Mr. Speaker, I want to follow my good colleagues who just

talked about what they consider to be the free trade debacle of the

1990s with a gentle reminder that that debacle commenced with the 1994

NAFTA vote under the Clinton administration, strongly supported by

President Clinton, and I think, strongly supported by then Senator

Kerry. At the time when we started that, I think we had a $3 billion

trade surplus with Mexico. Shortly thereafter, we had a $15 billion

annual trade loss.

I am reminded with respect to China that one of Mr. Clinton's

strongest contributors, who happened to be the chief executive officer

of the Loral Corporation, found that he had, after he had seriously

violated the rules of transferring technology, had transferred

technology to the Chinese with respect to their launch capability,

because in their satellite launches they use these Long March rockets

to do their satellite launches, and they use that same

rocketry to aim nuclear warheads at their adversary cities, several of

which are in the United States of America.

And when Loral violated the restrictions on transferring this weapons

technology, which puts all Americans at risk, he was allowed to

continue to make those sales; and Loral was allowed to continue to make

those sales, prematurely, in my judgment, and there was, I think, a

very strong link to the Clinton administration manifested in a

$300,000-plus contribution to President Clinton.

So I remember the free trade, the threshold free trade vote well,

which a lot of my Republican colleagues do not agree with me on, and a

number of Democrats do not agree with me on; but I do remember that it

was done by President Clinton, and I wanted to add that little historic

footnote.

I wanted to engage in a little dialogue with my good friend, the

gentleman from Michigan (Mr. Hoekstra), who has been to Iraq a number

of times, four times, I believe, and is one of the Members who has

really focused on Iraq. I would just start off by saying, Mr. Speaker,

that it is a long, hard road in Iraq. We understand that. It has been

tough for our soldiers. It is a difficult environment. It is full of

sweat and dust and high temperatures, and sometimes blood. But we are

undertaking and are now well on our way to making this hand-off, both

politically and militarily, to the Iraqi people in Iraq, and giving

them the best running start at freedom that country has ever had. And,

in doing so, we are on our way to neutralizing Iraq as a potential

springboard for terrorism in the years to come, which will accrue to

the benefit of many, many generations of Americans.

So the cause is right. It is a just cause. We are standing up that

military right now. We have General David Petraeus, one of our best

military leaders, former commander of the 101st Airborne in Iraq, as a

leader of that stand-up and training of the Iraqi forces. He has put

together the schools for officers, for noncoms, for enlisted personnel;

and those forces are starting to pick up that weight a little bit now

and carry it in various battles and clashes that they have had around

Iraq with the insurgents.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would simply want to report that while this is not

an easy task, it is a very difficult task, the United States is

carrying the ball and the folks who wear the uniform of the United

States are doing a wonderful job for us.

Having said that, I would like to yield to the gentleman from

Michigan (Mr. Hoekstra) for his observations on this very important

issue.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. I will tell him that

I am just one of many, many great folks on that committee, I am just

part of the group there, because we have really wonderful people on

both sides of the aisle on the Committee on Armed Services. The

committee has been working hard. Our members have been working very

hard. This has been a challenge. The IEDs, these Improvised Explosive

Devices that are detonated remotely now, are an enormous challenge; and

the deadliness of those is manifested and can be illustrated as you

walk the halls of the hospital there in Ramstein, Germany, or over here

in Bethesda at Walter Reed when they come back.

So we moved out smartly and the services moved out very quickly to

armor up some 8,000-plus Humvee vehicles, basically our follow-on

utility vehicle, and we are also working hard on other means of trying

to stop these very deadly systems.

But in the end, if we look at the combat that took place in Iraq, it

is interesting, with this high-tech world, a lot of it is just great,

great people. So we have done a few good things; but we have had some

really, really wonderful people wearing the uniform of the United

States.

The last citation I picked up before I went over there was for a

Marco Martinez, who was a sergeant in the Marine Corps who won the Navy

cross for taking an enemy position, taking on and taking out four

insurgents with grenades and rifle fire. That is one of hundreds of

high awards for valor and literally thousands of lesser awards. We have

issued some 16,000 Bronze Stars in that theater and over 127 Silver

Stars. Mr. Speaker, those people, the television this year and the

movie screens were filled with the invasion of Normandy, but the kids

that wear the uniform of the United States, and they are kids, because

a lot of them are teenagers, a few of them just in their early 20s, are

every bit as courageous and dedicated as that great generation that hit

the beaches in Normandy and hit the beaches in the South Pacific.

So I want to thank the gentleman for all the great work that he has

done, all the intelligence work that he has done along with his

colleagues.

Saddam Hussein really rattled on when he was there in the court, and

I do not know if that is an equivalent to a preliminary hearing or a

time in which one enters their plea; but he said as he rattled on, he

said one thing that was true. He said, in essence, if it was not for

George Bush and those Americans, this would not be taking place, and

that was true. He would not be there if it was not for George Bush and

about 300,000 great Marines and soldiers and sailors and airmen.

And I think of all of those great units, the First Marine Division,

101st Airborne, the Third Army, the Fourth Infantry Division, now taken

over by the Big Red One, the first infantry division up there in

Tikrit, and the First Cav and the First Armored Division, which has

been centered there in Baghdad for so long, right in the heart of the

tough operations, and now the First Striker Brigade up in the north, if

it was not for the Americans, the people of Iraq would have no chance

at freedom and we, the Free World, would have no chance at neutralizing

Iraq as a potential springboard for terrorism.

So I want to thank the gentleman. I also want to thank the gentleman

from New Hampshire (Mr. Bradley) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr.

Miller) for coming on down here. We have spent a lot of time working

this issue and going over to theater, and all of the great work that

they have done.

Well, I would just say to my friend that, at worst, we do

not put documents in our socks; and I have not seen the definitive

statement on this, but one, at least according to the news reports, and

I think that is why we need to get more information on this, one of the

staff members at the Archives said he put some of them into his socks.

Now, I think that they keep the temperature fairly temperate in that

room, and you do not need to warm your feet. And just the idea of a

national security adviser putting documents into his socks, I think

raises a few questions.

There are more questions here than there are answers, and I think we

all want to believe the best of our fellow man, our fellow government

servant, who, as you said, was national security adviser. But another

thing that I think the American people have to ponder on is that he did

not, according to the news reports, say, Yes, I have got them until he

was called by the archivists, who said, ``You have got secure

documents.'' And at that point he said, ``Yes, I believe I do.''

So you are right. These are not documents that are mixed up.

It is a standard procedure to divest yourself of any notes that you

have written, but also divest yourself of the documents, as it is to

turn your car off when you pull your car into the parking garage. You

turn it off. And the idea that you left the car running, and then you

did not go down and turn the car off until somebody called you and told

you the car was still running and that that was all done

unintentionally is, I think, something that Mr. Berger needs to

continue to explain.

Because one thing about the 9/11 Commission, the reports are out, one

they were afraid of, and I need to yield to my friend from Florida, is

that bits and pieces, little bitty statements out of that report, two

and three words, will be used for news triggers, little statements that

people made. And they will be plucked out and they will be used

politically on one side or the other and they will be used by the news

media, and so just a couple of words, one sentence, can have enormous

effect, enormous effect.

I know the more liberal members of the media have pointed to one

sentence that somebody used in one of the weapons of mass destruction

analyses, where said it does not matter what we find, because this war

is going to happen. Now, that was not a statement of policy. That was a

statement by some guy who did not control policy, but it was plucked

out and used and probably put in front of 50 million people. So little

bitty words and little bitty sentences and little bitty phrases can be

pulled out. And so the idea that we now have an incomplete reservoir of

facts is, I think, disturbing to the American people.

If you lined up all the people in the United States and said, who

would take those documents out, the President's former national

security adviser would be the last gentleman that you would suspect.

And on the other hand, apparently truth is stranger than fiction. It

has happened. I think there is some explaining to do.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, and I think he has

raised probably the most important question for the next several weeks.

One other question we might ask is when Mr. Berger took these

documents home, he obviously took them home for a purpose, and

presumably he reviewed them at home, he looked at them. That would be

another opportunity to say, I have got classified documents; they

should go back. And it would certainly be a time when you would not

scrunch one of them up and destroy it, because you realize you have got

something that the Archives needs.

And so it is a very, very strange situation, and I think the

gentleman has posited the most important questions. And maybe in the

next 5 or 6 or 7 days we are going to have some answers.

I hope the gentleman would stay around and we will talk about Iraq,

because the gentleman, along with the gentleman from Florida (Mr.

Miller) and the gentleman from New Hampshire have a wealth of

experience with respect to the Iraq theatre.

I would be happy to yield to the gentleman from Florida, a great

member of the committee.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding at this

point, because I think that it does reflect on the judgment of Senator

Kerry, but I think more reflective of his judgment with respect to

intelligence is the fact that Senator Kerry voted to cut intelligence

all during the 1990s.

Now what we have discovered is that we cut intelligence, we cut our

operatives, our operating officers by more than 20 percent during the

1990s, during the Clinton administration; and that meant that we cut

all of the people that gave us information because each of those

operating officers has stables of people who talk to them, whether they

are taxicab drivers or people in a bureaucracy in some foreign country

or just people that have a certain insight into knowledge, people who

are in the room when somebody bad makes a decision to hurt Americans.

We lost 40 percent of our assets, of our intelligence assets.

So we had all this information coming in, and we cut out 40 percent

of it. So we are like Ford Motor Company cutting out 40 percent of its

dealerships and then wondering why the number of Fords sold has dropped

dramatically.

Well, while we were doing that during the Clinton administration in

the 1990s, Senator Kerry tried to cut it more, and in 1994 he offered a

massive cut that received from fellow Democrats extreme criticism, one

of them saying this was going to cut the eyes and ears out of our

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and another one saying that

this was going to be a disservice to our troops.

And then in 1996, Senator Kerry offered a bill, and I understand that

he did not get a single cosponsor. There was not anybody in the Senate,

Democrat or Republican, who was liberal enough to sign up to this one,

because this cut $1.5 billion out of the intelligence budget. This is

in 1996 when we really needed it, when we needed to rebuild

intelligence; and he cut what would have been $300 million per year for

1996, 1997, 1998, 1999 and the year 2000. Luckily, not a single Senator

was liberal enough to join him in that.

And it goes back to a statement that he made that was reported in one

of the Harvard newspapers when he was first running for office, and he

said that for practical purposes, he was going to for practical

purposes defund the CIA, just take away the money.

I think that Senator Kerry always looked at the CIA in the same way

as people look at it when they go into these movies and the movie is

made through the prism of some left-winger in Hollywood; and in these

Hollywood movies the CIA is always out there moving drugs and hurting

people and being basically a bad influence. In reality, the people that

serve in the CIA and our other intelligence agencies are wonderful

people who serve this country, get no kudos, get no parades down Main

Street, put themselves in dangerous positions for our country and often

die in small, isolated places around the world for the United States of

America.

But the problem in judgment is not Sandy Berger, the image of Sandy

Berger stuffing stuff into his clothes and leaving the classified intel

room, as John Kerry's adviser. The real crisis in judgment, I think, is

when John Kerry got up and tried to cut an already debilitated CIA, one

where the Clinton administration had sliced the top right off of it,

cut out 40 percent of our assets, and he came in with further cuts. And

he called our programs, the intelligence programs, silly programs.

Nobody calls them silly programs today. We wish we had had more. We

wish we had had people sitting in those meetings when decisions were

made to hurt Americans.

I would be happy to yield to the gentleman.

I thank the gentleman. Another question I think is a

commonsense question that the average American would ask is, well, if

you took this stuff home that was highly classified, very sensitive, it

is against the law to take it home, and you took it home. And you are

reading it and you are a former security advisor, you know that it is

highly classified, well, if you wad it up and throw it in the garbage,

which is almost unthinkable, almost unthinkable, would you not, when

you get called up by the people who have run the collection of that

information, would you not then go try to retrieve it?

Would you not go out to your garbage and dig through it and say, why

did I just lose it and throw it away?

Let me thank the gentleman for his great initiative

because I am just a cog in this wheel and both gentlemen, the gentleman

from Florida (Mr. Miller), has been a leader and put together, drafted

the provisions that we all got behind that gave these great survivor

benefits which heretofore had not been coming. And the gentleman from

Florida (Mr. Miller) is to be congratulated on that.

The gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. Bradley) has been a real leader

in making sure that we have this momentum to rebuild the military; and

not only do we have the 30,000 increase in Army end strength in our

bill, but we also have an increase of some 9,000 Marines. I think that

is important also. The Marines are out there deployed a great deal of

the time. They are kind of a 911 for us. It always has one MEU or one

larger unit. A MEU is a Marine Expeditionary Unit, a little bit bigger

than a battalion, out on patrol, so to speak, in the world's oceans,

ready to move in quickly if there is a problem.

The interesting thing is this all reflects on the people. If you have

a family sitting around the breakfast table trying to decide whether to

re-up or not, the fact that the dad has not been home for two or three

Christmases is going to have an effect on whether he stays in. This is

a corporate decision that is made by the family. So having enough

people is a very, very important thing.

It is also standing military that is not committed that is an

insurance policy for our country. It makes sense to have an insurance

policy.

I want to thank the gentleman for his great work and just ask the

gentleman, he has been to Iraq, and I would like to ask both gentlemen

what their take is now. We all know it is a tough, hard road; but our

troops are walking down that road. We are starting to make this hand-

off. We have handed off the government of Iraq to Iraqis, and we are

starting to hand off the military. What do you think?

The gentleman made a good point when he said that

sometimes the news media follows the old adage, if it bleeds, it leads.

Because that is what a TV station will use to get viewership for their

news hour so they can sell Coca-Cola and whatever type of advertising

they have got. And they know that violence does attract a certain core

audience.

Now, the problem with running wall-to-wall car wrecks if you are a

local TV station is that you give a misleading impression of the

traffic situation in a given town. If you go in, if you are a new TV

station in town and you say, because we do not have a lot of good

substantial news, we will do wall-to-wall car wrecks, and your news

guys may say, we only have two car wrecks a day; and you say, run them

over and over again. If the average person watches that news station

and sees wall-to-wall car wrecks on the news, he will be given the

impression if he drives out on the freeway in that town, he has a 50

percent chance of being in an accident.

The car wrecks in isolation may be true. They are accurate pictures,

but if you run them back-to-back, wall-to-wall, all the time, all car

wrecks, you are going to give a misleading impression on the traffic

situation on that town. Similarly, if you run wall-to-wall pictures of

burning tankers. If there was one tanker blown up in a country that is

as big as the State of California and has 25 million people, and you

run one explosion over and over and over, you give the impression that

the entire country is on fire. It is not.

That is not to say it is not dangerous, because it is dangerous; and

that is not to say it is not tough.

I want to give a description of what I saw last time I was there.

When we went into Balad, we were there in time for the daily mortaring,

where a couple of mortar rounds are thrown in by the insurgents in this

big former fighter base for Saddam Hussein, which is now one of our

main logistics bases.

Well, we were out looking at the gun trucks at that time; and as

these rounds came in about 1,000 yards away, all the GIs just walked,

they did not panic or stampede. They just walked, did not even stop

their conversations, to the shelters that were nearby.

Our general said, Quick, get into the nearest building. It happened

to be a movie theater. We went in there, and he said, get away from the

glass, go indoors. We went into the actual theater portion of this

building. I opened up the door and went in. It was a big church

service. It was on Sunday. There were 400 GIs there. They had a great

preacher who was preaching. They had a 100 GI choir, a band, had a

couple of steel guitars up there, and everybody had their combat gear

sitting there.

Not only were the politicians forced to go into the church service

because of mortaring, we were forced to stay there because of

mortaring. We asked

when we could leave, and they said, You are going to have to wait till

the service was over, and so we waited until the service was over and

we left.

My point is, those folks are standing firm. Our people in uniform are

standing firm. The American people should stand firm.

It was interesting to come back here and watch the talking heads on

television whip themselves into a tizzy, and in my mind's eye I had

those great folks in uniform who were doing their job very coolly, very

professionally and with a sense of purpose; and with respect to a sense

of purpose, that is an important thing.

Just saying, Well, I support the troops, but they are wasting their

lives is not enough. If you tell people that what they are doing,

whether they are a truck driver for a living or they are a soldier, is

without value. Then you are really denigrating that person. You are

really taking the value away from their occupation.

So those who say, Well, I would support the troops, but what they are

doing is a waste, is not a support of the troops.

Now, you may say, Well, that is okay, I think my opinion outbalances

whether or not I support the troops but I am not a supporter of the

troops, and it does a disservice to the troops.

I want to let you know when we went over, and the gentleman from

Texas (Mr. Reyes), a great Member from El Paso, was over with us and

the gentleman from California (Mr. Calvert), we let the troops know

that we valued their service and valued them.

I would be happy to continue to yield to the gentleman from New

Hampshire.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell the gentleman about another

operation that took place.

For those folks who now have given the distorted view to the world

that somehow the Americans are worse than Saddam Hussein, that we have

tortured people and we are the emblems of torture because they have run

these pictures back to back, including the picture where a person is

pretending to shock a person. In the briefings I received, they never

turned on the electricity, but they have given that picture out to

literally millions of viewers with the clear impression that that

person is being shocked with electricity.

When I was in the hospital there at Ramstein, one of the surgeons had

a disk, and on the disk was a video of Saddam Hussein's people

amputating the hands of people in one of the villages because they had

not done enough for the economy. They were businessmen, and the growth

rate of the economy had not been high enough. So he thought he would

give a little example and amputate their hands.

So for people that want to see real torture, real inhumane treatment,

it is there to see, but of course, if we give that disk to the news

media, I am sure that nobody will. In fact, I think those people were

in the capital. I think the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Weldon)

brought them over for a reception, and as I recall, there were almost

no stories about those people.

There was a story or two about the young kids, the 14-year-old kids

who wrote anti-Saddam graffiti on their blackboard in high school. They

were promptly taken out and hanged.

And the Kurdish mothers who died there by poison gas,

with their babies in their arms, those were representations of real

inhumane treatment.

I would be happy to yield to the gentleman from Florida.

We will all continue to work together, and I thank all

Members, Republican and Democrat, on our committee. We have got a great

membership.

Let me just say one thing, if I could, with the indulgence of my

colleagues.

A great gentleman, Cato Cedillo, who served as my assistant district

administrator for 23 years passed away early this morning, and he was a

real hero. He was a guy from San Angelo, Texas, who helped everybody,

who had a heart as big as all outdoors; and I swear he could do more

with a telephone, getting the problem solved, than the rest of us with

a bank of computers.

Cato was a wonderful, wonderful person, and I was with him and with

his family last night as we said good-bye to Cato. It is sad. He will

be greatly missed around his hometown of San Angelo, Texas, and San

Diego, California.

I thank the gentlemen for letting me mention him in the closing

moments of our special order.

I want to thank the gentlemen for participating tonight, and again,

the message from our troops was that they are staying steady and we in

America should stay steady. We are making this handoff. We need to

follow through with it and follow through with our mission.

I thank the gentlemen.