Madam Speaker, on this unfortunate day 5 years ago, a

majority of this House enabled President Bush to proceed with his

tragic ``go it alone'' war. He was dead certain then, and he was dead

wrong then. He is dead certain today, and once again dead wrong. As a

result of his choices, we approach now some 4,000 Americans whose lives

have been lost, perhaps as many as another 30,000 who have been

disabled.

Our Treasury, of course, has been disabled of what is scheduled to be

probably a trillion or more dollars out of our Treasury that could have

been spent right here at home on more causes that would have touched

and protected the American people, their health care and economic

security.

After this 5 years, I think it is important to look back and realize

that despite the position of the Republican leadership, the Republican

administration, and most of the Democratic administration, that in this

House that day 5 years ago, a substantial majority of House Democrats

voted against this war that should never have been launched.

We say today that the best course for this country to pursue is a new

course, a change of course, not just more of the same old thing as the

President proposed in his escalation, as he has implemented in his

escalation, but a genuine change in course.

We need to end this endless war in Iraq. We really already have a

blueprint of how to do it, how to implement a safe and orderly

redeployment. The United Kingdom, the only one of our allies to offer

any substantial help in Iraq, is already redeploying and seems to be

indicating that their troops will be out of Iraq next year. We need to

join that coalition, the coalition of refocusing on priorities here at

home, because what we have done in Iraq has not made our families

safer. As one independent study after another has shown, what we have

done there has made our families much less safe than had this adventure

never been launched.

For the last 5 years, this administration has repeatedly presented us

with false choices. Remember, there would be a mushroom cloud, perhaps,

if we waited to find the smoking gun to justify the invasion of Iraq to

find all these weapons of mass destruction that never existed. Now we

hear the same old deadly course is the only alternative to a

Well, I don't know of anyone who is

proposing a precipitous withdrawal. There are other reasonable

alternatives. We believe that the better course, a new course, is a

safe, orderly, fully funded, phased redeployment. The British already

have this underway.

The British already have this underway. We can follow their example,

and we can follow the leadership of the American people reflected in

one study after another, that they want that kind of change in course.

The choice to redeploy or not is a decision about priorities. While

it is true that the big cost of what we are doing there is measured in

the blood of the brave, we are also hemorrhaging some $3 billion in

Iraq expenditures right out of our Treasury, week after week, month

after month.

The President vetoed the Children's Health Insurance bill, because

even too little for our children seems to be too much for him. Half a

trillion dollars for a war already that he chose in Iraq, but for the

children of America's working poor, he brusquely tells us, they can

just go to the emergency room. With millions of children uninsured, it

is too soon to declare ``mission accomplished'' there, just as it was

too soon for him to make that declaration years back and many deaths

back in Iraq.

In Iraq and with the Children's Health Insurance Program, we believe

that the President is on the wrong course and that we cannot afford to

wait until he departs office to end this war and to end the

indifference that he has shown toward our children.

This fifth anniversary then should be commemorated with thoughtful

consideration of alternatives for new courses and new avenues to

address the tremendous damage that has been done by this faulty policy

of preemptive war. I believe that we need in these next few months to

continue to focus on the wrongs that have been committed, the damage

that has been done, and bring people together behind a genuinely new

course that we have not tried before, and that is a complete but

phased, safe and orderly, fully-funded redeployment of our troops that

will protect our families, that will assure our Nation's security, and

will not continue with the hemorrhaging that we have suffered these

last many years.