

SAMPLE SPEECH

Thank you so much to Ambassador Negroponte and Fran Townsend for putting together this important event and for your interest in such an important issue as our nation's security.

And thanks to my good friend Dutch Ruppersberger. I can't tell you how refreshing it is to have a partner like Dutch who puts aside the petty politics and tries to get to solutions. You know, we decided three years ago when we took over leadership of the Intelligence Committee that we should just take out the partisanship. We both had seen it turn into what the Washington Post called a "partisan snakepit." And we said American's national security was too important for politics and whenever humanly possible we should make our committee bipartisan or even non partisan. Now I'm thrilled to be able to say we have passed 3 intelligence authorization bills in a row with nearly 400 votes on the House floor each time.

That's no easy task in this current Congress!

I appreciate being here with you today.

Well, these days I am just happy to be anywhere. Heck after defending the NSA's programs all summer and now this Syria mess my own family doesn't even return my calls.

Actually, my dad is fond of saying I got five boys, four turned out really good and I got one in Congress.

You know in all seriousness I am worried, and I know Dutch is too, about where we are in America on national security.

We have a President who doesn't seem comfortable with American power or American leadership. We have a growing contingent in Congress who does not focus on foreign policy and sees nothing but trouble at every turn.

And we have an American public who is understandably weary of war and the only time they hear about foreign policy is when something bad happens, usually in the Middle East.

There has been a general lack of leadership and dialogue about what are America's national security interests and why are those important.

So this narrative is taking hold that there is nothing but trouble for the United States of America overseas. Maybe we should just pack up and go home.

As something of a history buff, and I have a hunch that everyone in this room can agree: this is dangerous path. We have tried it before and it just does not work out very well. It does not serve America's interests.

And I think everyone in this room and every like-minded citizen of this great country has a responsibility to resist this siren song and help explain what is at stake.

The United States of America has the biggest economy and the largest middle class on the face of the earth.

But that didn't just happen. We set up the greatest political system ever devised by man to unleash human potential that led to the most dynamic, most resilient economy the world has ever known. But we didn't just sit back on our laurels. We went overseas and defended it.

We defended it against the imperialists, the fascists, the communists and the terrorists.

Now, I think we have to defend it against the isolationists. Not with bullets of course but with engagement and dialogue.

And all of us need to play a role in this I think. There is a lot of brain power in this room. Well not me, but all of you! And all of us need to reach out to Members of the House and Senate and explain why America has to be engaged in the world. All of us need to write OpEds, all of us need to get engaged on Facebook and Twitter and all of us need to encourage our fellow citizens to get engaged with what's going on in the world.

We do not have the luxury of simply burying our head in the sand and turning away from the world. It just won't work. Its not good for America and its not good for the world. History has proven that.

Thanks for being interested in this important issue. Thanks for what you do and for being a part of the solution.