Speaker John Boehner issued an earlier statement in which he said he was “deeply troubled” by Biden’s comments and that the “reprehensible” policy should never be condoned by an American official.

Biden spokeswoman Kendra Barkoff said the vice president was far from condoning the policy, and “strongly opposes all aspects” of it as does the entirety of the Obama administration.

“The Vice President believes such practices are repugnant,” Barkoff said in a statement. “He also pointed out, in China, that the policy is, as a practical matter, unsustainable. He was arguing against the One Child Policy to a Chinese audience.”

China’s one-child policy, announced by Communist Party Chairman Deng Xiaoping in a 1979 speech, was in place nationwide by 1981, according to the [Population Research Institute](#) in Front Royal, Virginia, a non-profit organization opposed to population control. China requires IUDs for women of childbearing age with one child, sterilization for couples with two children (usually performed on the woman), and abortions for women pregnant without authorization. Abortions, sterilizations, and IUD insertions combined were averaging more than 30 million a year by the mid 1980s, according to Chinese government statistics. “Many, if not most, of these procedures were performed on women who submitted only under duress,” PRI president Stephen Mosher said in an article on the organization’s website.

The policy has long been criticized worldwide by a wide range of organizations, on practical as well as moral grounds. As Biden noted in his remarks, the policy has created a shortage of young people working to support retirees. And as the British Broadcasting Company has noted, the policy, “has also been blamed for a gender imbalance, as a traditional preference for boys has persuaded some parents to abort girl fetuses.”

Yet the one-child policy is supported by the United Nations Population Fund. President Reagan and both Presidents Bush eliminated U.S. funding for that program. The funding has been restored under the Obama administration. Considering the Chinese policy is “anti-choice” and has resulted in the routine abortion of female infants out of preference for male children, it may seem strange that feminist organizations have been the strongest supporters of the UN Population Fund that helps support it.

Perhaps their gender pride is not nearly as strong as their ideological devotion to population control — and a controlled population.



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