Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding. He,

like myself, has been to Iraq a number of different times. And as

chairman of the Committee on Armed Services, I just want to

congratulate the gentleman on the tremendous work that the gentleman

and his committee have done to demonstrate to our armed services, our

men and women in uniform, that we stand with them, that we are

providing them with all of the resources necessary to conduct this war

effectively, and that our presence in Iraq is a testament to the

courage that we witness from them each and every day.

I was over there on Father's Day, really, just to go over there and

to say thank you. We have 130,000 men and women over there who are

giving up their time with their families, who are over there on

Father's Day, they are over there on Christmas, they are over there on

Easter, all of the important holidays for our families. It was really

meaningful to be there and to have lunch and dinner with some of our

troops.

As we talked with them, we found out the effectiveness of the

Committee on Armed Services. We found out that this is a little

different type of a war than what we expected, a little bit different

than an occupation. The gentleman and his committee have done just a

tremendous job in altering the procurement process and the types of

things that we are buying to get them what they need in Iraq to be

successful and to be safe. I know that they appreciate all of the work

that the gentleman and his committee have done. I know there are lots

of other things.

The gentleman may want to respond to some of the things that the

gentleman's committee has done in terms of getting armored Humvees and

these types of things to our troops, to enable them to be successful to

go after these insurgents.

Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, I just want

to put some of that in context of what our men and women are doing in

Iraq as to the shameful event that was outlined yesterday here in the

United States, last night. This war on terrorism has evolved through

the 1990s. It was not brand-new on September 11, 2001. It started when

the World Trade Centers were bombed the first time in the early 1990s,

when the Khobar Towers in Saudi were attacked, when our embassies in

Africa were attacked, when the USS

Cole was attacked. We know that during much of the 1990s, the Clinton

administration did not appear to take this war on terror very

seriously. Mr. Speaker, it was not identified.

What we found out last night was we may never know the decision-

making process that the Clinton administration went through as it

developed its policies. Because after 9/11, we have had a joint inquiry

between the House and the Senate as to what happened, what went wrong,

and what went right; and there has been talk about the failure in

decision-making, both in the executive branch and in Congress, and in

other areas. And we now have a 9/11 Commission report coming out.

What we found out last night, what America learned last night, is

that John Kerry's foreign policy adviser, Sandy Berger, who was the

National Security Adviser to President Clinton, removed highly

classified documents from a secure area; and these documents, we are

not quite sure what they are anymore, because they are gone. But we do

know that he went into a secure area, and the gentleman and I have gone

into these rooms ourselves. you go in with maybe a couple of pieces of

paper, a pen, they bring in the documents, you have the opportunity to

review the documents, to read them, to study them, to take notes on

them, to organize your thoughts. But when you leave that room, you

leave all of the paper and you leave all of your notes in the room.

Nothing comes out with you, because these are secret documents.

Sandy Berger, the National Security Adviser, last night revealed, and

he has been under investigation by the FBI I guess now for over a year,

last night publicly admitted that he inadvertently took documents from

the National Archives that outlined Clinton administration decision-

making policies, practices, whatever, in relationship at least to the

millennium threat; he removed those documents inadvertently. We do not

know exactly how many. We do not know what was in them. But he

inadvertently removed them; and then, some time later, when he was home

or in his office, he inadvertently destroyed these documents.

I think some of the news media said, Berger said he deeply regretted

the sloppiness involved. Well, to American citizens, to the folks that

are involved in the 9/11 Commission, and to our troops who are fighting

in Iraq, and for the troops that may be fighting sometime in the

future, I am sorry, America deserves better than that. Our troops

deserve better than that, and taking highly classified, secret

documents out of a secure room inadvertently and then destroying them

inadvertently means that the 9/11 Commission, this Congress, and others

will probably never really know what we knew in the 1990s, what we

could and maybe should have acted on in the 1990s, and how we could

have improved this process so that it would not happen again.

Critical documents were taken out and they were destroyed, and we

have a National Security Adviser who was involved in this for years. He

knows, the gentleman from California (Mr. Hunter) and I know the rules

going into that room. How is it characterized? I think the sloppiness

is characterized as somebody stuffing papers into their coat and into

their pants. Excuse me. This is a National Security Adviser with top

secret documents who takes them out of there, and the only question

that one can really ask is, because I believe that he probably knew

that somewhere along the line someone would discover that these

documents were missing; why was he willing to risk taking these

documents out of this security facility and taking them home and

destroying them? What was in those documents that he probably did not

want the American people to see?

I yield back to the chairman, because it is an unbelievable assertion

from Sandy Berger that he inadvertently took documents. I mean, when

the gentleman from California (Mr. Hunter) and I go into these rooms,

do we walk in with a binder of our own notes and our own documents and

then put the classified stuff next to it and kind of put it through

each other and then walk out with a binder and say, oh, man, I just

happened to take a few extra documents? Is that the process that we go

through? I yield back to the chairman.

Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield for a second,

I think we need to put this in context to the American people.

He removed those documents as he was preparing his testimony for the

9/11 commission. It just does not feel right. The context of going into

a secure room, reviewing documents, knowing that these documents are

going to be scrutinized by the 9/11 Commission, and as the chairman

said, word for word for word, and then perhaps stuffing them into his

coat, into his pants and perhaps even into his socks as he is preparing

that testimony, and the disappointing thing is, now the American people

will probably never know what was in those documents.

Those were original documents. They were not copies of documents, at

least the evidence that we have or the information we have today said

that those were original documents, they were not copies. There are not

multiple versions of this available. He had the originals.

And the other thing we have to know about Sandy Berger, very

different than the current President in the way that he operates, Sandy

Berger was the gatekeeper to the President, meaning that George Tenet,

John Deutsch and the CIA and other folks who wanted to

get to the President and brief the President had to go through Sandy

Berger, and Sandy Berger was the gatekeeper.

It is not like this President, who gets briefed by a wide variety of

people on a pretty regular basis. Sandy Berger was the gatekeeper. He

had all of the information. These were documents that he prepared. Most

likely, these are documents that are now missing. We will never know

what is in them.

As those of us here on Capitol Hill are involved in the process of

trying to improve the Intelligence Community, improve the intelligence

capability and the analysis, we will never have the benefit of

reviewing how these documents influence decision-making, and that will

impair our ability to come up with the right recommendations to try to

make sure or to minimize the possibility that a 9/11 will ever happen

again.

I thank the chairman for yielding.

I think this is another critical point. Again, the

information that we have to date is that this was not a single

occurrence, but this was a pattern on a series of visits that he on

multiple occasions inadvertently took documents. Again, that is what

some of the press reports are indicating, which makes it even more

suspect that by accident you took documents on a number of occasions.

I thank my colleague for yielding.