and the President signs this legislation, we can all be proud that we are, at last, acting as a great nation should.

I urge my colleagues to keep the word of our Nation and act expeditiously and favorably on this legislation as it proceeds through the Congress.

CODEL WELDON, OBSERVATIONS AND DIRECTION

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2002

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my colleagues tonight to talk about what we have seen in a part of the world that has vexed American policy makers for generations.

First I want to commend Chairman WELDON for his high-energy, unyielding approach to seeing as much as possible on these delegation trips. Our focus is always on bringing back information that will enlighten and inform U.S. policy makers, both in the Congress and in the Administration.

At this difficult moment in the world, our trip was a good opportunity to speak to our legislative colleagues in the Russian Duma. We arrived in Moscow in the wake of the historic signing of the strategic arms reduction treaty by Presidents Bush and Putin. While we were there, NATO nations met in Rome to agree to limited membership for Russian in NATO, India and Pakistan danced dangerously close to a nuclear confrontation, the cycle of violence continued between the Israelis and the Palestinians, and the war on terrorism continued in Afghanistan. So there was a great deal on our plate with which to deal.

We last went to Russia in September 2001, after the attacks on the United States and after the war began, and came away with a real partnership with many of our colleagues in the Russian Duma. We began then to talk about areas of commonality through which members of our respective legislatures (the U.S. Congress and the Russian Duma) could work. In our last visit, we presented a document entitled: ''U.S.-Russia Partnership.''

In our visit this time around, we were told that our document's recommendations were the basis for the Russian initiatives presented to President Bush during his recent visit in Russia. Discussions in Russia generally followed concerns such as: combating international terrorism, using academics and science to address political problems, joint environmental—and economic—efforts, and engaging young people of both countries in issues of mutual interest (such as sports and cultural events).

Russia is an important strategic partner for the United States and for NATO. After entering the 21st Century through columns of fire, our relationship with Russia is on a considerably stronger foundation. For the first time, there is mutual agreement on goals and values, and on a shared vision for the security threats we both face in this world.

When we met with Uzbekistani President Karimov, I was impressed with the geopolitical environment of the region. He, too, supported Chairman WELDON'S proposal to establish a joint U.S. Congress-Uzbek parliamentary working group, based on the success of the U.S. Congress-Duma work of last year.

The best part of being in Uzbekistan was seeing the satisfaction on the faces of the young men and women serving in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. They are the ones carrying our battle to our enemies, and they are gung-ho about their mission. We got a good deal of intelligence on the ground—literally—intelligence about the daily activities of our troops and how they see their jobs every day. We had the privilege of distributing homemade cookies baked by people here at home for these brave men and women. They very much enjoyed the special gifts from home.

As always, I saw a host of Texans stationed in Uzbekistan doing then-duty for the United States, including Specialist Harwig from Corpus Christi, Texas.

We also went to Beijing, China, to talk with senior officials about a host of defense-related and economic-related topics. With China, as always, the topic of Taiwan was paramount in the minds of the Chinese. They continually expressed the importance of the ''one-China'' policy. We emphasized the wide breath of things on which the United States and China agree, and urged both nations to find agreement rather than disagreement.

Several members of our delegation surmised that the issue of Taiwan will diminish as a divisive issue over time due to the large—and increasing—investment by Taiwan interests in mainland China.

India and Pakistan are adjoining neighbors, and the nuclear saber-rattling in the subcontinent is unnerving all the nations of the world . . . most noticeably the Chinese. Both nations are China's neighbors, and they continue to hope the difference over Kashmir can be solved peacefully. This is no place for a hair-trigger on a nuclear weapon.

The CODEL also met with members of the government of the Republic of Korea (ROK, South Korea) and thanked the ROK for their prompt and significant support for the United States after 9–11. The ROK stepped up quickly to support our war against the Taliban and al Queda in Afghanistan, providing shipping, aircraft and a field hospital to support U.S. operations in the area.

We were particularly disappointed that the North Koreans refused to meet with us. The ROK, we were told by the foreign ministry, continues to talk of peace with North Korea, but the pace of discussions was extraordinarily slow.

Chiefly, discussions with the ROK centered on trade, U.S. forces in Korea in the DMZ, our war on terrorism, political and military stability on the Korean Peninsula, and the strong desire—on their part—for reunification. We even had significant discussions about internet voting in the ROK, ''E'' government initiatives, and the digital divide in the ROK.

There are also a number of Texans serving in uniform as we visited the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). The DMZ never ceases to amaze me . . . it stands as a tribute to the standoff between ideologies along the Pacific Rim, and on the south side of it is the best reason for the conflict in the first place: democracy and free commerce in the highly developed south, with the north side practicing communism and starving their citizens and their economy.

Our trip proved, once again, the importance of going beyond our borders to see first hand, and hear first hand, the particular situations in the nations of our friends and those whom we hope to make our friends.

HONORING FLINT POWERS CATHOLIC CHARGERS

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2002

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Chargers of Flint Powers Catholic High School, on winning the 2001–2002 Michigan High School Athletic Association Class B State girls basketball championship. The Chargers defended their 2000–2001 championship in a repeat of last year's final game, defeating the Detroit Country Day Yellowjackets 54–53. It was certainly an exciting game that showcased some of the best talent the state of Michigan has to offer.

The Chargers are a true testament of what hard work, determination, and a passionate desire to win can accomplish. Under the guidance of 26-year Head Coach Kathy McGee, and Assistant Coaches Brad Terebinski, Betsy Kreston, and Kae Edison, the championship served as a wonderful finish to a remarkable year, marked with a perfect record of 28–0. In addition, the Michigan High School Coaches Association named Coach McGee Women's Basketball Coach of the Year.

The Chargers' roster includes: seniors Rachael Carney, Rebekah Sirna, Ellen Tomek; juniors Brittney Brindley, Elizabeth Flemming, Jessica Guilbault, Michelle Landaal, Victoria Lucas-Perry, Shannon Rettenmund, Ann Skufca; sophomores Erin Carney, Lauren Goggins, Maddison Snow; and freshmen Tia Duncan, Cari Pigott. These young women, led by team captains Carney, Lucas-Perry, and Tomek, proved to be leaders in the classroom, the basketball court, and the community. They are all shining examples of the Lansing Diocese's strong commitment to success in all aspects of life.

Mr. Speaker, I salute the accomplishments of the Powers Chargers, and share the joy of their victory with Powers students and alumni and especially the people in my hometown of Flint. I ask my colleagues in the 107th Congress to join me in congratulating these fine ladies.

MOURNING THE LOSS OF HALA SALAAM MAKSOUD

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2002

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, a memorial service honoring the work and achievements of Hala Salaam Maksoud will be held on Wednesday, June 5 at Georgetown University. Hala Maksoud was a great champion for civil rights and human rights. It was truly a sad day on Friday, April 26, 2002, when she lost her hard-fought battle with cancer.

Hala Maksoud was a passionate and vital advocate for Arab American concerns. As president of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) from 1996–2001, she helped propel the concerns of Arab Americans