Madam President, I rise today to voice my strong

opposition to the emergency supplemental bill. The supplemental bill on

the floor today is irresponsible. Since coming to the Congress 20-plus

years ago, I have pushed for accountability and fiscal responsibility.

When the Democrats took a page from the Republican playbook and said

they would be responsible with the taxpayers' money, I wanted to

believe them. I can see now that all the Democratic promises to the

American people last fall were only empty words.

This bill is an insult to our men and women in uniform and every

single American taxpayer. To me, this is not a political game. I came

to the floor last year to oppose additional spending in the emergency

supplemental bill. It had nondefense spending like $20 million for

oyster fishermen in New England and $4 million for erosion control

projects in California and Michigan, and that draft was put together by

a Republican Congress.

The extra funds I opposed last year pale in comparison to what the

Democrats have done this year. Unfortunately, it has become routine to

see emergency spending bills on the Senate floor. I understand the

pressing need for this legislation to defend America from terrorism and

support our ongoing efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. The purpose of the

President's request is to protect and pay the men and women serving in

our Armed Forces.

It also provides the funding needed to restore damaged military

equipment and to purchase new state-of-the-art technology. This

emergency supplemental is important to provide for American armed

services the additional funds they need right now. However, this

legislation goes far beyond necessary emergency defense spending. The

majority is using budgetary gimmicks to pay for political handouts and

entitlements on the backs of our fighting men and women. Mixed in the

defense spending is a complicated list of earmark legislative language

and program expansions.

Let me walk you through part of the bill. The hurricanes of 2005 were

truly devastating, and I have supported the Government's rebuilding

efforts in the region. But this bill before us today includes $1.45

billion in unrequested and unnecessary funding for the Corps of

Engineers. It also eliminates a 10-percent local matching requirement

for FEMA funds and eliminates the prohibition on forgiving community

disaster loans.

These are two provisions Congress has supported in the past to ensure

responsible spending. These provisions are not only inappropriate for a

wartime supplemental, but they are also bad policy.

Another area of extra spending relates to agriculture. I have been a

strong supporter of America's farms, but the programs in this bill are

routinely funded through the regular process. I cannot justify

supporting $3 million for Hawaiian sugar cane co-ops or $20 million for

insect damage in Nevada on a wartime supplemental bill. This bill is

about our troops, not our farmers.

There are even more glaring examples in this bill. There is $3.5

million for Capital Guide Services to provide service for tourism in

this very building. It adds $100 million for dairy production losses;

$13 million for a lamb replacement and retention program; $40 million

for the tree assistance program; $6 million for flooded croplands in

North Dakota; $25 million for asbestos abatement at the Capitol

powerplant; $23 million for geothermal energy research. The list goes

on and on.

I cannot support requests like these on the backs of our fighting men

and

women. I will support every effort to strip all the nondefense funding

out of this bill. It is time to show fiscal restraint and use emergency

wartime spending legislation for precisely that purpose--to pay for the

war and not for domestic pork projects.

Finally, I want to address the single most important issue in the

supplemental, the shortsighted and political call for troop withdrawal.

This bill includes similar language to that which was rejected by the

Senate 2 weeks ago. It calls for the withdrawal of troops starting 120

days after passage of the bill and sets an arbitrary goal of full

withdrawal from Iraq by March 31, 2008. I voted against this language 2

weeks ago, I voted against it yesterday, and I will continue to vote

against it. As I have stated repeatedly, I do not support micromanaging

the war. It is counterproductive and sends a detrimental message to our

troops and emboldens our enemies.

I want my colleagues to understand that without the U.S. military,

Iraq would become a vacuum that would threaten the stability of the

entire Middle East. I share the desire to have the Iraqis defend

themselves, and our military is providing them with important training.

But that cannot happen based on an arbitrary deadline.

I want to warn the other side of the aisle, if you try to force the

American military out of Iraq, you will be responsible for the chaos

that will ensue. Without the United States, Iraq would emerge as a

training ground for all al-Qaida and terrorist organizations. I believe

the power vacuum would lead to genocide and murdering far worse than

the terrorist attacks that are now occurring in Iraq.

Without the United States, there would be greater threat to Israel,

and Iran would become the dominant country in the Middle East.

I want my colleagues to think about the path this troop withdrawal

language takes us down. I stand for the men and women serving in Iraq

by supporting their mission, but this bill does the opposite. It

undermines the military's ability to act.

We need to listen to the commanders on the ground instead of pulling

the rug out from under them. This supplemental is not a strategy for

success. It is a recipe for defeat. Now is precisely the wrong time to

send this message. I believe we may be turning the corner in Iraq. We

may already see some success, based on recent reports from General

Petraeus. Sectarian killing has been lowered in Baghdad over the last

several weeks, and many Iraqi families have been returning to their

homes. Some of my colleagues would rather ignore these small signs and

the opportunities to succeed in Iraq by pursuing a partisan political

agenda.

This bill should be a commitment to General Petraeus and our

soldiers. It should be a mandate for them to secure democracy in Iraq

and protect America from terrorism. I rise to ask my colleagues to join

me in opposing this bill. This may be the most important legislation we

address all year. It is an opportunity to tell General Petraeus and our

fighting men and women in uniform that we support them. It is an

opportunity to tell the people of Iraq that we will not cut and run and

will not give in to political pressure, allowing us to affect our

decisions on the floor of the Senate. It is an opportunity to defend

America from terrorism.

This bill is a mistake that we cannot afford, and I urge my

colleagues to vote against it.

I yield the floor.