Mr. Speaker, 9 days ago, 11 innocent Iraqi civilian were

killed in an incident involving American military contractors. The

circumstances surrounding the tragedy are not clear, but what is clear

is that not enough attention has been paid to civilian deaths in Iraq.

By the most conservative count, over 73,000 innocent Iraqi civilians

have been killed since the occupation began. Just about everyone agrees

that the real figure is much higher, since many deaths aren't even

reported. But even if you accept the low 73,000 figure, you can see how

catastrophic the occupation has been to Iraqi society.

The population of the United States is about 12 times greater than

that of Iraq, so 73,000 Iraqi deaths are comparable to over 875,000

American deaths. That is more than the population of Cleveland and

Kansas City combined, or Atlanta and Omaha combined. This 875,000 is

more than the population of an entire congressional district.

I would also like to call my colleagues' attention to the article in

The Washington Post this morning concerning civilian casualties in

Iraq. The article points out that the Pentagon's official count of

civilian casualties in Iraq shows an increase over the course of this

year. This is in stark contrast to the charts that General Petraeus

showed us in his testimony earlier this month, which only showed the

narrower category of civilian deaths. This is further evidence, Mr.

Speaker, that General Petraeus' testimony was part of an overall

administration spin campaign to convince this Congress and the American

people to keep their support for ``stay the course'' in Iraq.

Iraqi civilians are also suffering, because the violence has forced

over 4 million of them to become refugees. The U.N. referred 11,000

refugee applicants to the United States for processing by the end of

this fiscal year. In February, the United States promised to admit

7,000. Then that number was downgraded to 2,000. But, so far, only

1,035 refugees have been admitted, and the fiscal year expires in 5

days. This situation is like so many others we have seen during the

occupation of Iraq. The administration makes big promises about what it

can achieve, then retreats from its promises, and then fails to deliver

altogether.

To make our refugee record even worse, the Government Accountability

Office has reported that the number of condolence payments the United

States Government pays to families of dead or injured Iraqi civilians

plunged by 66 percent from the year 2005 to 2006. The condolence

payments are, at most, $2,500, $2,500 per incident. Would any one of us

consider $2,500 to be a condolence payment for the death of a beloved

child or spouse? No, Mr. Speaker, we wouldn't.

This Congress will have failed America, both morally and politically,

if we allow the occupation to continue and ignore the suffering of the

innocent. We have only one real tool that we can use to end the

occupation, the power of the purse. We must not appropriate another

dime for the continuation of the occupation. Instead, we must fully

fund the safe, orderly, and responsible withdrawal of our troops and

the estimated 180,000 military contractors who constitute an even

larger army than our 160,000 troops. This is what the American people

sent us here to do, and we have a moral obligation to do it. We have an

obligation to bring our troops home.