

**Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**Senator Richard Lugar**  
**Opening Statement for Hearing on Pakistan**  
**February 28, 2008**

I join Chairman Biden in welcoming our distinguished witness and friend, Deputy Secretary Negroponte.

Pakistan has long been one of the most strategically important nations for the United States. Its efforts against terrorists within its borders, its stewardship of its own nuclear arsenal, and its relations with other nations in the region are critical to global security.

The situation in Pakistan is more positive than many of us had anticipated before the recent election. Although the election campaign and the voting had a number of serious problems, I share the assessment that the outcome at least broadly represents the will of the Pakistani people. The election appears to have restored a rough balance of power in the country, with the party of the late Benazir Bhutto, the Pakistan People's Party, and the party of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, the Pakistan Muslim League, each winning a large number of parliamentary seats. The parties have agreed to join together to form a government. The supporters of President Musharraf did not fare well.

Equally important, the voters in the North West Frontier Province repudiated extremism by voting out the fundamentalist religious parties who came to power in 2002, replacing them with the secular opposition. This is a return to normalcy in that area and, I hope, a sign that Pakistanis will increasingly reject the extremism that poses as much threat to their interests as it does to United States' interests in the region.

These changes provide an opportunity for the United States to recalibrate its policy toward Pakistan. The Bush administration has been criticized in Pakistan, and by some in this country, for focusing its policy too narrowly on President Musharraf, who seized power in a coup, refused to respect democratic institutions and the judiciary, and only very recently resigned his post as the leader of the military. The administration should broaden its scope and engage with the new political actors on stage and reach out to the general public. 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.

Part of our recalibration should involve revisiting the issue of foreign assistance. 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.

More immediately, the United States could demonstrate its regard for the rule of law by encouraging the new government to reverse or rescind the actions against the media and the judiciary that were taken during the state of emergency last year. The United States' previous reluctance to press President Musharraf on these matters has fueled doubts within Pakistan about our commitment to democratic principles.

The Bush administration should engage the two new government parties to continue our cooperation in the fight against terrorism, al-Qaeda, and the Taliban. However, U.S. interests are neither one-dimensional nor short term, and bilateral cooperation must also address economic and social challenges throughout the country. Otherwise, our security goals are unlikely to be reached.

While some in the new Pakistan government may favor new tactics in the battle against al Qaeda, the Taliban, and other extremists, the leaders of both parties appreciate the grave threat that these elements pose to Pakistan's internal security. The United States should work with the parties to achieve agreement on a strategy for fighting extremism and advancing Pakistan's broader national interests. We should make it clear to the people in Pakistan that our interests lay not in supporting a particular leader or party, but in democracy, pluralism, stability, and the fight against violence and extremism. These are values supported by a large majority of the Pakistani people.

Thank you. I look forward to hearing from our witness.

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