Mr. Chairman, from the beginning, the Bush

Administration's policy on Iraq has been based on distortions and

misjudgments. Prior to the invasion, I fought to prevent this war. I

parted with most members of Congress and cast a vote against the

resolution authorizing the use of military force in Iraq. The President

misled the American people into believing there was a link between Iraq

and the terrorist attacks of September 11, and he distorted and

misrepresented intelligence data about weapons of mass destruction.

I understand the frustration and heartbreak that have led many

Americans to conclude that it is now time for us to remove ourselves

from this misguided quagmire and bring our troops home. That is why I

have called on the President to change course. America simply cannot

continue indefinitely to pay the high costs in both lives and dollars

to stay on the same failed course in Iraq.

In December 2005, I voted for H.R. 1815, the FY 2006 Defense

Authorization bill, which the President signed into law in January

2006. Section 1227 of that bill, United States Policy on Iraq, states

that it is the sense of Congress that ``calendar year 2006 should be a

period of significant transition to full Iraq sovereignty, with Iraqi

security forces taking the lead for the security of a free and

sovereign Iraq, thereby creating the conditions for the phased

redeployment of United States forces from Iraq.''

It is time for the President to implement this policy. We have no

choice but to approve this spending bill. We cannot put our troops at

greater risk. If the President does not heed the intent of Congress and

the American people, Congress should take more direct action to bring

our troops home promptly and safely. We should not have American troops

in the middle of a civil war.

I have repeatedly called for a change in America's policies so that

we can bring our troops home as soon as possible. In December 2004, I

visited our troops in Iraq. I thanked them for their service and

listened to their stories. It was a moving experience for me. I honor

the sacrifices they and their families are making each day.

The men and women of our armed forces are demonstrating tremendous

dedication to our Nation through their performance in Iraq. These brave

soldiers have put their lives in harm's way for our country, and we are

forever grateful for their service.

This bill also contains crucial provisions, which I support, that

would provide nearly $20 billion for Hurricane Katrina relief,

including funds for housing, community planning and development, flood

control, and small business loans. In addition, the House should take

up H.R. 4197, a comprehensive Hurricane Katrina recovery bill

introduced by the Congressional Black Caucus.

I am encouraged that the bill provides more than $500 million to

address the ongoing genocide in southern Sudan and Darfur. These funds

are critical to meeting the immediate needs of victims of the Darfur

crisis, such as shelter, health care, and access to water and

sanitation. Sudanese government-backed Arab militias have slaughtered

hundreds of thousands of villagers, and they have burned entire

villages. Up to two million refugees have fled this genocide to

neighboring countries, but the small, poorly-equipped, and underfunded

African Union (AU) force cannot offer them adequate protection. This

bill provides needed funding to help transition the AU peacekeeping

operation to a United Nations mission. It is also encouraging that last

week the House International Relations Committee reported out H.R.

3127, the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act, which I urge the House

to take up without delay.

Lastly, I strongly support the inclusion of an amendment adopted by

the Appropriations Committee to cancel the planned transfer of U.S.

ports to Dubai Ports World, which is owned by the United Arab Emirates.

Although the UAE recently agreed to abandon its efforts to take over

American ports, this Congress still needs to enact bipartisan

legislation that I introduced with Ways and Means Trade Subcommittee

Chairman Clay Shaw, H.R. 4839, the Secure America's Port Operations

Act, which would prohibit any foreign-government owned operations at

U.S. seaports in the future.

Mr. Chairman, this emergency supplemental is a necessary measure that

will provide essential support for our troops in their arduous mission

in Iraq, vital funding for the global war on terror, and desperately

needed assistance for our own Gulf region and the many Americans who

have been uprooted by Hurricane Katrina.