Mr. Speaker, there has never been a time like this in

America's history.

Never before has a full-scale assault been launched on Americans who

offer a different point of view about the policies of an

administration, especially when it concerns a war on foreign soil.

Almost 3 years ago, I went to Iraq as part of a humanitarian

delegation. When I said in

response to a media question that the President would mislead America

into war, the White House immediately launched a relentless attack on

me. They spared no political or public relations weapon, surrogate or

ploy, in their attempt to silence me.

Republicans, at the direction of the White House, launched a full-

scale assault on me, because they feared what might happen if the

American people actually had an opportunity to consider an alternative

point of view. If they could shout me down, they could silence anyone's

question about the evidence before waging war.

In the last 24 hours, a similar campaign has been launched against

Representative John Murtha of Pennsylvania. Here is an esteemed Member

of Congress, a decorated combat veteran, a conservative known for his

strong stand on defense, and the Republicans and their cronies launch

an offensive that, itself, is offensive.

Representative John Murtha stood up yesterday and spoke on behalf of

the American people. He called for the deployment of U.S. soldiers out

of Iraq, beginning immediately. He called for a diplomatic solution.

And Republicans and their surrogates have called him every foul and

offensive name imaginable.

The conduct of the Republican Party and its surrogates is despicable,

but it is out in the open for the first time. Now, the American people

understand the lengths to which the Republican Party will go to silence

dissent in America. Now, the American people know that there is a war

being fought in America over the war in Iraq.

The American people are demanding an end to the presence of U.S.

soldiers in Iraq because the American people know there is no such

thing as a military victory in an urban, guerilla warfare. There is

only occupation, and the American people want no part of that flawed

and futile mission.

The American people overwhelming want a solution for Iraq that is

negotiated by diplomats from the Arab world, not dictated by a

President from the western world.

Representative John Murtha has set forth a plan that resonates with

the American people, and that's what frightens the White House.

Therefore, the attacks will not stop unless and until Republicans can

silence dissent in America.

There is a plan now for winning the peace in Iraq. It may have been

submitted by a Member of Congress, but it is the voice and will of the

American people. The American people get it: You are not strong on

defense, by strong arming a defenseless--and senseless--war.

I support the Murtha plan to win the peace in Iraq.