Mr. Chairman, I rise today to oppose the Emergency

Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror,

and Hurricane Recovery, H.R. 4939. This supplemental bill, totaling

$91.8 billion, is the largest that the House of Representatives has

ever considered.

As I have said repeatedly on the House floor, I strongly oppose using

so-called ``emergency supplementals'' to fund non-emergency, clearly

foreseeable expenditures. This bill provides $72 billion for continued

military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The fact that our troops

are on the ground in these dangerous places is not a surprise. They

have been in Iraq for almost three years. Their needs are well known to

everyone, except, it seems, the President and his budget staff. Every

year, the President fails to budget for the cost of military

operations, and every year he pretends that the war is an unforeseen

``emergency''.

Funding our soldiers this way is dangerous because it leaves them

ill-equipped and subject to last minute actions like this by Congress.

If, by contrast, we funded military operations through the normal

budget process, funding decisions would be made in the open and with

the appropriate scrutiny they deserve. It would also allow for long

term planning and more thoughtful budgeting. We have all read about the

contracting waste and fraud that has occurred in Iraq. A number of no-

bid and open ended contracts have wasted millions of taxpayer's

dollars. This waste has made a few crooked businessmen wealthy and done

nothing to protect our troops or help build a more stable democracy in

Iraq.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, I refuse to continue to fund a

failed policy. I opposed this war because I did not think the President

had made a convincing case for the existence of weapons of mass

destruction in Iraq and I opposed his illegal doctrine of preemption.

Since then I have only been heartbroken by the utter incompetence of

which it has been planned. Our soldiers are doing outstanding work, and

I salute their sacrifice. But the policy-makers in Washington have let

them down and put them in an impossible situation. As I said in a

letter to Secretary Rice last September, it is time to begin bringing

our soldiers home. Spending good money after bad on a failed policy

puts our soldiers, and our national security in even greater risk.

There are portions of this bill that should have been in the

President's budget last year. For example, I fully support up-armoring

HUMVEE's and tanks in Iraq. I also support investing $59 million to

fund foreign language proficiency pay. I also support the $1.4 billion

in the bill to fund family separation allowances, hardship duty, and

combat pay.

Yet, all of these funds could have, and should have, been included in

the regular budget process. But they were not.

Let me talk for a moment about the other good portions of this bill

which were attached by the Majority in a cynical attempt to buy votes

for the overall bill.

There is true emergency funding in this bill. But it is money for

Sudan and the Gulf Coast, not Iraq.

This bill also contains money to help in the recovery of another

emergency, one that struck our own shore. Just over six months ago, the

Gulf Coast was struck by Hurricane Katrina. I have visited the Gulf

Coast and found that the destruction was terrible, with hundreds of

thousands uprooted only to return and discover their homes were

obliterated. The debris is still being cleaned. The people of the Gulf

Coast region are looking to rebuild and continue their lives, and this

bill provides $19 billion in needed funds to assist in financing the

rebuilding effort. This money helps us to keep faith with those who

were failed by their government in the days and weeks following

Hurricane Katrina. I am voting for an amendment that would increase by

$2 billion community development funds available to assist local

communities rebuild.

The genocide that continues to this day in Darfur, in the Sudan, is

unconscionable. The President has said this, the Secretary of State has

said this. Further, I have said a number of times that America needs to

do everything it can to end the Darfur genocide. This bill contains

$514 million for Sudan, with a large portion going to the Darfur region

to fund the African Union peace keeping mission. I strongly support

this funding. There is a true emergency in Sudan and I am glad that

this money will be provided to end the genocide and provide

humanitarian assistance to devastated people in the region. I am voting

for the Capuano Amendment to add an additional $50 million to help fund

extra peacekeepers in Darfur.

I am sorry that these true emergency funds were attached to the

foreseeable spending for the ongoing operations in Iraq. I have voted

for rebuilding the Gulf Coast and ending the genocide in Darfur in the

past, and I will continue to do so. But I will not fund a failed policy

in Iraq that is jeopardizing our soldiers needlessly, stoking the

insurgency, draining our national resources, and doing nothing to

protect Americans from terrorism at home.