

95 degrees. You're put in the back of a C-130 with troops being moved into one theater or another. And they don't pick the guys that happen to show up at the airport that morning. You go with whoever is going in or out of the country.

Now, when you're on the plane, it's just too noisy and hot and dark to talk. But as the plane landed when we got to Baghdad and they bring the engines down and you can actually hear again, the soldiers that were around became anxious to talk to me when they found out who I was and why I was there.

Most of them, it was their second or third rotation. Their deployments had been extended to 15 months, and most of the guys that were on that plane wouldn't see home again for almost a year.

Since February, there's been a big change in how they do their job. They're placed alongside Iraqi soldiers in smaller groups, both in Baghdad and out in the provinces, and they're no longer attached to this larger and more protected military base. And clearly, they're seeing a greater amount of activity and, to a large degree, that concerned them.

The fellow that was just right across from me I actually spoke with in some depth, and he'd been reading a book all during this hot plane ride for 2 hours from Kuwait City into Baghdad.

He obviously voiced a concern. He wondered if the General Officer Corps even knew what they were up to, even knew what they were doing. He wondered if they knew what they were up against. He did complain about the long hours. He complained about the heat. He complained about being separated from his family.

Mr. Speaker, he'd been reading a book intently while we were on the plane. And I asked him about this. I said, What book are you reading? And he said it was a book about philosophy. So I naturally assumed that at the end of his deployment he'd be coming home to perhaps finish school, or maybe he had a job waiting for him, and I asked him about this. And he looked at me very strangely and said, I just signed up for five more years.

You know, it's that kind of ambiguity, it's that kind of enigma that confronts you when you're in Iraq. Things just don't add up the way you think that they might.

Now, we got off that plane and we all went our separate ways. We were taken into the town of Ramadi. And a year ago, there would have been no way to go to Ramadi. We visited with the mayor.

And again, as Mr. AKIN just alluded to, the good news story coming out of Iraq is the building up of those institutions of local government just like we have here in this country, county governments, city governments that are doing the really hard work. They're doing reconciliation at the city level, at the provincial level. If it takes the central government a while longer to

catch up with them, I've got a lot of hope based on what I saw on the ground.

But what really gives me hope is what I saw in the market in Ramadi. Look at the faces on these two young guys. We were just out there walking in the market just in an area that a year ago it had been so dangerous no one in their right mind would have taken us there.

Let me just show you this other picture that gives you some idea of the types of thing for sale in the market. Again, it looks like a typical marketplace anywhere you'd find in the Middle East, Jordan or Saudi Arabia. A lot of stuff for sale. I don't know where the stuff comes from, but a lot of stuff for sale. And again, clearly the people who were there did not look to be particularly stressed or aggrieved. They looked half curious and happy to see us. In fact, the kids were starting school in a couple of weeks and would come up to us and ask us for pens and quarters. Apparently our military had given them a good deal of coaching on the kinds of things you can get from a codel as it walks through town.

Mr. Speaker, I will conclude here and leave the remaining time to my friend from Texas. I will say I do believe it is in America's interest that we finish the job. The next 30 years will look starkly different if we're successful versus if we're a failure.

I will yield back to the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. WAMP. I'd like to yield our final minute to Mr. HENSARLING of Texas to close.

Mr. HENSARLING. I certainly thank the gentleman for yielding. I thank the gentleman from Tennessee for leading this hour. I want to thank the other members of the Republican Study Committee, the House's conservative caucus, for lending their voice here.

In the remaining time, I just want to make a couple of points, and that is, we see every night the cost of fighting this war, and it is a heavy cost. It's a heavy cost in terms of money and, much more importantly, lives. But we need to again remember the cost of losing this war and what that could mean and how serious the threat is.

I was home during the August recess, got to spend time not only with my wife and children, but with my parents. My mother reminded me of something that she said from time to time, and that is, sometimes life is full of lousy options. And yes, fighting this war is costly. But losing this war could be even costlier if Iraq becomes what Afghanistan once was, under the Taliban, a breeding ground, a training ground for terrorists that are bent on hurting our country.

And we have to remember these are people who have said they have the right to kill 4 million Americans. Two million of them are children and two of those 2 million are mine. We have to remember what the cost of defeat is.

So we finally have signs for cautious optimism. We all need to have an open mind when the report comes in.

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MOURNING THE PASSING OF THE LATE JENNIFER DUNN, FORMER MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIRE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. REICHERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, today I join my colleagues and friends and the entire State of Washington in mourning the loss of former Congresswoman Jennifer Dunn. She was my predecessor here in the House of Representatives, represented the Eighth District of Washington State. I'm shocked and saddened by the news of her death today, and my condolences go out to the family: her husband, Keith; her children, Bryant, Reagan, and Angus; their wives; and the grandchildren, who meant so much to her.

And today as we were on the floor voting, Mr. Speaker, the news was presented to the Members of this body by a good friend, a longtime friend of hers, Doc Hastings is his nickname, from Central Washington. He had known Jennifer for over 30 years. And as Doc Hastings announced the news of her unexpected death, you could hear the sadness. You could hear the sadness. You could hear the gasp as the air went out of this room.

Jennifer Dunn served this House for 12 years. She was a well-respected Member of this body. She was in leadership in the Republican Party, one of the first females in leadership in this House. She was one of those Members who reached across the aisle; who worked with all; who had a dedicated, compassionate drive to represent the people of the Eighth District. She served with passion and the heart of a servant.

I first met Jennifer Dunn back in 1997 as I became the first elected sheriff in King County, Seattle, Washington. And I had the opportunity to travel back and forth between Washington State and Washington, D.C. to meet with our delegation. And Jennifer Dunn was always so gracious in allowing me time as the sheriff to come in and present the issues that were facing us in King County law enforcement.

She was very proud of the fact that she helped start the school resource officer program with grant funds. She was very proud of the fact that she helped acquire funding for the so important fight against methamphetamines that really are the scourge of this Nation today. She helped plant the seed of an effort in Washington State that still goes on today in the form of the Washington State Meth Initiative, people meeting today, deciding how to spend the money the Federal Government still provides as a result of her efforts in fighting the deadly addiction that meth causes in our communities.

But one of the things that she was most proud of was her effort in passing legislation that led to the Amber Alert system that we have throughout this Nation that, as everyone knows across this country, has saved many lives, lives of our children, our most vulnerable of citizens and victims.

So I am so honored and so proud to be the person who has been given the privilege to follow in such a great lady's footsteps.

Jennifer Dunn, we will all miss you. Our prayers and thoughts go with the family.

AMERICAN PATENT LAW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, let me just note for my colleague who just finished his very, very appropriate remarks concerning the passing of Jennifer Dunn, I have three children at home, little Tristen and Anika and Christian; and as a parent, I am very grateful to Jennifer Dunn for the leadership that she provided in helping make our country safer for our children, the children that we all love so much.

And when we talk about the future and I think about my children, we have to think that whatever we do here, we are creating a better world, and it is a better world for our children because they are going to be around a lot longer than we are.

Well, Mr. Speaker, on Friday the House will consider legislation that will have a huge impact on the well-being of the American people and, yes, the well-being of America's children as they get older. Yet this bill will have a great deal to do with whether or not our children have good jobs and live in a secure country.

This bill is receiving very little attention. Very powerful interest groups are trying to sneak this one by us, and if they succeed, they will be enriched and the American people will be worse off.

So what's new? Well, what's new is that this special interest foray is not aimed at just adding an earmark or changing a clause in the tax law to help a specific company. It is a maneuver to dramatically diminish a constitutionally protected right that has served our Nation well. It is a fundamental change in a system that has been in place since our country's founding. That is a lot different than the special interest forays in the past just aimed at changing little elements of the law for their own benefit.

We are talking about fundamentally altering America's patent system. Now, if H.R. 1908, the bill in question, passes, there will be tremendous negative long-term consequences not just for America's inventors but for the country.

Now, patent law is thought to be so complicated and so esoteric that most people tune out once they realize that that is the subject of a discussion. We have probably lost people right now who are reading the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD or watching C-SPAN or our colleagues who are watching this from their offices. But the technology that we are talking about is vitally important to the well-being of our country. Patent law is not so complicated and esoteric because it is that vital to the well-being of our country. Our technological genius and the laws protecting and promoting that genius have been at the heart of America's success as a Nation.

America's technological edge has made American workers competitive with low-priced laborers overseas. It has provided the American people with the highest standard of living in the world, and it enabled our country to sail safely through the troubled waters of world wars and international threats. It is American technology that has made all the difference for our country's security and our people's quality of life.

Protecting individual rights, even for the little guy, has been the hallmark of our Nation. Patent rights, the right to one's own creation, which is what we are talking about when we talk about patent rights, have been considered a fundamental part of our system since our country's founding. In fact, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, and others of our Founding Fathers were not the only people who believed in freedom and democracy. They believed in technology and progress.

Visit Monticello and see what Thomas Jefferson did with his time after he penned the words to the Declaration of Independence and after he served as President of the United States. He went back to Monticello and spent his time inventing gadgets and pieces of equipment that would lift the burden from the shoulders of labor. And, by the way, Jefferson was America's first Patent Commissioner.

And then there is Ben Franklin, the inventor of the bifocal and the potbellied stove. Before Benjamin Franklin people could only heat themselves at a fireplace and project heat in a room only from a fireplace. And Benjamin Franklin invented the potbellied stove, which started the whole concept of modern heating. This grand old man, who was present at the Declaration of Independence and the writing of our Constitution, once lamented his own death not by talking about the fear of the unknown and dying but by lamenting that he would not be able to see the great human progress that was bound to happen, the technological advances that would be the byproduct of a free people in the United States of America.

Our Founding Fathers believed that with freedom and with technology, we could increase the standard of living of all our people, not just the elite. Our

founders were visionaries, not just about political structures but about a way of life for ordinary people and the future of humankind. Those patriots who laid the foundation of our country wrote into the Constitution a provision they firmly believed was a prerequisite to progress and freedom.

Now, last night after I gave a similar speech on the floor, a teacher, a so-called teacher of history, called my office to complain, "There is nothing about copyrights or patents in our Constitution." I don't know how long he has been a teacher. He said he has been teaching 20 years. But my staff member took out a copy of the Constitution and read to him article I, section 8 of the Constitution, which states in part: "Congress shall have the power to promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries." They held the right of owning one's ideas and creations and inventions as equal to the rights of speech, religion, and assembly. In fact, in the body of the Constitution before the Bill of Rights, the word "right" is only used in reference to patents and copyrights. So that shows you the priority that our Founding Fathers placed on the technological development that would create the dream of America that they felt that they were establishing here on this continent.

In short, we have had the strongest patent protection in the world, and that is why in the history of mankind there has never been a more innovative and creative people. And it has been no accident that Americans are the world's great inventors, scientists, and technologists. No, it is not just the diversity of our people, but diversity certainly plays a role and we can be proud of that and it has contributed to our capabilities. It wasn't just our natural resources, although we were blessed with vast territory and natural resources. Our innovation and progress can be traced to our law from the very beginning. It was the intent of those who wrote these protections into our fundamental law, into the Constitution in those earliest days of our Republic, and it was their vision of optimism that motivated them to write this into the law. Our history is filled with stories of technological achievement that flowed from the fact that we had established a country that thought that the rights of ownership of what you create is just as important as your right to speak or the right to worship God as you so choose.

We found people who emerged among us, Eli Whitney, for example, who not only invented the cotton gin but who invented the interchangeable parts for manufacturing. This revolutionized industrial production and dramatically uplifted the well-being of millions of people and, yes, people who were yet to be born.

Cyrus McCormick invented the reaper. Before that the food supply for our