Madam

Speaker, we have returned from the

work recess. So many of us have had

the opportunity to listen to our constituents,

and aside from the important

business of the appropriations

process, I heard a singular cry and that

is whether this country was going to

engage in war with Iraq.

I am gratified to hear that there will

be a full debate in this House and I

hope it will not be limited by time. But

I have called for citizen summits

across the Nation, communities opening

up in town hall meetings and PTA

meetings and civic associations to discuss

one of the most important decisions

this Nation has to make. For if

this war is engaged and we go into war,

there is no determination as to whether

this will be a 1-year war or a 20-year

war.

The American people must be involved.

And although this is the people’s

House, and I hope we will have

full debate, I believe it is crucial to

have citizens debate all over this Nation.

In visiting with students at the

University of Houston, I made this

point.

Madam Speaker, I hope that the

American people will begin to debate

this crucial issue impacting America.