Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman so much

for yielding.

First of all, I must humbly acknowledge what a difficult situation we

face in Iraq, and I respect the passionate debate on both sides. And I

must concede that I don't really have a cohesive, comprehensive plan

for fixing Iraq. And, indeed, the Iraq Study Group has indicated that

really no one can guarantee that any course of action in Iraq at this

point will stop sectarian warfare, growing violence, or the slide

toward chaos.

Our intelligence community recently found that the violence in Iraq

is now a self-sustaining sectarian struggle. Our military leaders have

indicated that a prolonged occupation cannot prevent what already

exists: little political accommodation, hardening sectarian divisions,

and a growing civil war.

It has been asked what the majority is for. Well, I can tell you that

I am for standing down from these policies in Iraq that have been based

primarily on fear and pride. Fear can be false evidence appearing real,

and fear is one of the most destructive afflictions that can affect the

human mind, and often, as we have seen, feeds aggression. Pride, of

course, is one of the seven deadly sins, and it is an excessive belief

in one's own abilities and is often called the sin from which all

others arise. Oh, we are going to be great liberators.

Fear can appear and make you see a false reality. As the ancient

author Lactantius said, ``Where fear is present, wisdom cannot be.''

In 2003 America's fear of weapons of mass destruction, Saddam

Hussein, and al Qaeda bolstered arguments for going to war. Fear

outraced the facts, and 4 years later our troops find themselves in a

civil war.

Today this debate, this call for an escalation, is led by fear. We

hear the dire predictions about withdrawing from Iraq: Oh, if we leave,

civil war and bloodshed will continue. Sadly, the reality is if we

stay, civil war and bloodshed will continue. Pride blinds our actions

just as much as fear, and some have said that ego is the defender of

fear. A requirement of pride, indeed a symptom, is that each challenge

to our pride drives us harder to improve our illusions and keep up

appearances. Oh, we are going to achieve victory. Oh, we have got to

maintain the morale and pride of the forces. Oh, if we don't succeed,

we don't support our troops. And if we send more troops, we are sending

the wrong message. A very precarious warning about pride that I think

we are all familiar with is that ``pride cometh before a fall.'' In

order for us to consider what our real interests in Iraq and the Middle

East are, we have to get past stoking fear and pride.

Fact: The U.S. is not going to impose democracy on Iraq by military

force. And no matter how proud we are, no matter how much we may wish,

no matter when we leave, the U.S. will leave an Iraq that is in pieces,

not at peace. The U.S. alone cannot stabilize the Middle East. Will our

pride prevent us from reaching out and being honest brokers and invite

others in the region, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, to help stabilize

Iraq? It is said that the punishment for pride is being broken on the

wheel, and our budget and military readiness is being broken on the

wheel.

There are a lot of things I would like to see in Iraq, Madam Speaker:

more political and economic opportunities for women, respect for law,

the emerging of democratic institutions. But as the Iraq Study Group

noted, achieving the goal of having an Iraq that can govern itself,

sustain itself, and defend itself will require much time and depend

primarily on the actions of the Iraqi people, not American troops.