Mr. Speaker, approximately 24 hours from now,

this House will bring this debate to a conclusion and it will vote. And

the vote, based on everything we expect, will be an overwhelming one.

It will include people from the left of this House, the right of this

House, it will include people from both political parties. It will

include people who supported this war and who believed in it 5 years

ago, and it will include those who have questioned it from its

inception.

And there is a reason for this consensus, Mr. Speaker. There is broad

agreement on several things in this House. There is broad agreement

that we have been caught in the cross-hairs of a civil war between two

sets of radical Islamist fundamentalists, neither of which shares our

values.

There is broad agreement in this House that the human and material

cost of this effort has gone too high, and there is broad agreement in

this House that the moral obligation is not to put 21,000 more soldiers

into harm's way; but to do the opposite, to begin the process of

pulling our men and women out of this cauldron that is now Iraq.

And there is broad agreement on one other point, Mr. Speaker. It is

this: that the President of the United States is wrong to say that it

doesn't matter to him what this Congress thinks, or what this country

thinks.

I am reminded, Mr. Speaker, I am one of the younger Members of this

House, I was in college a little more recently than some of my

colleagues.

I had a very esteemed professor back in the 1980s named Richard

Newstadt who wrote about the American Presidency for a number of years.

And one night he invited all the freshmen in the class to come over and

to have a dialogue with him about the future of the Presidency. And a

number of us said to him, Mr. Newstadt, what do you fear about the

Presidency of the United States? And it is interesting what he said,

and it is relevant today. He said, I don't fear that someone corrupt

will become President one day. I don't fear that someone incompetent

will become President. There are too many guardrails built in the

system. The process is too exacting for that to happen. But what I

fear, he said, is that one day someone will come in that office who is

absolutely convinced he is right about something on which he is

absolutely

wrong. And he said this: that if the country is frightened enough, if

we are in enough danger, that enough people may think that what is

rigid is what is strong.

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Speaker, several of my colleagues on the

other side of the aisle have said that this resolution carries no

weight, no legal or moral force. I will tell you the weight that this

carries, my friends. Twenty-four hours from now, 65 percent of the

Members of this Chamber will send a signal to the American people that

we have heard their voices. That is a powerful thing when I think of

all the people in this country who sent a clear signal, last November

7, that they were not heard.

And I end with this point. A number of my colleagues in this debate,

our adversaries in this debate have said that there is a group in

Washington. There is a group of people on the left. Some of you have

said there is a group on the other side of the aisle who want to

defund, or who don't somehow have the strength, the fiber, to support

our troops.

I remind you, my friends, your disagreement is not with the

Democratic Caucus. It is not even with the 50 or so in your ranks who

will vote for this resolution. It is a disagreement with the 65 percent

of this country. It is a disagreement with the people in my very

conservative State of Alabama, 60 percent of whom now think this war is

wrong and who say to me, Mr. Davis, why on Earth have we taken sides in

a battle between radical Islamic fundamentalists? Why is a blood feud

between Shiia and Sunni worth the spilling of American blood?

They are the ones you are saying are wrong. They are the ones you are

saying lack strength.

So, Mr. Speaker, I simply end by thanking my colleagues who had the

good judgment to be right about the futility of this war from the

outset, by thanking the colleagues who were wrong 5 years ago and are

right today, and by asking one last thing.

The President of the United States, who brags that he has watched

none of this debate, if he could only hear just one plea from debate,

that he listen to some fact, some evidence, because, Mr. Speaker, this

is the problem that we face with this President. No set of facts, no

set of truths can tell him that he is wrong. Tomorrow this Chamber will

tell him so