Mr. Speaker, if this undemocratic, smoke-and-

mirrors Congress had been in power throughout our Nation's history, I

am not sure we would have much to celebrate this weekend when we

commemorate Presidents Day. On Monday, we honor the Presidents who

guided our Nation through its toughest moments, Presidents who made

tough decisions in the face of public skepticism despite great peril

and unimaginable sacrifice.

Not all Americans supported General George Washington's campaign

against the British, yet our Nation's father led a ragtag band of

underfed and underequipped soldiers to victory over the greatest

military of its day.

Not all Americans supported President Lincoln's decision to go to war

to preserve the Union. It seems inevitable today, but, at the time,

many Americans would have preferred to save the lives, treasure, and

misery and just let the Nation cleave into two. But Lincoln decided to

preserve the Union, a Union that, in time, would become the greatest,

most powerful nation on earth, even though he had to wage the deadliest

war in U.S. history, with 600,000 lives lost.

I wonder what the forebears of today's Democratic Party would think

of their policy of retreat and defeat? What would they think of the

timidity in the face of great danger?

What happened to the legacy of Woodrow Wilson, who faced down

American skeptics to lead us to victory in World War I?

What happened to the legacy of FDR, who faced down American

isolationists to defeat the evils of German fascism and the militarism

of imperial Japan?

What happened to the legacy of Harry Truman, the first President to

realize the peril of the Soviets and entered our war-weary Nation into

the fight against the spread of communism?

The wisdom of their decisions wasn't necessarily clear to all

Americans of their day, but the judgment of history validates their

leadership.

Today, our Commander in Chief sees the danger to our Nation's

security and freedom posed by Islamic extremist forces in the Middle

East. Many in this Congress choose to believe that the violence in Iraq

is a local problem. To some degree, it is, but it is also a problem for

the United States.

If we were to follow the proposals of Democratic leaders, we would

pull out our troops and let Iraq become a failed State. Anarchy in Iraq

would give al Qaeda and other extremists a safe haven to train and plot

attacks. It was in the failed states of the Sudan and Afghanistan that

al Qaeda was able to plan the African embassy bombings, the attack on

the USS Cole and the September 11 disasters.

The smoke and mirrors Democratic Congress wants it both ways. On the

one hand, they say this is a nonbinding resolution. On the other hand,

they say this is a first step.

Given how Democratic leaders have battled to one-up each other and

have allowed their rhetoric to spiral, how can this nonbinding

resolution be anything but a first step?

How can Democrats stop with the nonbinding resolution if they agree

with Senator Obama that lives lost in Iraq have been ``wasted?''

This nonbinding resolution expresses disapproval of the military plan

to strengthen our forces in Iraq and give them the resources they need.

By the end of this week, every Member of this House will be on the

record and answerable to their constituents about whether they are for

or against the military plan.

My colleagues who vote for this resolution are for one of two things.

They are either for retreat and defeat, or stay the course.

We all agree that changes need to be made, that changes need to take

us toward a stable and peaceful Iraq. Withdrawal would take us in the

opposite direction.

Let's reject this smoke-and-mirrors resolution and continue to fight,

take the fight to the terrorists.