Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, the President was right to

veto the bill that we have before us. And I believe that the House

today will sustain the President's veto because the bill that we have

before us that is purportedly there to pay for our efforts in

Afghanistan and Iraq and other issues, in my opinion, ties the hands of

our generals and our troops on the ground and almost mandates failure

in Iraq.

I think it is time for us to work across the aisle to produce a clean

bill that the President can sign into law to sustain our efforts in

Afghanistan and in Iraq, and to make sure that at the end of the day we

have victory.

The fundamental question that we are all dealing with in this Chamber

and elsewhere is, why is Iraq important? Why is winning in Iraq so

important?

In my view, and in others, al Qaeda has made Iraq the central front

in their war with us. Those aren't my words, those are their words.

They started this war when they attacked us all through the 1990s and

when they attacked us in New York City on 9/11.

And while we went to Iraq to take out Saddam Hussein and to help

build a more stable, democratically-elected nation in that part of the

world and bring more stability there, it has turned into much more than

that.

According to the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism,

a nonprofit organization funded by a grant from the Homeland Security

Department, Iraq today is home to 77 different terrorist organizations.

They have made this, they have made Iraq the central front in their war

with us.

We all know that there is a growing movement around the world of

radical Islamic terrorists that want to kill Americans and want to kill

our allies. They are operating all over the world and they are

attacking people all over the world. Just think about where they have

been over the last several weeks, whether it was Bangladesh last night

or elsewhere. They are continuing their efforts to try to gain control

of the world, and part of that effort is aimed directly at us.

Americans, freedom loving people, up against people who don't want

freedom for people, that want to impose radical Islamic law on all of

us. And so they have made Iraq the central front in their war with us.

And if we walk out of Iraq, if we don't give this plan a chance to

succeed, we encourage the terrorists. We will encourage them. They will

be able to recruit new people all over the world. They will have a safe

haven in Iraq itself. We will destabilize the entire Middle East,

including the very existence of Israel. And who doesn't believe that if

we don't deal with the terrorists in Iraq, that we won't be dealing

with them on the streets of America? That is why Iraq is important. And

if we are not willing to stand up to the terrorists and defeat them in

Iraq, when and where will we draw the line to protect the American

people, our ultimate responsibility?

We have a serious responsibility, and there is no greater

responsibility for those of us who serve in this Chamber, than to

provide for the safety and security of our constituents and our people

in our country.

So tell me, if we are not going to stand up to them in Iraq, if we

are not going to take them on in Iraq and defeat them there, when and

where will we do it?

And the fact is, is that our troops are doing a great job in Iraq

under very difficult circumstances. They deserve the support of all the

Members of this House.

And so I say to my colleagues, it is time for the games to stop, it

is time

for the political points to be taken off the board, and it is time for

us to sit down as Members on both sides of the aisle and give the

President a clean bill that funds our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan,

that furthers our effort to take on the terrorists and defeats them,

and doesn't do it with some $20 billion worth of excess spending that

has nothing to do with this bill.

I urge my colleagues to sustain the President's veto.