Mr. Speaker, the American people and both Democrat and

Republican Members of Congress are demanding a new direction in Iraq.

It is long past time for Congress to debate whether or not the

President's latest troop escalation will actually change the situation

on the ground in Iraq. This is a debate that Congress must have. We

will all have 5 minutes to explain to our constituents and to the

American people and to our troops why we either support the President's

strategy or why we think it is time for a new direction.

This is the first time since the war began that every Member of the

House will have 5 minutes to speak about the situation in Iraq. The

last time Congress was allowed so much time for a debate on the war was

during the lead-up to the first gulf war back in the 1990s.

Mr. Speaker, every single one of us in this House supports the

efforts our troops are making in Iraq. Some believe the best way to

support them is to allow the President to conduct the war in any way he

sees fit, without question. I believe it is our job in Congress to ask

the tough questions, and that is what we are doing this week.