

# Dick Lugar

## U.S. Senator for Indiana

Date: 10/01/2009 • <http://lugar.senate.gov>  
Contact: Andy Fisher • 202-224-2079 • [andy\\_fisher@lugar.senate.gov](mailto:andy_fisher@lugar.senate.gov)

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### Opening Statement for Hearing on Afghanistan's Impact on Pakistan

*U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Republican leader Dick Lugar made the following statement at today's hearing:*

I thank the Chairman for holding this hearing. As our previous hearings have demonstrated, the choices confronting the United States and NATO in Afghanistan and Pakistan are not simple. The threats to U.S. national security in the region are real and profound, but they are also largely indirect. Meanwhile, we know that expanding U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan would proceed during a period of severe economic challenges for our own country. It also would take place at a time of continuing strain on our military forces and amidst questions about alliance cohesion. Given these factors, as we revise our approach to the region, we must avoid trial and error in favor of a comprehensive plan that includes not just military elements, but also makes progress on development, governance, and other factors that directly affect the stability and welfare of these countries.

The United States Congress has taken an important step forward this week by passing the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act. The bill represents a long-overdue investment in diplomacy and development in this region. I look forward to the President's signature on the bill and the productive engagement with Pakistan that it is designed to produce.

As several of our witnesses pointed out last week, the rationale for increasing U.S. commitments in Afghanistan depends heavily on our expectations of how events there might affect stability in Pakistan. Although we should not diminish Afghanistan's strategic, symbolic, or humanitarian importance, it is clear that one of the most important goals of an enlarged American commitment to Afghanistan would be the preservation and potential enhancement of stability in Pakistan.

Pakistan has roughly five times as many people as Afghanistan and possesses nuclear weapons. Its stability has implications throughout the Middle East and South Asia. It also is contending with an al-Qaeda sanctuary, an expanding Islamic insurgency, political uncertainty, and a shaky economy. These circumstances are a threat to Pakistan, the region, and the United States.

With this in mind, we must ask what impact our efforts in Afghanistan have on events in Pakistan. Do aspects of our current military posture in Afghanistan aggravate the situation in Pakistan? Would increasing the intensity of our counterinsurgency activities in Afghanistan benefit stability across the border? Would a government collapse in Afghanistan, coupled with significant advances by the Taliban threaten to destabilize Pakistan?

When the President moves forward, it is essential that he lead public discussion on Afghanistan and Pakistan and begin to put his own stamp on the assessments completed by his experienced advisers. His initial statements in March served only as guideposts. He must now clarify the best advice Secretary Gates and Clinton and their respective institutions have provided to achieve our national security goals in the region. Many questions have arisen surrounding troop levels, civilian force levels, contractor rules, the role of development, to name just a few. Any decision the President makes will be for the long-term and will require significant United States investment in diplomacy, development, and defense. His plan will require broad support in Congress if it is to be sustained and funded.

I believe it is possible to develop a strong consensus on the way forward. Both Senator McCain and then Senator Obama campaigned in the last Presidential election on the importance of a sustained commitment to Afghanistan and Pakistan. The strategic imperative of this region has not diminished, even if events in one or the other country have given us pause to reconsider our approach.

I look forward to our continuing inquiries on this issue and join the Chairman in welcoming our witnesses.

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