

Tauscher on Finalized U.S. - Polish Missile Defense Pact

Washington, DC –Rep.

Ellen O. Tauscher, Chairman of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, reacted today to the news that Secretary Rice had signed an agreement on the Missile Defense Third Site with the Polish government:

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Ellen O. Tauscher, Chairman of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, reacted today to the news that Secretary Rice had signed an agreement on the Missile Defense Third Site with the Polish government:

"While further details of the agreement remain to be worked out, I am pleased that it will provide Poland with capabilities to defend against a short range missile threat. I have continually urged the Bush administration to work with our allies to address existing short range threats. This is a step in the right direction toward enhancing the defenses of a NATO ally and further investing in NATO's Active Layered Ballistic Missile Defense. I take our commitment to NATO's Article Five very seriously, and it is in this vein that we should be delivering Poland the systems they need to protect against very real short range missile threats. The United States and our allies are stronger when we invest in NATO, not when creating relationships outside of the Alliance.

Signing this agreement is only one of several steps before actual deployment of the long range interceptor system in Poland. I remain deeply committed to Congress' bipartisan approach and have faith in existing law requiring an independent assessment of any proposed deployment of long range missile defense interceptors or associated radars in Europe.

Congress will continue to insist

that that we have both independent analysis of missile defense options in Europe and that the Secretary of Defense certifies the system is operationally effective before any funds can be used for acquisition or deployment.

I visited Poland recently and look forward to further working with the Polish government under this and the next US administration. Poland is an important strategic ally of the United States and its commitment to our relationship has been demonstrated time and time again in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our countries will continue to cooperate closely on democratization, nuclear proliferation, human rights, regional cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe, UN reform, and all the other concerns that our two countries share."

Rep.
Ellen O. Tauscher

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