

list includes: Father Nguyen Van Ly, Nguyen Phong, Nguyen Binh Thanh, Nguyen Bac Truyen, and Nguyen Van Dai, lawyer—just to name a few. But the list doesn't stop there.

Since 2006 the Government of Vietnam has detained six American citizens—all falsely accused and harassed. One of those cases includes Dr. Nguyen Quoc Quan who has been incarcerated in Vietnam since November for promoting peace and non-violence.

Since his detainment in Vietnam, I have called for his immediate release and authored letters to both Secretary Rice and Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung urging his safe return to the United States. I have met with his wife Mai Huong and have seen the anguish this injustice has caused their family—a family that has not been able to communicate with their loved one since last year.

Dr. Nguyen Quan now awaits a trial scheduled for May 13 along with fellow democracy activists: Mr. Nguyen The Vu and Mr. Somsak Khunmi. I call on the Government of Vietnam to afford Dr. Quan and the other democracy advocates a fair and just trial. It is my greatest hope that his trial will be handled in a fair manner, unlike that of Father Ly, who was gagged, unable to speak at his own defense, and sentenced to 8 years in prison.

So today I join the Vietnamese community in commemorating Vietnam Human Rights Day and urging support for the continuing advocacy efforts that are fighting for the most basic freedoms that we in the U.S. enjoy—freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion. These freedoms do not exist in Vietnam.

I will continue working with my colleagues in the Congressional Caucus on Vietnam and the Congressional Human Rights Caucus to advance human rights for the people of Vietnam. And as a cosponsor of H.R. 3096, the Vietnam Human Rights Act of 2007, I will continue to advocate for its passage with my colleagues in the Senate. I am pleased that Senator BARBARA BOXER held a hearing on this legislation last March.

It is my hope that H.R. 3096 will be brought to the Senate floor for a vote. This would be a clear message that Congress wants to see the Government of Vietnam get serious about improving human rights conditions

CONGRESSIONAL TRIBUTE HONORING THE SAN ANTONIO FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2008

Mr. GONZALEZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend Fire Chief Charles N. Hood and the brave men and women of the San Antonio Fire Department. On Tuesday, May 7th, a four-alarm fire swept through the historic Main Building at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, Texas.

Our Lady of the Lake University was founded in 1895 and was the first San Antonio institution of higher education to receive regional accreditation. A beacon of hope and opportunity, Our Lady of the Lake has provided countless minority and underprivileged students the means to a higher education.

In their valiant efforts to fight this destructive fire, San Antonio Fire Department firefighters

went from room to room in the 100 year-old main building, ensuring that students, faculty and staff were safely evacuated. Because of their courageous efforts, not one life was lost and amazingly there were no serious injuries reported. While the fire was ripping through the third and fourth floors, firefighters worked quickly to save the University's mainframe computer and important records so that these items were not damaged by the thousands of gallons of water being used to fight the fire.

More than 100 firefighters fought late into the night and were on hand to make sure that the Our Lady of the Lake University community was safe. I ask my colleagues to join me in commending the efforts of the San Antonio Fire Department and offering support for the entire Our Lady of the Lake University community as they recover from this devastating fire.

RECOGNIZING NU HIGH SCHOOL BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. BRUCE L. BRALEY

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2008

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding results achieved by the NU High School Boys Basketball team at the Iowa State Boys Basketball tournament in Des Moines this past winter.

The last quarter would see five lead changes with the last lead change coming with two minutes left in the game. Travis Ellerbroek hit an NBA range three-pointer to take the lead for the final time and win the class 1A State boys basketball title.

I congratulate the Panthers for winning the Iowa Class 1A State championship. This exciting victory is the first for Coach Paul Elser who wrapped up his first season with the Panthers.

Madam Speaker, I am extremely proud of the accomplishments of the Panther boys basketball team, both on and off court, and I am proud to serve them in Congress.

85TH JUBILEE OF THE AZERBAIJANI PRESIDENT HEYDAR ALIYEV

HON. VIRGINIA FOXX

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2008

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, on May 10, we commemorate the 85th Jubilee of the late Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev. Heydar Aliyev was a strong leader at a critical time. When political strife and economic uncertainty engulfed the region, he emerged in 1993 as President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

He steered his country through regional power struggles and global changes. He negotiated a cease-fire in the war with Armenia. He deepened Azerbaijan's relationship with the United States, Turkey, Israel, as well as countries in Western Europe. He also cultivated the nation's relations with multilateral organizations such as the United Nations, NATO, the Council of Europe, and the OSCE. He oversaw economic reforms that opened the door for foreign investment.

In September 1994, the "Contract of the Century" was signed between American and Western companies and Azerbaijan. The Contract was designed to allow Azerbaijan to develop its energy resources in order to diversify Western energy supplies. The two early oil pipelines were from Azerbaijan through Russia to the port of Novorossiysk on the Black Sea and from Azerbaijan through Georgia to Supsa. But his real dream was the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, which, despite strong opposition, was supported by both the Clinton and Bush Administrations, and is now pumping one million barrels of oil a day.

President Heydar Aliyev always valued his country's relations with the United States. The United States was one of the first countries to recognize Azerbaijan's independence. His goal was to elevate relations to a strategic level, and we can say that he has been successful.

After we experienced the worst terrorist attack on United States soil on September 11, President Heydar Aliyev was one of the first in the world to offer the unconditional support of his country in the fight against terrorism. Soon after, Azerbaijan had troops in Afghanistan and was the first country with a predominantly Muslim population to send troops to Iraq.

President Aliyev was instrumental in shaping Azerbaijan's Western-leaning policies and relationship building practices. Azerbaijan joined NATO's Partnership for Peace Program in 1994. It is also a 2001 charter member of the GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development which works to promote democratic values, ensure stable development, enhance international and regional security, and step up European integration. Azerbaijan has consistently integrated into the Euro-Atlantic security architecture, further deepening U.S.-Azerbaijani military to military cooperation.

Following his passing in 2003, Azerbaijan has continued its course first established by President Heydar Aliyev toward the greater democratic and economic development. Due to his efforts and the will and character of the people of Azerbaijan, there is no doubt about the viability of this nation or about its capability as an effective leader in the region.

The United States looks forward to furthering its partnership with Azerbaijan in the region and on global issues of mutual concern.

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF LT. EVAN SCAGGS

HON. TOM COLE

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2008

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Madam Speaker, it is my privilege today to rise in recognition of an outstanding young naval aviator from my district, Lt. Evan Scaggs of Sulphur, Oklahoma. As a dedicated member of the U.S. Navy, Lt. Scaggs was an integral part of one of the highest elevation rescue missions ever to occur in Iraq. Honored by his hometown newspaper, the Sulphur Times-Democrat, I felt that his story was so compelling and his commitment so sincere, that telling his story before you today would be but one small way of honoring such an outstanding young man.

Madam Speaker, when a group of American schoolteachers with Teachers Without Borders