Mr. Speaker, it's not working. This policy is not

working. That's why we want to change direction. I mean, it is one

thing to stand here and rhetorically say it's working, say there's

progress to make statements. Because the White House says it? Because

the Pentagon says it?

Let me tell you, the Pentagon wrote and said, ``Further, the lack of

timely supplemental funds has limited the Department's ability to

properly contract for the reconstitution of equipment for both the

active and reserve forces.''

We put extra money in the budget, $17 billion last year. There

wouldn't have been any money in the budget to reset. We have no

strategic reserve. Our National Guard has only 40 percent of the

equipment they need. They can't respond to a national disaster. As a

matter of fact, the National Guard in this country couldn't be deployed

overseas. The active duty American Armed Forces could not be deployed

overseas because we have no strategic reserve.

This war has been mishandled. We need accountability. We had a

hearing on contracting today, and I have been studying this

contracting. Some of the accusations are that the contractors, there's

126,000 contractors in Iraq. We have approximately 140,000 troops there

and 126,000 contractors. Now, imagine this. Some of them are making or

being paid $600 a day, the contractors, and no accountability. It took

us 2 weeks to find out who those contractors were, what they were

doing. We still haven't gotten the details of what they're doing or who

they are. This is unacceptable.

I saw in the book about Blackwater. It said in this book that

Ambassador Bremer had 26 Praetorian Guards and those Praetorian Guards

made $600 a day. Now, you can imagine them pushing through an area

where the Iraqis lived, with their sunglasses on, you know, those

little sunglasses that wrap around your eyes, with their khaki uniforms

with their AK-47s or whatever weapons they carry. That does not make

friends.

When I went to Iraq the first time, you could drive around anyplace

in the city. Today, you can't drive anyplace. Matter of fact, they fly

you from the airport to the Green Zone.

We are occupying Saddam Hussein's palaces. We are in the very area

where Saddam Hussein occupied and there's no accountability.

We need to redeploy to stabilize this situation. We need to get our

troops out of the killing zone. We have lost more people in the last 4

months than we lost any other 4 months in the entire war.

Now, let me tell you what you're voting against if you vote against

this bill.

Well, first of all, let me tell you why I say it's not working. Oil

production, below pre-war level; oil exports, below pre-war level;

electricity production, below pre-war level. Hours of electricity in

Baghdad, they had to shut down the Parliament the other day because

they didn't have enough electricity. The microphones wouldn't work, and

they had no air conditioning inside; and, of course, they have air

conditioning in the Green Zone. Potable water, people with potable

water, below pre-war level; unemployment rate between 25 and 40

percent; inflation rate in Iraq, 50 percent.

Now, here's what you're voting if you vote against this bill. There's

$95.5 billion for the troops. There's $12.3 billion for military

personnel pay and benefits program. $1.15 billion to cover the full

cost of housing allowances, something that was left out last year.

We are adding $2 billion to address the training and equipping

shortfalls in the forces not deployed. We actually have $4 billion more

in this bill than was asked for.

We have $2 billion dedicated to the strategic reserve readiness fund.

We recommend adding $1 billion for Afghanistan, where the real war

should be fought.

We have $25.6 billion in this bill, and if you vote against it,

you're voting against $25.6 billion purchases to increase the

President's request by $800 million. That's the acquisition. The

proposal allocates $3 billion. Let me tell you, the Pentagon asked for

$1.3 billion. We added $1.2 billion for MRAPs. What are MRAPs? MRAPs

are the V-shaped vehicles that resist IEDs.

Now, some of your children have been there. Some of your sons and

daughters have been there. This the Pentagon says is their most

important equipment, and we added twice as much money as they asked for

in the budget, and if you vote against this, you are voting against

that very equipment.

We passed legislation that fully funded everything at $4 billion more

and the President vetoed it. He should have signed that bill.

For the Army procurement accounts, we approved a total of $15.8

billion, more for Humvees, more for Strykers. Somebody mentioned

Strykers. Let me tell you something, if it hadn't been for the

Subcommittee on Defense, there wouldn't have been any Strykers for the

Army because they wanted them, but they weren't willing to ask for the

money.

The defense health programs, somebody mentioned Walter Reed. All of

us have been to Walter Reed. All of us have seen the young people who

have been shattered by this war. All of us have seen the people who go

to Walter Reed and are taken care of so well. None of us knew about

Building 18, but we put money in the budget for three or four years in

a row, and it was mishandled. It didn't go to fixing up the places that

should have been fixed up.

I just went out there a week ago, and I met with the doctors. The

doctors

said we don't have enough doctors. They said we don't have enough

nurses, we don't have enough administrative people, at Walter Reed

today. Why? Because they can't afford to pay them as much as they would

on the outside. We put $2.1 billion above the budget request for Walter

Reed.

$450 million for post-traumatic stress. Of all the other injuries

that are suffered in Iraq, this is going to be the most damaging, the

things that people will have to live with the most. I have seen young

people that came back from Iraq that are having a hard time adjusting,

and they were not in the heaviest contact. The psychologists that

appeared before the committee said to me, 3 months in this situation is

a long time, 3 months they start getting post-traumatic stress.

Predictions are we will have 65,000 Americans, not Iraqis, Americans

that are going to have post-traumatic stress.

You wonder why we want to bring this to an end? We want to change the

direction? You wonder why we want to convince the President that it's

not working? Why we have to have a diplomatic surge instead of a

military surge?

We put $450 million in for brain damage to see if we can't find ways

to help the people with brains that have been damaged. If you vote

against this, you're voting against that.

Amputee care, $62 million for amputee care; $12 million for care

givers. The care givers at Walter Reed, at Landstuhl are suffering

because they see this all the time. They see these young people coming

in, and they are shattered.

Let me tell you this, finally. I went down to Fort Hood, Fort Bragg,

Fort Stewart; and I saw at those bases these families who inspire me,

these families who I can't say enough about them. And they gathered

around me and we talked about their problems. It had just been

announced they are going to extend the troops for 15 months. Now,

Secretary Gates made the right decision because he wasn't going to

leave them at home. Because of what we have done here in the Congress,

he is now leaving people at home for at least a year, and let me tell

you that's essential for these people who have to go back.

Some of these troops in the 82nd Airborne will be deployed for the

fourth and the fifth time. They're individuals. They're people. They're

people suffering from the horrendous impact of this war, and I ask you

to vote for this because we want to hold this President accountable for

this war, hold him accountable and convince him we need compromises.

Mr. Speaker, let me say, I see the Vice President has

gone to Iraq to urge the Iraqis not to take a 2-month vacation. I mean,

we have got to put some pressure on them. It hasn't been working. I

mean, I see the Vice President also said, he said they seem to be more

enthused than they used to be. Let me tell you something, we have got

to do something more than be enthused when the Americans are in the

killing zone. That's the problem.

If this amendment were adopted, we would lose all our leverage on the

Iraqis. The Iraqis could go on as they have, and one of the biggest

problems

we have right now is that every time the Iraqis don't do something, the

Americans are put in a killing zone.

So I would urge the Members to reject this motion to recommit.