Mr. Speaker, when the American death toll in Iraq hit

4,000 on March 23, there was a great deal of coverage about it in the

media. But the media only seems to care about the death toll when it

reaches a special milestone. But now that the number of dead has

reached 4,012, they have packed up their cameras, they have gone back

to ignoring Iraq. Once again, our brave soldiers are dying in virtual

anonymity, surely paying the highest price.

Here at home, the administration's occupation policies are harming

American people in other ways. I am talking about the millions of

Americans who are suffering because we are spending our Nation's

treasure in Iraq rather than on vitally-needed social and economic

programs here at home. We're spending about $4,600 every second on the

occupation, or about $12 billion a month.

Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel Prize winning economist, has calculated

that the occupation will ultimately cost $3 trillion, and that, Mr.

Speaker, is a conservative estimate. And it will certainly cost a whole

lot more if the administration gets its way and we establish permanent

bases in Iraq or the others get their way and we remain involved in

Iraq for 50 to 100 years.

This enormous drain on our resources has buried us so deeply in debt

that we cannot make investments in the programs that would really move

our Nation forward. Just think of what we could do with all of those

trillions of dollars.

We could invest in the education of the 48 million children in our

public schools. We could prepare them to compete and win in the global

economy.

We could invest in early childhood education and the childcare that

millions of poor and middle-class families so desperately need.

We could invest in the medical research needed to cure disease and to

save millions of Americans from needless suffering and from premature

death.

We could invest in our infrastructure and new green technologies

which could produce millions of jobs around our Nation.

We could produce an economic stimulus package to fulfill remaining

unmet needs.

We could help States and cities to provide their first responders

with the equipment they need to save lives in the event of terrorism or

natural disasters.

We could build more affordable housing and assist those who have been

caught up in the mortgage meltdown.

We could provide health care to our citizens, starting with SCHIP for

our children.

We could move to ensure the solvency of Social Security.

We could invest in global health. As a member of the Foreign

Relations Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, I can tell you that

every single dollar spent on global health is a dollar spent to make

our world more peaceful and stable.

These are just a few examples, Mr. Speaker. We couldn't do them all,

but if we did just a few, we would go much further toward safeguarding

our national security than we are currently doing in Iraq.

I hope my colleagues will remember this when General Petraeus arrives

next week with his bar charts and statistics. Let us remember that the

turmoil in the Middle East is helping to spike gas prices at the pump.

It is leading us deeper and deeper into the effects of the Iraq

recession.

The responsible redeployment of our troops out of Iraq is the one

policy that makes sense, and the one policy that the great majority of

the American people support. It is high time for us to do what the

American people expect us to do, and they expect us to end our

occupation of Iraq.