

A TRIBUTE TO SONDR A MILLER

HON. NITA M. LOWEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 13, 1999

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my great admiration for Judge Sondra Miller, an extraordinary jurist and community leader who will be honored with the Diane White "Advocate for Women's Justice" Award on October 28th.

Judge Miller has enjoyed a remarkable career in the law. Currently an Associate Justice of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, she has previously served as a Justice of the Supreme Court for the Ninth Judicial District, and as a Family Court Judge in Westchester County.

Judge Miller has also lent her energy and expertise to a great number of organizations which support our legal system and advance the values of a strong society. Her expertise and commitment to women and children has been especially inspiring. Judge Miller has been the Co-Chair of the New York State Task Force on Family Violence, the Founder of Judges and Lawyers Breast Cancer Alert, and a Commissioner of the Governor's Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children, among many other volunteer posts.

To each challenge, Judge Miller brings a keen legal mind, a genuine devotion to our system of law, and a determination to seek justice. It is no wonder that she has been recognized repeatedly by her peers, receiving honors such as the Westchester Woman of the Year Award, the Founders Award from the Woman's Bar Association of the State of New York, and the New York State Bar Association Howard A. Levine Award for Outstanding Work in the Area of Children and the Law.

Judge Miller's commitment to the law is matched by an equally powerful devotion to the larger community. She has been active in a wide variety of organizations, ranging from the League of Women Voters, to Hadassah, to Planned Parenthood. In each case, Judge Miller has earned the respect and admiration of friends and associates.

In short, Judge Miller is a trail-blazer whose work and personal example have made a difference to countless Americans, and who continues to offer the very highest quality of personal and professional service.

I am proud to join in recognizing Judge Sondra Miller and confident that she will remain a leading light for many years to come.

ADDRESS BY H.E. LENNART MERI,
PRESIDENT OF ESTONIA

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 13, 1999

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following for the RECORD.

ADDRESS BY H.E. LENNART MERI, PRESIDENT OF ESTONIA, AT THE BREAKFAST OF THE JOINT BALTIC AMERICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE HONORING THE MEMBERS OF THE BALTIC CAUCUS OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 13, 1999—WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. Chairman, Members of Congress, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I appreciate being here in this very distinguished company. I appreciate the opportunity to address this distinguished audience here today and I will do so in a triple capacity: as an Estonian, as a representative of the Baltic states, and as European. I will focus on the challenge of NATO enlargement to the Baltic states, but I will do so in the context of the evolving European-U.S. relationship and of the situation in and the relationship with the Russian Federation.

The world today is changing, and it should be our joint endeavor to change it in a way, which promotes our common interests. These interests include, both as far as Estonia and the U.S. are concerned, a stable and secure Europe and a stable, secure, democratic and cooperative Russia. The question is how to achieve these two aims. I will present to you my case that, including the Baltic States in NATO can actually contribute to both.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the security relationship between the US and Europe is changing and evolving. What is not and what should not change is the American commitment to European security. After all, for forty years it was the United States presence in Europe that guaranteed safety and freedom to the non-communist part of the continent. Even in countries that were not and are not members of NATO it is generally acknowledged today that their safety was a consequence of the United States military presence in Europe. For all the manpower and military hardware that the European NATO members themselves put up it was essential for America to be ever-present and ready to support and lead the defense of western Europe, should it come to that. Today, the security situation has altered drastically. In this situation it is clear that we Europeans have to do more and that we have to be better prepared to manage crises on our own doorstep to be a more partner to the United States.

The contrary, the US presence in Europe is today as vital as it has ever been. History has shown that the United States will be involved, sooner or later, in a European conflict. This is a sign of our close economic ties, but it is more importantly, and I believe above all, a sign of the convictions and values we share on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Therefore we must continue to work together to strengthen and expand the still all too narrow area where democracy rules and human rights are respected. It is right of the United States to want its European partners to contribute more and it is right of the Europeans to strengthen common defense capacities. Yet all this means is that we are restructuring a successful and vital relationship. We are not—and we must not—alter the fundamental principles on which this co-operation is based, and these principles are caught up in one word: NATO. NATO is today and will remain for the foreseeable future the only organisation capable of ensuring a safe and secure Euro-Atlantic region.

Estonia and our two Baltic neighbours, Latvia and Lithuania, wish to be part of this co-operation. Or rather I should say that we are already part of it. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have been working together with NATO forces in Bosnia and now in Kosovo. We are exercising with US and European forces on a regular basis. In the very near future Estonian radar stations and those of our neighbours will be hooked up to NATO systems and we will start exchanging vital information.

Thus the co-operation between Estonia and NATO, between our neighbours and NATO is already happening. We have demonstrated clearly our willingness and readiness to contribute to European and Trans-Atlantic security and stability because we believe that

this also affects our security. Kosovo and Bosnia were not far away events in far away places but were of direct relevance to our own national security. If one nation in Europe is not secure then no one is secure. We may be able to avoid direct conflict, but we cannot avoid refugees and disruptions in trade that result from these wars. Therefore it is in our direct national interest to contribute to European and Trans-Atlantic security, just as I am convinced that it is in the United States interest to remain engaged in Europe.

This is the reason why we wish to join NATO and this is why I believe it is also in the national interest of the United States to have the Baltic states become members of the Alliance.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is fashionable for some nowadays to speak of a realist, or neo-realist policy agenda. The argument is that what worked well until the end of the Cold War will work well today. I would be the last one to dispute that the US policies, which led to the collapse of the Soviet Union, were wrong or ineffective. On the contrary; they were right and effective. But the world of 1999 is different from the world of 1989, or 1979, 69 or 59. We no longer have the Cold War; we no longer have the Soviet Union. Instead we have a Central Europe stretching from the Gulf of Finland to the Adriatic and Black Seas that is free once more and we have a Russia which is struggling to find a democratic path. We also have an independent Ukraine, and Georgia and Azerbaijan and Armenia . . . The list goes on! And we are faced with the fact that the United States truly is the one remaining superpower.

Thus, our policy agenda today should also proceed from the fact that we face a new world, which requires new solutions. The world of tomorrow is in the process of being shaped. In shaping this world we must act with great agility and great speed. Whether we term the policies realistic or idealistic or something in between has in this case no relevance. What is required is determined action. Any other approach is, I believe, simply unrealistic.

I am convinced that the United States has a profound interest in leading this endeavour. An expanded area of democracy and freedom is in the US interest, because it increases stability. And stability in turn is a catalyst for economic development, which increases trade, and so on. And one major way of increasing stability is to continue the enlargement of NATO.

There will be those—perhaps even here, in this room—who will say that I am wrong, that continuing the enlargement of NATO will only irritate Russia, make it even harder to deal with and that for that reason NATO should not expand. Certainly not to the Baltic states.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dreams of the instant birth of a free and democratic Russia, where human rights would be respected were very popular in the West at the beginning of this decade. We in Estonia never shared this enthusiasm. But neither do we share the gloom of many Western observers today who seem to write off Russia and to say that nothing good will ever come out of there. I believe that Russia can indeed become a truly democratic country. But it will simply take a lot of time. What Russia needs during this time of growing up is firm guidance on what is and what is not permitted in our new world.

Today we see once again the bombing of villages and the killing of civilians in Chechnya. We see the deportation of tens of thousands of persons from Moscow—simply because of the different colour of their skin. And we see worrying calls for a strong man