

Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
Chairman Richard G. Lugar
Opening Statement for Hearing on
Stabilization and Reconstruction: Building Peace in a Hostile Environment
June 16, 2005

The Foreign Relations Committee meets today to continue our examination of how the United States can improve its capacity to undertake stabilization and reconstruction missions abroad. Over the years, we have observed our government cobble together plans, people and projects to respond to post-conflict situations in the Balkans, in Afghanistan, in Iraq, and elsewhere. The efforts of those engaged have been valiant, but these emergencies have been complex and time sensitive. Our ad hoc approach has been inadequate to deliver the necessary capabilities to deal speedily and efficiently with complex emergencies.

In an age of terrorism, it is especially important that we be prepared to undertake these missions, because we have seen how terrorists can exploit nations afflicted by lawlessness and desperate circumstances. They seek out such places to establish training camps, recruit new members, and tap into a global black market in weapons technology.

In 2003, this Committee organized a distinguished Policy Advisory Group made up of government officials and outside experts to give Members advice on how to strengthen our ability to plan and implement these post conflict missions. After much study, it was clear that we needed a well organized and strongly lead civilian partner to work with the military in complex emergencies. It was our judgment that the State Department was best positioned to lead this effort.

As a result of our deliberations, I introduced with Senators Biden and Hagel the Stabilization and Reconstruction Civilian Management Act of 2004, and this Committee passed it unanimously. That bill is included, with some modifications, as Title VII in S. 600, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act of 2006 and 2007, which is now on the Senate calendar. The bill puts the State Department at the center of the civilian reconstruction and stabilization effort, while coordination between State and Defense would continue at the NSC level.

The Executive Branch already has moved to implement elements of our bill. Indeed, an Office of Reconstruction and Stabilization was organized at the State Department last July. The new Office is conducting a government-wide inventory of the civilian assets that might be available for stabilization and reconstruction tasks. It also is pursuing an idea proposed in our bill of a rapid response corps to greatly reduce the time required to mobilize post-conflict stabilization personnel. It will work closely with the Secretary of State to assist in the coordination of policy and in developing cooperative arrangements with foreign countries and non-governmental organizations. President Bush said last month that this new State Department office would be dedicated to “helping the world’s newest democracies make the transition to peace, freedom, and a market economy.”

I am hopeful that the Office will develop the concept of a 250-person active duty corps that is contained in the legislation. In Army terms, that is less than a small battalion of well-trained people -- a modest but vigorous force-multiplier that would greatly improve our nation's stabilization capacity. This corps of civilians could be composed of State Department and USAID employees as well as former military personnel who have the experience and technical skills to manage stabilization and reconstruction tasks in a hostile environment.

At her confirmation hearings earlier this year, Secretary Rice expressed enthusiastic support for enhancing standing civilian capacity to respond to post conflict situations. In answer to one of my questions, she said: "Creating a strong U.S. Government stabilization and reconstruction capacity is an Administration national security priority." She asserted that "experience has shown that we must have the capacity to manage two to three stabilization and reconstruction operations concurrently. That means [we need] staff in Washington and in the field to manage and deliver quality programs."

Secretary Rice is working to make the State Department an effective inter-agency leader in post-conflict operations. I consider this new mission to be one of the most important long-term defenses that the State Department can mount against future acts of terrorism.

We are pleased to welcome a panel of experienced and distinguished witnesses. Ambassador Carlos Pascual is testifying before the Committee for the first time in his new job as State Department Coordinator for Reconstruction and Development. He has stayed in close contact with our Committee during his tenure, and we appreciate his willingness to exchange ideas and brief us on plans. Mr. James Kunder is USAID's Assistant Administrator for Asia and the Near East. In addition to his work at USAID, he was a valuable participant in the Committee's Policy Advisory Group process, which examined stabilization and reconstruction issues two years ago. Also joining us are Mr. Ryan Henry, the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and Lieutenant General Walter Sharp, Director of Strategic Plans and Policy for the Joint Staff. Any discussion of how we should organize the building of peace in a hostile environment must take account of Defense Department expertise and insight.

We are grateful to our witnesses, and we look forward to an enlightening discussion.

###