Mr. Speaker, I rise in reluctant opposition to the

supplemental spending measure before us. Though I originally voted

against giving the President authority to invade Iraq in October 2002,

I supported every supplemental appropriations bill since then because I

believed that, irrespective of how we might feel about our operations

in Iraq, we must stand together in support of our troops in the field.

Those spending bills provided much-needed body armor, up-armored

Humvees and lED jammers and helped our men and women and uniform as

they undertook challenging and often unconventional missions.

However, in the last 4 years, the situation on the ground in Iraq has

changed, and we must adapt our strategy accordingly. We can no longer

allow our military to referee what has become a civil war. The

underlying causes of violence are now primarily sectarian in nature and

can only be resolved by the Iraqis--a conclusion that nearly all

foreign security experts accept. Consequently, we need a new approach

that will support the Iraqi political process to end sectarian

divisions in Iraq, help rebuild the economy and infrastructure, and

promote maximum diplomatic efforts to bring an end to the violence. We

can meet these goals by redeploying our troops out of Iraq--allowing a

limited U.S. military presence solely for training Iraqi Security

Forces, protecting our citizens and interests and hunting down al Qaeda

and combating terrorism.

Earlier this year, the Democratic-led Congress passed a supplemental

spending bill that would have demanded accountability of the Bush

Administration and set the groundwork for bringing our troops home.

Despite Americans' strong dissatisfaction with his handling of the war,

President Bush vetoed that measure. I am deeply disappointed with that

decision and with his subsequent unwillingness to work with

congressional leadership on a true compromise that funds the needs of

our troops while pursuing a new strategy for success in Iraq. The bill

before us today does require that the President certify that Iraq is

making progress in attaining certain benchmarks--a provision that will

help Congress conduct greater oversight. However, it falls short of the

accountability requirements in the earlier House-passed measure and

gives the President far too much authority to continue prosecuting a

war that has been mismanaged from the start by the civilian leadership.

Despite my past support of supplemental spending bills, I simply cannot

vote for the measure before us today. If we do not shift our mission in

Iraq from a military approach to a comprehensive diplomatic and

economic one, we run the serious risk of damaging the readiness of our

military, doing long-term harm to our armed forces and endangering our

national security. I will vote today to support our troops, and the

best way we can do that is by getting them out of a civil war and

bringing them home.