

Wednesday, June 27, 2007

On Thursday night, I staked out a spot on the floor of the House of Representatives to debate the State and Foreign Operations appropriations bill. The clock ticked toward midnight and a long day of amendments began to take its toll. Patience was wearing thin, particularly as the hot air of the House got thicker.

One of my Republican colleagues stood to offer an amendment calling for an across-the-board cut to the foreign aid budget. Sounds good, right? After all, can't we stand to just tighten our belts by one little notch?

But as I started asking questions, it was clear that this wasn't much of an amendment to cut spending at all. It was all politics.

I asked, "Does the reduction in foreign aid include the economic and military assistance we provide to Israel?"

The answer was "no." Of course they wouldn't cut aid to Israel!

How about foreign military assistance? International Military Education and training? The security aspects of the foreign aid bill?

No, I was told, we don't want to cut that either.

In fact, when I finally read the amendment, its substance wasn't quite as advertised. It called for a cut in all foreign aid but then listed so many exceptions and exemptions that, as I said on the Floor, "We are down to Secretary of State Rice's chauffer!"

Sometimes in the heat of battle when the hour is late, the debate becomes most pointed.

To view this particular portion of the debate, please visit my new video link ([click here](#)). And check back every week when we feature “Video House Highlight of The Week.”