Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and for

his hard work on this and other work that we do here.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the debate on this emergency spending

bill has provided the service of reminding Americans exactly what is at

stake in Iraq, the prospects of victory, the consequences of defeat,

and a better appreciation of how it is we do everything we possibly can

to secure and support our men and women in harm's way.

House Republicans, Mr. Speaker, asked the Speaker and her colleagues

on the Appropriations Committee to produce a clean and straightforward

supplemental emergency bill, a package worthy of our troops' hard work

and dedication, with help we could deploy to the front lines as quickly

as possible.

What we got instead was a poorly assembled wish-list of nonemergency

spending requests wrapped in a date-certain declaration of defeat, a

confirmation to our enemies that if they hang on just a bit longer, we

will be out of their way soon.

I happen to believe the stakes in Iraq are too high and the

sacrifices made by our military personnel and their families too great

to be content with anything but success. But the bill brought before us

today isn't written with victory in mind. Its prevailing tone is one of

defeat, and its abiding premise is that America's mission in Iraq is

over and our troops' continued status there is without merit. And just

to drive the point home, it forces on General Petraeus and his

commanders on the ground constant status and reporting requirements,

designed not only to undermine their basic operational authority, but

to hasten a withdrawal of troop support from the region.

When the leaders of the majority were offered the opportunity for a

secure briefing from General Petraeus a few days ago, they said no.

When the majority was offered a briefing from Secretary Gates,

Secretary Rice and Secretary Pace in the last few days, they said no

again.

Does anyone think that demoting our best generals to administrative

assistants represents our best chance of achieving our goals in this

region? Does anyone believe our commanders in the field have been given

too much authority and too much flexibility to get the job done?

Ultimate victory in Iraq is a proposition that is far from

guaranteed, Mr. Speaker, but ultimate failure in Iraq is, if this

attempt to co-opt the essential command-and-control responsibilities of

our commanders in the field ever actually becomes law.

Mr. Speaker, this emergency supplemental includes billions of dollars

in nonemergency spending, offered as an excuse to vote for a bill that

guarantees our defeat in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I urge a ``no'' vote on this bill and ask my colleagues to join me in

sending a message of strength and resolve to our friends and our

enemies and, most importantly, to our troops in the field.