

**Senate Foreign Relations Committee**  
**Chairman Richard Lugar**  
**Opening Statement for Hearing on**  
**PAKISTAN AND INDIA: STEPS TOWARD RAPPROCHMENT**  
**January 28, 2004**

The Committee is pleased to welcome back Ambassador Frank Wisner, Executive Vice President for External Relations of the AIG Insurance Group and a former Ambassador to India. Ambassador Wisner recently co-chaired an Independent Task Force sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations and the Asia Society, which produced a comprehensive study: “New Priorities in South Asia: U.S. Policy Toward India, Pakistan and Afghanistan.” Ambassador, we look forward to learning more about this study.

We also welcome Dr. Stephen Cohen, a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, and Mr. Michael Krepon, founding President of the Henry L. Stimson Center and Project Director for the Center’s South Asia program. Each has made substantial contributions to U.S. foreign policy and analysis of South Asia. The Committee is delighted to draw on the expertise of our three distinguished witnesses as we consider the prospects for rapprochement between India and Pakistan.

This hearing comes at a hopeful time in India-Pakistan relations. Pakistan’s President Musharraf and India’s Prime Minister Vajpayee agreed earlier this month to open a dialogue on all of the bilateral issues between their countries. At the recent South Asian Regional Cooperation Summit, they also moved forward, along with their neighbors, on an important regional free trade agreement and signed a protocol on fighting terrorism.

Only Pakistan and India can resolve the issues between them. Yet, it is more important than ever that the United States sustain active engagement in South Asia to encourage continuation of this positive momentum. We have seen opportunities for peace squandered in South Asia in recent years. To ensure success, it is crucial that both parties prevent extremists from disrupting the process.

Stability in this troubled region is vital to U.S. national interests, both because an Indo-Pakistani conflict could escalate into nuclear war and because of the potential nexus between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. Hostility between India and Pakistan boosts Islamic extremists in the region, and provides them fertile ground for terrorist recruitment. Greater instability also means that nuclear weapons could fall into the wrong hands. A stable South Asia in which Pakistan and India engage each other will eventually weaken the extremists. It will allow both countries to focus more time, energy, and resources on building better lives for their people.

U.S. diplomacy in South Asia has already paid off by helping to avert a possible nuclear war in 2002. India and Pakistan have taken positive steps since that time, including resumption of transport links, restoration of diplomatic ties, and implementation of a ceasefire along the Line of Control. They also have agreed to start technical level talks on re-launching bus service between the capitals of the two portions of Kashmir, which would allow families to reunite for the first time in decades.

Despite this promising atmosphere, normalization will take time and will require both sides to make difficult political decisions on matters of long-standing dispute. We have seen hopeful examples already. President Musharraf has said that Islamabad is willing to consider giving up its traditional demand for a plebiscite to resolve the status of Kashmir, as long as India is willing to show reciprocal flexibility. For his part, Prime Minister Vajpayee has conceded that India is willing to discuss all the issues relating to Kashmir.

The two leaders deserve praise for these bold moves. But we must recognize that they also face the opposition of entrenched interests and hawks in their own countries who will try to undermine or complicate these diplomatic openings. Twice in December, President Musharraf was the target of assassination attempts.

The United States can contribute to the easing of tensions and advance its own national security interests by exploring ways to assist both sides with nuclear security. As Ambassador Wisner's Independent Task Force report recommends, we should seek new ways to bring India and Pakistan into the global nonproliferation system. We should encourage Indo-Pakistani nuclear discussions and confidence building measures and the Administration's recent expansion of our non-proliferation dialogues with each side. The United States has considerable expertise in nuclear threat reduction. We should use this, consistent with our international obligations, to facilitate exchanges between Pakistani and Indian security experts and offer them assistance on tightening export controls and border security, and the protection, control and accounting of nuclear stockpiles and arsenals.

The U.S. must remain vigilant, especially in light of recent reports that Pakistani scientists, with or without government approval, may have supplied Iran, Libya, and North Korea with nuclear technology and materials. Pakistan must demonstrate, through deeds not words, that it is serious about its commitment to preventing weapons proliferation and its ability to secure its nuclear weapons. As President Bush goes forward with discussions about the \$3 billion in aid proposed for Pakistan, Congress should be fully cognizant of Pakistan's actions in this area.

India also must do its part. Indo-U.S. relations have made remarkable strides in the past four years, as shown this month by the United States' unprecedented offer on high-tech cooperation, including nuclear energy and missile defense. We should make clear to New Delhi that such progress can continue only if it works to ease tensions in Kashmir and build confidence among the Muslims there.

India and Pakistan have often seemed far away. But problems that start on the Subcontinent can have serious consequences for the United States. The stakes in South Asia have become too high to risk a return to military confrontation or creation of new sources of Islamic extremism.

We look forward to hearing our witnesses' recommendations for advancing U.S. national security interests in this important region.

###