

**U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard Lugar**  
**Opening Statement for Hearing on Repercussions of Iraq Stabilization**  
**and Reconstruction Policies**  
**June 12, 2003**

This is the third in a series of hearings on post-conflict Iraq. During our first two hearings, Administration witnesses identified the needs and problems in re-building Iraq and outlined the Administration's responses. Those hearings gave the American public and Congress insight into complex decisions involved in formulating U.S. policies in post-conflict Iraq.

Today, the Foreign Relations Committee will hear from expert witnesses from outside the Bush Administration. We welcome Ambassador Peter Galbraith, from the National Defense University, Dr. Geoffrey Kemp, Director of Regional Strategic Programs at the Nixon Center, and Ambassador Frank G. Wisner, a co-chair of the Council on Foreign Relations Task Force, which recently published the Report: "Iraq: The Day After."

Each of these experts has a wealth of experience and knowledge on Iraq, the Middle East region, and U.S. foreign policy. We have asked them to examine U.S. policy and plans in Iraq from three perspectives:

First, how should the United States deal with domestic issues in Iraq and in other Middle Eastern countries? In particular, how can we promote the prospects for democracy, stability, and economic reform?

Second, what are the repercussions of U.S. policies in Iraq on regional political and economic issues, on traditional regional alignments, and on the evolving Middle East Peace process?

Finally, what is the likely impact of our policies in Iraq on broader foreign policy concerns, including the war on terrorism; non-proliferation efforts; and our relations with the United Nations, NATO allies, and other nations?

The ramifications of U.S. policies in Iraq go far beyond the Iraqi people or Iraqi territory. Nations throughout the Middle East, including regimes that have supported terrorists, are assessing how U.S. and Coalition reconstruction of Iraq will affect their own interests. An American presence in Iraq that is devoted to achieving democracy and a healthy economy puts enormous pressure on states in the region to undertake reform. It improves our ability to encourage the transformation of repressive countries such as Iran and Syria and to promote the liberation of minorities across the Middle East. The achievement of democracy and a sound economy in Iraq could dispel growing anti-Americanism and dampen Islamic extremism and terrorism. It could raise expectations in the region for general economic growth, personal freedom, and women's rights. By improving U.S. credibility and underscoring the benefits of participation in the global community, success in Iraq could also provide added impetus for a permanent diplomatic resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

But these opportunities will not be realized if we fail in Iraq. In the worst case, an ineffective or unsuccessful reconstruction effort in Iraq could lead to sustained civil unrest or even open civil war between ethnic or religious factions. In that event, Middle East states might become more repressive and entrenched, their populations more divided and extremist. Anti-American sentiments, already festering, could spread, leading to an increased threat of terrorism.

As we work to reconstruct Iraq, we must prepare for unintended consequences of our efforts. If U.S. policies inspire more agitation for democracy in Iran, for instance, a crackdown by the mullahs might ensue. In Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, while reformers may be strengthened, existing divisions may be intensified, leading to instability in countries that have long been friends of the United States. These states already face demographic pressures, stagnant economic growth, uncertain political succession, and smoldering regional disputes, which threaten to undercut stability. None of this should dissuade us from pursuing the most aggressive and effective reconstruction and reform agenda possible in Iraq, but we must be flexible enough to deal with problems and consequences throughout the region.

Achieving ambitious goals in Iraq and the Middle East will require that we act with both patience and a sense of urgency. We must understand that our prospects for success depend greatly on what we do for the next several months. Right now, we are at a critical stage in Iraqi reconstruction, and no expense should be spared to show signs of progress and to demonstrate our commitment. But we also must keep in mind Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz's admonition to avoid unrealistic expectations. Success may not be instant, and we have to be prepared to stay in Iraq as long as necessary to win the peace. If the international community knows that the United States will not run out of patience in Iraq, we will find it easier to generate contributions that reduce our burdens and to gain support for our diplomatic initiatives.

The military victory in Iraq has presented us with a once-in-a-generation opportunity to help remold the Middle East. We must speak frequently to the American people about the costs and benefits of seizing this opportunity. Historically, Americans have been anxious to disengage from postwar commitments. This impulse is understandable, but in the case of Iraq we do not have the luxury of disengaging after the battles have been fought. It would be irresponsible -- and contrary to our own national security interests -- to walk away from Iraq before it becomes a dependable member of the world community. We would provide an incubator for terrorist cells and activity.

The American people know this. A recent poll by the Program on International Policy Attitudes found that an overwhelming 86 percent said the United States has "the responsibility to remain in Iraq as long as necessary until there is a stable government," and nearly as many, 73 percent, said that pulling out prematurely "would be unwise and immoral." As leaders, the President and Congress must make the case for why we are risking American lives and spending American resources in Iraq. We may spar over particular policy decisions, but we must not let partisanship or inattention undermine the basic U.S. commitment to rebuilding and democratizing Iraq.

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