Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor with some

observations about Iraq, but I must comment on the presentation I just

heard from my friend from Georgia.

You know, Mr. Speaker, independent observers agree that Democrats

have moved quickly and aggressively to implement what we said we were

going to do in the first 100 hours. I find it disingenuous that our

friend was talking about somehow the Democrats not dealing with its

commitment on earmarks, and mentioning the rain forest in Iowa. Mr.

Speaker, again, independent observers agree that Mr. Obey and Mr. Byrd

did bring forward a clean continuing resolution that didn't have any

new earmarks. It killed the earmarks that had been set aside in the

failed budget of the Republicans in the last session of Congress.

What my friend is talking about, the rain forest in Iowa, was an

earmark from several years ago, a Republican earmark, I might say, from

several years ago. And now he is suggesting that as we have moved

forward to clean up the budget mess left by the Republicans, failing to

meet their commitments to produce budgets in a timely fashion, that we

didn't go back and surgically remove earmarks that they had scattered

throughout the budget for years. Well, I'm sorry. With all due respect

to George Orwell and my friend from Georgia, I think that is

doublespeak. We did what we said we were going to do. The CR has come

forward without earmarks, and we have put in place a much more

transparent process so people will know who is doing what on whose

behalf.

But, Mr. Speaker, I came to the floor today to make a few comments

about the situation in Iraq. There is much ado in the other body to

work to catch up with the reality on the ground in Iraq and where the

American public is. This is not the time just to oppose escalation of

more troops in Iraq. We find that the 21,000 that the President

referred to is actually going to mean 50 additional thousand when you

put all the support in. It is time for Congress to deal in a

comprehensive fashion with what we need to do to make the best of this

tragically mismanaged situation, a war of choice that we didn't have to

do, sadly mismanaged by the administration. It is time for Congress to

rediscover our war powers with Iraq, and even more important, the saber

rattling that is directed now towards Iran. It is time for us to

rediscover the power of the purse, not provide an open-ended bank

account, but tighten down the resources that are provided by Congress

to the administration, and to rediscover oversight where there are

daily reminders in every major newspaper of where Congress in the last

few years has frankly been missing in action.

To be able to advance those goals in a comprehensive fashion, I have

introduced new directions for Iraq. It sets forth goals for United

States policy, supporting the Iraqi people, preventing greater

violence, reestablish our international credibility and military

readiness, and focusing on real national security threats. It calls not

for escalation, but prohibiting the escalation without specific

congressional approval, and for the redeployment of troops from Iraq to

be completed in approximately 1 year.

It calls for the United States to forswear the establishment of

permanent bases in Iraq, as well as U.S. control over Iraq's oil

infrastructure and economic policies. It redirects United States

reconstruction funding from large foreign contractors to Iraqi-owned

businesses to help create jobs in Iraq. It instructs the President to

nullify contracts where any company has not fulfilled an Iraq

reconstruction contract, and to recover lost funds.

We ought not to just stop the fraud in terms of the contracting, but

we ought to aggressively punish war profiteering, encouraging Congress

to investigate and the Attorney General to aggressively prosecute

profiteering and fraud.

It requires a regional diplomatic initiative because ultimately it is

going to require diplomacy on the part of the United States and all of

the surrounding countries to be able to turn this around.

I strongly urge my colleagues to look at the New Direction For Iraq

Act of 2007 as a comprehensive way to change the situation in Iraq.