

Lugar introduction of Tim Roemer

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

I am pleased to have the honor to introduce Congressman Tim Roemer, a distinguished fellow Hoosier, to the Committee. I had the opportunity to work productively with Tim on numerous issues during his six terms in Congress representing Indiana's Third Congressional District. He also is no stranger to the Senate, having served on the staff of Senator Dennis DeConcini of Arizona during the 1980s.

Since retiring from the House of Representatives in 2003, he has focused much of his attention on national security affairs as President of the Center for National Policy and as a member of the 9/11 Commission. In the House, he served on the Intelligence Committee and sponsored the bill that created the 9/11 Commission. Since the Commission issued its report in 2004, he has appeared frequently to explain and amplify its conclusions. He also has served on the Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism and the Washington Institute for Near East Policy's Presidential Task Force on Combating the Ideology of Radical Extremism.

Congressman Roemer's national security experience will be put to excellent use as Ambassador to India. In 2008, the United States and India concluded the landmark U.S.-India Peaceful Nuclear Cooperation Agreement. It was one of the most important strategic diplomatic initiatives undertaken by the United States in the last decade. With this pact, our country embraced a policy based on the premise that the national security and economic future of the United States would be enhanced by a strong and enduring partnership with India. Although the agreement has been concluded, its success will depend greatly on the diplomatic work overseen by our next ambassador.

Tim also brings to the job an understanding of how the economic welfare of the United States will be affected by what happens overseas, particularly in relation to rapidly developing economies like India. The United States is India's largest trade and investment partner, with \$17.7 billion in exports in 2008. Managing and expanding this engagement will be important as we attempt to work our way out of the current global recession. Many parts of our home state of Indiana have suffered heavy job losses. The Elkhart-Goshen metro area in the Third District, for example, has a 17.5 percent unemployment rate according the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Tim's Congressional experience and familiarity with the composition and needs of local economies stressed by the global downturn will be advantageous as he seeks to generate economic opportunities in India for American businesses and their employees.

The United States and India have common democratic values and the potential for limitless economic engagement. The progress made by India in the last decade is one of the world's major success stories. With a well-educated middle class that is larger than the entire U.S. population, India can be an anchor of stability in Asia. It is also extremely important to efforts to address global energy security, food security, and climate change. I share the President's confidence in Tim Roemer to lead our diplomatic efforts in India at this formative moment in history.

I would also take this opportunity to note that I have had the opportunity to work with our other two nominees, Mr. Gordon Gray and Mr. Richard Schmierer, who have been appointed ambassadors to Tunisia and Oman. Both have impressive credentials as career members of the Foreign Service, including recent tours at our Embassy in Iraq.

Mr. Schmierer was my escort officer on a 1983 visit that I made to Germany. Since then, he has gone on to many impressive achievements in the Foreign Service. His experiences have prepared him well to lead our mission in Muscat and work with our friends, the Omanis, with whom we have had a diplomatic relationship since the nineteenth century.

I had the opportunity to spend four days with Mr. Gray in 2005 when we were part of the same Presidential Mission to Algeria, Morocco, and Libya. On that occasion we oversaw the release of the last 404 Moroccan prisoners of war held by the Polisario Front. This was the culmination of a great deal of creative U.S. diplomacy. We also had the opportunity to engage Libyan leaders, including Muammar Qaddafi, during an early period in the process of establishing full diplomatic relations between our countries. I benefitted greatly from the expertise and diplomatic skill exhibited by Mr. Gray during that mission.

I congratulate all the nominees and their families on their appointments and look forward to our discussion.

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