Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I

might consume.

Mr. Speaker, you all know that I have worked over the years very,

very closely with Mr. Murtha and our chairman Mr. Obey. I think most would

agree that some of us make a significant effort to reach out on both

sides of the aisle to solve problems where that is possible.

In this case, we have a major, major disagreement. I do not presume

others to be insincere in their disagreement, but I feel very strongly

that we must make absolutely certain that we do nothing to undermine

the mission of our troops by way of this debate.

There is absolutely no doubt that the message that we will be sending

as this bill passes today, in part, will say to the terrorists of the

world, including Iraq, that America is not willing to stay and complete

the mission.

I rarely refer to newspaper items in addressing the House, but I

cannot help but note that the Los Angeles Times, USA Today, the Atlanta

Journal, et cetera, those newspapers all have expressed grave concerns

about combining this supplemental funding for a war with huge amounts

of pork.

As a result of that, I am going to use an item several times

mentioned today as a part of my own close. The item is entitled:

``Retreat and Butter. Are Democrats in the House Voting for Farm

Subsidies or Withdrawal from Iraq?''

``Today, the House of Representatives is due to vote on a bill that

would grant $25 million to spinach farmers in California. The

legislation would also appropriate $75 million for peanut storage in

Georgia and $15 million to protect Louisiana rice fields from

saltwater. More substantially, there is $120 million for shrimp and

menhaden fishermen, $250 million for milk subsidies, $500 million for

wildfire suppression and $1.3 billion to build levees in New Orleans.

``Altogether the House Democratic leadership has come up with more

than $20 billion in new spending, much of it wasteful subsidies to

agriculture or pork barrel projects aimed at individual Members of

Congress. At the tail of all this log rolling,'' and by the way I would

not use this next phrase so that Mr. Obey knows that, ``log rolling and

political bribery lies this stinger: Representatives who support the

bill, for whatever reason, will be voting to require that all U.S.

combat troops leave Iraq by August 2008, regardless of what happens

during the next 17 months or whether U.S. commanders believe a pullout

at that moment protects or endangers U.S. national security, not to

mention the thousands of American trainers and Special Forces troops

who would remain behind.

``The Democrats claim to have a mandate from voters to reverse the

Bush administration's policy in Iraq. Yet the leadership is ready to

piece together the votes necessary to force a fateful turn in the war

by using tactics usually dedicated to highway bills or the Army Corps

of Engineers budget. The legislation pays more heed to a handful of

peanut farmers than to the 24 million Iraqis who are living through a

maelstrom initiated by the United States, the outcome of which could

shape the future of the Middle East for decades.

``Congress can and should play a major role in determining how and

when the war ends. Political benchmarks for the Iraqi Government are

important, provided they are not unrealistic or inflexible. Even dates

for troop withdrawals might be helpful, if they are cast as goals

rather than requirements, and if the timing derives from the needs of

Iraq, not the U.S. election cycle. The Senate's version of the

supplemental spending bill for Iraq and Afghanistan contains nonbinding

benchmarks and a withdrawal date that is a goal; that approach is more

likely to win broad support and avoid a White House veto.

``As it is, House Democrats are pressing a bill that has the

endorsement of MoveOn.org but excludes the judgment of the U.S.

commanders who would have to execute the retreat the bill mandates. It

would heap money on unneedy dairy farmers while provoking a

constitutional fight with the White House that could block the funding

to equip troops in the field. Democrats who want to force a withdrawal

should vote against war appropriations. They should not seek to use

pork to buy a majority for an unconditional retreat that the majority

does not support.''

At this point, I include for the Record the Statement of

Administration Policy.