

Tauscher on Proposed U.S - Poland Missile Defense Pact

Washington DC - In response to news that The U.S. and Poland reached a deal on Thursday to place an American missile defense base on Polish territory, Rep. Ellen Tauscher, Chairman of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, released the following statement.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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"Russian military aggression against any of our allies justly causes great concern, and should be seen as a threat to stability in the region. But we must be careful not to confuse our response to this provocation with our efforts to establish a cooperative U.S. - NATO missile defense architecture.

The missile defense interceptors that would be located in Poland are not designed to protect against Russian missile threats, but a long-range threat from Iran that has not yet emerged. The U.S. has properly characterized Russia's belligerent rhetoric about the proposed deployment - which would create no discernable threat to Russian capabilities --- as misguided. Any linking now of the proposed interceptors with recent Russian actions will only undermine months and months of U.S. assurances that there is no relationship.

I am also concerned that the agreement announced yesterday appears to give Poland a security relationship over and above what Poland currently enjoys as a member of NATO with the existing Article Five responsibilities among all members. The U.S. commitment to our NATO allies via Article Five is as serious a commitment as our nation

makes. We need to be sure the proposed agreement with Poland does not imply that there is something better than our Article Five commitment; devaluing our commitments to other NATO allies."

I take our commitment to NATO Article Five very seriously, and I am concerned that expediting this agreement, if it is understood as a reaction to Russian actions - could serve to ratify suspicions about our and NATO's commitment to Article Five."

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