I thank the gentleman from California.

Mr. Speaker, on February 5, the President sent a request to fund our

troops in Afghanistan and Iraq to the House. This week, Majority Leader

Hoyer said to a C-SPAN audience, the Speaker's plan was to get this

supplemental funding to the President by Memorial Day. That means it

will take 120 days to fund the President's request. In the meantime,

not one penny is going to make its way to the troops. Why? Well, the

President has said, in its current form, this bill is going to be

vetoed. He will veto this bill because it funds the troops on a

contingency basis for only 60 days; 120 days to get the request funded,

and then it only funds it for 60 days. It will be vetoed also because

Secretary Gates says the Pentagon cannot manage a 60-day appropriations

bill. The bureaucracy simply will not move that fast.

This bill will also be vetoed because it has too many strings

attached. They are attached in the form of benchmarks. And there are

more than a dozen of them, 17 to be exact. It will take more than 60

days just to see if the benchmarks have been accomplished.

In the 120 days we have spent haggling over this bill that funds the

troops for only 60 days, we know it is going to be vetoed. In the

meantime, the troops are waiting for the mine-resistant equipment that

is funded in this bill to be manufactured and to be sent to Iraq. They

are waiting on the equipment that they need. They are waiting on the

equipment they need. The majority should withdraw this bill and send

back a clean appropriations supplemental bill that funds the troops

without the 60-day contingency, without the strings attached so we can

meet the needs of our troops. This bill does not do it.

I urge my colleagues to vote ``no.''