

Tauscher To Deliver Keynote Address at NATO Bucharest Conference

Washington, DC – Today at 11:45 EST 8:45 PST Rep. Ellen Tauscher, Chairman of the House Strategic Forces Subcommittee, will deliver the keynote address at the NATO Bucharest Conference in Bucharest, Romania.

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CONTACT: Kevin Lawlor, 202/225-1880

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Rep. Ellen Tauscher To Deliver Keynote Address at NATO Bucharest Conference

Washington, DC – Today at 11:45 EST 8:45 PST Rep. Ellen Tauscher, Chairman of the House Strategic Forces Subcommittee, will deliver the keynote address at the NATO Bucharest Conference in Bucharest, Romania.

The Speech can be viewed live at www.bucharestconference.org

The full text of the speech as prepared for delivery follows below. To speak with Rep. Tauscher about her remarks or the conference in general please contact Kevin Lawlor.

Held alongside the official 2008 NATO Summit, and continuing the success of the Istanbul Conference in 2004 and the Riga Conference in 2006, the Bucharest Conference provides a forum for leading policymakers, opinion leaders, scholars, and business people from both sides of the Atlantic to discuss the most pressing issues facing NATO and the international community.

As the NATO alliance confronts both familiar and new missions, its leaders must possess a clear sense of purpose in their approach to each particular mission. Maintaining the alliance's preeminent role as the greatest collective security organization in world history requires clarity of vision as well as commitment of resources and effective planning. As NATO steps up to tackle these issues at the NATO Summit in Bucharest, the Bucharest Conference provides an open platform for frank dialogue on those issues currently on the alliance agenda.

Remarks of

Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher

German Marshall Fund

Bucharest, Romania

April, 2008

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It is an honor to be here tonight and to follow the President of Romania.

Thank you very much for your hospitality this week and for inviting us to the lovely city of Bucharest.

It is clear that as Mayor your efforts to modernize this great city have brought great returns.

To be here for this meeting is an accomplishment no one could have imagined at the end of the Cold War.

Romania was a country forbidden to look beyond the Iron Curtain.

Bucharest was a city under lock and key.

Romanians were a people living under brutal oppression; but their desire for freedom never diminished.

And thanks to the grace, bravery and the will of the people we are able to gather here tonight.

This is an important moment.

It is a first on many levels.

And it is the chance NATO members need to strengthen this Alliance and defuse the threats of the 21st century, together.

And so in the words of Elie Wiesel (ELEE-VEE-ZEL)—born in this country and who went on to inspire the world—
“Peace is our gift to each other.”

Pacea este cadoul nostru pentru fiecare.

Nearly 60 years ago in the wake of the Second World War, a handful of world leaders gathered with President Harry Truman to sign the Washington Treaty establishing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

These men sought to build an alliance that would safeguard future generations from the injustices suffered at the hands of dictators and oppressors.

Soon after the signing, President Truman issued a statement that resonates today.

He said, "This Treaty is only one step—although a long one—on the road to peace."

Tonight, we gather in the same spirit in which this Alliance began.

We are, of course, a much larger group.

But we are just as determined as that group of ten to accomplish our shared goals of peace and security for our people.

That is the wisdom all of us here tonight can recommit to.

As the chairman of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee and of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Sub-Committee on Future Security and Defense Capabilities, I believe that Parliamentary dialogue and cooperation is an overlooked companion to the statecraft practiced by our respective executive branch colleagues.

What our Alliance needs is a broader dialogue between publics and parliaments of the alliance about NATO's need for robust military capabilities and common investment.

We ask our citizenry to buy into the Alliance both financially and by sending their sons and daughters to war zones.

And what we owe them is an open and transparent debate about NATO's role in a world threatened in new and unconventional ways.

In the past, we have done just that.

This Alliance has often been steady on Truman's high road.

During the height of the Cold War, our mission was clear to the horizon.

In the 1990's, the Alliance traveled down a just road to stop the genocide and conflict in the Balkans.

And in many other smaller missions, this Alliance has made the world safer and more just for our people.

However, as an American, I will say candidly that mistakes have been made in recent years.

Some of those mistakes have pushed members of this Alliance to the edge.

Some relations are struggling.

Not all of these mistakes will be fixed over one meeting, on one night or in one year.

But we can begin because Truman's high road is becoming.

And it is going to take each NATO member working together to make our Alliance stronger and get our shared goals back on track.

Together, we can turn toward building stronger alliances.

We can turn together toward policies that condemn torture and the United States must close Guantanamo Bay.

We can turn together toward stopping the threat of Global Warming.

And we can turn together toward a stronger commitment to winning the war in Afghanistan.

This is what the United States and NATO can do together when we turn toward Truman's high road and the core beliefs of this Alliance.

I believe that the Alliance can turn toward these critical challenges of our times because there is already a strong partner in the United States.

As a member of the majority in the United States Congress, I am here to say that we know that there are no short-cuts.

There is only the hard work of building alliances.

There are no short-cuts to modernizing and building new capabilities.

There is only the commitment of allies to common defense and shared burden.

There are no short-cuts to confronting terrorist threats and rebuilding countries like Afghanistan.

There is only the steadfast work of men and women fighting to bring security to a country that no longer wishes to be manipulated by terrorists.

There are no "go it alone" strategies in this Alliance.

There is only the unalterable commitment to multilateralism in a multi-polar world.

And my colleagues and I in this Congress, as the elected representatives of the American People, stand ready to meet the challenges of renewing relationships and to do the hard work that is ahead.

With this renewed effort will also mean a demand for shared responsibility by our allies.

Whether the issue is Afghanistan or spreading peace and prosperity in a volatile world, the United States will continue to depend on our European allies to shoulder their share of the investment for our collective defense.

While progress has been made in improving the capabilities of the European pillar of the Alliance, I believe there is a strong feeling in the United States among Democrats and Republicans that our European allies can do more to modernize and improve their defenses.

This change must happen too if our Alliance is to grow stronger.

But the time to begin taking long steps on Truman's high road begins tonight.

For this summit is about the future.

To begin, 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.

Our first step begins in Afghanistan.

NATO was started to marshal the collective strength of free people in the face of a dangerous enemy.

The will of free men and free women to resist tyranny won the Cold War two decades ago.

Our will must be as firm and resilient to prevail against radical fundamentalism in Afghanistan today.

This mission must succeed. Afghanistan must prevail. It is that simple. And that is NATO's goal.

But every time another ally issues a caveat about deployments or sets mission limits on their troops, it undercuts NATO's ability to act decisively.

We need to remember that ten years ago a critical question about NATO's post- cold war role was asked and answered, "Out of area or out of business?";

We have no choice but success in Afghanistan. And that is why I've called for additional NATO troops to be committed to Afghanistan.

While the US is committing an additional three thousand two hundred Marines, NATO allies must commit at least seven thousand more combat troops to secure the East and South of the Afghanistan.

Many people here tonight and the people back in your countries are frustrated by the Bush Administration's intentional conflation of the conflict in Iraq with the mission in Afghanistan.

It was wrong to do. But that does not excuse alliance hesitancy in Afghanistan.

Security is the key to our success without it we cannot start the reconstruction effort or stabilize Afghanistan.

It is our responsibility to provide an adequate number of assets, troops and funding, to stabilize all of Afghanistan.

The other week, the United Nations took an important step by naming Ambassador Kai Eide of Norway as the new Special Representative in Afghanistan.

Our next step is encouraging the appointment of an Afghan leader to coordinate the development inside the country.

The alternative to success could not be more dire. Imagine if we fail in Afghanistan. Imagine the poppy fields cover the land. The Taliban returns.

Osama bin Laden remains a threat to the world and unpunished.

How will the world look at NATO?

Will they see us as the anchor in the chaos?

Or will they see the Alliance as a group that faded because it failed to modernize and meet the threats of these new and challenging times?

In this twenty first century and in the conflicts to come, NATO needs to assert itself as a defense alliance, as a force willing to take action against threats to our collective security.

In Afghanistan, we aren't there as peacekeepers; we are there to defeat Osama bin Laden, the Taliban, and efforts to destabilize a fledgling sovereign government in a dangerous neighborhood.

With leadership from the United States and with shared responsibilities from allies in Europe, this Alliance will bring stability to Afghanistan and security for its people and our own.

The second step on the long road to peace involves NATO clearly emphasizing its role as a primary security

organization.

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

NATO was started as a defense force.

It is filled with warriors ready to fight for the security of our people.

Their sacrifice deserves clear missions from all of us as members of this Alliance.

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

As missions and pressures for action in new parts of the world proliferate, NATO needs to decide what is a mission for us versus a mission for the E.U.

So while the E.U. develops its common defense identity, it is important to decide how to allocate scarce capabilities.

Then, the Alliance must also work together to build a 21st century force for deterrence.

With advances in technology, NATO has the potential to deter weapons of mass destruction from ever destroying a city or holding a capital hostage.

This is a welcomed achievement.

But there is a right-way to deploy this advancement and a wrong-way.

There has been a great deal of discussion this past year about the Bush Administration's proposal to deploy ten

long-range missile defense interceptors in Poland and radar in the Czech Republic.

The way the Bush Administration rolled out its proposal last year was the wrong-way.

I have been to both countries.

I met with the leaders of the Czech Republic: Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek, Deputy Prime Minister Sasha Vondra, and Deputy Foreign Minister Tomas Pojar (POYAR) .

And I met with the leaders in Poland: Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski and Defense Minister Bogdan Klich.

These discussions are essential. They ensure an open and honest dialogue. They ensure that a clear mission is established. And when we don't engage in this way, progress stalls. But just talking to governments is not sufficient.

In my work so far, I have found that if a government cannot explain its policies to its people, its proposals will likely fail.

But at my urging the Bush Administration has begun to engage the entire Alliance and "NATO-ize" the ballistic missile defense system proposal.

The Bush Administration has also begun promoting ways to work with NATO to provide protection against current short and medium range missile threats to Southern Europe — areas that would not be protected by the proposed Polish interceptor site.

Such efforts are critical to maintain security and deal with rogue nations like Iran.

Perhaps, most importantly, NATOizing the missile defense system proposal will advance the important pillar of indivisibility of the alliance as well.

But in this process, the United States cannot tolerate Russian saber rattling.

Senior Russian officials have been fully briefed on the defensive nature of the long range system and have finally

acknowledged that the 3rd site is not a threat to Russian Security.

That is a welcomed step.

The United States ballistic missile defense system is truly that. A defensive system against current and future threats from rogue nations and terrorists.

And I believe that as NATO moves forward, it is important to note that Russia, nor any other country, cannot have a veto over Alliance security.

In addition to paying attention to deterrence, NATO must devote more attention to the development of its conventional forces, including advanced conventional strike and other systems.

In doing so, the Alliance will increase our ability to respond to new threats.

And as NATO modernizes our collective defense, we need to renew our efforts to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

The protection, dismantlement and disposition of Russian WMD has been an area where the United States has found some support, though 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, NATO and the United States can work together on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in 2010.

NATO should 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.

By showing that this Alliance is an anchor, we have a once in a generation chance to push our strategic and nuclear weapons policies out of the Cold War paradigms and into the new century.

And with a renewed strength and purpose, this would bolster NATO, our collective defense and provide more security for our people.

And the final step we can take to get back on Truman's high road starts with developing a new shared vision.

NATO must achieve a new strategic purpose that unifies its membership and sends a strong signal to the rest of the international community.

And I would argue that its immediate political goal should be to broaden its engagement from the Balkans through Eurasia to Azerbaijan.

NATO should use this opportunity in Bucharest 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 believe that we should send a strong signal that NATO believes that Georgia and Ukraine are orienting themselves toward the West and should begin the MAP process.

Looking Eastward, NATO should work with the European Union to reach out to the nations of Eurasia.

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

Stability in this new frontier of the Euro-Atlantic community is in all of our interests.

If NATO is seen as an Alliance with a collective defense and indispensable to the security of its allies in the changing world, 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.

The three steps I addressed tonight can help guide the United States, NATO, and the international community back to Truman's high road to peace and security.

It is a road that runs from Bucharest to your countries and to my community in the Bay Area of California.

It runs through the towns and cities I know well and that I represent in Congress.

It runs by the two national defense laboratories in my district Lawrence Livermore and Sandia California where innovation is advancing technology to make us safer.

And it runs through Travis Air Force Base the strategic airlift gateway to the Pacific.

This is where brave men and women say good-bye to their families before some fly off to serve in Iraq or Afghanistan. It is also where tons of relief supplies, medicine and food are air lifted to tens of thousands of people in desperate need after tsunamis and earthquakes.

There is a connection between my home district, your country, and the work to be done at this summit.

There is a common determination to get back on the high road to progress and to succeed in our efforts in the true "can-do" tradition of the American people.

And this connection often strikes when you least expect it. It is something I experienced during my first trip to Afghanistan.

In 2003, I was part of the first United States Senate delegation to head to Afghanistan after the Taliban had been defeated led by Senator Tom Daschle, who was the Majority Leader.

Our delegation had left Uzbekistan at four A.M. and flew in a C-130 to a base just below Kabul.

We landed safely and were met by a large gathering of military officials and about fifty members of the U.S. Special Forces.

Many of these U.S. Military men were in full Afghan dress. And the only thing you could see was their eyes. I greeted them.

I began looking into each man's eyes as I shook their hand.

As I continued through the crowd shaking hands I was consumed with an inexplicable sense of familiarity with the first man I had met.

As I shook his hand, I had a flash right away of my daughter playing soccer in a lovely park in Washington, DC. I stopped and turned to find those familiar eyes. He had started unraveling the loong-jee around his head. And there he was: Tim, the father of one of my daughter's soccer teammates in Afghanistan, vanquishing the Taliban and searching for Osama Bin Laden. He missed most of that spring's soccer season but returned home to his family safely.

It was a very emotional moment for both us. Perhaps that meeting in Afghanistan can serve as a reminder to us all.

We can never forget that as we strengthen this Alliance, as we modernize our collective defense, as we embark on new missions, it is our people, our neighbors, our brothers and sisters, and our children, who sacrifice in the fight for our security.

It is a constant connection to Truman's high road.

It has endured since that April night with Truman in Washington, D.C.

Moving forward, Truman's high road will once again be chosen as the United States and NATO take renewed steps toward meeting the threats of this century and building a lasting peace.

And that is the gift we give to each other's people and the future generations of this world.

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