that I thought it would be best if I wrote my reasons for joining the Army on my page for all to see. First, the more accurate question is why I volunteered to go to Iraq. After all, I joined the Army a week after we declared war on Saddam's government with the intention of going to Iraq. Now, after years of training and preparation, I am finally here.

Much has changed in the last three years. The criminal Ba'ath regime has been replaced by an insurgency fueled by Iraq's neighbors who hope to partition Iraq for their own ends. This is coupled with the ever present transnational militant Islamist movement which has seized upon Iraq as the greatest way to kill Americans, along with anyone else they happen to be standing near. What was once a paralyzed state of fear is now the staging ground for one of the largest transformations of power and ideology the Middle East has experienced since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Thanks to Iran, Syria, and other enlightened local actors, this transformation will be plagued by interregional hatred and genocide. And I am now in the center of this.

Is this why I joined?

Yes. Much has been said about America's intentions in overthrowing Saddam Hussein and seeking to establish a new state based upon political representation and individual rights. Many have framed the paradigm through which they view the conflict around one-word explanations such as ''oil'' or ''terrorism,'' favoring the one which best serves their political persuasion. I did the same thing, and anyone who knew me before I joined knows that I am quite aware and at times sympathetic to the arguments against the war in Iraq. If you think the only way a person could bring themselves to volunteer for this war is through sheer desperation or blind obedience then consider me the exception (though there are countless like me).

I joined the fight because it occurred to me that many modern day ''humanists'' who claim to possess a genuine concern for human beings throughout the world are in fact quite content to allow their fellow ''global citizens'' to suffer under the most hideous state apparatuses and conditions. Their excuses used to be my excuses. When asked why we shouldn't confront the Ba'ath party, the Taliban or the various other tyrannies throughout this world, my answers would allude to vague notions of cultural tolerance (forcing women to wear a veil and stay indoors is such a quaint cultural tradition), the sanctity of national sovereignty (how eager we internationalists are to throw up borders to defend dictatorships!) or even a creeping suspicion of America's intentions. When all else failed, I would retreat to my fragile moral ecosystem that years of living in peace and liberty had provided me. I would write off war because civilian casualties were guaranteed, or temporary alliances with illiberal forces would be made, or tank fuel was toxic for the environment. My fellow ''humanists'' and I would relish contently in our self righteous declaration of opposition against all military campaigns against dictatorships, congratulating one another for refusing to taint that aforementioned fragile moral ecosystem that many still cradle with all the revolutionary tenacity of the members of Rage against the Machine and Green Day. Others would point to America's historical support of Saddam Hussein, citing it as hypocritical that we would now vilify him as a thug and a tyrant. Upon explaining that we did so to ward off the fiercely Islamist Iran, which was correctly identified as the greater threat at the time, eyes are rolled and hypocrisy is declared. Forgetting that America sided with Stalin to defeat Hitler, who was promptly confronted once the Nazis were destroyed, America's initial engagement with Saddam and other regional actors is identified as the ultimate argument against America's moral crusade.

And maybe it is. Maybe the reality of politics makes all political action inherently crude and immoral. Or maybe it is these adventures in philosophical masturbation that prevent people from ever taking any kind of effective action against men like Saddam Hussein. One thing is for certain, as disagreeable or as confusing as my decision to enter the fray may be, consider what peace vigils against genocide have accomplished lately. Consider that there are 19 year old soldiers from the Midwest who have never touched a college campus or a protest who have done more to uphold the universal legitimacy of representative government and individual rights by placing themselves between Iraqi voting lines and homicidal religious fanatics. Often times it is less about how clean your actions are and more about how pure your intentions are.

So that is why I joined. In the time it took for you to read this explanation, innocent people your age have suffered under the crushing misery of tyranny. Every tool of philosophical advancement and communication that we use to develop our opinions about this war are denied to countless human beings on this planet, many of whom live under the regimes that have, in my opinion, been legitimately targeted for destruction. Some have allowed their resentment of the President to stir silent applause for setbacks in Iraq. Others have ironically decried the war because it has tied up our forces and prevented them from confronting criminal regimes in Sudan, Uganda, and elsewhere.

I simply decided that the time for candid discussions of the oppressed was over, and I joined.

In digesting this posting, please remember that America's commitment to overthrow Saddam Hussein and his sons existed before the current administration and would exist into our future children's lives had we not acted. Please remember that the problems that plague Iraq today were set in motion centuries ago and were up until now held back by the most cruel of cages. Don't forget that human beings have a responsibility to one another and that Americans will always have a responsibility to the oppressed. Don't overlook the obvious reasons to disagree with the war but don't cheapen the moral aspects either. Assisting a formerly oppressed population in converting their torn society into a plural, democratic one is dangerous and difficult business, especially when being attacked and sabotaged from literally every direction. So if you have anything to say to me at the end of this reading, let it at least include ''Good Luck.''—Lt. Mark J. Daily, United States Army.

CONGRATULATING ST. JUDE MEDICAL CENTER ON ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. EDWARD R. ROYCE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 5, 2007

Mr. ROYCE. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the sisters, physicians and staff of St. Jude Medical Center, I rise to congratulate the hospital on its 50th Anniversary.

In 1957, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange opened a new hospital in Fullerton to continue their remarkable ministry of compassion and healing. Since then, St. Jude Medical Center, a nonprofit, faith-based facility, has grown into one of Southern California's most respected and technologically-advanced hospitals. And the same excellence that it strives for within its walls, is apparent in its efforts to touch lives outside its walls.

St. Jude continuously improves the health and quality of life of the people in the communities it serves. One example is the St. Jude Neighborhood Health Center. Located in an underserved area, this new facility offers a full range of outpatient care to uninsured and low-income families.

St. Jude's commitment to improving lives is evident in each of the 14 hospitals within the St. Joseph Health System (SJHS), the Catholic healthcare ministry of the sisters. In Southern California, SJHS is considered the pre-eminent healthcare network and includes four hospitals, outpatient facilities, hospice and home health care agencies, and physician groups.

EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2007

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 800) to amend the National Labor Relations Act to establish an efficient system to enable employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations, to provide for mandatory injunctions for unfair labor practices during organizing efforts, and for other purposes:

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Chairman, I rise today in support of a long overdue measure, the Employee Free Choice Act. This necessary bill gives America's hard workers basic rights that they have been denied for over 70 years.

My father was an ironworker, and a member of his local union. I saw firsthand the struggles employees went through in order to organize their workplace. I also saw how easy it was and how easy it still is to fire union organizers with impunity. This unlawful practice happens all the time, and the worst that can possibly happen to the employer is a slap on the wrist.

I was also a proud member of a union. I was a teacher and a guidance counselor in New York City, where I became a member of the American Federation of Teachers. I learned the personal benefits to collective bargaining, and I discovered the security of having thousands of other brothers and sisters of the union behind me if I ever needed them.

Unions were an integral part in making this Nation the economic superpower it is. And while this bill will not put laborers on an even footing with employers, it will help to bridge the chasm between workers' rights and corporate rights.

Madam Chairman, we owe unions and their members a massive debt of gratitude for everything they have done for this country. We can start paying back that debt by passing the Employee Free Choice Act. I strongly support this measure, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.