

Dick Lugar

U.S. Senator for Indiana

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Opening Statement for Pakistan Hearing

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

I join the Chairman in welcoming Ambassador Holbrooke. We are grateful that he has come today to share his insights on Pakistan and the Kerry-Lugar legislation. The Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009 sustains the objectives outlined in a bill I introduced last year with then Senator Biden. Chairman Kerry and I have listened carefully to those conducting a strategic review of U.S. policy in South Asia, and we have tried to ensure consistency with the President's goals. This hearing gives members an opportunity to review the situation in Pakistan, as well as U.S. policy options and the resources that may be required to achieve them.

The United States has an intense strategic interest in Pakistan and the surrounding region. The U.S. National Intelligence Estimate last year painted a bleak picture of the converging crises in Pakistan. A growing al-Qaeda sanctuary, an expanding Taliban insurgency, political brinksmanship, and a failing economy are intensifying turmoil and violence in that country. These circumstances are a threat to Pakistan, the region, and the United States.

Our legislation is intended to take advantage of the opportunity for revitalizing our relationship through greater diplomatic engagement, as well as a commitment to economic and political development. It calls for significant increases in U.S. and international economic support alongside relevant military assistance linked to Pakistani performance against terrorism. We seek strong cooperation with the Pakistan government, a continued improvement in Indo-Pak relations, the secure management of Pakistan's nuclear program, and the development of Afghanistan as a free and stable country governed by the rule of law.

While our bill envisions sustained economic and political cooperation with Pakistan, it is not a blank check. The bill subjects our security assistance to a certification that the Pakistani government is using the money for its intended purpose, namely, to combat the Taliban and al-Qaeda. The bill also calls for tangible progress in governance, including an independent judiciary, greater accountability by the central government, respect for human rights, and civilian control of the military and the intelligence agencies.

Our bill also contains provisions to help ensure that development funds are spent effectively and efficiently. It stipulates that the Administration must provide Congress with a comprehensive assistance strategy before additional assistance is made available. Once money begins to flow, the Administration must report every six months on how the money is spent and what impact it is having. In addition, the bill provides that before the Administration spends more than half of the \$1.5 billion authorized in any fiscal year, it must certify that the assistance provided to that date is making substantial progress toward the principal objectives contained in the Administration's strategy report. We also have asked the Government Accountability Office to review annually the Administration's progress on stated goals, and we authorize \$20 million each year for audits and program reviews by the Inspectors General of the State Department, USAID, and other relevant agencies.

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.

As I noted when we introduced the Kerry-Lugar bill last week, any U.S. policy related to Pakistan will require the cooperation and active support of both the Executive and Legislative branches of our government. Senator Kerry and I are trying to play a constructive role in facilitating a consensus position between branches that will undergird a rational approach to the region with the best chance of success. With this in mind, it is vital that the Administration's message on Pakistan be clear and consistent. The Administration also must continue to actively consult with Congress on elements of strategy, not just lobby us for funds.

The Administration has conducted some bipartisan outreach on this topic already. I encourage the President to build on this so we have a truly bipartisan consensus as we grapple with the spectrum of security challenges the region presents.

I look forward to working with the Obama Administration and Congressional colleagues on a policy toward Pakistan that builds our relationship with that nation and protects vital U.S. interests.

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