

Hearing on the Stabilization and Reconstruction
Civilian Management Act
Opening Statement
Senator Richard G. Lugar
March 3, 2004

Over the past decade the United States has undertaken a series of post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction operations that have been critical to U.S. national security. In the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq, the United States has cobbled together plans, people, and resources with the Defense Department in the lead.

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.

Last week, Senator Biden and I introduced S. 2127 -- the Stabilization and Reconstruction Civilian Management Act. The purpose of this bill is to establish a more robust civilian capability to respond quickly and effectively to post-conflict situations or other complex emergencies.

International crises are inevitable, and in most cases, U.S. national security interests will be threatened by sustained instability. The war on terrorism necessitates that we not leave nations crumbling and ungoverned. Our tolerance for failed states has been reduced by a global war against terrorists. We have already 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 this international atmosphere, the United States must have the right structures, personnel, and resources in place when an emergency occurs. A delay in our response of a few weeks, or even days, can mean the difference between success and failure. As a nation, we have accepted the stabilization and reconstruction missions in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq, but we need to go a step further and create structures that can plan and execute strategies to deal with future emergencies.

While recognizing the critical challenges that our military has undertaken with skill and courage, we must acknowledge that certain non-security missions would have been better served by a civilian response. Our post-conflict efforts frequently have had a higher than necessary military profile. This is not the result of a Pentagon power grab or institutional fights. Rather, the military has led post-conflict operations primarily because it is the only agency capable of mobilizing sufficient personnel and resources for these tasks. As a consequence, military resources have been stretched and deployments of military personnel have been extended beyond expectations. If we can improve the capabilities of the civilian agencies, they can take over many of the non-security missions that have burdened the military.

The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations embarked on a bipartisan experiment beginning

in late 2003, assembling an impressive array of experts from inside and outside of government to provide advice on how best to achieve this goal. This “Policy Advisory Group” held extensive discussions in which Senators, group members, and invited experts spoke frankly about their ideas to improve the U.S. response to post-conflict reconstruction problems and complex emergencies. The bill that Senator Biden and I have introduced draws heavily on these discussions. I believe that we need structural change, accomplished through legislation, to guarantee improvements in our capabilities.

Although Senator Biden and I have tried to incorporate into the bill as many of the insights of the group as possible, we recognize that not every participant will agree with every provision in the bill. This is not surprising given that one of our goals in constructing the group was guaranteeing a diverse set of perspectives. Nevertheless, there were several consensus themes that developed from the group’s discussion:

- The civilian foreign affairs agencies should be better organized for overseas crisis response, and the Secretary of State should play a lead role in this effort.

- There should be improved standing capacity within the civilian agencies to respond to complex emergencies and to work in potentially hostile environments.

- The agencies must be capable and flexible enough to provide a robust partner to the military when necessary or to lead a crisis response effort when appropriate.

- The rapid mobilization of resources must be shared by the civilian agencies and the military. While the need to ensure security will continue to fall on the shoulders of the military, the post-conflict demands on the armed services would be reduced by more effectively tapping civilian expertise.

During this process, the Bush Administration was extremely helpful. Officials from the State Department, the Defense Department, the NSC, and USAID attended as guests of the group and participated in their private capacities. The participation of these officials does not constitute an official endorsement of this bill by their employing agencies, but the final product was greatly improved by their collective experience and wisdom.

Our bill urges the President to create a Stabilization and Reconstruction Coordinating Committee to be chaired by the National Security Advisor. This Coordinating Committee would ensure appropriate interagency planning and execution of stabilization and reconstruction efforts. The Coordinating Committee would have representation from the Department of State, USAID, and the Departments of Commerce, Justice, Treasury, Agriculture, and Defense and other agencies as appropriate.

Our bill would authorize the creation of an office within the State Department to coordinate the civilian component of stabilization and reconstruction missions. The Office would be headed by a Coordinator who is appointed by the President and reports directly to the Secretary of State.

Our bill also would authorize the Secretary of State to establish a Response Readiness Corps with both active duty and reserve components available to be called upon at a moments notice to respond to emerging international crises. The reserves would include federal government officials from the non-foreign affairs agencies who have volunteered to participate and members recruited from the private sector based on their applicable skills.

Finally, our bill urges the Foreign Service Institute to work with the National Defense University and the United States Army War College to establish a training curriculum for civilian and military personnel that would enhance their stabilization and reconstruction skills and improve their coordination in the field.

Our intent is not to critique past practices, but rather to improve our stabilization and reconstruction capacity for the future. We recognize that S. 2127 does not address many facets of this issue that fall under the jurisdiction of the military and the Armed Services Committee. I know that my colleagues on that committee have thought about many of these issues, and they may recommend additional steps.

Today, we welcome as witnesses three key participants in our Policy Advisory Group process. Ambassador James Dobbins is Director of the International Security and Defense Policy Center of the RAND Corporation; Dr. John Hamre is President and CEO of the Center for Strategic and International Studies; and Dr. Hans Binnendijk is the Theodore Roosevelt Chair and the Director of the Center for Technology and National Security Policy at the National Defense University. All three have played leadership roles in research studies by their organizations on ways to improve U.S. capacity in the area of stabilization and reconstruction.

The inevitable post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction demands of future crises will require a formidable capacity to respond to challenges -- both military and diplomatic. It is crucial to our success that the necessary resources and plans be put in place now.

We look forward to the insights of our witnesses and this opportunity to discuss S. 2127 with them.

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