

Rep. Tauscher Gives Remarks to the Council on Foreign Relations

Council on
Foreign Relations

Remarks

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Thank you Dr. Larrabee, I'm sure you are as happy as I am to be back, and hopefully you are as optimistic as I am about what we accomplished in Bucharest.

It will take experts and scholars like you working hand-in-hand with governments to ensure we achieve the highest levels of security for the United States and our allies.

I am proud to join such a well-informed group today and to participate as a new member of the Council on Foreign Relations family.

As Stephen mentioned, I was in Bucharest during the summit and delivered the keynote address to the German Marshall Fund's conference.

I was fortunate to discuss the challenges affecting NATO with a range of participants including the President and Prime Minister of Romania as well as officials from several NATO countries.

In Bucharest I outlined several steps the alliance must take.

First, NATO member parliaments must work more closely with their governments and with each other.

As the chairman of both the Strategic Forces Subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee in the House of Representatives and of the Sub-Committee on Future Security and Defense Capabilities of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, I understand how vital it is that the parliaments that fund, oversee, and approve

budgets and policies be actively involved at the front end of evolving NATO policy.

On issues like support for the Third Site -- where the Czech and Polish populations are divided over the threat and the means to meet it -- or Afghanistan where national caveats are hindering success -- parliaments have been insufficiently engaged.

Second, Europeans must do more to invest in capabilities and the skill sets needed to fight future wars.

As we expand to additional countries NATO must maintain ready forces instead of squabbling over platforms and missions.

Third -- to remain relevant -- NATO must clearly demonstrate its commitment and capability to handle out of area missions.

To do so NATO must take three major steps:

Help successfully stabilize Afghanistan;

Clearly emphasize its role as a primarily war fighting organization;

And generate a new strategic vision that unifies its membership.

In Bucharest I called for NATO allies to commit at least seven thousand more combat troops to secure the East and South of Afghanistan.

The United Nations took an important step by naming Ambassador Kai Eide (KAI IDAH) of Norway as the new Special Representative in Afghanistan.

The next step I recommended is to appoint an Afghan leader to coordinate development inside the country.

NATO must assert its role as the premiere defense alliance that will use force if needed against twenty first century threats.

To start strengthening our collective defense NATO needs to clarify its relationship with other organizations such as the European Union.

As our mission in new parts of the world expands -- NATO must decide what is our responsibility versus the E.U.

I also stressed the importance of NATO embracing the Third Site as an element of European missile defense.

Among its benefits, NATOizing the missile defense system proposal would advance the important pillar of indivisibility of the alliance.

I urged the alliance to commit more significantly to defeating the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction.

The protection, dismantlement and disposition of Russian WMD has been an area where the United States has found some support -- although it has not always been easy.

As our non-proliferation focus broadens beyond the former Soviet Union the Alliance will have opportunities to partner with the international community in a global effort to reduce proliferation risks.

As a first step I urged NATO and the United States to work together on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in 2010.

NATO must also support US efforts to negotiate with Russia and create a legally binding replacement to the START Treaty scheduled to expire at the end of 2009.

This could help further allay Russian concerns that the United States is seeking a strategic advantage over Russia.

In addition to missions and capabilities -- NATO's immediate political goal should be to broaden its engagement from the Balkans through Eurasia to Azerbaijan.

I called on NATO to invite Croatia, Albania, and Macedonia to join as full members of NATO and to encourage them to keep up the political, military and economic progress they have made in the Membership Action Plan process.

I also stated that we should send a strong signal that NATO believes Georgia and Ukraine are orienting themselves toward the West and should begin the MAP process.

Looking Eastward, I told them that NATO should work with the European Union to reach out to Eurasia.

The investment will be worth it if that part of the world has a stake in the global community and are committed to peace and prosperity.

Stability in this new frontier is in all of our interests.

If NATO is seen as an Alliance with a collective defense indispensable to the security of its allies, then NATO will be seen as a strong alternative to instability, ethnic conflict and fundamentalism for countries that are struggling in more volatile parts of the world.

NATO had a range of challenges before Bucharest and showed a mixed ability to answer all of them.

There were some areas of progress and some areas which I will call place-holders for

issues that were identified but not addressed.

Bucharest
moved the ball a few yards forward on Afghanistan.

It
is worth noting that NATO is stepping up its contributions:

France
will send an additional seven hundred combat troops to eastern Afghanistan
allowing some US troops to move to the south, easing the burden on Canadian
troops.

The
Czech Republic will send an additional one hundred and fifty troops.

The
British were to announce a larger commitment, but did not because they are
keeping troops on rotation in Basra due to recent flare-ups.

At
some point in the near future the Georgians will send an unannounced number of
combat troops.

On
the other hand, I am disappointed that there was an insufficient link drawn between
the destructive role of Pakistan's tribal area and stability in Afghanistan.

The
statement on Afghanistan calls for deepening relations with Pakistan but makes
no mention of the steady flow of weapons and fighters from Pakistan.

Clearly
we cannot win in Afghanistan by only focusing on Afghanistan without demanding
accountability from its neighbors.

As
our NATO allies take more significant steps to stabilize Afghanistan it is time
for the Bush administration to make Afghanistan a greater priority.

It
is hard to extract greater support from our allies when we are insufficiently

focused on Afghanistan.

Today
we spend a fraction in Afghanistan of what we do in Iraq.

I
am pleased that several of my colleagues in congress are looking into my idea
of separating out the funding for the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts in two
different supplemental funding bills.

Concerning
expansion, the Bucharest conference was a mixed bag.

Inviting
Albania and Croatia to join -- while not significant militarily or economically
-- was a smart move for geostrategic reasons.

Both
countries will help anchor what is the remaining unstable region in Europe and
ensure that the Balkans do not once more descend into bloodshed.

The
failure to invite Macedonia to join NATO was not only an admission that NATO
has a significant challenge in articulating a coherent perspective, but showed
that we will need to find ways to reach consensus with our growing membership.

The
summit's inability to extend MAP to Ukraine and Georgia was an unfortunate
outcome.

I
am pleased that the Alliance officially agreed that "these countries will become members of NATO."

I
am more concerned about the motivations of the French and Germans who claimed
that both countries were not ready for the MAP program.

They
may have been more concerned about Russian displeasure about NATO encroachment
and Russia's energy blackmail against the West.

Addressing
the challenges posed by Ukraine and Georgia's possible candidacies will require

a Democratic president to focus the alliance on energy security and to generally stiffen the spine of some of its members.

The decision to deepen NATO's relationship with Bosnia and Montenegro and to explore further cooperation with Serbia are important placeholders pending further bold action toward greater integration of the Balkans within the Euro-Atlantic community.

Regarding the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe -- the Alliance expressed its concerns that Russia does not seem to have any plan to rejoin the treaty.

This is an issue that will have to be negotiated between the US and the Medvedev administration and unlikely to be resolved by NATO.

On the Third Site the Bucharest summit yielded very little progress.

I am pleased that it acknowledged the need for integrating the long range systems with future NATO-wide missile defense architecture.

We have come a long way from the mistakes of the Bush administration but further progress can be achieved by a Democratic administration.

The benefits of a coherent and cooperative approach to the threat of ballistic missiles between the United States and Europe are clear. What specific shape that cooperation takes under the next administration is yet to be determined.

Bucharest was an important milepost before the even more significant landmark sixtieth anniversary of NATO.

Next year we will face even greater existential questions.

And we must answer them more firmly than at Bucharest.

