I thank my friend for yielding.

It has been interesting to listen to this debate over several days.

Two thoughts stand out. One side says nonbinding resolutions achieve

nothing and insult the troops. The other side has retired to opinion

polls. The American people want to end this cost of human and financial

treasure. They said so in the last election.

Thank God John Adams never consulted public opinion polls. There was

never a time when more than a third of our Nation was in favor of

independence and freedom. Thomas Paine said, ``If there must be

trouble, let it be in my day, that my child may have peace.''

World War I was not America's war, no one attacked us; but an attack

was made on freedom, and we responded. The doubters wondered why we

would spend money on a war so far from our shores which didn't threaten

us. The doughboys at Vimmy Ridge knew why they were there.

Hitler didn't attack us, he didn't even threaten us; he threatened

all that freedom meant to the world. And while we were engaged in

Southeast Asia after Pearl Harbor, we still sent troops across the

channel on D Day. Many mistakes were made. Troops drowned before

getting to the beach. Support aircraft bombed the wrong areas. 9,386

Americans died in the Battle of Normandy and are buried there on that

hill.

But the Boys of Pointe Du Hoc climbed that ridge under withering

machine gun fire. They silenced the machine guns, took out the

embankments and walked across Europe, and in 11 months Europe was free.

We then spent billions of dollars to rebuild a free Europe.

After World War II, we spent 50 years in a war against an idea. It

was a battle of the two great religions, communism and freedom. When

Whittaker Chambers left communism for freedom, he told his wife that he

feared that he was moving to the losing side. He knew that communism

could not survive if its people believed in a higher faith; he

concluded that freedom could not survive if they did not. He had become

a believer; he was unsure if we remained believers.

Many of those Cold War years were not pretty. Between 1970 and 1980,

the Soviets increased their influence in Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos,

Nicaragua, Grenada, Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, South

Yemen, Libya, Iraq and Syria. We watched and were timid. We even had

Members of this very body go to some of those nations' dictators to

apologize for our defense of what we believed; we believed in freedom.

When Israel watched its athletes murdered at Munich, we urged

caution. When terrorists continued to kill Israelis, we continued to

urge caution. For 21 years we urged that great friend of ours not to

respond in kind. We were timid. After the attacks began against

America, beginning with the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Centers, we

remained timid. We chose not to engage all of the opportunities we had

to be bold. In the face of a declared war against our government and

our people, we were timid.

And then September 11, 2001. We stood together on the Capitol steps

in solidarity that lasted a good week, and then it became politics as

usual.

I don't know if this fight for freedom can succeed when about half of

our Nation doesn't know we are in it; nor do I know whether our Nation

can come to an honest conclusion about what we are engaged in when all

they see is the worst side of everything.

When I was last in Iraq, a young man told me about going through a

city and all the residents came forth to say thank you and throw

flowers. He asked the embedded reporter if that was worth a picture; he

was told, ``That's not news.'' I don't know how the whole story gets

told.

I do know this: This President knows that he and his commanders have

made some wrong decisions, but he knows, as we must know, that this war

has always been about the principle, the virtue, the idea of freedom,

and to walk away now will have catastrophic consequences for its

future.

President Bush believes that our Nation, more than any other, ought

to defend the right of people to live free. That is the only victory we

can ever have over an ideology that cannot survive in a free society.

President Bush knows why Lincoln said that he often found himself on

his knees because there was nowhere else to go.

He also knows, as did Lincoln, that a President must continue to

fight for posterity, even when it becomes unpopular to do so.

If you believe, as I do, that the idea of freedom is still worth

defending, you will vote against this resolution.