I thank the distinguished ranking member.

Mr. Speaker, for over 12 years in this House and over 10 years on the

Appropriations Committee, I have worked really hard to try to be fair,

bipartisan, cooperative.

I have to say, though, here today that campaign rhetoric is one thing

but when the rubber meets the road on this huge, important bill to have

this kind of a process in this kind of a bill is not right. To have

over $21 billion of extraneous spending added to this bill, under a

closed rule, which is not the regular way here in the House, especially

on appropriations, and, frankly, to then even violate your own budget

rules is not right.

I have to say that first. It is kind of insider talk, but it is

important to know that this is not the regular order and not the way

this should be done.

Then I respect all the Members in this House that have served in the

military, and I respect so much the gentleman from Pennsylvania and his

expertise here. But I disagree that if you vote against this bill, you

are not supporting the troops, and you are not supporting the veterans,

because I am going to do both, and I always do both.

I do believe that this bill needs to be changed dramatically. I hope

to serve on the conference committee, and I hope that the product that

comes back from the conference committee is very different, that it is

more about supporting the troops and not all these extra things, and

that we don't micromanage the war through the appropriations process.

Now, let me also say this. When the President said mission

accomplished, he was talking about removing Saddam Hussein. We agreed

as a Congress, over half the Democrats in the Senate voted to do it,

almost half the Democrats in the House voted to remove Saddam Hussein.

I wish that wouldn't have sent the signal that it was accomplished

because the mission wasn't accomplished. The mission is not

accomplished, and the mission may not be accomplished in August of

2008.

As a matter of fact, this threat is not going away. One thing I know

a lot about is this threat of jihadism. I have read 20 books. I have

been to lectures. We cannot retreat from this threat. We must stand

against this threat.