

Extensions Of Remarks

Extensions of Remarks - TRANS-ATLANTIC LEGISLATORS DIALOGUE—64TH MEETING OF DELEGATIONS OF THE U.S. CONGRESS AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT MEET UNDER LEADERSHIP OF THE HON. SHELLEY BERKLEY

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HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

of california

in the house of representatives

Thursday, June 19, 2008

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I would like to call the attention of my colleagues in the Congress to another successful meeting of the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue (TLD) that was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, from May 24-26, 2008. The United States delegation continues to flourish under the outstanding leadership of Chairwoman Shelley Berkley, the gentlelady from Nevada. She has injected energy and enthusiasm into this interparliamentary dialogue, while further strengthening American relationships with a wide range of European parliamentarians. The Republican vice-chairman, Representative Cliff Stearns from Florida, has also maintained an effective voice in European affairs and the TLD.

Representatives Berkley and Stearns should be praised for their efforts to recruit members to participate in the Slovenia session, with the delegation of 10 members being the largest and by all reports most well informed in recent years. I commend the members of this bipartisan delegation—Rep. Gary Ackerman (D-NY), Rep. Joe Barton (R-TX), Rep. Russ Carnahan (D-MO), Rep. Eliot Engel (D-NY), Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX), Rep. Phil Gingrey (R-GA), Rep. Steve Israel (D-NY), and Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA)—for contributing to a rich and meaningful exchange of views.

The TLD serves as the formal response of the European Parliament and the U.S. Congress to the commitment in the New Transatlantic Agenda (NTA) of 1995 to enhance legislative ties between the European Union and the United States. Building on the existing interparliamentary relationship, the TLD involves bi-annual meetings between American and European legislators in order to discuss topics of mutual interest and foster transatlantic discourse.

The most recent session in Slovenia addressed a wide range of foreign policy challenges, including the Middle East, China, Russia, and Kosovo. Members discussed regulatory initiatives being undertaken by the Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC), with American members reinforcing Administration [E1276] concerns about European initiatives on poultry and chemicals used to manufacture cosmetics that have a detrimental effect on American farmers and producers. American members also responded to European concerns about the **visa waiver** program and legislation requiring 100% cargo scanning to ensure port security. In addition, the delegates discussed the challenge of climate change, the importance of energy security, and the current global financial crisis. Madam Speaker, I would like to place in the Record the joint statement that was agreed upon by American and European legislators at the 64th TLD meeting in Ljubljana. It underscores the rich agenda of this meeting and highlights the many areas in which there was strong transatlantic agreement.

Transatlantic Legislator's Dialogue—64th Meeting of Delegations From the European Parliament and the United States, Ljubljana, 24-26 May 2008 Joint Statement

We, Members of the European Parliament and the United States House of Representatives, held our 64th Interparliamentary meeting (Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue) in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on 24-26 May 2008.

Building on the joint statement issued following our last meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada, on 5-8 October 2007, we stressed the importance of regular dialogue on a range of political, social and economic issues that affect all of our citizens. We agreed to report back to our parent bodies on the content and outcome of our discussions, particularly in the areas where joint efforts are likely to result in positive outcomes. We agreed that legislators in both sides of the Atlantic should increase dialogue and consultation amongst themselves in order to prevent possible conflicts of legislation. Direct and timely contacts between specialist committees from Congress and the European Parliament—such as those that have occurred within the TLD framework—have been valuable means of reinforcing cooperation; this exchange of information should be continued and enhanced.

We examined a wide array of foreign policy issues, agreeing that joint action by the European Union and the United States is the most effective way to approach problems that affect both sides of the Atlantic. We took stock of recent developments with regard to the Middle East Peace process, the nuclear threat posed by Iran and the situation in Iraq. On Afghanistan, we recognized the need for a joint long-term strategy aimed at stabilizing the internal situation and reducing risks for regional security. We noted a proposal to develop a joint fund for humanitarian services and infrastructure development in Afghanistan. We discussed the future political and economical development in Kosovo, and recognized that joint efforts were essential in order to ensure a peaceful and prosperous future for the Western Balkans, including an EU perspective. We analyzed development in Russia's domestic and foreign policies, including the U.S. Administration's proposed missile defense plans as well as European efforts to diversify their energy supply and ensure their energy security. We also assessed our economic and political relationship with China, expressing concern over recent events in Tibet.

The dialogue focused on the ongoing discussions between the U.S. and the EU in order to extend access to the U.S. **Visa Waiver** programme in the future to all EU Member States, as well as to the importance of ensuring safe trade and port security.

We also discussed the current global financial crisis. We agreed on the need for continued discussion and joint actions to address the effects of climate change.

With regard to the Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC), we noted with satisfaction the engagement of the TLD on 13 May 2008 with TEC Co-Chairs Gunther Verheugen and Dan Price in the framework of the 'Advisory group'. The European Parliament Resolution on the TEC and the letter by the U.S. TLD leadership to the TEC formed the basis for this dialogue. We took note of the EU-U.S. High Level Regulatory Forum, the joint reports on strengthening cooperation regarding the safety of imported products, and the impact assessment guidelines. We advocated stronger involvement of legislators in contributing to and overseeing these initiatives. We supported the identification of compatible biofuels standards in order to achieve international harmonization at the level of international standards organizations. We also welcomed the joint statement on open investment, as well as the start of the second phase of negotiations for the air services agreement.

We welcome the fact that the TEC has become a permanent feature of the EU/U.S. relations. We also welcome the decision taken on 13 May 2008 to develop a short term agenda and long term roadmap for TEC activities, and consider that this represents an important step towards ensuring the continuity of the process. As we have done throughout the establishment and initial meetings of the TEC, we continue to assert that the TEC initiative should be characterized by transparency and consultation of stakeholders and we call on the EU and U.S. Administration to reinforce the flow of information to the TLD in advance of the

TEC meetings. Awareness of the transatlantic impact of proposed legislation and regulations should be developed in the relevant legislative and regulatory bodies, as well as information about the benefits of rapid advancements towards a barrier-free regulatory environment.

*Several items have been identified within the TEC agenda that require further legislative consideration: While achieving reciprocity and mutual recognition of security standards remains critically important, we call on the U.S. Congress to review their legislation requiring 100 percent cargo scanning in recognition of European concerns regarding this legislation. We call on the European Parliament to facilitate an early solution to the ongoing discussions on the ban on imports into the EU of U.S. poultry which has undergone pathogen reduction treatment. In regards to the EU's regulation on the registration of chemicals (REACH) we call on the **European Commission** to bring forward legislation ensuring that European and U.S. producers of cosmetics are treated equitably in their requirement to register substances used in their products with the EU's chemical agency.*

Finally, we welcome progress on items contained in the 'lighthouse projects' and related initiatives included in the 2007 Summit declaration. In particular, we call for: Steps towards allowing the use in the United States of suppliers' declarations of conformity for electrical, electronic and ICT products; Further progress towards the mutual recognition of U.S. GAAP and EU IFRS accounting standards; Discussion of U.S. and EU regulatory issues in the insurance sector, in order to enhance market access for brokers-dealers, exchanges and other trading systems; and Progress in other areas of regulatory cooperation, including pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and animal testing.

In conclusion, both sides renewed their commitment to make the TLD's work more relevant to the European Parliament and to the United States House of Representatives. We agreed to identify ways by which to reinforce the involvement of the TLD and our legislatures in the preparation of the EU/U.S. Summit. We also agreed to further improve the effectiveness of our dialogue in order to realize the full potential of our interparliamentary relationship.

Jonathan Evans, MEP,-

Chairman, European Parliament Delegation.

Benoit Hamon, MEP,----

Vice Chairman, European Parliament Delegation.

Hon. Shelley Berkley,

Chairwoman, U.S. Congress Delegation.

Hon. Cliff Stearns,

Vice Chairman (Ranking Republican), U.S. Congress Delegation.

Hon. Gary Ackerman,

Vice Chairman, U.S. Congress Delegation.

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