Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Mr. Larson and Iraq

Watch for what you have been doing to bring attention to the follies of

what is going on in Iraq.

I will stay here and talk back and forth, but we have folks here who

have been so important, Maxine Waters and Donald Payne and I saw Bill

Delahunt, who are all part of this, and we want everybody to have their

say.

What I want to emphasize is that the people of this country, the

people of this world know that this was a mistake. Our very own

constituents are ahead of the Members of Congress that they have

elected to serve them because they know we should leave Iraq. They tell

us that.

What they don't know, however, is how to make it happen. Guess what,

that is not their job. It is our job. It is our job to say, Mr.

President, commander in chief, stop this war. Put together a plan and

bring our troops home. You see, that is our job. It is very clear to me

when you lead, people will follow.

Just under 2 years ago I believe I was the first person to request of

the President that he bring our troops home. My request had just under

20 signatures on a letter to him.

Then we had a hearing, informal hearing with Senator Max Cleland and

generals and an Iraqi citizen. It was bipartisan and the room was full.

We had a little bit of press, not much, but it was a good hearing. It

was about why we are there and why we shouldn't be there.

Following that we had an amendment of mine that came to the House

floor. Some folks asked me not to call for a vote on it because they

thought it would be embarrassing to all of us. But 128 Members of this

House, a bipartisan effort actually, voted to tell the President to put

together a plan to bring our troops home and bring that plan to the

appropriate committees in the House of Representatives.

Since then we have written a letter to the President that over 50

Members signed saying, Mr. President, bring our troops home. Do this in

a multinational way with multilateral involvement. Work with the Iraqis

on reconstruction in a nonmilitaristic stance, and work with them for

reconciliation.

Then I introduced legislation that I talked about earlier tonight to

repeal the President's Iraq war powers because that is one way to tell

him enough is enough. This is not a war, this is an occupation.

We are going to have another hearing on September 26. This is the

third forum, and it is on the cost, the human cost, the cost to our

treasury and the cost to our reputation. I hope many Members will

attend it. You see, that is what the people of this country are looking

for and these are the people down on the floor with you that to the

best of our ability are trying to provide, and that is leadership,

leadership to catch up with them, the public, so we will indeed do the

right thing and stop the death and destruction that is going on that we

are causing because of our very presence over there.