

Dick Lugar

U.S. Senator for Indiana

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Lugar Says U.S. Post Conflict Stabilization and Reconstruction Efforts Strengthened

U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Dick Lugar applauded the Presidential directive announced today by President Bush that places the Secretary of State in charge of U.S. Government stabilization and reconstruction missions abroad. Lugar long has supported efforts to improve U.S. capacity to undertake stabilization and reconstruction missions in countries that have been torn apart by war or internal conflict.

The Presidential directive establishes that the Secretary of State will coordinate and lead integrated efforts involving all U.S. Departments and Agencies with relevant capabilities to prepare, plan for and conduct stabilization and reconstruction activities in foreign states and regions at risk of, or in transition from, conflict or civil strife.

“The President’s decision will strengthen America’s ability to respond quickly and effectively to post-conflict situations or other complex emergencies,” said Lugar. “The war on terrorism necessitates that we not leave nations crumbling and ungoverned. We already have seen how terrorists can exploit nations afflicted by lawlessness and desperate circumstances. In this international atmosphere, the United States must have the proper 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.”

“Over the years, we have observed our government cobble together plans, people and projects to respond to post-conflict situations in the Balkans, Afghanistan, 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,” Lugar added.

Lugar first introduced legislation in 2004 to establish the Coordinator of Reconstruction and Stabilization at the State Department and continues to recommend that the President and State Department create a Response Corps, as called for in his proposed legislation. Lugar recommends that the Response Corp contain an active duty component of some 250 people experienced in post-war reconstruction and that a reserve component should be drawn from state and local governments, the private sector and the Federal government.

Under Lugar’s chairmanship in 2003, the Foreign Relations Committee organized a Policy Advisory Group of government officials and outside experts to give Members advice on how to strengthen the ability to plan and implement post conflict missions. After much study, it was clear a well-organized and strongly led civilian partner was needed to work with the military in complex emergencies. It was the Committee’s judgment that the State Department was best positioned to lead this effort.

The Executive Branch first moved to implement elements of Lugar’s bill in July 2004 by creating a new Office of Stabilization and Reconstruction headed by a Coordinator reporting directly to the Secretary of State.

The Foreign Relations Committee continued its examination of U.S. stabilization efforts and reconstruction at a hearing in June 2005.

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