Mr. Speaker, the war in Iraq is like one of those

bridges in Alaska. You can give it all the money in the world, but in

the end it goes nowhere.

People all around the country are waking up to the fact that this war

is not making the United States safer, like the President promised. It

is actually jeopardizing our national security.

It is the very presence of nearly 150,000 American troops on Iraqi

soil, appearing as occupiers, that galvanizes and unites the

dissatisfied people in the Arab world.

The American people get this, people like Cindy Sheehan, whose son

Casey was killed in Iraq. Cindy has been calling on the President to

bring the troops home for months now. Her mission is a righteous one,

that of a grieving mother who simply wants to know what noble cause her

son was killed for.

People in groups get it, like the members the northern California

Ruth Group, who turned out in the hundreds to call for an end of the

war last weekend. Over 500 people from my district joined me and fellow

Members of Congress, Ms. Lee and Ms. Waters, and Cindy Sheehan at an

important Ruth Group event to discuss ending the war. I have to tell

you, discuss is a bit of an understatement. These folks are through

discussing. They want our troops home. They want the war to be over.

Mr. Speaker, there are thousands of individuals like Cindy Sheehan

and the members of the Ruth Group around the country, all calling on

their government to quickly end the war in Iraq and bring our

servicemen and women home. They join with 66 percent of

Americans who disapprove of the way President Bush has handled Iraq.

The point is that the American people are speaking out. They are

speaking loudly about the U.S. role in Iraq. They are sick and tired of

reading reports of more young soldiers being killed, leaving behind

grieving widows and children and parents and friends and communities.

They, like me, believe that more than 2,000 American soldiers killed is

2,000 too many. They think 2,000 soldiers, just think about it, 2,000

soldiers is an entire Army division gone. They know that for every

insurgent killed, three more rise up to take their place.

They are tired of watching bombs go off in Iraqi cities, killing

innocent civilians and American soldiers. They want to see the U.S.

continue to support Iraq nonmilitaristically by assisting the Iraqi

people build their war-torn economic and physical infrastructure. They

want the United States to help in a nonmilitaristic role.

Members of Congress are actually joining this debate, too. There are

no fewer than five Members of this House who have policy proposals to

end the war, and 127 Members joined me in voting for the amendment I

offered in May to this year's defense authorization bill expressing the

sense of Congress that we need to end this war.

On the other side of the Capitol, Senators Kerry, Kennedy, Feingold

and others have offered their plans for Iraq as well.

I held an informal hearing last month to address how the United

States can achieve military disengagement. Thirty other Members of

Congress joined me at this hearing, listening to military, academic and

governmental experts discuss the best way to end this devastating war.

Clearly the majority of the country has started the conversation

about these issues. It is necessary that the President join in. Mr.

Speaker, individuals around the country have given us their plans to

end the war. It is time for the President to give us his plan, the goal

of which needs to be bringing the troops home to their families.