Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, we know that this conference report before us will be

vetoed by the President because of the Iraqi withdrawal language and

the many unrelated and costly spending items that have absolutely

nothing to do with the global war on terror or recovery efforts in the

gulf coast.

It is no secret that many Members of the House and Senate, both

Republicans and Democrats, have strong reservations about the manner in

which this legislation undermines the authority of the President, our

Commander in Chief. Members are also rightly concerned about how this

legislation places military decisions in the hands of politicians

rather than the military commanders in the field.

As I have said many times before, this legislation ought to focus on

our troops. It ought to focus on providing those in harm's way with the

resources they need to complete their mission successfully. It ought to

respect, not micromanage, our combatant commanders in whom we place the

ultimate responsibility for prosecuting military actions.

My colleagues know that I have great respect for my friend, Mr.

Murtha, but I strongly disagree with his assertion that we ought to

have 535 Members and Senators micromanaging the war in Iraq. With all

due respect, that is not our job.

Let me again remind my colleagues, we are not generals, we are not

the Secretary of State, and we most certainly are not the Commander in

Chief. It is tragically ironic that the House is considering this

conference report the same day that General David Petraeus met with

Members in closed session on the current situation in Iraq.

It was on January 26 of this year, just 3 months ago, that the Senate

voted 81-0 to confirm General Petraeus to be the top military commander

in Iraq. One would have thought that Members and Senators would trust

his judgment following such an extraordinary vote of confidence over 3

months ago. Senator Reid, who supported the General's confirmation, now

says, and I quote, ``I don't believe him.''

Recent history reminds us that the enemy we face in Iraq, in

Afghanistan and other countries that harbor terrorists will stop at

nothing to seek opportunities to attack the United States and our

allies. Have we not learned anything from the original World Trade

Center bombing in 1993, the Khobar Towers bombing, the attack on USS

Cole or 9/11 itself?

Al Qaeda will view this legislation as the first sign of the United

States backing down from its commitment to the war on terror. It will

view the withdrawal provisions contained in this conference report as

America signaling retreat and surrender. Indeed, al Qaeda will view

this as a day that the House of Representatives threw in the towel,

waved the white flag and signaled retreat and surrender in Iraq.

Our failure to learn the lessons of history, our failure to lead

today, will result in devastating consequences, including an even

greater loss of lives, and even more resources needed to fight

tomorrow. Just as we have only one top General in Iraq, one Secretary

of State and one Commander in Chief, we only have one Speaker of the

House at a time.

Speaker Pelosi and I have been friends and have served as colleagues

on the Appropriations Committee for many years. The Speaker played an

important role in supporting the development of unmanned aerial

vehicles, a critical and successful military capability that is a key

element to the war on terror. She and I worked on that in the

Intelligence Committee together years ago. It is puzzling to me that

the Speaker would not only openly question the judgment of General

Petraeus, Secretary Rice, and our Commander in Chief, but that she

would also willingly work to undermine their efforts to secure a

successful outcome in Iraq.

My colleagues, it is absolutely essential that America, the last

remaining superpower on Earth, continue to be the voice for peace and

freedom in our shrinking world. Our success is critical. Walking away

will further signal to Syria, Iran, Afghanistan and others that the

United States is no longer committed to a successful outcome in Iraq.

In closing, I ask Speaker Pelosi and my friends in the majority to

weigh the implications of supporting this conference report. Even as I

hold hope that the Speaker might have a road-to-Damascus conversion, I

ask her to weigh the enormous consequences of putting our troops in

peril. I strongly urge a ``no'' vote on this emergency supplemental.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.