Mr. Speaker, the news media is quick to provide

gratuitous coverage of anti-war protests in Europe and elsewhere. They

are quick to provide a forum for critics of U.S. policy in Iraq and

even quicker to highlight the problems, misfortunes, and missteps of

our coalition forces in Iraq. What they rarely do, however, is to

highlight the contributions and valor of our coalition soldiers.

Take, for example, the case of Salvadoran Corporal Samuel Toloza.

According to a recent Associated Press story,

The story goes on,

According to the reports, Toloza and 16 other members were trapped by

members of Muqtada al-Sadr's al-Mahdi militia. They initially did not

fire their weapons for several hours, for fear of inflicting civilian

casualties, despite the fact that insurgents were peppering the group

with small arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades. Finally, after

fighting back, the group, comprised of Salvadoran and American

soldiers, ran out of ammunition. Faced with mounting casualties, they

placed wounded soldiers on transports and tried to make their way back

to the base. Unfortunately, they ran into a contingent of about 10

insurgents on the way. That is when Toloza, out of ammunition, rushed

the insurgents with nothing but his knife, buying enough time for

reinforcements to arrive.

Toloza reportedly said,

Phil Kosnett, who heads the Coalition Provisional Authority in Najaf,

also has nothing but praise for the nearly 400 Salvadoran troops

fighting shoulder to shoulder with American troops in Iraq. In fact, he

is so impressed with their valor and dedication to duty, he has

nominated six of them for the Bronze Star, and for good reason. The AP

story goes on to explain that Kosnett himself believes he owes his life

to them. Salvadoran troops, the story continues,

Mr. Speaker, let us pay tribute to the sacrifices and heroism of our

soldiers, as well as those of our allies, like Corporal Toloza, for

their efforts and contributions to protecting freedom and on their

efforts in the war on terror.