

**Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**Senator Richard G. Lugar**  
**Opening Statement**  
**Hearing on the Current Situation in Iraq**  
**January 10, 2007**

I thank Senator Biden for holding this important hearing and for assembling such an excellent panel.

I would offer a special greeting to Dr. Phebe Marr, who has been a tremendous resource for the Committee and for me personally. She testified at four different Iraq hearings during my recent chairmanship and also appeared at the hearings held under Senator Biden in August 2002. Dr. Marr's calm and authoritative analysis on Iraq is grounded in a prodigious understanding of that country and a non-partisan outlook that is badly needed in this debate.

Dr. Michael O'Hanlon has also provided excellent testimony before our Committee in recent years. In 2005 and 2006, I wrote a series of fifteen "Dear Colleague" letters on Iraq to all Senators. These letters introduced reports and documents that I found to be particularly illuminating. The Brookings Institution's "Iraq Index," a report overseen by Dr. O'Hanlon, accompanied the first letter that I sent. It provides a remarkably detailed view of the economic and security situation in Iraq. The Iraq Index is updated regularly, and I continue to recommend it to any member of Congress or citizen who wants a thoughtful grounding in the facts.

I also welcome Mr. Said and Dr. Pillar, who are testifying before this Committee for the first time. We are grateful to have them as new resources at this critical time.

Tonight, President Bush will give a speech outlining his intended course in Iraq. In recent days, I have had opportunities to talk to the President about Iraq. Among other points, I underscored the need for a thorough effort to involve Congress in the decision-making process. U.S. policy in Iraq would benefit greatly from meaningful Executive Branch consultations with legislators and from careful study by Members of Congress that is directed at dispassionately evaluating the President's plan and other options. Members of this Committee and the entire Congress must be prepared to make reasoned judgments about what the President is proposing.

Initially, the President and his team need to explain what objectives we are trying to achieve if forces are expanded, where and how they will be used, why such a strategy will succeed, how Iraqi forces will be involved, how long additional troops may be needed, what contingencies are in place if the situation does not improve, and how this strategy fits into our discussions throughout the region.

The American media is understandably focused on the possibility of a troop surge in Iraq. But whatever may be the final conclusion on this point, relative success or failure is likely to hinge on many other factors and decisions. The complexity of the Iraq situation demands more of us than partisan sound bites or preconceived judgments. With this in mind, this hearing setting the terms of reference for what is happening in Iraq is particularly timely.

I look forward to the insights of our distinguished panel and to working with Chairman Biden and all members of this Committee as we continue our inquiry in the coming weeks.

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