Mr. Speaker, I thank my California colleague and

congratulate him on his stellar leadership on this and a wide range of

other issues.

As I came to the floor just as our colleague the distinguished

majority leader, the gentleman from Maryland, was addressing this House

and he talked about politicization of statements that have been made, I

will tell you, Mr. Speaker, when Saddam Hussein was toppled, it was not

a celebration of one political party over another. It was not even a

celebration just of Americans. It was a global celebration over the

fact that we took this butcher who had murdered literally hundreds of

thousands of his people, and we brought his reign of terror to an end,

and that was worth celebrating.

Now, what we saw yesterday was nothing but partisanship because we

know there is a real divide here. We know that the country is divided,

and we know and the President of the United States, Mr. Speaker, has

acknowledged that mistakes have been made, and we have gone through

real difficulty.

I also heard the majority leader talk about the fact that there is no

definition of victory. Mr. Speaker, it has been very clear from the

beginning victory consists of two factors that are very important.

First, we need to make sure that we have an Iraqi military force, the

ISF, the Iraqi security force, able to defend the country, and we need

to make sure that there is a government that can govern the country.

Those are the two items that have been placed forward. That is all we

want. We have seen self-determination take place with three elections

that have taken place in Iraq. We have seen, I believe, positive news

come forward.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we constantly hear people describe this as the Bush

plan. We hear the litany of others, and as my friend from Tennessee

(Mr. Wamp) just said, we know that the President is not terribly

popular. The President knows that he is not very popular. He likes to

say everyone likes to be loved, but I would rather be right than be

loved.

So we know that the President obviously does not have a high approval

rating right now, but he is doing the right thing. He is doing the

right thing, and I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this goal is a very

valiant one and a very, very important one for us to pursue. We have to

bring about some kind of bipartisan resolution.

I am very pleased to have indications come from our friends on the

other side of the aisle about the fact that we are going to provide

important funding for our troops. We have to do that. That is

absolutely essential, but we need to realize that we are in the midst

of a new strategy.

I had the opportunity to talk with my good friend Mr. Murtha, the

distinguished chairman of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, the

other day, and we agree that we have got to come to some kind of

bipartisan resolution of this.

But the important point that needs to be made, as we hear the names

of these unpopular people, Wolfowitz, Rumsfeld, Bush, thrown out there,

we have to realize again that this is a new strategy, and this is the

Petraeus plan. It was Dave Petraeus who last week said, before a large

bipartisan gathering of Members, that Iraqis today are fighting and

dying for their country. And it was Dave Petraeus who said, let us have

until September, at which time I will report back with my colleagues to

the President of the United States and the Congress.

I talked to, just day before yesterday, a very strong supporter of

Mr. Kerry's when he was running for President, a strong, committed

Democrat, and he said that he believed that establishing some sort of

artificial timeline would be wrong.

The President described it last night following issuance of his veto

that it clearly would be a prescription for defeat, and I believe that

we need to make sure that, again, as Dave Petraeus said, since Iraq is

the central front in the battle against al Qaeda, we need to keep it

there.

Mr. Speaker, sustain this President's veto. Let's come together and

provide the necessary funding for our men and women in uniform.