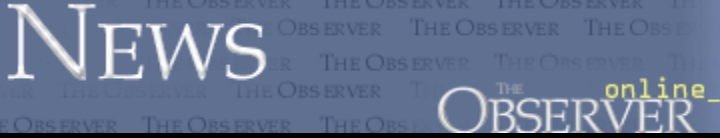


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Lugar to give speech at Commencement

By HELENA PAYNE
Senior Staff Writer

Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind. will address the Class of 2003 as the keynote speaker for the University of Notre Dame's 158th Commencement exercises on May 18.

Lugar, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, is in regular communication with the White House regarding the conflict with war, most recently meeting with President George W. Bush, the 2001 commencement speaker, on Monday.

"At a time when American foreign policy is going in dramatic new directions, we believe his vast experience in the field will be of particular interest to our graduates and their families," Notre Dame President Father Edward Malloy said in a statement released by the University.

Lugar, the senior Indiana senator serving his fifth term, will be the first Indiana politician to deliver the Commencement address since Lt. Gov. Joseph Kernan in 1998.

Lugar joins the ranks of fellow political leaders who have spoken at recent Notre Dame Commencement exercises, such as Bush, United Nations Security General Kofi Annan, National Security Adviser Condeleezza Rice and Sen. Elizabeth Dole.

"[Lugar] was delighted to get the opportunity," said Lugar's deputy press secretary for the Washington, D.C. office, Nick Weber. "Notre Dame is obviously a first-class university and a premier education facility and so an opportunity to speak to its graduates is well received."

Lugar, who is offered many invitations to speak at commencements each year, often talks to graduates about what they will face in the "real world" once they leave college, Weber said. Referring to his experiences in education, agriculture, business and public service, Lugar often relays his view on the state of the world.

Weber said it is probable that he will mention the situation in Iraq, depending on how it develops in the coming months.

"The senator has a spectacular grasp of international relations. ... I'm sure that will come up at some point," Weber said.

Lugar is chairing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for the second time. He was also the chair between 1984 and 1986. Weber said Lugar is dedicated to keeping the committee the most active in Congress. The full committee currently meets between three and five times a week. During Lugar's 27 years, it has tackled the issues of the Korean peninsula, the war on terrorism, embassy security and the foreign operations bill.

"The senator has been involved in a myriad of issues," Weber said.

Lugar plans to speak at other commencement ceremonies this spring, including his alma mater, Denison University in Ohio, where he majored in economics.

The Indiana senator graduated from Denison at the top of his class and attended Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar in the philosophy, politics and economics program.

The senator will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree from the University. It will be his 36th honorary degree.

Lugar and his wife, Charlene Lugar, have four sons, John, Mark, Bob and David. Bob Lugar lives in Indiana and the others live in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

Lugar showed support to Notre Dame in 2000 by speaking on behalf of Father Theodore Hesburgh, University president emeritus, when he received a U.S. Congressional Gold Medal, and in 2001 when he and other Indiana politicians honored the women's basketball team after winning the NCAA tournament.

The 2003 Notre Dame Commencement will begin at 2 p.m. in the Joyce Center May 18.

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