Mr. Speaker, after the administration promised to bring

liberation to the people of Iraq, they have, instead, brought

insecurity and despair.

Every day a new report emerges about the horrible living conditions

in Iraq. One of the latest stories comes from Missan, a predominantly

Shia province south of Baghdad.

Human rights groups and media reports show that there is a shortage

of safe drinking water, and that very shortage may pose a serious

health risk. Eight agencies have found that there is a shortage of

chemicals for water purification and that many people have been forced

to take water directly from the polluted Tigris River.

The provincial capital, Amarah, hasn't been able to treat its water

supply since early September because they lack the treatment chemicals.

This problem, Mr. Speaker, is further complicated by the large number

of internally displaced people arriving each and every day. And

according to media reports, thousands of refugees have arrived from the

central and northern provinces since February 2006, which puts

unmitigated pressure on the already strained water system.

And according to a U.N. Refugee Agency report, the available water

supply only met 60 percent of the needs 1 year ago. It also stated,

Recent studies found that only 5 percent of the houses in the

province have running water. 60 percent use water pumps, and the rest

rely on river water. Is there any wonder why the number of cholera

cases are on the rise?

But the news reports only say so much. Listen to the local sanitation

officials:

There hasn't been a proper sanitation system in Missan since before

the invasion of 2003. Many districts have poor sanitation facilities,

and one can smell the stench of open sewers kilometers away. In some

areas of the province, supposedly drinkable water is being mixed with

sewage effluent and families have no option but to drink unsafe water.

Mr. Speaker, we are spending $2 billion a week in Iraq, and we cannot

provide for the most basic needs like safe drinking water. This makes

one wonder if the funds are being misdirected, and it makes us wonder

if our administration just can't show any leadership on humanitarian

projects. It is simply disgraceful.

We should help the Iraqi people by giving them back their country,

and then we should work with our international partners to help the

Iraqis rebuild their physical and economic infrastructure. And we

should ensure that the Iraqi people have all they need to survive:

clean water, food, electricity, schools, jobs, and a secure future.

These life and death problems are not going to be solved at the point

of a gun. Putting our brave men and women in uniform on the front lines

of a civil war isn't helping.

I urge my colleagues to join together to support proposals that bring

our troops and military contractors home and rededicate ourselves to

the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Iraq.

It is past time for responsible foreign policy. It is time to bring

our troops home now.