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COMMENCEMENT

# COMMENCEMENT; Harvard President Urges Social Commitment

By FOX BUTTERFIELD,

**CAMBRIDGE, Mass., June 6**— In his final address after 20 years as president of Harvard University, Derek C. Bok delivered a pointed rebuke today to the country's leaders who "stand by idly" in the face of rising poverty, crime and homelessness.

Charging that "an eerie indifference hangs over the land," Mr. Bok said, "Instead of a popular outcry to end the urban violence, the poverty, the homelessness, the hunger of children, the loudest clamor we hear from the public today is 'no new taxes.' "

Mr. Bok, who will step down at the end of this month, spoke in Harvard Yard this afternoon after the university's 340th commencement exercises. Seated on the dais near him was Gov. William F. Weld of Massachusetts, a Republican who has pushed through a series of severe budget cuts to make good on a campaign pledge of no new taxes.

Mr. Weld has been widely criticized for cutting back on spending for education and social services. Adorned in Top Hat

A graduate of the Harvard class of 1966 who was celebrating his 25th reunion today, Mr. Weld was dressed in a top hat, morning coat and striped pants, befitting his status as chief marshal of his Harvard reunion class.

A descendant of one of the founders of Harvard in 1636, Mr. Weld looked on attentively as Mr. Bok decried what he said was a loss of sense of purpose by American universities over the past two decades. Where universities long believed they existed to train the nation's leaders and develop its science, Mr. Bok said, there is now "a buzzing confusion of complaints."

Universities are under attack by the public and the government for rising tuitions, for their financial aid practices, for affirmative action programs and for expanding beyond a traditional curriculum of Western studies, Mr. Bok said.

Mr. Bok told an audience of more than 20,000 students, family members, professors and alumni that the criticism of universities should instead be that their "research on school reform, poverty,

crime and many other social afflictions lags far behind the urgency of these problems for our society."

Harvard and other universities must redefine their "social mission," Mr. Bok said. This is especially true, he said, at a time when "education for humane citizenship is a stunted enterprise, and preparation for teaching and most of the other helping professions suffers from benign neglect."

Mr. Bok shared the platform this afternoon with the former Soviet foreign minister, Eduard A. Shevardnadze, who delivered a short speech calling for a global ban on nuclear weapons tests. Mr. Shevardnadze, who was awarded an honorary degree by Harvard today, said he had become concerned that with the euphoria over the ending of the cold war, "we have become too complacent about the danger of nuclear catastrophe."

At a press conference later, Mr. Shevardnadze said he welcomed President Bush's decision to let Mr. Gorbachev attend a meeting of the Group of Seven Industrialized Nations in London in July to appeal for Western aid to help the ailing Soviet economy. But he said he did not expect any substantive decisions there on Western aid.

Instead, Mr. Shevardnadze said, the Soviet Union must work harder to reform its own economy to make it more attractive for foreign investment.

Mr. Shevardnadze said he was "green with envy" as he listened to a report on fund raising by Harvard alumni this afternoon, particularly that the 25th reunion class alone had contributed more than \$5 million this year.

Among the other honorary degree recipients were the novelist Andrei Sinyavsky, a Russian dissident; the cellist Yo-Yo Ma; the architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable, and Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund.

Harvard awarded 1,550 undergraduate degrees and 3,646 graduate degrees. School of Visual Arts

In T-shirts and sneakers, in glittering dresses -- in just about anything but cap and gown -- the 500 graduates of the School of Visual Arts went through the school's 41st commencement exercises yesterday at Avery Fisher Hall.

A school tradition dictates mufti or evening wear as the fashion for commencement. A slide show of all the graduates, some dressed in even odder outfits, is also shown before the ceremony.

The speaker at the commencement was the actor Eli Wallach.

Photo: Eduard A. Shevardnadze, right, the former Soviet Foreign Minister, being shown how to do a "human wave" by the cellist Yo-Yo Ma at the Harvard University commencement. Mr. Shevardnadze, in a speech to the graduates, called for a global test ban on nuclear weapons. (Associated Press)

