Well, with great fanfare last week and very belatedly,

the President unveiled a document called A Plan For Victory in Iraq,

and he said that this was a declassified version of the longstanding

military strategy in Iraq.

Now, help to review that strategy: The initial strategy based on

unrealistic assumptions by Mr. Wolfowitz, Mr. Rumsfeld, and others was

that our troops would be welcomed as liberators, we would be drawn down

to 40,000 troops within a few months, and that the Iraqis would be able

to pay for their rebuilding themselves. Of course, all these things

were horribly, horribly wrong. A number of us have called to remove Mr.

Rumsfeld for more than a couple of years now, but he is still there. So

we would assume that the President condones the incredible mistakes

that he has made which have caused many, many American lives.

Now, with his support slumping into the 30s on his execution of the

war in Iraq, the President has decided to shift gears. Now, that would

be good if this was really a declassified version of a credible

military plan for victory and return of our troops home from Iraq.

Unfortunately, the White House and its folks do not quite understand

high technology and the Internet, and by clicking on this, you could

find out who really wrote it. It was not written by a military

strategist, it was not written at the Pentagon; it was written by a

political science professor named Peter D. Feaver from Duke University,

and his specialty is polling and public opinion on military conflicts.

He has a theory that Vietnam could have continued if only the American

people had been given a vision that we were headed toward victory, and

he is now testing that theory by writing this document which the

President presented as an actual declassified version of a military

document. It is not. It is a political construct based on a theory of a

political science professor from Duke University who the President has

named to the National Security Council. So the dissembling continues

here for the American people.

We want a real plan on how we are going to bring our troops home from

Iraq. We do not want any more dissembling, we do not want any more

Pollyannas. The President seems in his recent speeches to be admitting

to the numerous mistakes that were made, but if we look at this

document and the way it has been presented, they just made another

grievous mistake for the American people. In fact, the general in

charge in Iraq, Lieutenant General Martin Dempsey, top military

official in charge of training Iraqi troops, he surprised some

reporters by saying that the first time he saw our strategy for victory

in Iraq was the day it was released to the press. So this

administration is still failing to create a clear vision.

I and others have proposed that the President should negotiate with

the newly elected Iraqi government after the elections on a withdrawal,

or enhance their credibility, their legitimacy. I think it would also

begin to remove a crutch which they are using, which is the U.S. forces

in Iraq. They are not settling their differences legitimately between

the Sunnis, the Shiites, and the Kurds, and of course many predicted

that before the war, but the administration also glossed over that. And

they will not as long as the U.S. is there, and the Sunnis in

particular resent the U.S. presence. So if we negotiated that sort of

an agreement with them and had a timeline to draw down and remove our

troops and stand up the Iraqis, I believe that then the insurgency

would abate, as do many others, including others in the military who

have said that in fact it is our forces that are the kindling for many,

other than the foreign fighters who are there, and then soon the Iraqis

would turn on the foreign fighters and hopefully then reclaim their own

country. So I am very saddened to learn that this is yet one more

deception by this administration in this sorry chapter in American

history.