Mr. Speaker, there was an historic debate on the House

floor last week between both sides of the aisle concerning the war in

Iraq. Unfortunately, I got a call late on Wednesday evening that my

wife Erica had been rushed to the hospital with a serious medical

emergency, and I was absent from that debate because I had to go to my

wife's bedside at the hospital. I am happy to report she is at least

out of the hospital, although the infection in her hand is still giving

her a lot of trouble.

I wanted to at least state my opinion on the war in Iraq and the

consequences of American action, and I think heroic action, that is

taking place in Iraq and also in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, we are involved in a war on terror. The battle for Iraq

and the battle for Afghanistan are clearly part of that war on terror.

And if you want to talk about terror, how terrible could it be that

what we have discovered happened to two of our fine soldiers, Kristian

Menchaca and Thomas Lowell Tucker, who were slaughtered and butchered

by our enemy, and we are just learning of the horror of what they did

to those poor young men, those heroes, those American heroes who were

willing to stand in the gap and be counted so that the people of Iraq

can do what they have done, form up a government, make that government

functional, get that government to where it is operational so that we

can meet our goal.

Our goal is a free Iraq, a democratic Iraq, because, as the President

says, when we have free democratic countries, we don't have disputes

with those countries that go to war. We are trying to advance the cause

of freedom around the world and protect ourselves from people who would

slaughter our citizens of this country.

This is not warfare that we are talking about of these people. We are

abiding by the rules of war; they are abiding by the rules of

terrorism, which is no rule. And that is why we have to continue to

take this fight to the enemy where they are until we have established a

victory for the United States. And I honestly believe that victory is

on the horizon.

I have made three trips to Iraq. I have visited with individual

soldiers in Iraq. They are proud of their mission, they are proud of

their accomplishments, they are proud of the things that they do for

the Iraqi public. They have stories to share, as one soldier shared

with me who was in the hospital and had a rose there with him, about a

little girl who gave him that rose and said thank you. He didn't

understand the language she was speaking, but he knew it meant thank

you.

These troops are doing humanitarian as well as soldierly efforts to

make life for the Iraqi people better. But, more importantly, we as

American citizens should never tolerate an enemy that would butcher our

troops. If there is any amount of decency in these people, they would

at least abide by simple, simple rules of war. But they don't. We have

had beheadings. We have had slaughter and mutilation of our American

corpses.

Mr. Speaker, we are on the right side of Iraq. I am proud that the

4th Infantry Division, which is in my district, and the 1st Calvary

Division have been active participants in making life better for the

Iraqi public. And, Mr. Speaker, I honor them by standing here today and

say I fully support America's war on terror and the war in Iraq. And I

apologize that I was not here for the debate, but I am grateful for all

those who stood up for the United States of America's effort in the

battle of Iraq.