

released a report this week showing that Iraq has failed 11 out of 18 benchmarks. And those seven that did not fail were barely, barely worked upon at all. In response, the administration now claims that these benchmarks should no longer be used to measure progress. It is clear that the administration will never accept the reality about Iraq. The only way to end the violence is to fully fund a safe and orderly redeployment from Iraq.

The shallow fortune-telling of the Bush administration cannot replace what every American knows: The only right course in Iraq is to bring our troops home by fully funding a safe redeployment of our troops and military contractors. The American people want bold leadership, and they have called on the Congress to take action, action now. The occupation has been a total failure and the American people will not accept taking a wait-and-see attitude. They know that the only sensible moral and responsible course is to fully fund the redeployment of our American troops and military contractors. And they want us to get started on it now.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PLANNED DEFEAT BY
WITHDRAWAL?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. “Never, never, never believe any war will be smooth and easy, or that anyone who embarks on the strange voyage can measure the tides and hurricanes that he will encounter. The statesman must realize that once the signal is given, there are unforeseeable and uncontrollable events.”

Winston Churchill’s statement many years from the past indicates the truism of war. It is hard. It is always hard.

Next week, General Petraeus will be reporting to this Congress what progress has been made in achieving security and stability in Iraq. No doubt the report will offer mixed results, signs of progress and probably setbacks.

In the midst of all of this review, Mr. Speaker, the question is: Now what?

Regardless of what anybody thought about going into Iraq, we are there. Right now our military personnel are risking their lives every day in Iraq and Afghanistan to protect our interests at home and abroad. In my opinion, there are far too many people focusing on where we have been and how we got there rather than making decisions about the future and our involvement in Iraq.

The way I see it, Mr. Speaker, we just have two options. We can stay in

Iraq and keep fighting for the American interest and what we believe is right, or we can turn our back and leave. There is not a third option.

To those who think we ought to leave Iraq and bring our troops home, what will happen if we withdraw before the job is done? The answer is chaos and more bloodshed. Without a stable Iraq, the power vacuum will inevitably entice more civil war like we haven’t begun to imagine and, most likely, a regional conflict that will lead to serious security risks for those nations and the United States.

Congress is making the outcome of this war the same as the planned failure in Vietnam. That war lasted 10 years. The media didn’t like the war. The American public got war weary and Congress then cut the funding and started bringing troops home. The results: We left before the mission was accomplished. We abandoned our friends, and when the communists gained control, they killed thousands of people because we lost our way.

Our enemies today believe we will abandon Iraq in the same way, and they hope we do. They feel we don’t have the stomach for war. Our enemies believe they are more committed to their cause of killing in the name of religion than we are for our cause of life and liberty.

Abandonment and retreat is not a strategy. We stay because it is in America’s best interest to stay and secure a victory before we turn the country over to the Iraqis. We stay because there are men and women laying down their lives for the cause of America. Twenty-one courageous men and women from my area in southeast Texas have died in Iraq and Afghanistan. What would the retreat crowd tell those families about their kids who died on the altar of freedom? War got too hard so we left? We don’t quit because war is hard. War is always hard. We stay, Mr. Speaker, because we know that we are fighting a global enemy who doesn’t intend to stop war. They want to destroy us. Success, Mr. Speaker, has never come from withdrawal; it never will.

General George Patton in World War II told his troops in 1944, he said, “Sure, we want to go home. We want this war over with. The quickest way to get it over with is to get the ones who started it. The quicker they are whipped, the quicker we can go home. You must always do your finest and win.”

That is the only option. And yes, Mr. Speaker, Patton and his boys successfully finished that war.

And that’s just the way it is.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. McCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. McCARTHY of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE PRESIDENT’S WAR
ASSESSMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, when the President arrived in Australia the other day, he told the prime minister, quote, “We’re kicking ass” in Iraq. It is a clear sign that he intends to keep a massive U.S. military force in Iraq as long as he remains in office. And he will make it official administration policy next week. “We’re Kicking Ass in Iraq” might be the headline of the report the White House is writing for General Petraeus to deliver to the Congress next week.

It is supposed to be an objective military assessment, but the President has declared it will be a White House spin document, as usual. Here’s what the President’s “kick ass” assessment translates to on the ground: 10 U.S. soldiers killed this week; 793 U.S. soldiers killed so far this year; 3,752 U.S. soldiers killed since the beginning of the war; and 27,186 U.S. soldiers wounded since the beginning of the war, although the actual number is much higher.

As the Times of India newspaper said today, Iraq is getting worse day after day after day. We don’t even know how bad things really are.

The ACLU filed a lawsuit the other day demanding the U.S. release military documents concerning the number of innocent civilians killed by the U.S. forces. They fear the government is hiding the human cost of war. We don’t know, but reliable information does exist.

There is plenty of factual information for the President to rely on, but he won’t. An independent commission of retired U.S. generals released a report today that concludes that the Iraqi national police force is so corrupt the force should be disbanded. These U.S. military experts concluded that Iraq’s Army over the next 18 months, “Cannot yet meaningfully contribute to denying terrorists safe haven.”

The GAO released its own independent study showing the Iraq Government has reached only three of the 18 benchmarks established as part of the U.S. continuing to fund the war. In case anyone thinks that achieving three of 18 isn’t too bad, let me tell you what they are.

The first benchmark we achieved was passing a law that legally protects the rights of minority parties in Iraq. Except the minority Sunni population remains outside the political situation totally. The other two benchmarks the Iraqi Government achieved was setting up security and public relations offices to support the military escalation. But the White House will use the military brass to paint a much rosier picture next week in its report to the Congress.

Besides the kick-ass assessment by the President, there have been recent reports trying to bolster the administration's position. I enter into the RECORD at this point a story appearing in today's Washington Post. It's on page 16, but it ought to be on page 1. The headline is: "Experts Doubt Drop in Violence in Iraq. Military Statistics Called Into Question." I urge everyone to read this important news story. The only conclusion one can reach is, here we go again.

[From the Washington Post, Sept. 6, 2007]

**EXPERTS DOUBT DROP IN VIOLENCE IN IRAQ—
MILITARY STATISTICS CALLED INTO QUESTION**

(By Karen DeYoung)

The U.S. military's claim that violence has decreased sharply in Iraq in recent months has come under scrutiny from many experts within and outside the government, who contend that some of the underlying statistics are questionable and selectively ignore negative trends.

Reductions in violence form the centerpiece of the Bush administration's claim that its war strategy is working. In congressional testimony Monday, Army Gen. David H. Petraeus, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, is expected to cite a 75 percent decrease in sectarian attacks. According to senior U.S. military officials in Baghdad, overall attacks in Iraq were down to 960 a week in August, compared with 1,700 a week in June, and civilian casualties had fallen 17 percent between December 2006 and last month. Unofficial Iraqi figures show a similar decrease.

Others who have looked at the full range of U.S. government statistics on violence, however, accuse the military of cherry-picking positive indicators and caution that the numbers—most of which are classified—are often confusing and contradictory. "Let's just say that there are several different sources within the administration on violence, and those sources do not agree," Comptroller General David Walker told Congress on Tuesday in releasing a new Government Accountability Office report on Iraq.

Senior U.S. officers in Baghdad disputed the accuracy and conclusions of the largely negative GAO report, which they said had adopted a flawed counting methodology used by the CIA and the Defense Intelligence Agency. Many of those conclusions were also reflected in last month's pessimistic National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq.

The intelligence community has its own problems with military calculations. Intelligence analysts computing aggregate levels of violence against civilians for the NIE puzzled over how the military designated attacks as combat, sectarian or criminal, according to one senior intelligence official in Washington. "If a bullet went through the back of the head, it's sectarian," the official said. "If it went through the front, it's criminal."

"Depending on which numbers you pick," he said, "you get a different outcome." Analysts found "trend lines . . . going in different directions" compared with previous years, when numbers in different categories varied widely but trended in the same direction. "It began to look like spaghetti."

Among the most worrisome trends cited by the NIE was escalating warfare between rival Shiite militias in southern Iraq that has consumed the port city of Basra and resulted last month in the assassination of two southern provincial governors. According to a spokesman for the Baghdad headquarters of the Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I), those attacks are not included in the military's statistics. "Given a lack of capability

to accurately track Shiite-on-Shiite and Sunni-on-Sunni violence, except in certain instances," the spokesman said, "we do not track this data to any significant degree."

Attacks by U.S.-allied Sunni tribesmen—recruited to battle Iraqis allied with al-Qaeda—are also excluded from the U.S. military's calculation of violence levels.

The administration has not given up trying to demonstrate that Iraq is moving toward political reconciliation. Testifying with Petraeus next week, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Ryan C. Crocker is expected to report that top Shiite, Sunni and Kurdish leaders agreed last month to work together on key legislation demanded by Congress. If all goes as U.S. officials hope, Crocker will also be able to point to a visit today to the Sunni stronghold of Anbar province by ministers in the Shiite-dominated government—perhaps including Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, according to a senior U.S. official involved in Iraq policy. The ministers plan to hand Anbar's governor \$70 million in new development funds, the official said.

But most of the administration's case will rest on security data, according to military, intelligence and diplomatic officials who would not speak on the record before the Petraeus-Crocker testimony. Several Republican and Democratic lawmakers who were offered military statistics during Baghdad visits in August said they had been convinced that Bush's new strategy, and the 162,000 troops carrying it out, has produced enough results to merit more time.

Challenges to how military and intelligence statistics are tallied and used have been a staple of the Iraq war. In its December 2006 report, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group identified "significant underreporting of violence," noting that "a murder of an Iraqi is not necessarily counted as an attack. If we cannot determine the sources of a sectarian attack, that assault does not make it into the data base." The report concluded that "good policy is difficult to make when information is systematically collected in a way that minimizes its discrepancy with policy goals."

Recent estimates by the media, outside groups and some government agencies have called the military's findings into question. The Associated Press last week counted 1,809 civilian deaths in August, making it the highest monthly total this year, with 27,564 civilians killed overall since the AP began collecting data in April 2005.

The GAO report found that "average number of daily attacks against civilians have remained unchanged from February to July 2007," a conclusion that the military said was skewed because it did not include dramatic, up-to-date information from August.

Juan R.I. Cole, a Middle East specialist at the University of Michigan who is critical of U.S. policy, said that most independent counts "do not agree with Pentagon estimates about drops in civilian deaths."

In a letter last week to the leadership of both parties, a group of influential academics and former Clinton administration officials called on Congress to examine "the exact nature and methodology that is being used to track the security situation in Iraq and specifically the assertions that sectarian violence is down."

The controversy centers as much on what is counted—attacks on civilians vs. attacks on U.S. and Iraqi troops, numbers of attacks vs. numbers of casualties, sectarian vs. intrasect battles, daily numbers vs. monthly averages—as on the numbers themselves.

The military stopped releasing statistics on civilian deaths in late 2005, saying the news media were taking them out of context. In an e-mailed response to questions last weekend, an MNF-I spokesman said that

while trends were favorable, "exact monthly figures cannot be provided" for attacks against civilians or other categories of violence in 2006 or 2007, either in Baghdad or for the country overall. "MNF-I makes every attempt to ensure it captures the most comprehensive, accurate, and valid data on civilian and sectarian deaths," the spokesman wrote. "However, there is not one central place for data or information. . . . This means there can be variations when different organizations examine this information."

In a follow-up message yesterday, the spokesman said that the non-release policy had been changed this week but that the numbers were still being put "in the right context."

Attacks labeled "sectarian" are among the few statistics the military has consistently published in recent years, although the totals are regularly recalculated. The number of monthly "sectarian murders and incidents" in the last six months of 2006, listed in the Pentagon's quarterly Iraq report published in June, was substantially higher each month than in the Pentagon's March report. MNF-I said that "reports from un-reported/not-yet reported past incidences as well as clarification/corrections on reports already received" are "likely to contribute to changes."

When Petraeus told an Australian newspaper last week that sectarian attacks had decreased 75 percent "since last year," the statistic was quickly e-mailed to U.S. journalists in a White House fact sheet. Asked for detail, MNF-I said that "last year" referred to December 2006, when attacks spiked to more than 1,600.

By March, however—before U.S. troop strength was increased under Bush's strategy—the number had dropped to 600, only slightly less than in the same month last year. That is about where it has remained in 2007, with what MNF-I said was a slight increase in April and May "but trending back down in June-July."

Petraeus's spokesman, Col. Steven A. Boylan, said he was certain that Petraeus had made a comparison with December in the interview with the Australian paper, which did not publish a direct Petraeus quote. No qualifier appeared in the White House fact sheet.

When a member of the National Intelligence Council visited Baghdad this summer to review a draft of the intelligence estimate on Iraq, Petraeus argued that its negative judgments did not reflect recent improvements. At least one new sentence was added to the final version, noting that "overall attack levels across Iraq have fallen during seven of the last nine weeks."

A senior military intelligence official in Baghdad deemed it "odd" that "marginal" security improvements were reflected in an estimate assessing the previous seven months and projecting the next six to 12 months. He attributed the change to a desire to provide Petraeus with ammunition for his congressional testimony.

The intelligence official in Washington, however, described the Baghdad consultation as standard in the NIE drafting process and said that the "new information" did not change the estimate's conclusions. The overall assessment was that the security situation in Iraq since January "was still getting worse," he said, "but not as fast."

We're kicking ass is the kind of assessment you'd hear at a football game, and the PR game is clearly on by this President and his minions. They will claim progress next week and tease the American people with talk of token U.S. troop reductions. But because it's coming from this White

House, the only thing certain about next week is that it will be their latest attempt to try to mislead us into believing there are enough bullets and bombs, money and U.S. blood to prevail in Iraq.

The best military in the world is being run into the ground by this President. That's the only truth the evidence supports. Don't believe anything else. The American people had it right in November, and they still have it right today.

The U.S. must end its occupation. There is no other choice for this country, except to continue to shed the blood of our people and waste the resources of this country in Mr. Bush's failure.

□ 1430

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind Members to refrain from using vulgarity.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

STATUS REPORT ON CURRENT SPENDING LEVELS OF ON-BUDGET SPENDING AND REVENUES FOR FY 2007 AND FY 2008 AND THE 5-YEAR PERIOD FY 2008 THROUGH FY 2012

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I am transmitting a status report on the current levels of on-budget spending and revenues for fiscal years 2007 and 2008 and the five-year period of fiscal years 2008 through 2012. This report is necessary to facilitate the application of sections 302 and 311 of the Congressional Budget Act. This status report is current through September 5, 2007.

The term "current level" refers to the amounts of spending and revenues estimated for each fiscal year based on laws enacted or awaiting the President's signature.

DIRECT SPENDING LEGISLATION—COMPARISON OF CURRENT LEVEL WITH AUTHORIZING COMMITTEE 302(a) ALLOCATIONS FOR RESOLUTION CHANGES REFLECTING ACTION COMPLETED AS OF SEPTEMBER 5, 2007

[Fiscal years, in millions of dollars]

House committee	Fiscal years			2007			2008			2008–2012 total		
	2007	2008 ¹	2008–2012	BA	Outlays	BA	Outlays	BA	Outlays	BA	Outlays	
Appropriate Level:												
Budget authority	2,255,570	2,350,357	n.a.	0	0	–50	–50	–410	–410	–410	–410	
Outlays	2,268,649	2,353,992	n.a.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Agriculture:												
Allocation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Current Level	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Difference	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Armed Services:												
Allocation	0	0	–50	–50	–50	–50	–50	–410	–410	–410	–410	
Current Level	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Difference	0	0	50	50	50	50	50	410	410	410	410	
Education and Labor:												
Allocation	13	4	–150	–145	–145	–145	–145	–750	–750	–750	–750	
Current Level	13	4	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Difference	0	0	150	150	150	150	150	750	750	750	750	
Energy and Commerce:												
Allocation	–1	–1	134	132	132	132	132	89	89	89	89	
Current Level	–1	–1	134	132	132	132	132	89	89	89	89	

REPORT TO THE SPEAKER FROM THE COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET—STATUS OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2008 CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET ADOPTED IN S. CON. RES. 21—Continued

[Reflecting action completed as of September 5, 2007—On-budget amounts, in millions of dollars]

	Fiscal years		
	2007	2008 ¹	2008–2012
Revenues	1,900,340	2,015,841	11,137,671
Current Level:			
Budget authority	2,255,570	1,422,249	n.a.
Outlays	2,268,649	1,766,864	n.a.
Revenues	1,904,516	2,050,418	11,313,523
Current Level over (+) / under (–) Appropriate Level:			
Budget authority	0	–928,108	n.a.
Outlays	0	–587,128	n.a.
Revenues	4,176	34,577	175,852

n.a. = Not applicable because annual appropriations Acts for fiscal years 2009 through 2012 will not be considered until future sessions of Congress.

¹ Pending action by the House Appropriations Committee on spending covered by section 207(d)(1)(E) (overseas deployments and related activities), resolution assumptions are not included in the appropriate level.

BUDGET AUTHORITY

Enactment of measures providing any new budget authority for FY 2007 (if not already included in the current level estimate) would cause FY 2007 budget authority to exceed the appropriate level set by S. Con. Res. 21.

Enactment of measures providing new budget authority for FY 2008 in excess of \$928,108,000,000 (if not already included in the current level estimate) would cause FY 2008 budget authority to exceed the appropriate level set by S. Con. Res. 21.

OUTLAYS

Enactment of measures providing any new outlays for FY 2007 (if not already included in the current level estimate) would cause FY 2007 outlays to exceed the appropriate level set by S. Con. Res. 21.

Enactment of measures providing new outlays for FY 2008 in excess of \$587,128,000,000 (if not already included in the current level estimate) would cause FY 2008 outlays to exceed the appropriate level set by S. Con. Res. 21.

REVENUES

Enactment of measures resulting in revenue reduction for FY 2007 in excess of \$4,176,000,000 (if not already included in the current estimate) would cause FY 2007 revenue to fall below the appropriate level set by S. Con. Res. 21.

Enactment of measures resulting in revenue reduction for FY 2008 in excess of \$34,577,000,000 (if not already included in the current estimate) would cause FY 2008 revenue to fall below the appropriate level set by S. Con. Res. 21.

Enactment of measures resulting in revenue reduction for the period of fiscal years 2008 through 2012 in excess of \$175,852,000,000 (if not already included in the current level estimate) would cause revenues to fall below the appropriate levels set by S. Con. Res. 21.