By “extreme circumstances” he meant what is often called the “ticking-bomb” scenario: A deadly terror attack is looming, and you can prevent it only by getting the information quickly. Torture might force him to talk, thereby saving thousands of innocent lives. May he be tortured.

Many Americans would say yes without hesitating. Some would argue that torturing a terrorist is not nearly as wrong as refusing to do so and having another 9/11 occur. Others would insist that monsters of Mohammed’s ilk deserve no decency.

As an indignant reader (one of many) wrote to me after last week’s column on the cruel abuse of some U.S. detainees. “The terrorists . . . would cut your heart out and stuff it into the throat they would probably slit open. Why not torture detainees, if it will produce the information we need?”

Here’s why:

First, because torture, as noted, is unambiguously illegal—illegal under a covenant the United States ratified, illegal under Federal law, and illegal under protocols of civilizational dating back to the Magna Carta.

Second, because torture is notoriously unreliable. Many people will say anything to make a torture interrogator happy, so the torture will yield no matter what is done to them. Yes, sometimes torture produces vital information. But it can also produce false leads and desperate fiction. The ticking-bomb case, bad information is every bit as deadly as no information.

Third, because torture is never limited to just the guilty. The case for razors and electric shock rests on the premise that the prisoner is a knowable terrorist like Mohammed or Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. But most of the inmates in military prisons are nothing of the kind. Commanders in Guantanamo acknowledge that hundreds of their prisoners pose no danger and have no useful information. How much abuse reported to date involved men who were guilty only of being in the wrong place at the wrong time?

And fourth, because torture is a dangerously slippery slope. Electric shocks and beatings are justified if they can prevent, another 9/11. But what if the shocks and beating don’t produce the needed information? Is it OK to break a finger? To cut off a hand? To gouge out his son’s eyes? Or raping his daughter in his presence? If that’s what it will take to make him talk, to defuse the ticking bomb, isn’t it worth it? No. Torture is never worth it. Some things we don’t do, not because they never work, not because they aren’t “deserved,” but because our very right to call ourselves decent human beings depends in part on not doing them. Torture is in that category. We can win our war against the barbarians without becoming barbaric in the process.

RECOGNIZING ERIN ROBBNET, WINNER OF TEXAS VALUES VISUAL ARTS COMPETITION

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 5, 2005

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Erin Robnett, an eighth grader at Crowner Middle School of Comal, located in the 26th Congressional District of Texas, for being one of the winners of the Texas Values Arts Competition. This is truly an outstanding accomplishment for Erin. More than 250 students from Plano, Denton, Lewisville and surrounding communities entered the contest. Over Time is the name of Erin’s piece which represents changes that have occurred during Texas’ history. With Erin’s win, she received a savings bond from Huffines Auto Dealerships.

Erin’s piece had the pecan tree, mocking bird, and bluebonnet as the Alamo and a soldier standing where the head piece would be. The head piece is half complete representing Texas’ past and present.

Erin Robnett’s talents are not only a testament to her artistic skill but also a stellar example of the cultural arts performed. She has been rewarded when combining a core curriculum with study in the arts. I am proud of the educational system in Texas, especially our students, and involved parents and teachers at Crowner Middle School, who commit their time and to fostering growth of our communities. And I wanted to extend a special thank you to Huffines Automotive for their generous contribution to these aspiring students.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JEAN ALLARD

HON. MARILYN N. MUSGRAVE OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 5, 2005

Mrs. MUSGRAVE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Jean Allard, a lifelong servant and supporter of agricultural industry and to Larimer County, Colorado.

Jean was born in Alamosa, Colorado. She came to Fort Collins at the age of five where she grew up on a farm and graduated from Fort Collins High School in 1938. She attended Colorado State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, (today it would be known as Colorado State University). She studied home economics and was a textile major. Jean was active in sports such as basketball, field hockey, softball and swimming.

Jean graduated in 1942. Jean made all of her own clothes during high school and college, which is evidence of her creativity and willingness to work hard. She comes from a family with a strong work ethic. Her grandparents, James and Jane Ross, homesteaded in Fort Collins when they came from Scotland in 1867. Jean’s family grew grain, hay, and raised purebred Hereford cattle. Their original homestead remained on 1600 Horsetooth Road through the 1980’s.

Jean met Amos Allard at Fort Collins High School and they married on July 18, 1941. Their time together as a newlywed couple was short-lived as Amos was soon drafted into the Navy during World War II in 1944.

After Jean graduated from Colorado A&M, they moved to the Allard family ranch in Jackson County, Colorado where they raised Herefords. In 1962 they sold their ranch and moved back to Larimer County.

The Allards bought a 297-acre farm in Loveland, west of the current Hewlett-Packard facility.

On their property, Walt Clark Middle School was built, 3 churches and private ranches have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places including a 1836 home in Loch-Lon (Lake Meadow Land). Jean was instrumental in the development of Big Thompson senior housing in Loveland. She also sold the lots in
Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of a distinguished organization the Council of Jewish Organizations of Flatbush. It is an honor to represent the Council of Jewish Organizations of Flatbush in the House of Representatives and it behooves us to pay tribute to their selfless endeavors of more than a quarter century.

Mr. Speaker, the Council of Jewish Organizations of Flatbush, was founded twenty six years ago to assist families in need in the greater Brooklyn area. Over the course of its many years of dedication to the Brooklyn community, The Council of Jewish Organizations of Flatbush has truly emerged as a premier organization committed to assisting those who have nowhere else to turn.

Under the leadership of their Executive Director, Rabbi Yechezkel Pikus, The Council of Jewish Organizations of Flatbush has established itself as Brooklyn's central address for social services, immigration services and many forms of crucial emergency assistance.

The Council of Jewish Organizations of Flatbush has been instrumental in creating successful employment programs and developing Small Business services. Through the Leader Family Employment Center and the South Brooklyn Business Outreach Center, they have empowered people with the tools to succeed in their professional endeavors. Additionally, they are renowned for providing vital outreach to the elderly and homebound with particular attention and sensitivity to Holocaust survivors. They have also developed a scholarship fund to send children from disadvantaged families to summer camp.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is incumbent on this body to recognize the achievements of the Council of Jewish Organizations of Flatbush. Their uncompromising commitment to Jewish ideals and ethics is an inspiration for us all.

Mr. Speaker, may our country continue to benefit from the civic actions of the Council of Jewish Organizations of Flat bush and community groups similar to them.