

growth of poverty in the United States. Today, President Bush addressed the opening of the United Nations World Summit on Poverty and Reform. Earlier this month, the U.N. released a shocking report on global inequality that is critical of American policies towards poverty abroad as well as here at home.

Among its many startling conclusions, the U.N. report reveals that infant mortality has been rising in the United States for the past 5 years and now is the same as Malaysia. America's African American children are twice as likely as whites to die before their first birthday.

The U.N. report also notes that although the U.S. leads the world in health care spending, this high level goes disproportionately to the care of wealthier Americans. It has not been targeted to eradicate health disparities based on race, wealth and the State of residence.

Countries that spend substantially less than the United States have, on average, a healthier population.

For a century in the U.S. there has been a sustained decline in the number of children who died before their first birthday. But since 2000 this trend has sadly been reversed.

The U.S. is the only wealthy country with no universal health insurance system. Shame on us.

The United States, along with Mexico, has the dubious distinction of seeing its child poverty rate increase to more than 20 percent.

The U.S. ranked 17 out of the 18 OECD countries in the highest level of human and income poverty. The only OECD country the U.S. is ranked ahead is the country of Italy. Even Ireland ranks higher.

Poverty is a systemic issue, and we need to move on it now.

ERADICATE POVERTY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHLMANN of New York). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, I simply want to thank my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus who are taking the time and consistently putting forward this message that poverty and race and the convergence of them in this country must be an issue that we deal with.

I found it extremely ironic as Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus that it has taken a disaster like Katrina to refocus attention on the issue of poverty in this country. In fact, it has been interesting to see how this has evolved, because the Congressional Black Caucus has been dealing with this issue of poverty and the disparity in economic means between African Americans and other Americans in this country this entire year.

We developed an agenda in January of this year which was printed, re-

leased, covered and written about in the press. Press people were calling me, saying you have positioned this in a different way than it has been positioned in the past. And then all of a sudden what I found was quietly into the night the discussion about poverty and the convergence of poverty and race and class went quietly into the background.

What has been interesting since Katrina occurred is that the same press people who wrote about our positioning of this issue have been on the phone to me, saying why have you all not been talking about this? Why have you not kept this issue of race and class and poverty in front of us? We should have been talking about this.

And I have to remind them that, yes, look, you wrote about this in January and February of this year, and you must have forgotten about it. We have not forgotten about it. We have been talking about it all year.

It did not take a hurricane to make us patently aware that poverty exists in this country. In fact, what I would submit to you is if the same kind of catastrophe occurred in any city in America and the same amount of advance notice was given to the people of that city, the people who would get out would be the high-income people. They would heed the notice. They would have the resources to move away from the disaster that is coming down the pike. And the people who would not be able to heed the notice and the entreaties to get out of harm's way would be poor people; and in every city in America, every place in America they would be disproportionately African American, Hispanic and other minorities.

That is not only true of a hurricane. When you are poor, you cannot get away from bad health conditions, because you cannot take the preventative steps that you need to take to get treatment. When you are poor, you do not have the option of sending your kids to private school to get them away from bad schools. You do not have the option of doing a lot of things that we take for granted in this country.

So maybe my staff member is right. We do not like to talk about that in this country. We do not like to talk about poverty in this country because we have this notion that we all are equal. We are not equal except in writing.

Under our Constitution, we are created equal. We are supposed to be given equal opportunity, but when somebody starts at the 70 yard line in a race of 100 yards and somebody else is starting at the zero yard line, making up that difference is an impossible task, and we have got to recommit ourselves to making up that difference. It cannot be done just by people running faster and harder and longer. We have got to commit ourselves as a Nation to fighting poverty and its convergence with race.

WINNING THE WAR IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Speaker for the opportunity to address the House this evening, really by way of reporting on a congressional delegation trip that I had the privilege of leading at the very turn of this month, the very last days of August, the very first days of September.

Our journey took us on a diplomatic mission through Egypt. We met with military commanders at Central Command in Qatar. But clearly the most memorable and meaningful time of our trip, which included the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING), who we will hear from in a few moments, and three of our Democratic colleagues, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DAVIS), the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. CASE), and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCINTYRE), it took us for two full days into Iraq.

I rise tonight anxious to hear my colleagues' reflections on this trip and trips that they have taken as the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) will join us. But I rise today to make a very simple assertion, that from what I saw on the ground, flying into Baghdad on C-130s, flying around to outpost bases far outside the Green Zone in Baghdad, far outside the safety net of the center of our operations in Iraq, what I herald from the soldiers, not just in official meetings but in informal interactions and what I heard from our commanders was a simple message: We are winning the war in Iraq.

□ 1745

I know, Mr. Speaker, that that is a very different message than most of the American people, some of whom may be looking in tonight, are getting from national television and from the newsprint.

The headlines today were resplendent with over 100 killed in a series of car bombs and suicide attacks in Iraq; but let me say emphatically again, from our meetings with General Abizaid at CENTCOM, to General Petraeus in Baghdad, our meetings with members of the 3rd Infantry Division and A Company of the 138th Signal Battalion from Indiana in Ramadi, I heard it again and again: we are winning the war in Iraq.

That is not a slogan. It is an objective fact, based on a few simple observations, because as many who are strenuous critics of the war would assert, we have endured casualties, the precise number still less than 2,000, but every single loss, including the 10 heroes from my congressional district, is grievous to every single family. I will not for a moment trivialize a single American loss; but as we heard from one soldier after another, some with four stars, some with one, some with

corporal bars sitting on top of amphibious assault vehicles in Ramadi, as I was with Lance Corporal Ty Cotton, but soldiers understand that you do not define victory in war by the absence of casualties.

When the U.S. Marines went ashore in Okinawa in 1945, April, we lost 10,000 soldiers in that military engagement and we won. We won the battle on Okinawa. It remains one of the great military victories in American history, because as we lost 10,000 American soldiers, the Japanese lost 200,000 soldiers in the same engagement.

Let us begin there in the definition of victory in Iraq. While we have lost somewhere shy of 2,000 soldiers in 4 years of fighting, and today we have 140,000-some-odd soldiers within Iraq, according to information we received, enemy casualties run from 20 to 30 to one American casualty; and more compellingly to me as we were informed, the number of Iraqi military personnel fighting on our side in uniform compared to our casualties is three to one. Three Iraqis in uniform, fighting for their own freedom, have died for every American fighting for their freedom in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Beginning with that large statistic, Mr. Speaker, it is undeniable: we are winning the war in Iraq. As I will discuss later, literally hours before the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) and I and our colleagues touched down at the landing zone at the military base at Balad, there had been a mortar attack, a pretty typical engagement with the enemy, as near as was represented to us.

Two mortars were fired into the American base. They were tracked through extraordinary technology and professionalism from literally moments after they were fired, several thousand yards from the base. The incoming mortars were determined to be landing in an area where they did not threaten a significant amount of American military personnel. They did destroy two trucks, I believe, both of which were still on fire as we were landing on the base; but when we went into the command center at the Balad Air Base and saw the full report on that engagement, we learned that within 3 minutes of the launch of the mortars, American military personnel had identified where the mortars were fired.

Within minutes after that, American surveillance drones, known as Predators, flying overhead were able to surveil and identify up to 13 different insurgents who were making egress from the site where they had launched the mortar; and within 12 minutes from the time of the launch, all 13 of those insurgents were killed in a Hellfire missile attack on their location.

The intelligence, the military precision, no American casualties, 13 Iraqi casualties. We are winning the war in Iraq.

As we sat with General John Abizaid at Central Command in Qatar, pictured

here in this photograph, we had a very intense and intimate hour with the four star general at Central Command; and before I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING), my colleague, I want to share with my colleagues, without compromising any confidence, a conversation that I had with the general, which basically was derived from a recent stop that I made at the American Legion Hall in Selma, Indiana.

Mr. Speaker, Selma, Indiana, probably has the population of this House of Representatives when it is filled, maybe 500, 600 people. I popped into the Legion Hall about a week before I went to visit Iraq. I walked into the Legion Hall, and there were several guys, a few of them bellied up to the bar, a few more sitting around tables and chairs and playing cards; and as I said to General Abizaid, the guys at the Legion in Selma, Indiana, were concerned about what they were seeing on television. They wanted to know what is going on, did the soldiers over there have a cause, are we in this for the right reasons. I took by their meaning how are we doing in Iraq.

I told them I was leaving in about a week and I called the question and I had asked the brass and the regular soldiers. So I asked General Abizaid that very question. I said, General, what do I tell the guys in the Legion Hall in Selma, Indiana? Four Star General John Abizaid said in words that still ring in my ears, sitting at this table, he turned and looked at me, me here, him there, in his private office and he said, Congressman, you tell them we are winning the war in Iraq.

Then he explained it. He talked about that ratio of, yes, there are Americans that are dying, but 20 to 30 enemy insurgent soldiers are dying for every American that has fallen. Then he went on to point out that at no time in 4 years of fighting have we ever lost a military engagement to this enemy, never. Every time the enemy has engaged our forces, we have defeated them and defeated them summarily.

Another statistic that General Abizaid shared with me was the simple statement that we have never lost a full platoon in a military engagement with the enemy in this theater of combat.

He conceded that being a combat soldier, being a military man, knowing the ruthless nature of the perhaps even 10,000 insurgents that we are dealing with in Iraq, that he had assumed that maybe at this point they would have figured out how to launch and ambush, as they had done many, many times and maybe catch us unawares.

The Confederate Army caught the Union Army at Shiloh completely unawares. In war, people make mistakes, people end up exposed. The general basically said, in 4 years of fighting, I would have thought that they would have figured out a way to defeat a full platoon, but they have never done it. Every time they have engaged our forces, we have defeated the enemy.

He went on to say that the answer here is not entirely military; but, rather, that as we went out to Camp Caldwell along the Iranian border, as we went up to Balad, as we went out to Ramadi, we saw these are soldiers that are not only engaging the enemy successfully and not only defeating the enemy in military engagements, one after another, with professionalism and courage and precision, but they are also training Iraqi soldiers.

These are the two hands. The American soldier in Iraq today is doing the work of defeating the enemy, and at the same time, many of the same personnel are also training Iraqis to provide their own defense, and the statistics are rather overwhelming and impressive.

In the last 12 months, we have stood up in uniform over 100,000 Iraqi soldiers for the defense of their own country. Literally, 100 battalions have been stood up, a little bit more than 100 battalions, but roughly 100,000. As the general told us and the men on the ground told us who are training these soldiers, they are on track to stand up another 100,000 Iraqis within 12 months, Iraqis who would be able to take over their own security of their nation, both internal and ultimately external security.

Of the 100,000 Iraqis, roughly 30,000 of those are deploying every day with American soldiers. One full battalion, we were told, is fully independent and has to do with old tribal loyalties, and they can handle themselves and we let them handle themselves; but the balance of some nearly 29 battalions of nearly 1,000 men each are deploying either on point as we did along the Syrian border last week when literally Iraqi military personnel led the charge, defeating insurgents and killing insurgents along the Syrian border, or they are going right alongside with us.

So for those who want to minimize that, it is an extraordinary thing.

I will never forget it was Labor Day, the day that we were at the military base at Camp Caldwell near the Iranian border. So, of course, it is a military base, there was a Labor Day picnic going on. As the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) and the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. CASE) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DAVIS), who had an awful lot of Tennessee Volunteers there, National Guard from Tennessee, urged us, we went to the Labor Day picnic. What a sight it was to see the American military personnel letting off a little steam, of course playing blue grass music; but the most awesome thing was walking on to a volleyball court and half of the people playing volleyball in T-shirts and shorts were Iraqis. Here I am at a Labor Day picnic at a military installation, along the Iraq-Iran border, and half the people playing volleyball with the Americans were Iraqis, the people that we were training.

In fact, we learned there at Camp Caldwell that in a matter of 3 to 6

months, when the Tennessee Volunteers, the National Guard, head back to Tennessee, they are not going to be replaced by American military personnel. They are going to be replaced by Iraqis, which is a statement of success. It affirms we are winning the war in Iraq. We are standing up an army, 100,000 now, and 12 months, 200,000 Iraqis in uniform. We are defeating the enemy. We have never lost a platoon or a military engagement.

I say, Mr. Speaker, with great respect to my colleagues and anyone else listening in, we are winning the war in Iraq; and it is time the American people began to hear that and hear that consistently. We are winning the peace.

As we prepare, we met with Prime Minister Jafari, we met with the ministers of interior and defense. October 15, the people of Iraq will vote to ratify, and it is my fondest hope and prayer that they will ratify, a constitution of their own making. This standing up of a legitimate government in Iraq, the standing up of an independent army of Iraqis in Iraq, and ultimately, the drawing down of American troops as Iraqis take responsibility for their political and security future is in the cards. It is happening. I know it is not making it on the evening news, Mr. Speaker; but I have seen it with my own eyes. I have heard it from our soldiers, not a one of which does not believe in the mission.

I will yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) with this final thought. We must have talked to thousands of soldiers in the field, and I say that with absolute sincerity. We spoke to them in official meetings. We spoke to them on C-130s flying into the country. We talked to soldiers who knew where we were and who we were and soldiers who did not know who we were and knew that we would never see them again. I did not meet a single soldier anywhere in Iraq in the uniform of the United States of America who did not believe in this mission.

Every single soldier with whom I spoke said variations of the theme: we need to be here, sir; everything I have seen, we are doing what needs to be done; we have got to stop these guys right here.

We are winning the war in Iraq because of that kind of courage, that kind of determination. So allowing for my passion on this point, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING), a colleague who journeyed with us on this trip; and if I may say without embarrassing him, at a time when his own family was dealing with the tragic circumstances around Katrina, his own father-in-law, grandfather of his children, out of communication in New Orleans, but he was still willing to go into harm's way to be among the soldiers, and I commend him. I commend his wife, Melissa, for their dedication to our country.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I especially thank him for his leader-

ship in this body. As the chairman of the Republican Study Committee, the largest caucus in Congress, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE), my colleague, his leadership is second to none in this institution.

□ 1800

I am happy to call him my leader in the Republican Study Committee and to call him my friend. I was very grateful, Mr. Speaker, that he would invite me to join him on this trip over to Iraq.

It was very important for me, Mr. Speaker, that I travel over to Iraq. I thought it was important for a couple of reasons.

Number one, I thought it was very important to say "thank you" in person to the brave men and women who don our Nation's uniform and put themselves in harm's way so that we can live in a safer and more secure America. It was very important, I think, that these people hear in person, face to face, where they are sitting and fighting the battle for freedom and security, that they hear from us in person the Nation's gratitude for what they do.

I know it has been said before, but I do not know where our Nation finds such brave men and women to go and do this. It is so heartwarming that we in America have an all-volunteer military that produces such great men and women. So I wanted to thank these people in person.

Second of all, Mr. Speaker, as a Member of the United States Congress who has supported these troops in the field, we all know here in this institution that we are privy to a lot of briefings by three- and four-star generals. It is not that often, however, that we can get briefings from three- and four-stripe sergeants, those who are truly on the front lines of this effort; and I thought it was very important that I speak to these men and women as well.

I want to echo what my colleague had to say, and that is that we are winning this effort. That is not to deny the reality of what we see on the news every night and, as my colleague said, not to trivialize it, because the cost of this war is incredible. It is a terribly costly war in terms of blood and in terms of money. There is no denying that reality.

But in our living rooms back home, Mr. Speaker, and I come from Dallas, Texas, there is another reality that somehow never makes the 6 o'clock news, nor does it ever make the front page of my daily newspaper.

For example, no television station has ever shown up at my home in East Dallas at 8:30 p.m. to film either my wife or myself tucking our two children into bed in a safer, more secure America. No film crew has ever come to film that.

In my home of Dallas, no film crew has ever gone to the Northpark Shopping Mall and reported, "Today there was no suicide bomber at Northpark

Mall." You will never read that story back home in Dallas, Texas.

You will never read a newspaper headline saying, "Today no one rammed a car filled with explosives through Mesquite Poteet High School." You will never read that story.

Yet I believe that because of what we are doing in fighting this war against terrorism, because of Operation Iraqi Freedom, we do live in a safer and more secure America.

Now it is no accident there has not been another attack since 9/11. That is not to say one could not happen tomorrow, but we will never win this war playing defense. We will only win this war playing offense. For the sake of our Nation, for the same of this generation and the next, we must win this war on terror. And there is no substitute for actually going to a place, Mr. Speaker, and talking to people and observing for yourself.

There are a lot of different statistics I could quote in how we are winning the war on terror, but let me share a few stories, a few observations I have which really spoke volumes to me.

First of all, traveling around Baghdad in an Army helicopter, all over Baghdad we saw the rooftops riddled with satellite dishes, something that was illegal in the regime of Saddam Hussein. The seeds of freedom of speech that have been planted in that country are fundamental to growing this democracy, this nascent democracy in this very vital part of the world. Satellite dishes all over Baghdad with now multiple sources of information and news that has not been seen in Baghdad in decades and decades and decades.

Now one of the programs they apparently receive on this satellite dish, and I did not see it myself but I had a soldier describe it to me, is a program entitled "Angry Mothers." I guess in America the show would be part of our reality TV series. But when we watch American television, we only get the indication that all of the Iraqi people are either insurgents and terrorists or they cower in their homes. But that is not the reality that we saw. In this program entitled "Angry Mothers," apparently when some of the insurgents are captured, they allow the mothers of those who have been wounded or killed by the insurgents to confront them. And although I do not know nor do I care to know how to curse in Arabic, I assume a fair amount of the show has to be censored.

We never see those pictures of the Iraqi people themselves confronting the insurgents and confronting them about their evil deeds and their evil purposes, but, Mr. Speaker, it takes place. It takes place every day, and it is taking place throughout the Iraqi television network.

Something else. In going to these various military bases that my colleague, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE), described, whether it be Camp Caldwell or Camp Liberty, it was described to us that about 6 months

ago there might be two or three mortar attacks every day, and today it may be two or three a week. Mr. Speaker, it is still war, but it is progress. It is progress.

We heard a tragic story, and we have seen it in the news before, how at one of the many recruitment stations, where the Iraqi people will volunteer to help rebuild their country and be a part of their military service or to be a part of their police force, how at one of these recruitment stations the insurgents successfully bombed and killed many of the recruits. Well, Mr. Speaker, 24 hours later they had that recruitment station back open, and the exact same number of recruits showed up again. They knew what had happened. They wanted to be a part of building the new Iraq. Again, Mr. Speaker, I believe that is progress. That is helping win this war.

Human intelligence is a very vital aspect of fighting this war. Now, increasingly, more of the Iraqi people are helping locate the bad guys. We heard a story about an insurgent who was armed and who broke into a house. When Iraqi and American troops, working together, managed to go to this home and knock on the door, this insurgent informed the troops that he was the cousin from Baghdad of the lady of the house. Notwithstanding the fact she knew this insurgent had a gun, she said, "No, sir, he is a terrorist. Take him away." That might not have happened 6 months ago in this country, but it is happening today, Mr. Speaker. And that is more and more progress in this war against terrorists.

Mr. Speaker, again let me just go back and talk a little about all the troops we met and reinforce a point that was made by my colleague from Indiana. Again, I am just so proud that I had an opportunity to meet with these brave men and women.

I remember hopping on a C-130 with a corporal out of Las Vegas, Nevada. He had just come back from 2 weeks of R&R, rest and relaxation, back home, and he has a family. He is married, and he has children. I said, "Corporal, I guess you wish you were still back home." And he said, "No, sir. Today my unit needs me more than my family." Mr. Speaker, that is the incredible level of commitment that we see.

I remember meeting a young captain from Indiana, the home State of my colleague who led this delegation. We asked him about what does it mean to him and his family to be there. He said, very sincerely, "I hate being here. I hate being here, but I love my job, and I know how important it is to my country and my family that I succeed." Mr. Speaker, that is an incredible, incredible level of dedication that we have.

So some days, Mr. Speaker, it may be three steps forward and two step backwards. I am not here to say that this is easy work. I am not here to say that it is going to happen tomorrow. We cannot pick up democracy through a drive-in window. There is no such thing as

McDemocracy. It takes a long time to develop it. But, Mr. Speaker, it is not democracies that threaten us, it is these authoritarian, despotic regimes that harbor terrorists, that train terrorists, that finance terrorists, and that seek weapons of mass destruction.

I agree with our President, though some do not, but I agree with him that there are some threats that you must meet before they fully develop.

Who, looking back at the pages of history, if they had an opportunity to stop Nazism and Adolf Hitler in 1930 would not have done it? Who would not have done it? If you had an opportunity to stop what the Soviet Union did in taking over Eastern Europe and holding it captive for 50 years, who would not have stopped that?

Well, I think we have an opportunity to stop this terrorist movement that is taking place and emanating from the Mideast. But we as an American people have to realize that this is not a sprint, Mr. Speaker, this is a marathon. It is a marathon.

The cost of cutting and running is too high, because the elements that would come back and take over in Iraq are the same people who were part of the Hussein regime. They are the same people who put together the despotic regime in Afghanistan. These are the people that would threaten the lives of our fellow countrymen, and that cannot be tolerated.

So, again, Mr. Speaker, I was very proud to be a part of this delegation led by the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE). I learned so much. I am so proud of our soldiers, and I wish everybody could see the day-to-day progress, this kind of sloppy, halting, but inexorable progress towards democracy that is taking place in Iraq today. Like I said before, some days it is three steps forward and two steps backward, but it is progress. We see it, we know it is happening each and every day, and because of it, I believe ultimately our country will be more safe and more secure.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will yield back to my friend from Indiana.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for his powerful reflections on an extraordinary trip.

Before I yield to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING), who led his own delegation in August to Operation Iraqi Freedom, I wanted to reflect for just a few minutes, Mr. Speaker, on a few of the soldiers I met from Indiana, the kind of people the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) was just talking about.

In fact, a very detailed version of this appears on my Web site, MikePence.House.gov on our Web log, or blog as it has come to be known. I literally sat down on the airplane flying back from Iraq and typed up my reflections and remembrances while they were still fresh, and I want to excerpt them for just a second, if I can.

This first photograph is my conversations with Sergeant Matt Wright, an

extraordinary young man from Muncie, Indiana, and part of A Company of the 138th Signal Battalion stationed in Ramadi. To speak about the kind of dedication that my colleague just reflected on, as I talked to Sergeant Wright, he said, with the same kind of smile you see in this photograph, he said, "Yes, sir, it is good to have you here. Yesterday was supposed to be my wedding day." And I said, "Did you put it off?" He said, "No, sir. We moved it up 9 months so we could be married a couple of months before I deployed for 18 months to serve my country in Iraq." I mean, here was a man's dedication to his beautiful wife and his dedication to his country on full display. Sergeant Matt Wright.

We began making our way to the mess hall that evening, Mr. Speaker, in Ramadi. And Ramadi is principally the location of an enormous division of Marines who engage every night in the very dangerous patrols of this provincial capital of the west, of Iraq. In fact, many of the military commanders with whom we spoke said, even more than Baghdad, in the months ahead as we make that steady, to use my colleague's term, sometimes halting progress towards democracy and stability, much of the future fighting will take place in Ramadi, and it will be done by these brave Marines.

□ 1815

So we stopped on our way to the mess hall, and these five politicians started reaching up and shaking hands on these enormous amphibious vehicles, and suddenly I heard a voice say, Are you not going to say hello to the only Hoosiers here?

I stopped and looked up and saw this bright, freckled red head, a huge, strapping Marine named Ty Cotton from Anderson, Indiana. Ty leaned down and helped me climb up on that vehicle where we had a chance to visit for just a few minutes. As I talked to Ty about his mom, Marla, back in Anderson, I promised to look in on her and give her a report on how well he looked. We heard the commander in the background yell, 5 minutes.

I asked if there was anything we could do, if he had everything that he needed. And he said shyly, Sir, we have everything we need. I am with a great unit. Then I heard a shout, 2 minutes.

As I started to move toward the edge, I said, Ty, I want you to know the people back in Anderson are praying for you, and he looked at me with that shy smile, and he said, Glad to do it, sir.

We made our way to the mess hall to meet with the balance of the 138 Signal Battalion. I do not know what I expected when we went there. I sure did not expect to see this bright, good-looking group of men and women, faces shining like the morning, morale high, proud to be where they are, even though they are 8,000 miles away from their families. I sure did not expect to hear the optimism in their voices. One of the soldiers said it got way better in

Ramadi in the last year. To hear soldiers say it has got way better, the people on the ground living it, was very encouraging to me.

I was profoundly moved when one soldier after another asked about the families and communities affected by Hurricane Katrina. These soldiers are 8,000 miles away from their families, moms and dads, wives and kids, in 110 degree heat, and they are asking about New Orleans. They are Americans. They are an extraordinary lot.

As our Black Hawk helicopter lifted off from Ramadi, I watched the front lines on the war on terror, and I felt humbled by the men and women of the 138th that you see in this picture; and I felt more confident than ever in the justness of our cause and the war against terror and the belief it is vital to provide these men and women the resources to succeed. That begins by understanding that they are winning the war now, based on their professionalism, their commitment, their courage and the faith I encouraged in them, faith in God, faith in the country, and I say again, their faith in this mission.

I am going to go home this weekend and spend time with people at home, but I know the most bone-jarring thing that I have said to my constituents and colleagues, in two 20-plus hour days in Iraq, I did not meet a soldier who did not believe in the mission. General Mark O'Neill of the 3rd ID, I looked at him and said we appreciate your leadership. He said to me, Sir, it is a privilege to be here, but we have to stop these guys right here.

General Abizaid said to us, I think the most unreported story in America is how dangerous these guys are. If they get hold of this country the way they want to and become a petroleum power, these guys are the Nazis from the 1920s.

To understand that in this environment, as tough as it is, these soldiers are winning the war in Iraq. They are winning it because we have never lost a military tactical engagement. We have never so much as lost a platoon. They are winning it because we have stood up 100,000 Iraqis in uniform in the last 12 months and are on track to stand up another 100,000 in the next 12. And they are winning it because democracy is steadily advancing in a nation conditioned by thousands of years of authoritarianism, but it is advancing nonetheless with a constitutional referendum around the corner. We are winning the war in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING), who has been a tireless advocate of our soldiers in the field in Iraq and Afghanistan. He has just returned from leading his own delegation there, and I thought it altogether fitting that he and other colleagues associated with his travels might seize the opportunity of this Special Order to reinforce our firsthand account of what is really happening in Iraq, because what is happening is we are winning in Iraq.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) and count it a privilege to stand on the floor of the United States Congress with the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) and a number of our colleagues who have come down here to speak out in defense of our country.

I consider it also a duty to go to the Middle East from time to time and Iraq in particular and visit with our soldiers over there. The first time I went was in October 2003. I had some trepidation on my way over there, not so much concerned about myself because once the decision is made to go, security is out of my hands and into the hands of others. But I did not want to be in the way. I did not want to go over there and have people who had a duty to do look and say, What is that Member of Congress doing here? Is he here for political reasons? What is his gig, so to speak.

I had that same feeling when I went to the hospitals at Bethesda and Walter Reed to visit the wounded soldiers. I asked myself, how are they going to react? I found out that they are glad to see a face that cares, a face that is interested in what they are doing and is part of the team. We are part of the team.

As the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) mentioned, the kind of spirit, the shining faces that are there, and I wrote down a couple of things. It shifted my agenda here. One is it is an image that I will never forget and it was perhaps a year ago. I went to the hospital at Bethesda and I am scheduled to do that about every quarter to make sure that I have the feel for the kind of sacrifice that these brave men and women are making.

I remember walking into a room. There was a Marine captain in the room who had lost a leg right below the knee. His spirit was good, and he was strong. I said, what is in your future? And he said, I am going to stay in the Marine Corps. I am going to get therapy and get this prosthetic leg and be going, and maybe I cannot get back into combat; but I am a Marine, and that is my profession.

I asked, Is anything else going to change? He said, Yes, my wife and I are going to start a family right away. That is the kind of dedication that is there.

Also, one of the other anecdotes that came to me, when I visited with the 168th National Guard unit out of Sheldon, Iowa, and fortunately I was able to break bread in the mess hall with them, a couple of them had been back home for their 14 days of leave. They were the two with suntans, and they had gotten their suntan in Iowa. One of them said, I have been here, serving here for months and I went home for my 14 days of leave and I started watching television. I thought gracious, things have gotten a lot worse since when I went on leave. I wonder what it is going to be like when I go

back. He came back, and it was just the same as when he left.

The question I continually get asked is, It is our duty to fight the enemy, but why do we have to fight the United States media at the same time?

The media is always looking for the very worst component of the worst element they can find so they can get the maximum kind of sensationalism, but not get that broad perspective of what is going on over there.

So I went over on the 15th of August and came back on the 20th. The heat got up to 128 degrees. A piece of information that I received from those Iowa farm boys, I could never figure out why is it nothing was growing along the irrigation ditches, why there was water and not a blade of grass next to it. Those Iowa farmers, they put a thermometer in the soil, 154 degrees was the soil temperature. We plant corn at 54 degrees. At 154 degrees, it sterilizes the seed and would cook anything to some of the level that they do in the restaurants in this city.

We went to some unusual places. I asked to go to some of those places because I think we need to hear some from that area. I believe we were the first congressional delegation to go down to Basra in the south. We went in there to that region, and there are two ports where the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers come together. There are two ports and most of the water freight that comes in and out of Iraq has to go through there. We visited a port where there is an Iraqi manager who has been there for 8 months. He increased production by 400 percent in 8 months. He did not understand the free enterprise system, however. He did not understand that gross receipts were not profit; you had to subtract the expenses. They are missing a little free enterprise culture, and we can help them with that.

I took a ride in an Iraqi navy patrol boat. Most Americans do not think about Iraq having a navy. They have an 800-man navy being trained by the British Royal Navy. We took a flight right around the harbor. They are proud of what they do.

I was standing there in the headquarters at the command central, the command headquarters in Basra of all of the provinces in the southern part of Iraq, and I looked around me and I started to identify where some of these soldiers were from. I started to look at the flag on their shoulders. In that group of about 15 or 18 soldiers, I picked out soldiers from the U.S., Britain, Australia, Iraq, they are part of the coalition, they are with us, the Netherlands, Romania, and Denmark, all in that cluster of 15 or 18 soldiers, that many different countries represented. I hear the criticism, this is not a coalition. Yes, it is. They are working with each other.

I received a briefing from the British general, General Denton. He filled us in on the current events and the tactics. It is fairly stable in the southern part

of the country. One of the things that he said that will stick with me is, "I can think of no alternative but optimism." I like that phrase. If you do not believe that Iraq can be a free people, it can be a stable country, an oil-producing country, a country that starts to export dates again and the 28 million people there can put their lives back together again, what is your belief? How would you construct an Iraq? How would you want to direct that country if you were not an optimist?

I do not want to be involved in any planning done by anyone other than by optimists. I cannot have a pessimist there, I cannot even have one of those realists there because realists, just by definition, cannot follow a dream. They want to drag down someone else's, but they cannot follow a dream. Our soldiers are there, and they are following a dream. The Iraqi people are following a dream. They have their first grasp at freedom.

We looked at the oil field in the south, the distribution lines, the platforms where they load the oil out on supertankers. There is a lot of oil in the south in Basra. The equipment that is there is archaic. It goes back to the 60s, and it is going to take a lot of capital to get those oil fields back up to the level they need to be to get the country back on a fiscal track so they can fund their own construction and fund their own growth and development of Iraq. They are a long ways away from that.

The country is far more stable, but they need outside capital from other countries in the world and from multinational corporations that will go in and place a bet on Iraq. It will be a very safe bet because the oil is there. There is no question the market is there. With \$70 a barrel oil, that makes Iraq look even better from an economic viability standpoint.

From there we boarded some British helicopters, and the British are great. Their service is good; they are professional. They give you a sense of security. They showed us the ports, and then we landed and walked around and took a look and had a briefing. After we looked at that, we flew over the wetlands where 800,000 Iraqis lived up until a little more than a decade ago when some of them rose up against Saddam Hussein, and he went down and killed about 120,000 of them, drove between 400,000 and 450,000 out of there, and shut the water off.

□ 1830

That area is twice the size of the Everglades, 8,000 square miles; and Saddam drove the population from 800,000 down to about 200,000 by drying them out, starving them out, and just going down and killing them. That was an impressive thing to see; and it is another place that has now been recovered, about 40 percent of the 8,000 square miles, because we have turned the water back into the wetland rather than diverted it away.

And then from there we went up to another place that a lot of Members have not gone to, but some have been up there, and that is up to Kirkuk to the oil fields in the north. And up there, there is so much oil that some of the oil seeps to the top of the ground. Where there is a pool of oil in what one might call a sand trap, there is a puddle of oil in there. It is not a spill. It is natural flowing oil that seeps to the top of the ground.

And there were oil spills too, as one might expect in a country like that. A lot of oil in the north that needs a lot of development, too; and they need to be able to get it to market. And here is one of the reasons why not. This is a pair of bridges, and these bridges were blown during the liberation of Iraq. If I have got the bridges right, and I believe it was this one, there were nine pipelines tied to that bridge that went underneath there, and, of course, all nine pipelines got knocked out.

So we put a lot of those pipelines back together, but one of them is a 40-inch pipeline, a pretty good size pipeline, 40 inches in diameter, so 3½ feet; and each time we would put that back together, then the enemy would blow it again. So we brought a contractor in there to take that 40-inch pipeline and lay it underneath the Tigris River, 25 feet under the Tigris River, by the way, so it is a little hard for them to dig down there and blow that up, and that will give it a little more security. It is one of the pieces of the infrastructure that has been put together.

After Hurricane Katrina, \$18.4 billion almost sounds like loose change but \$18.4 billion across a country of 28 million people the size of California that had been allowed to depreciate, erode, dilapidate itself over the last 35 years or more and a country that needs to be brought back up into the modern era. A country that could not produce enough electricity so they had to turn the lights off periodically, even in the cities that got the preferred power. And now we are distributing power to everybody equally, and the power is up to about 13 hours a day, kind on an average for everybody in Iraq.

But every time we raise the generation up and produce more electricity, then more Iraqis go out and buy the satellite dish, I say to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING), or they go out to buy an air conditioner. And if I had to choose between the two, I would take the air conditioner and skip the television, by the way. But when they buy the air conditioners, the demand for power goes up and up and up, and we cannot quite catch up with the equation of how much generation do we have to put in place before it meets the demand. But we are putting generation in place.

I have here a picture of the mother-of-all-generators. This generator came across 1,057 kilometers of not always friendly territory. In fact, a lot of it was hostile territory. It came in several loads, but there were two big

loads. For me, I am a guy who has hauled some heavy loads. A 400-ton generator, 325-ton turbine, and they came in a caravan with other equipment that was about a mile long, and this has all been set up now and up and going. Actually, it is going to be formally put on line in about January.

But this mother-of-all-generators has been brought all across that territory, could not have a bullet wound in the generator, came through safe and sound, the generator, the turbine, and the rest of that. And they have constructed this together near Kirkuk, and this power will go to a number of the outlying communities as well as Kirkuk, and it dramatically kicks up the generation capacity.

So I went to see where the money went that would build the infrastructure of Iraq. And I saw renovated swamps. I saw sewer plants and lines that have been constructed. This generation that is here, I am watching them as they are constructing, not exactly a refinery, but it is a preliminary process to, I think, take the sulfur out of the oil that is there. I have watched work around that country, and I have watched the spirit of the people. And then from Kirkuk, we flew across in Black Hawks down to Baghdad across that vast open space and arrived in Baghdad.

We had to push and hurry because I was scheduled to meet with the Iraq Chamber of Commerce. I did not think about Iraq as having a chamber of commerce, and they are affiliated with the Americans in a way; so I believe they call it the American-Iraq Chamber of Commerce in Baghdad. They asked me if I would give a speech.

Yes, I will do that, but where is my interpreter?

Well, you do not need one because these people all speak English.

And I thought that was kind of a telling thing, and there were, I think, 56 of them there, somewhere between 55 and 60 Iraqi business people that are members of the chamber of commerce that want to do business. They want to get free enterprise going, and they just want to have a chance. The message that I carried to them was a message that America is not going to be the economic salvation for Iraq. Iraqis are going to be the economic salvation for them. They are going to need to build those traditions of free enterprise. They are going to have to build the institutions of business that go along with this free enterprise structure and culture that we have in the United States of America.

They have got a great start if that many of them can communicate with the rest of the world through a common form of communication currency called English. But they have got a lot of cultures to establish. If the manager of the port city down near Al Basrah does not understand the equation between gross receipts less expenses equals net income, it does not mean he is not a good manager. It just means

that there is a blank space in their upbringing, and I want to see the free enterprise culture established and grow. We can use American business people over there.

The security part is the part that I have the least amount of advice for because we have the highest degree of professionals that are there providing security. Soldier after soldier, when I looked them in the eye, I came back from that country, my third trip over there, more confident than ever in the job that they are doing and the security that is being provided. I believe that because of the National Guard and our Reservists, added to our active duty personnel, the people that have more experience than most, that bring their professionalism with them, I believe that we have fielded a military here of the highest quality of people ever to go to war, and that is our soldiers that are over there who are putting their lives on the line.

General Casey said something that I think we need to remember, and that was, "The enemy cannot win if the politicians stay in the fight," and I believe that he meant the politicians here on the floor of Congress, Mr. Speaker. I believe he meant the House and the Senate. I believe he meant the people who believe, that are setting up quasiforeign policy, the people that the enemy are listening to. We need to send a solid message over to them: we stay in the fight here; the Iraqis stay in the fight there.

As the politicians and the military, we will have 200,000 in uniform by next spring, and they are leading the battle over there; and Americans are stepping back. And we have handed over a base now to the control of the Iraqi troops. Signs are positive. The free enterprise side is coming along. They will get a constitution ratified. When they do, they can sign a contract to develop that oil. When they develop that oil, that money will come into their coffers, and they can develop their country. That is the formula for success in Iraq.

I appreciate the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) yielding to me, and I appreciate his leadership on this; and I look forward to the day that we can celebrate a victory in Iraq.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman for his tireless efforts to see firsthand. This is a congressman from Iowa who, when there are controversies in the Federal courts, is on the steps of the courthouse. I know for a fact this weekend that he was in a Black Hawk helicopter flying over New Orleans and dining and supping with the people that are dealing with Hurricane Katrina. For him to be here tonight to add this critical, important dimension, as the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING), whom I will yield to in a moment, and I were there focusing on the security in the Sunni Triangle, for him to come here and add to the record tonight that in realtime in the last several weeks the

investment the American people are making in reconstructing this country is working. It is having its good effect. An Iraqi chamber of commerce is not something we are seeing on the CBS Evening News, but it is happening; and I am grateful to the gentleman from Iowa for bringing that perspective to bear and just for being who he is.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) for any closing remarks he might have.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

I just wanted to say that I have been privileged to have a number of profound moments in my life; but I have to tell the Members, Mr. Speaker, one of the most profound moments I had was traveling to Baghdad, traveling to these military installations, meeting with our brave men and women, and reaching into my wallet, Mr. Speaker, and pulling out this very small photo of my two children, and looking these privates and corporals and sergeants in the eye and saying, Thank you. Thank you for what you do to keep my little 3½-year-old Melissa and my almost-2-year-old Travis alive in a safer, more secure America. And having them pull out photos of their children and having them tell me how they know how important it is that they fight for their families many, many thousands of miles away.

That was a profound moment in my life because, Mr. Speaker, I still do not know if the American people realize what the threat is. There are terrorists who have sworn publicly. This is not hyperbole. This is not exaggeration. They have said on the record they want to kill our children. It is that serious. They want to get their hands on weapons to attack and annihilate Western Civilization as we know it. This is their aim.

Mr. Speaker, the insurgents have proven very adept at taking innocent human life. They are very good at it. But what they have not proven adept at is halting this occasionally slow, awkward, clumsy, but inexorable, march towards democracy in Iraq. They have not stopped it, Mr. Speaker. People show up. They brave bombs and bullets to cast their ballots. And as we help this democracy flourish in Iraq, not only are we helping this people in this great and wonderful civilization. More importantly, we are making America safer and more secure. And that is what it is all about, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman for his comments.

I cannot add to that closing, but will simply repeat, Mr. Speaker, we are winning the war in Iraq. And, Mr. Speaker, to anyone who is listening in tonight to hear the passion of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING), to hear the progress on the ground on civil society that the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) described and to hear

about these soldiers and our effectiveness, we have never lost a military engagement in 4 years with this enemy. We have never lost so much as a platoon. We are taking the enemy down at a rate of 30 to one that they are taking down our military personnel. That all spells victory. We are winning in Iraq.

But let me leave with one image. As we flew over Baghdad and over Ramadi, 150 feet off the deck, Black Hawk helicopters flanked by Apache helicopters, really scary-looking aircraft, I lost count of the number of men and women and little boys and little girls running from their homes and waving at our helicopter as we sped by.

And then what broke my heart was to see the helmeted soldier take one hand off that enormous 50 caliber machine gun and extend a gloved hand hurriedly out of the helicopter to wave back to those children and men and women. They were running towards the American helicopters. They were waving at the American soldier.

This was not a put-up job for some politicians flying through Baghdad. It was hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people in Baghdad and Balad and Ramadi throughout the Sunni Triangle who were giving the thumbs up in a wave of friendship to their liberators, to the people who are fighting and sacrificing and succeeding in bringing them freedom and stability, which they so richly deserve.

With that I thank the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) for joining me tonight. And I close with the thought we are winning the war in Iraq. Never doubt that.

TWO DAYS IN IRAQ

(By Representative Mike Pence)

SEPT. 6, 2005.—Our two days in Iraq began with a prayer and a brief reading from Psalm 91. After a short delay caused by an engine failure, we lifted off in the cargo hold of a C-130 aircraft filled with soldiers and materials returning to Operation Iraqi Freedom. On the faces of the soldiers we met aboard the aircraft, most of whom were returning from leave, was the evident anxiety of men returning to battle and sober determination. I overheard one soldier tell a colleague, "I'm here for my family, my kids and my grandkids . . . so they don't have to deal with these guys."

Upon arriving at Baghdad airport, we donned the helmets and body armor that would be our wardrobe for the duration of our stay and climbed aboard a Blackhawk helicopter, destination Phoenix Base, Green Zone, Baghdad.

The copters moved fast and low across the landscape of this city of several million. Different from my visit to Baghdad in 2004 when the streets were barren, the city sweeping past me below our helicopter was filled with people bustling about and large roads filled with traffic. The city of Baghdad is no longer the deserted war zone I saw before. Despite the violence of insurgents, Baghdad is alive again.

We landed at Phoenix Base in the Green Zone and attended meetings with the American Commander and the American Ambassador for situation reports. In our previous meetings in Qatar, the diplomatic and military authorities spoke of steady progress and a determined enemy, but there was no hint

of defeatism or pessimism. As we learned of over 100 Iraqi Battalions deployed with American forces, schools, basic services, agriculture, one is left with the sense that our folks in Baghdad have a plan and are working the plan 24/7. As one soldier told me, "defeat the enemy, rebuild the country and give it back to the Iraqis."

From our meetings with American leaders, we boarded our motorcade for meetings with the Prime Minister of Iraq and the Ministers of Defense and Interior, three of the most important leaders to the present and future of Iraq.

Prime Minister Jaafari greeted us in a formal setting and spent the first 15 minutes expressing the heartfelt condolences of the people of Iraq for the loss of life in Hurricane Katrina. He seemed most determined to convey that the insurgents engaged in violence do not represent the feelings of the people of Iraq. I asked him, "Who is the enemy?" and he replied with a litany referring to Beirut in 1983, 9-11, Sharm El Sheik, as all the work of "the terrorists." He actually seemed slightly indignant about the question . . . as though anyone, with any common sense, would see that the enemy in Iraq is simply "terrorists."

In our meetings with two government leaders, two moments stood out. The Minister of Interior, a studious, bearded man, said the greatest challenge he faced was "changing the culture of authoritarianism" that followed the repressive history of Iraq. As we walked out, he and I spoke further about this point and I was moved by his ambition for his people to live under a just system of law and not of men.

The other moment came when another Congressman asked the Minister of Defense, "what neighboring nation represents the greatest challenge to peace within Iraq?" to which he replied, "all of them" then added, "Kuwait is ok." It was an illuminating moment. I will never forget that this new Iraq is, with one exception, floating in a sea of authoritarian regimes with long histories of association with terror among their people and their governments.

Our helicopters set us down at ground zero for American forces in Baghdad: Camp Liberty-home of the legendary 3rd Infantry Division under the Command of General Mark O'Neill. As we learned earlier, most of the terrorist violence in Iraq is taking place in 4 of the 18 provinces . . . all 4 are in the area under the control of the 3rd ID. But Gen. O'Neill, a thick-necked warrior with the mind of a CEO, said, "Hey, it's what we do sir and we're glad to do it . . . we gotta stop these guys right here."

After getting an update on action and progress, we headed to dinner with the troops including Evansville native Sgt. Dave Newland. Dave is part of force protection for the 3rd ID and is approaching 20 years and retirement but, from what he told me, there is no place he'd rather be. When I asked about the mission, he replied with a smile, "We need to be here sir." We spoke of home, of his plans to move to Washington, Indiana and work for Crane. We spoke of the White Steamer, a diner in Washington, which turned out to be his Dad's favorite stop and one of mine. For that time we were not what we are doing (soldier/congressman), we were just a couple of Hoosiers swappin' stories from home. I told him everybody back home was praying and was proud and he said quietly, "I know that, sir."

As our C-130 took off from Baghdad airport, I thought of the men of the 3rd ID. I thought of the mission. And I thought of Sgt. Dave Newland. By God's grace does this nation still produces men like that.

Day two began at 3:30 a.m. as we headed for a day that would take us to four American

bases in some of the most violent sectors of the "Sunni Triangle." First stop, Camp Caldwell, near the Syrian border which is home to the 278th of Tennessee. We were the first delegation of elected officials to ever visit this base and the soldiers seemed delighted to see us...especially Tennessee Congressman Lincoln Davis. When Lincoln presented the command group with a coin bearing the US Capitol and spoke of the time when these Tennessee Vols would "be a 'comin home," there wasn't a dry eye in the room.

It being Labor Day, the base had a picnic going on for soldiers off duty, so we made our way over to throw horseshoes and listen to blue grass music. I asked one soldier after another, "What would Labor Day be without havin' a bunch of politicians show up to spoil your picnic?!" While the atmosphere was festive, when I would ask "How ya doin?" or "How's everybody back home holdin' up?" one soldier after another would pause and get that far away look that you would expect from any soldier on a distant frontier. This unit has lost 12 men but defeated the enemy in every engagement. Their effort in training Iraqis has been so successful that their unit actually will not be replaced by American forces when they head home in a few months. Iraqis will take over Camp Caldwell. Mission Accomplished Tennessee.

Our Blackhawk helicopters and their Apache helicopter gunship escorts lifted off from Camp Caldwell at midday for the American airbase at Balad, another region of recent and intense insurgent activity. As we approached the base by air, I took note of a large column of black smoke billowing from the far end of the base. As we learned upon our arrival, at approximately 6 a.m. the base came under mortar attack by insurgents. While some equipment was damaged, as we learned later in the command center from a videotape replay, the enemy fared much worse.

Using our battlefield technology and real time intelligence, our forces identified where the mortar was fired and tracked 10 insurgents evacuating the area. With incredible precision, a hellfire missile scored a direct hit on the enemy as the eerie infrared video replay showed. The professionalism of these forces, young men and women who had to make split second decisions to save American lives, left most of us speechless.

We spent lunch with American soldiers in Balad at a huge mess hall while our colleague from Hawaii, Rep. Ed Case, held his own townhall meeting with the 29th National Guard out of Hawaii.

Our last stop of the day was Ramadi, the new home of the Anderson, Indiana based 138th Signal Battalion under the command of Captain Keith Paris of Marion, Indiana. Capt. Paris and Sgt. Matt Wright of Muncie met us at the landing zone and escorted us to the long, sand colored two-story building that these Hoosiers will call home for the next year. Capt. Paris is a determined professional whose patriotism, love of family and God exude from every pore of his body. In a short briefing in his modest 12x12 headquarters office, he explained how A Company was actually supplying all the real time communications for the ongoing battle in Ramadi, a city of some 500,000, that is the provincial capital of the west and a Sunni elite dominated area. Their sandbag reinforced and camouflaged operations are smack dab in the middle of a bustling base filled with moving tanks, armored vehicles and soldiers . . . and they all depend with confidence on the 138th.

Sgt. Matt Wright of Muncie was an impressive young married man who actually told me that his wedding was to have occurred the day before I arrived, but when word came

of his deployment to Iraq, he and his fiancée decided to move it up nine months to accommodate their devotion to each other and our nation.

On the way to the mess hall, we encountered a Marine unit of armored vehicles headed out for maneuvers. As we reached up and shook hands with one soldier after another, I heard a voice from atop a tank yell, "Hey, aren't you gonna say hi to a fellow Hoosier?!" I looked up to see the broad smile of redheaded Cpl. Ty Cotton of Anderson, Indiana. He reached down and shook my hand as a voice cried out, "5 minutes!" . . . the time the unit would roll to its duties in Ramadi. I climbed up the side of the vehicle so we could talk over the din of engines and troop movements. He told me to say hello to his mom, Marla, back in Anderson and I told him I'd look in on her and tell her how good he looked. As the commanding officer yelled, "2 minutes!" I told him the folks back home were praying for him, proud and grateful for his service. As I climbed down the side of the combat vehicle, Ty smiled and said modestly, "Glad to do it, sir."

In the mess hall, the young men and women of the 138th joined me for dinner. I don't know what I expected to find among these troops but what I did find was good spirits, high morale, fitness and a matter of fact attitude about the work ahead. I asked about the war and many spoke of steady progress, even in Ramadi. One soldier who had already seen a year in theatre said, "It's gotten way better here in Ramadi from a year ago." They were confident Americans doing a hard job in a hard place, but no complaints.

Mostly they wanted to ask about home. We talked about Indiana's response to Hurricane Katrina. They were concerned about how the country was holding up after such a tragedy. In a war zone, working in 110-degree heat, sleeping behind sandbags and 8,000 miles from Mom, Dad, wife and kids . . . and they were worried about us. Where do we get men and women like these?

As our Blackhawk helicopters lifted off from Ramadi, I watched the sun set over this desert encampment on the front lines of the war on terror and I felt humbled by the men and women I saw, especially the Hoosiers of the 138th. I scribbled the names of the men and women I met and purposed to pray for them and their families until they return home . . . victorious, safe and sound.

And I felt more confident than ever that this war is just, the battle against terror is vital and the enemy can and will be defeated here and now. I believe that not because of the armor, the firepower or the technology that swept beneath me as we passed over one base after another. I believe that because I have looked into the eyes of the men and women fighting this war at every level, and their faith and courage has never and will never be defeated.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOODE. Mr. Speaker, in a continuing effort to combat the adverse effects that illegal immigration is having on the United States, I have introduced a concurrent resolution that expresses the sense of the Congress that the President should immediately and unequivocally call for the enforcement of existing immigration laws in order