Mr. Chairman, my amendment, offered with its very able

champion, Congressman John Tierney of Massachusetts, will create a

select House committee modeled on the Truman Commission created during

World War II to exercise due diligence and proper congressional

oversight on the over half a trillion dollars of expenditures by the

government of the United States to conduct the global war on terrorism,

as well as those contracts let for rebuilding of the gulf region after

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The original Truman Commission recouped over $15 billion to our

taxpayers. That is big money in our time. But it was huge money back

then, returned to our taxpayers from those interests that were

conducting their business above and beyond the letter of the law.

We are asking for a thorough investigation of any waste, fraud and

abuse in government contracts associated with the Iraq war and the

global war on terrorism, as well as Katrina-Rita recovery and

reconstruction.

Our amendment is responsible. It is a good government amendment. It

provides real means for oversight that is thorough, not anecdotal.

Currently, no committee in this House has full investigative

authority to probe growing public concerns about where our tax dollars

are being spent in this contracting. The charges are legion of cost-

plus contracts, contractor fraud, as contracts below $500,000 are

purposely kept at that level to circumvent review. Criminal operatives

like Rob Stein have been charged and arrested for manipulating Iraqi

Coalition Provisional Authority accounts in bribery and kickback

schemes, waste and abuse.

This administration is moving billions of dollars with no audit

trails, even back to the Appropriations Committee, which should receive

those audits. In Iraq, no-bid contracts of enormous proportions are

let, like to Halliburton. In Iraq, rebuilding contracts, amounting to

millions are missing. A few wrongdoers have been arrested, but they are

just the tip of the iceberg. Companies like Custer Battles, given

contracts to secure Baghdad Airport, is a company that never did

security work. Indeed it submitted invoices for electricity that were

only valued at $74,000, but they got $400,000. Broken trucks bought in

local markets cost $228,000, yet Custer Battles billed for $800,000. In

our Gulf region, no-bid contracts need Congressional oversight.

Over 10,000 manufactured houses sit on the ground in open fields in

Hope, Arkansas, costing more than $300 million.

Our amendment aims to protect the taxpayer. It will save money. It

will

save lives as we bring back inferior equipment that is discovered

during this oversight.

This amendment will allow Congress to do its job, to oversee exactly

how billions in taxpayer dollars are being spent in Iraq and our Gulf

coast. The American people deserve this kind of responsible government.

It is critical that Congress curtail the opportunities for waste,

fraud and abuse in future Federal contracting and bring those to task

who are not meeting the letter and spirit of the law.

Mr. Chairman, I will be pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman

from Massachusetts and any remaining time I may have to himself as well

as to Congressman Walter Jones of North Carolina for their stellar work

on this effort.