and proud tradition of defending America. It also has a tradition of being the first. During World War II, Big Red One was the first to reach England, the first to capture a German city, the first to fight in North Africa, and the first on the beaches of Normandy on D-day. It was the first division to deploy to Vietnam and spearheaded the armored attack into Iraq at the start of Desert Storm. The Big Red One has a long and proud heritage that we should honor and celebrate.

On August 1, 2006, I was proud to welcome the Big Red One's headquarters back to Fort Riley, KS. The division has a vital, new mission of training military transition teams for both Iraq and Afghanistan. This intense training is meant to prepare our finest military members to train their counterparts in the Iraqi and Afghani militaries. We honor those soldiers who have committed to this mission. I also want to recognize the 1st Division soldiers operating today in some of Baghdad's toughest neighborhoods. They too take their place in the Big Red One's proud history.

On this 90th anniversary, June 8, 2007, I salute the men and women of the U.S. Army 1st Infantry Division, the Big Red One. The enormous sacrifice and dedication of these heroic men and women should make all Americans proud. As they say in the 1st Division: ''No mission too difficult, no sacrifice too great. Duty first.''

U.S.-RUSSIA RELATIONS

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Madam President, I rise today to acknowledge the United States' crucial relationship with Russia. The fate of U.S.-Russia relations rests on key agreements regarding security, trade, and energy policies.

The annual G8 Summit taking place this week in Germany comes at a crucial time in our relationship with Russia, a key international trade, military, and security partner to the United States.

For decades after World War II, our military and national security policies focused mostly on the Soviet Union. At that time, both nations pursued a foreign policy dubbed ''Mutually Assured Destruction.''

In the early 1990s, with the support of the United States, new Russian leaders began instituting democratic reforms. As the political landscape in the Soviet Union improved, so did our relationship with Russia. Instead of destruction, our countries have pursued cooperation, though the Russians still have work to do on human rights. Certainly, recent actions by the Russian Government to limit freedoms, crack down on journalists, and inflict economic damage on its neighbors are cause for concern for the United States. Some of these concerns can and should be addressed through engagement and diplomacy with Russia.

Recently, relations between the United States and Russia have become strained, with the rhetoric between the nations exacerbating the problem. As the G8 meetings commence, it is imperative that the U.S. Government engage Russia on the vital security, trade, and energy policies important to both nations.

Last week, as cochairman of the U.S. Senate-Russia interparliamentary working group, I held 3 days of meetings in Moscow with legislators and top Russian officials, including Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, to discuss our mutual economic and security interests.

The Russians were united on key matters. First, they question U.S. intent with regard to deployment of missile and radar systems in Poland and the Czech Republic. Second, they would prefer an extended timetable on independence for Kosovo. They also identified vital security matters where they and we Americans can work together, specifically, halting Iran's nuclear program and the spread of global terrorism. While we may have disagreed on the appropriate manner in which to address the emerging threat of Iran's nuclear program and the amount of time in which we have to do so, Russian officials were clear that, like me, they believe Iran's ultimate goal in developing nuclear power is to produce a nuclear weapon.

Our delegation's message to the Russians was clear as well: we can work out differences over missile defense, Kosovo and other issues, but the Russians need to step up and assist the global community with Iran and terrorism in Iraq. Cooperation is critical to the success of our relationship.

In addition, Russia has tremendous economic potential. They have registered 5 percent or better economic growth in each year since 1999 and 6.7 percent in 2006. Personal income grew 10 percent in 2006. However, this growth has impacted mostly urban areas such as Moscow or St. Petersburg, and more needs to be done to improve economic conditions in rural areas.

U.S. exports to Russia for the first 11 months of 2006 totaled $7.8 billion. U.S. foreign direct investment in Russia in 2005 was $5.5 billion, up from $3.8 billion in 2004. Russians are buying American products and services—it seemed that every fifth car in Moscow was a Ford. But we can do better by helping to raise the standard of living in Russia to advance democratic reforms.

Russia is now working to join the World Trade Organization, WTO. The United States maintains an obscure trade law, known in Washington-speak as ''Jackson-Vanik,'' that would limit U.S. business trade and investment in WTO-member Russia because the law prevents normalized trade relations between the two countries. While the original intent of this trade law was admirable, it is now widely believed to be antiquated and remains only as yet another Cold War relic, this time hindering future progress in opening permanent normal trade relations between Russia and the United States. If Jackson-Vanik remains in place, Russian businesses would not suffer alone upon Russia's accession to the WTO; U.S. businesses would also suffer while businesses from around the globe prosper in Russia's increasingly valuable markets. Congress needs to ''graduate'' Russia from this trade provision so U.S. firms can compete with foreign firms on the economically fertile ground in Russia.

Finally, as with other allies, important and controversial matters between the United States and Russia will continue to arise. Energy production and supply, for example, is an important national security matter for the United States and its allies. Russia's state-controlled energy company, Gazprom, is building an intricate pipeline system which will control natural gas flow to European countries. It currently supplies about 25 percent of Europe's natural gas, with higher percentages to some former Soviet European states. About 40 percent of crude oil exports move to Europe through a pipeline system. They plan to expand to North America. Russia has already exploited the dependence of Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, and Georgia on its energy resources. Without cooperation and understanding between our countries, this system could leave the United States vulnerable in the future to gas supplies controlled by the Russians.

Mikhail Margelov, my Russian counterpart in the working group, said that the U.S.-Russia alliance must be strong for the future of both countries. He is right. Collaboration can bring about change for the good. Negotiation can resolve conflicts. Strong relations can solidify Russia's democracy.

The administration should use the G8 Summit as an opportunity to engage Russia on these key security, trade and energy policy matters. It is in the national security interests of the United States to have a strong relationship with a democratic Russia.

TRIBUTE TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SURVIVAL FLIGHT TEAM

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I wish today to pay tribute to the six members of the University of Michigan Survival Flight team who perished this past Monday when their plane tragically crashed into Lake Michigan during an organ transplant mission. On behalf of the people of Michigan, I would like to extend my deepest condolences to the victims' families. These brave men put their lives on the line to save the lives of those in need of urgent medical care. They touched countless families through their work and the goodness of their hearts and stand as examples to all of us as modern-day Good Samaritans.

Richard Chenault II, 44, from Ann Arbor, was hoping to get back to Michigan on time Monday to attend