

**U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**Senator Richard G. Lugar**  
**Opening Statement for Hearing on Pakistan**  
**June 25, 2008**

I thank the Chairman for continuing this important series of hearings on Pakistan. It has given Members an opportunity to review the dynamic political and security situation in Pakistan, as well as U.S. policy options and the resources required to pursue them. We have examined a number of critical issues, including the size and purpose of our foreign assistance mechanisms in Pakistan, the terrorist threat emanating from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, and the prospects for democracy and stability. This is our fifth hearing on Pakistan in the last year, and we are better equipped to consider new directions for U.S. policy.

The United States has an intense strategic interest in the events and conditions in Pakistan and the surrounding region. Among other goals, we seek strong cooperation from the Pakistan government in combating terrorist forces, a continued improvement in Indo-Pak relations that maintains peace between these powerful neighbors, the development of Afghanistan as a free and stable country governed by the rule of law, the secure management of Pakistan's nuclear program, and continued economic opportunity and development in the region.

Shortly after the momentous Pakistan general election in February, we held a hearing to discuss the outcome. Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte provided the American public with a sense of the optimism that successful elections often engender. However, he also provided sober comment on the potential for political backsliding and brinkmanship that such situations sometimes reveal. Nonetheless, his testimony reinforced Congressional interest in seizing the historical opportunity for revitalizing our relationship. Inevitably this leads us to ask whether more can be achieved through U.S. assistance programs.

Last December we reviewed the size and purpose of our various assistance mechanisms. Testimony helped Senators better grasp the difficulties our diplomats and development experts encounter in effectively implementing and monitoring U.S. assistance. The discussion also touched on the challenge of effectively modulating our assistance to achieve certain ends. Acting Deputy Administrator of USAID Jim Kunder recounted the impact of the Pressler amendment, which effectively halted U.S. cooperation with Pakistan in 1990. This decision still confounds Pakistanis in discussions today.

Chairman Biden has put forward a proposal for dramatic adjustments to U.S. foreign assistance to Pakistan, which has given our Committee an important model for discussion. We should carefully reconsider both the amounts that we are providing and the goals we are hoping to achieve in Pakistan. Establishing Reconstruction Opportunity Zones in frontier regions, continued investment in important sectors such as education, and efforts to restructure our military assistance to Pakistan, are all steps in the right direction.

The United States should make clear to the people of Pakistan that our interests are focused not on supporting a particular leader or party, but on democracy, pluralism, stability, and the fight against violence and extremism. These are values supported by a large majority of the Pakistani people.

If Pakistan is to break its debilitating cycle of instability, it will need to achieve progress on fighting corruption, delivering government services, and promoting broad based economic growth. The international community and the United States should support reforms and contribute to the strengthening of Pakistani civilian institutions.

I commend Deputy Secretary Negroponte and the Administration for sustaining their commitment to work with the Committee, on a bipartisan basis, to explore ways to improve our assistance to Pakistan. Our Administration panel today reflects that continued cooperation, and I look forward to their testimony as we consider the scope and prospect of substantially increasing long-term economic assistance to Pakistan alongside our continued security assistance.

I welcome all our distinguished witnesses and thank the Chairman.

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