

Canadian NATO
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire
canadienne de l'OTAN

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
to the Visit to the United States by the Defence and Security
Committee**

Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)

**Washington, DC, United States of America
January 28 – February 2, 2008**

Report

The Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association has the honour to present its report on the Visit to the United States by the Defence and Security Committee, held January 28 – February 2, 2008. The Canadian delegation was represented by Senator Joseph Day and Senator Percy Downe.

The annual Committee visit to the United States, hosted by the US House of Representatives, is intended to ensure NATO member state Parliamentarians are familiar with the latest thinking of the highest level security and foreign policy officials of the US government. It is also intended to provide an opportunity for dialogue with members of Congress who represent the United States within the Assembly. During their visit, members had the opportunity to see McChord Air Force Base and Fort Lewis in Washington State as well as Boeing's Longacres and Renton facilities.

OVERVIEW

Discussion focused on Afghanistan, Kosovo, missile defence, relations with Russia and the upcoming NATO Summit in Bucharest. Members were briefed by Dr. Karen Donfried of the German Marshall Fund of the United States. Dr. Donfried argued that while a new US President could enjoy a honeymoon period, the underlying structural disagreements between Europe and the US would remain. The challenges of dealing with security problems outside of Europe are likely to continue to generate different reactions on different sides of the Atlantic. In addressing the matter of climate change, Dr. Donfried urged European Parliamentarians to keep an eye on initiatives at the state and local levels in the US. She particularly emphasized the importance of California's leadership as one of the largest economies in the world.

During a meeting with several US Congressional Representatives Mr. John Tanner argued that NATO was more important now than it has ever been and advocated an increased amount of transatlantic cooperation.

In his address to members, US Secretary of Defence Mr. Robert Gates, reaffirmed the importance of the mission in Afghanistan and argued that NATO was a military alliance and not a "talk shop" and those allies needed to share risks equally. He also expressed concern about activities by the Taliban and Al Qaeda in the Afghan/Pakistan border area, suggesting that Pakistan had only recently realized the danger to itself by this situation. Mr. Gates stated that the US was ready to assist Pakistan with this challenge and suggested that it had sought Pakistani permission for unilateral operations in the area.

Several delegation members from countries with troops deployed in the south of Afghanistan expressed concern that other Allied countries had not provided forces to relieve their deployed troops. According to them, the burden was not being shared adequately in Afghanistan.

Patrick Moon, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Afghanistan suggested that there remained a strong need for a senior international figure from Europe or Canada to coordinate the international effort from Kabul and ably represent international views in

the capitals of donors as well as with the Karzai government. Several officials commented on a possible strategic vision document on Afghanistan, expected to be endorsed at the Bucharest Summit. This document would lay out the case for continued engagement as well as benchmarks over the next 3 – 5 years.

Kurt Volker, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia, laid out the US agenda for the Bucharest summit in April as having three main elements: using NATO well, strengthening NATO and enlarging NATO. With respect to the first point, and largely in reference to Afghanistan, he suggested that while the contributions of the Allies were appreciated, more resources and flexibility were required. He also argued that NATO capabilities would benefit from the pooling of assets such as that accomplished by the C-17 decision.

In addressing the question of enlargement Dan Fata, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for Europe, argued that Georgia and Ukraine were very different and should therefore not be lumped together when making a decision on whether to offer Membership Action Plan status at Bucharest. He also went on to note that the US was seeking a statement of support for continued Missile Defence efforts at Bucharest, suggesting complimentary between US and NATO approaches.

The Committee also heard from Admiral Luciano Zappata, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, on the Alliance's ongoing transformation process. According to the Admiral, transformation is what NATO must think, develop and accomplish, continually anticipating the future operating environment and analysing the lessons of recent operations. NATO must identify new capabilities develop modern and innovative solutions and implement changes through a cohesive defence planning process while it conducts research into future technologies and capabilities. As well, the alliance must educate its people to common standards that underpin interoperability across all areas of Alliance operations and functions.

Former Senator Sam Nunn, Co-Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Nuclear Threat Initiative, warned delegates that the risk of a nuclear weapon being used today is growing rather than receding. In coming to this conclusion, he cited the declared intentions of terrorist groups, inadequately secured nuclear materials, more widely available nuclear expertise, renewed global interest in nuclear energy and uranium enrichment, and the proliferation of nuclear weapons and short warning times. Senator Nunn suggested that the United States should lead the world towards reversing reliance on nuclear weapons globally, a move requiring significant cooperation from other states.

Under Secretary for Policy Ambassador Eric Edelman highlighted ongoing work on capabilities for NATO including Special Operations Forces working towards a Comprehensive Approach to operations which addressed both military and civilian elements of NATO engagements, and missile defence. During his remarks he highlighted the fact that current military engagements require an increase in the numbers of Special Operations Forces available for deployments.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for Africa, Theresa Whelan, gave delegates an overview of current security challenges in Africa. She also dealt with the creation of Africa Command (AFRICOM) whereby the three previous commands responsible for Africa have been combined into one. The creation of AFRICOM allows the Defence

Department to interact and interface most effectively with the African Union's (AU) regional organizational structure. Whelan also noted that developing the limited capabilities of the AU into a more effective organization was a priority for the Pentagon.

Delegates also spent time at Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base where they were briefed on McChord's special role in delivering global airlift and logistics to the US military. Delegates learned that the C-17 has the capability to use semi-prepared short runways, thereby greatly increasing the number of usable runways worldwide.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Leon Benoit, M.P.

Chair

Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)
ACTIVITY	Visit to the United States by the Defence and Security Committee
DESTINATION	Washington, D.C., United States of America
DATES	January 28 – February 2, 2008
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Senator Joseph Day and Senator Percy Downe
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	
TRANSPORTATION	\$6,975.79
ACCOMMODATION	\$1,297.19
HOSPITALITY	\$0.00
PER DIEMS	\$1,948.18
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$0.00
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$10,221.16