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Rep. Ellen Tauscher Addresses Arms Control Association at The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Chairman of Strategic Forces Subcommittee Focuses on U. S Russia Relations, Highlights Missile Defense Policies

Washington , DC – By invitation of the Arms Control Association, Rep. Ellen Tauscher, Chairman of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, delivered a speech today at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace focusing on U. S Russia Relations, specifically missile defense policies. The comments were timely given the recent G-8 conference and remarks both President Bush and Russian President Putin have made. The full text of the speech as prepared for delivery is below. _

Carnegie Remarks

Rep. Ellen O. Tauscher

A S PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

Thank you Daryl for the invitation. It's a pleasure to be here today.

The announcement about today's event calls on the panelists to discuss what steps Russia and the United States should take to ***“put their relationship on a more stable footing and how they can effectively and verifiably reduce their still massive nuclear weapons arsenal and the lingering distrust they engender.”***

It's a tall order, but could not be better timed.

Allow me to offer a few thoughts on the immediate crisis generated over the Bush administration's proposal to deploy missile defense systems in Europe and the future of arms control agreements between both nations.

Both of these issues could be addressed separately but are linked politically.

I want to make it crystal clear: President Putin's recent actions and rhetoric are exaggerated and inflammatory.

The missile defense system that the Bush administration proposed -- despite its flaws and however poorly it may have been presented -- is certainly not a threat to Russia .

Ten missile interceptors and a radar are no match for thousands of Russian warheads and should not affect Russia 's strategic calculations.

Even more important, both the House Defense Authorization Bill -- which I helped author -- and the S enate version, cut funds for the proposed site in Europe and put strong restraints on moving forward.

Despite the rhetorical war or words, the Bush Administration's proposal **I S NOT** moving ahead this year.

I and my Democratic colleagues believe in a missile shield for our NATO allies -- but we want one that works. We want it to cover all of our allies and we eventually want NATO to help pay for it.

The shield proposed by the Bush administration does none of this.

Congress is committed to work to make it a robust and practical system that meets these criteria.

More significant than last week's Russian ICBM test and Putin's threats of unspecified "retaliatory steps", is how quickly U. S . and Russian relations appear to have degenerated.

Between Putin's threats and Bush's persistence, it is clear to me that there is a profound disconnect between both countries.

Overblown rhetoric and threats from the Kremlin are not new.

In 1999, Russia tried to blame the sinking of the Kursk submarine on the United S tates .

S ome of this renewed rhetoric may be aimed at a domestic audience in advance of the Russian elections next April.

First Deputy Prime Minister Ivanov who is the likely successor to Putin boasted that Russian ICBMs could penetrate any defense system, and President Vladimir Putin warned that U. S . missile defense plans would turn the region into a "powder keg."

Some of the rhetoric harkens back to historic fears of Western encirclement.

Referring to the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe , Putin said *"We have signed and ratified the CFE and are fully implementing it. We have pulled out all our heavy weapons from the European part of Russia to locations behind the Ural Mountains and cut our military by three hundred thousand men."*

"And what about our partners? They are filling Eastern Europe with new weapons. A new base in Bulgaria , another one in Romania , a site in Poland and a radar in the Czech Republic ," he said. "What we are supposed to do? We can't just sit back and look at that."

Even though Russia will never dictate how America defends its security interests, it is critical that we look at the items Putin has raised and decide what elements are worth engaging over.

Right now the Bush administration is crippled by the fact that it is a lame duck administration having pursued haphazard bilateral and short term foreign policy goals with no thought to the future.

Furthermore, it has consistently undermined the global norms and treaties that have successfully constrained the spread weapons of mass destruction for decades.

What we need is a strategic review of our nation's objectives and defined roles for missile defense, nuclear, conventional weapons and nonproliferation programs.

Included in the House Defense Authorization bill is a commission which would examine the role of deterrence in the 21st Century; assess the role of U. S . nuclear weapons making recommendations for the most appropriate strategic posture.

This commission would replace the administration's Nuclear Posture Review which raised more questions about U. S . strategy than it answered.

This new assessment does not mean that we take any threats less seriously than in the past.

In fact, the defense bill also extends the report on our capabilities to defeat hard and deeply buried targets.

This ensures that we are developing the necessary capabilities to hold at risk an entire class of targets.

Most critical, **it ends the Republican Congress' starving of our nation's nonproliferation programs** by accelerating them and expanding them to other nations.

Putin's comments are useful for providing a framework to assess our priorities.

Putin first announced that Russia is considering withdrawing from the 1990 Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty, which limits the amount of tanks, artillery, and other conventional weaponry that its states-parties deploy in Europe .

Then later last week, the Foreign Minister Lavrov said Russia would not leave it.

Preserving the CFE is in the United States' interests.

We want Russian troops to leave the independent nations of Moldova and Georgia and we want to prevent destabilizing deployments of troops across Europe .

Putin has also threatened to withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which prohibits possession of nuclear and conventional ground-launched missiles with ranges between five hundred and fifty five hundred kilometers.

Leaving INF would allow Russia to devote its resources to defeating intermediary threats posed by China .

Russia has mentioned this desire previously to Secretaries Rumsfeld and Powell.

We must work to preserve the INF which set a standard for accountability and intrusive inspections.

We do not want a nuclear arms race across Eurasia .

Russia also has threatened to reject a proposed U. S .-Russian clearing house to share information on missile launches worldwide.

This is an important early warning system that must be pursued.

U. S . and Russian officials are considering options to address the future of the 1991 strategic nuclear reductions agreement, S TART, but neither side wants to extend the accord in its current form after it expires on December 5, 2009.

Under S TART Russia has reported having four thousand one hundred and sixty two deployed strategic warheads, while the United S tates has reported five thousand eight hundred and sixty six warheads.

Both countries have committed to further reduce their nuclear forces under the May 2002 S ORT agreement to less than twenty two hundred **“operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads”** apiece by December 31, 2012.

When S ORT expires on that date, neither country’s forces will be capped.

I am deeply concerned that the Bush administration has put too strong a premium on flexibility rather than accountability and leadership.

This does little to take us toward significant reductions in our nuclear arsenal.

I believe it is critical that Putin and Bush formally agree when they meet in Maine to observe S TART until they can agree to new levels that achieve real and verifiable reductions beyond the numbers prescribed in S ORT.

I believe such a goal is achievable by both relaxing some of the notification requirements and on site visits mandated under S TART while still achieving a legally binding treaty.

The intelligence community has expressed concern with losing the verification component provided by S TART.

And S TRATCOM head General Cartwright has indicated that:

“Whatever the construct is that we do with a treaty-like activity, you are trying to make sure that you can build confidence, understand the intentions of your adversary, and have time to react appropriately to those intentions.”

He added further that the attributes of a follow on to S TART...

“that you would seek are transparency, the ability to generate warning time, and confidence in what the intentions are of a counterpart.”

The United S tates made a commitment to verifiable and irreversible cuts at the 2000 NPT review conference.

It is time that we again, act as leaders.

Our relationship with Russia is not an easy one and the administration has paid too little attention to both Russia and the arms control issues Putin

raises.

But despite his aversion to treaties, if Bush does one thing in this regard before leaving office, it would be to state the U. S . commitment to preserving S TART before a new agreement is reached by the next President.

I look forward to addressing this and any other questions you may have.

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[HOME](#) [PRIVACY POLICY](#) [SITE INDEX](#)