They entrusted Congress to Democrats in the hopes that we would help take our Iraq policy in a new direction so that we could bring our troops home soon.

Mr. Speaker, the emergency supplemental addresses the concerns of the American people. It is a serious piece of legislation that brings together into one bill the recommendations of the nonpartisan Iraq Study Group, military generals, the Pentagon, and even the President himself. It provides us the first real opportunity to change course, and therefore it deserves the support of anyone who believes the status quo is no longer acceptable.

The supplemental takes into consideration the views of military generals and military experts who have said for months now that there is no longer a military solution possible in Iraq. Instead, they say the only way to end the civil war that is raging in Iraq is through political and diplomatic means.

Tomorrow this House will have the opportunity to send the President a strong message that the war in Iraq will not continue indefinitely. The legislation states that American troops will be out of Iraq no later than August 31, 2008, and if the Iraqi Government does not meet certain benchmarks in the coming months, our troops will be home by the end of this year.

With this legislation, the fate of Iraq now truly belongs to the Iraqis themselves. It is time the Iraqi Government stepped forward and takes some responsibility. The Maliki government must realize that it has to meet political, economic and diplomatic benchmarks that the President himself set, and that if serious improvements are not seen in the coming months, then we will begin the process of redeploying our troops out of Iraq.

This only makes sense, Mr. Speaker. If the Iraqi Government continues to believe that U.S. involvement there is indefinite, what kind of pressure are they going to have to make the necessary political reforms? They are not, and that is why both this pressure and a date certain for responsible redeployment are so important.

This legislation also begins the process of redirecting the Bush administration's attention to the forgotten war in Afghanistan by adding $1 billion to the Defense Department's request for military activities there. This increase supports our efforts to suppress a likely spring offensive by the Taliban. In addition, it will reinforce our humanitarian efforts in that war-torn country. We must work to give poor farmers an alternative to the illicit opium trade that is rampant throughout Afghanistan.

Finally, the legislation provides more money than the Pentagon requested for critical health care needs for veterans and wounded soldiers. Specifically, the legislation provides $1.7 billion more for defense health care and $1.7 billion more for veterans' health care in the hope that we can eliminate the horrific conditions and the treatment our wounded soldiers receive at Walter Reed. The brave men and women who fought on behalf of this country should not now have to endure bureaucratic delays in order to receive the health care services that they were promised.

Mr. Speaker, this week we entered the fifth year of this unfortunate war. Tomorrow we must step forward and support a bill that brings our troops home within the next 18 months, exerts pressure on the Iraqi Government, prioritizes the forgotten war in Afghanistan and provides additional funds for veterans and military health care.

Tomorrow we have the opportunity to change the direction of the war in Iraq, and we should certainly take it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

MEXICAN GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO STAY OUT OF AMERICA'S BUSINESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the Mexican Government needs to stay out of America's business. Let me explain.

Deputy Sheriff Gilmer Hernandez of the town of Rocksprings, Texas, Edwards County, the size of Delaware, one of three deputy sheriffs on patrol at any given time in this massive area of west Texas, is on patrol in the middle of the night, and he sees a van with the lights off running a red light. He does what he is supposed to. He attempts to pull the van over. He notices as he approaches the van that numerous people are laying down on the floorboards.

As he gets closer, the driver speeds off, turns around and tries to run over Deputy Gilmer Hernandez. Deputy Hernandez pulls out his pistol, blows out two of those tires, and the vehicle finally stops. One passenger in the van was slightly injured, but the people in the van jump out and take off running because they are all illegally in the United States, seven or eight of them.

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Deputy Hernandez immediately calls the sheriff of the county to show up. The sheriff shows up; he calls the Texas Rangers to make an independent investigation of this shooting. The Texas Rangers—there is probably no finer law enforcement group in the United States, or in the world for that matter—make an independent investigation and determine that Deputy Hernandez acted lawfully and within the law when he fired his weapon. But then the Mexican government gets involved, and in their arrogance, demand in writing from their consulate general to our Federal Government that Deputy Hernandez be prosecuted. And our Federal Government, like the cavalry, shows up later and reinvestigates the case; basically uses the same facts, talks to all of the illegals, and prosecutes Deputy Hernandez for shooting his weapon in self-defense.

It is ironic that the consulate general wouldn't even allow our government to talk to the illegals until the consulate general got them all together in a room and apparently got their story straight. And once that happened, they talked to Federal prosecutors, and the Federal prosecutors prosecuted Deputy Hernandez, where they were saying he should have stopped firing his weapon after the van went on by. How ridiculous a statement that is.

Deputy Hernandez was convicted, and this week he was sentenced to 1 year and 1 month in the Federal penitentiary. The Federal judge apparently did everything he could to get the lowest possible sentence under the Federal guidelines, even though Deputy Hernandez should not have been prosecuted. The illegals in the van should have been prosecuted. The human smuggler driving the van, he should have been prosecuted. But no, they got a deal; they got green cards to stay in the United States. It seems like our government is prosecuting the wrong people.

It is interesting that Deputy Hernandez was also ordered to pay $5,000 to the illegal who was slightly injured. That is nonsense. It is like someone who breaks into your home, you try to stop that person, they are injured in the scuffle, and the next thing you know you have to pay for their injuries when they illegally broke into your home. That is the same thing that Deputy Hernandez is supposed to do under this court order.

It sounds to me like the Mexican government ought to be paying restitution. They ought to pay restitution to the American taxpayers for the cost of the illegals that come into the United States and get all the social programs that the rest of us pay for. The Mexican government ought to pay restitution for their drug smugglers that come into the United States, bringing that cancer that has spread across our land.

Our Federal Government obviously needs to get on the right side of the border war, and that is the American side of the border war. It is interesting how our Federal Government is so relentless in prosecuting border protectors who are protecting the dignity of this country, doing everything they can to keep people from illegally coming into this country, while our Federal Government gives lip service to border control. Of course that is the

news that the drug smugglers and the illegals like, that our Federal Government prosecutes the border protectors rather than prosecute them.

And why does our Federal Government jump when the Mexican government arrogantly demands that our border protectors be prosecuted? Hopefully we are going to find out the answer to that. Who is driving the process, the Mexican government or our own government? And anyway, who cares what the Mexican government thinks, they are irrelevant to border security and what our border protectors do.

Mr. Speaker, the border war continues, and the Federal Government needs to get on the right side of the border war because right now they are missing in action.

And that's just the way it is.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PERLMUTTER). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. KING of Iowa addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SMITH of Washington addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BISHOP of Utah addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. BLACKBURN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DUNCAN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

WAR SUPPLEMENTAL IS BAD POLITICS, BAD POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be here tonight.

I wanted to talk on the eve of what may be the most controversial bill that we have voted on since I have been a Member of Congress, and I have been a Member of Congress now for 16 years. In fact, sometimes I don't like to admit that in public because everybody gets so concerned about term limits, I don't want to be the poster child for my enemies on that subject. But I have been in Congress for the NAFTA vote, for the renewal of GATT, the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs. I have been here for the impeachment vote. I was here for welfare reform, some very significant pieces of legislation, the Contract With America, and recently with the Democrats' 6 for 06 plan. Yet in all my years of Congress, I can say that this week, perhaps tomorrow, perhaps Friday, we will have what is the most controversial bill that I ever voted on and the largest supplemental appropriation bill in the history of the United States Congress, a bill which the President requested for our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq and the war on terrorism in general. His request level was $101 billion, but it is actually going to be about a $124 billion bill, because there are many things that aren't even related to the war that have now got stuck in the bill.

There are a lot of different views on this that I wanted to talk about. I have my friend, Mr. CARTER from Texas, who is a fellow appropriator on this Special Order. The thing that is interesting, though, is that a lot of the traditional allies of the Democrat Party, the Los Angeles Times, the Washington Post, and sometimes in fact those two newspapers are inseparable from the Democrat talking points, but they are squarely against this bill. The editorial pages have gone out of their way to say what a bad bill this is, to say do we really need a General PELOSI, which is what the Los Angeles Times said. And to quote the Los Angeles Times, ''After weeks of internal strife, House Democrats have brought forth their proposal forcing President Bush to withdraw the troops from Iraq, 2008. This plan is unruly, bad public policy, bad precedent and bad politics. If the legislation passes, Bush says he will veto it, as well he should.'' That is the Los Angeles Times.

Here is the Washington Post. The Pelosi plan for Iraq. ''The only constituency House Speaker NANCY PELOSI ignored in her plan for amending Bush's supplemental war funding bill are the people of the country that the U.S. troops are fighting to stabilize.'' That is real important.

''The Democratic proposal doesn't attempt to answer the question of why August 2008 is the right moment for the Iraqi Government to lose all support from U.S. combat units. It doesn't hint as to what might happen if American forces were to leave at the end of this year, a development that would be triggered by the Iraqi Government's weakness. It doesn't explain how continued U.S. interest in Iraq, which holds the world's second largest oil reserve and a substantial cadre of al Qaeda militants, would be protected after 2008. In fact, it may prohibit U.S. forces from returning once they leave.'' That is the Washington Post.

These are not what I would call mainstream moderate newspapers. The Los Angeles Times and the Washington Post are out there drumming the drums for the liberal causes, time and time again, and they are both squarely against this plan.

You know, I think one thing Americans have to ask themselves is, is there U.S. interest in Iraq? Rhetorical question. Is there U.S. interest in Iraq? Now, if there isn't, and the war is in fact in the tank as Speaker PELOSI and many of her followers believe, get out tomorrow. Get out. Get out yesterday. Now, this bill doesn't say that. It is more of a slow-bleed, sure-formula-for-defeat plan. But if you really think the war is in the tank, why spend another nickel there?

Now I understand, I haven't spoken to him, that my colleague from Georgia, JOHN LEWIS, has made that philosophical and principled position. JOHN is a liberal senior Member from Atlanta. And he says, I am against the war. Why should I vote to spend $100 billion more there? I respect that position. But if you are going to spend the money and give the troops some assistance, why are you tying their hands at the same time? Again, if there is a U.S. interest, then is there not a U.S. interest in victory? Is there a U.S. interest in defeat? And so often the critics of