

their courage. So many hours of training; days and nights of service; time away from their families and friends; comradery with their brothers; lives and homes saved... it is impossible to put into words our gratitude for these heroes in our lives and our communities.

Gary Lee "Deuce" Staley of the Porter Volunteer Fire Department, will have his name added to the plaques surrounding the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Park in Emmitsburg, Maryland, just outside of Washington, D.C. this weekend.

As a member of the Porter Volunteer Fire Department, Deuce died serving the community that he loved and will always be remembered for his heroism and sacrifice.

In January 2003, Deuce was responding to a fire at an antique car showroom. While attempting to lead three stranded firefighters out of the blaze and to safety, a car filled with nitrous oxide exploded, killing Staley instantly.

Firefighters represent the best our community has to offer. We honor them today, not only for their final act of bravery but for the lives they led. A firefighter's work can some times be thankless, but of all the men and women I've met, meet challenge and the danger without complaints and without regret. Their lives provided hope and comfort to victims of horrible events that we pray never come to us or the ones we love.

This remembrance service is as much a celebration of their lives and their ideals as it is a time to reflect on what we have lost. Firefighters remind us that heroes are every day people who decide to devote their lives and work to something greater than themselves.

Today we are here to honor Gary Staley and his brothers, the 106 nationwide who've sacrificed so much. With the start of a new day, we honor the families and friends they've left behind. Mr. Speaker, our prayers are always with them. Together as a community and a nation, we say thank you to those who will stand in the place of those who have fallen and will continue to faithfully serve and protect.

UKRAINE-U.S. RELATIONS

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 30, 2004

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to submit the following article for the RECORD.

COMMENT: UKRAINE-U.S. RELATIONS HINGE ON FALL ELECTIONS

(By Richard Holbrooke, Jan Kalicki and Mark Brzezinski)

SEPT. 27.—Americans are increasingly focused on our pivotal presidential choice on Nov. 2. But many may not be aware that partway around the world, at the doorstep of an expanded Europe, the citizens of Ukraine will be making an important choice in their Oct. 31 elections for president.

Ukrainians will decide whether a pro-Western reformer, Viktor Yushchenko, or a pro-Russian statist, Viktor Yanukovich, will be elected. That choice is theirs and theirs alone to make. But friends of Ukraine can certainly express concern about issues at stake. The first issue is the freedom and fairness of the election process—to ensure that the power of the incumbent president, who cannot run again, is not mobilized to suppress open debate and unfettered choice.

There is reason for concern, because oligarchic interests will likely try to stack the political deck, and to protect ill-gotten gains from past and pending privatizations.

The second issue affects the United States even more directly, for Ukrainians will decide whether to support those who favor integration into NATO and the European Union, or those who favor realignment with Russia and Belarus, the latter already under the sway of an unsavory dictator.

After meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin last month, Ukraine's President Leonid Kuchma amended his government's national security doctrine to turn away from NATO and the EU. The impact was felt immediately: Instead of continuing to plan to transport Caspian oil from the Black Sea to central Europe and eventually the Baltic, Kuchma now plans to transport Russian oil to the Black Sea and further congest the environmentally sensitive Turkish Straits.

Both the EU and the Turkish government have expressed deep concern about this development. But the Bush administration has been largely silent.

Our European and Turkish allies recognize the stakes. Will a country of 48 million people, almost the size of Texas, have the opportunity to pursue a common destiny with its neighbors to the north and west? Or will Ukraine take a course in which new lines could be drawn across post-Cold War Europe? Will energy flows continue to be subject to control by Russian monopolies, or will they reach markets competitively and support the freedom of Ukraine and the Caspian states?

Strategically located between a newly assertive Russia and an expanded NATO and EU, Ukraine can be a bridge to increased cooperation between these two realms. Or it can create new grounds for division. What remains to be seen is whether this pivotal European country will take the path of reform or the path of increased state control. This decision will impact a similar drama being played out between reformers and statist across the vast expanse of Russia itself. The most important interest here is to create durable political, economic and security ties engaging the Euro-Atlantic community with both Russia and Ukraine.

Americans can make clear where we stand: with those in Ukraine supporting free and democratic choice. With our European allies, we can make clear that EU and NATO doors are open if Ukrainians choose the path of integration and reform. But this brings us back to our own elections in November. There is one candidate who believes in democratic action, rather than ideology, and favors making common cause with our allies. There is another who has failed to do so, to the great detriment of America's vital national security interests. The stakes in the United States, as in Ukraine, could not be higher.

HONORING SANGER MIDDLE SCHOOL'S AMERICAN SPIRIT TOWARD THE VICTIMS OF THE BESLAN SCHOOL TRAGEDY

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 30, 2004

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to say thank you to one of my hometown schools, Sanger Middle School in Sanger, Texas. The students of Sanger Middle School enthusiastically participated in a card giving program for the victims of the Beslan school tragedy.

Before departing for my mission to Russia, I asked several local schools if they would like to create, draw, color or write greeting cards to the survivors and grieving families. The response was overwhelming. I was honored to be able to present hundreds of colorful cards to patients and families.

During my time in Russia, I had the opportunity to visit survivors recuperating at two hospitals. The visits were moving and tearful, but you could see the hearts of American students truly shining in the eyes of the Russian children. I was truly privileged to represent the United States, and especially grateful to be able to share wonderful cards full of encouragement and joy.

Again, thank you, the students of Sanger Middle School for your kindheartedness and thoughtfulness. Your words strongly conveyed the spirit of the American people and our commitment to build relations with countries dedicated to combating global terrorism.

ACKNOWLEDGING CONTRIBUTIONS MADE TO DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BY MARGIE GILBERT AND DR. JULIE CANEPA

HON. MAC THORBERRY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 30, 2004

Mr. THORBERRY. Mr. Speaker, one of the biggest challenges for this Congress over the past 2 years has been to fulfill our responsibilities on homeland security. At the beginning of this Congress, the Speaker decided to create a Select Committee on Homeland Security to help get the new Department of Homeland Security off to a good start and to focus congressional efforts on the many issues related to helping to protect our citizens against terrorism.

Beginning a new committee on such a complex topic would never be easy. Doing so within a very limited time was even more difficult. We had to have help, and to the good fortune of the House and of the country, we got help from some exceptional people.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge the contributions of two of them whose tour of duty on Capitol Hill is ending and to thank them for all they have done for me, as a subcommittee chairman on the Select Committee, and for the entire Committee. Working with my Legislative Director, Kim Kotlar, these two individuals have made enormous contributions to the development of the new Department of Homeland Security and its vital mission.

Our subcommittee has had responsibility for cybersecurity and for science and technology. To advise us on cybersecurity, we have had the assistance of Margie Gilbert. Margie was previously assigned to the White House as a director in the Office of Cyberspace Security, supporting both the National Security Council and the Office of Homeland Security. She dealt with intelligence and domestic protection, particularly national-level incident handling and counterterrorism. Throughout her DOD career, she has worked as an intelligence liaison officer, foreign relations officer, collection systems project leader, contracts and budget manager, and supervisor of a microelectronics research organization. She completed international