Thank you, Members. Nancy, John, David, I

appreciate you all.

I rise today in support of a clean emergency spending bill for our

troops, but this one is all smoke and mirrors. We must give our men and

women in uniform everything they need to thwart the insurgency in Iraq

and come home safely and soon.

You know, we can't tie the hands of the guys on the ground with time

lines or benchmarks. And, worse, we shouldn't be using the emergency

troop spending bill as the way to finance the political gimmickry of

special interest projects. It is just exasperating that the Democrat

leaders have turned the emergency troop spending bill into a pork

barrel project giveaway.

This bill gives piles of money to shrimpers, spinach farmers, and

peanut storage. You know, what does throwing money at Bubba Gump,

Popeye the Sailorman, and Mr. Peanut have to do with winning a war?

Nothing.

The special interest projects added to increase the likelihood of

this bill passing are really an insult to the troops who want, need,

and deserve our full support. The Democrats are trying to buy the

majority vote today one pork project at a time, perhaps because the

majority does not support their slow bleed surrender strategy.

Since the President announced his new plan for Iraq in January, there

has been measured, steady progress. He changed the rules of engagement

and removed political protections. Coalition forces nabbed more than 50

suspects and dismantled a bomb factory in Iraq over the past few days.

Coalition forces in Iraq detained seven suspects with reported ties to

foreign fighter groups. In Ramadi, troops nabbed four other suspects

with alleged ties to al Qaeda. In Mosul, coalition forces captured a

former paramilitary leader who allegedly is responsible for setting up

al Qaeda terrorist training camps in Iraq and Syria. During another

operation, troops captured a suspected terrorist with alleged ties to

al Qaeda car bomb and assassination cells.

We must seize this opportunity to move forward and not stifle future

success and harm troop morale.

More importantly, I want to know, how many of you have ever asked

your constituents, Do you want to lose in Iraq? I think if you ask that

question, do you want to lose in Iraq, Americans will wholeheartedly

say no.

We have smart, strong men and women serving in Iraq, and they need

our help, and they need the full support of their country and their

Congress.

Our troops don't need 435 generals in Washington declaring, we will

send you money for bullets, but we won't send you bulletproof vests.

Our troops don't need folks in suits sitting in wood paneled rooms on

Capitol Hill saying, we will send you armored tanks, but we won't send

you gas.

Literally, this bill forces our guys on the ground to fight a war

with one arm tied behind their backs. That just smacks of defeat.

Most of you in the Chamber know that I spent nearly 7 years as a

prisoner in Vietnam, more than half of that time in solitary. Well,

that was during my second tour in Vietnam. During my first tour, I

worked for General Westmoreland at MAC-V Headquarters, that is the

Military Assistance Command Vietnam.

While working late at night, we had a bunch of men involved in the

first real hand-to-hand combat using bayonets. You may remember that,

John. That was war. It turns out someone sent back footage to

Washington that would match the opening scene of ``Saving Private

Ryan.'' In the middle of the night, the red phone rang and I answered

it. I heard an earful that is not fit for this House Chamber, something

like, This is the White House. What the heck is going on over there? I

replied, I'll wake up General Westmoreland. They slammed the phone down

and hung up. That was the control they had over our guys.

Starting in 1965, we had folks in Washington trying to tell the

generals how to run things on the ground in Vietnam. A generation ago,

we saw what happens when you stop the funding and America stiffs its

friends. As a matter of fact, we all know just this morning Iran

captured 15 British sailors. This bill prevents us from responding from

Kuwait to help our strong allies of British in an emergency. We show

weakness, and the world knows it.

Just think back to the dark day in history when we saw visions of

American marines airlifting Vietnamese out of the U.S. embassy. You

remember that. That is what happens when America makes a commitment;

Congress cuts the funding, and we go home with our tails between our

legs.

The brave marines who died on that day in 1975 while innocent people

desperately clung to life on a rope tied to a helicopter are a

testimony to what happens when Congress cuts the funding and we leave

without finishing the job.

We can't let that happen again. And I don't think any of you on

either side in this Chamber wants that to happen. Frankly, we all want

our troops to come home, when the job is done. We want to win.

Internationally announcing our timelines for withdrawal literally hands

the enemy our war plan and gives them hope that they will win if they

just wait it out. What world superpower would do such a thing?

We are the United States of America. We are the premier military

force on the globe. We are the land of the free and the home of the

brave. Surely we do not go around announcing to the world how we will

conduct and win a war. Surrendering is not an option, and neither do I

think abandoning our troops is an option.

Look around you. We are all America. Do you want to lose in Iraq?

Voting to set a hard exit date for U.S. troops in Iraq and imposing

strict standards for deploying forces gives hope to the enemy, and it

is a prescription for failure. Worse, forcing Members of Congress to

decide on this issue when the bill is cluttered with excess money for

spinach and peanuts is abhorrent, infuriating, and ill-advised.

My dear colleagues, if you really want to debate the merits of a time

withdrawal, give each Member in Congress an up or down vote so we can

vote our conscience. The sweeteners in this bill are political bribery,

and our troops deserve more than this.

Ladies and gentlemen, we cannot abandon our men and women in uniform

for politically charged benchmarks wrapped up in fat-cat constituent

projects. If we learned anything from the brave Marines who died trying

to save innocent people that day at the embassy in Vietnam, and John,

you know this, it is that the marines never quit. Neither should we.