

THE GAO REPORT BUSTS THE ADMINISTRATION IN ITS LIES

I'm anxiously waiting the WaPo's analysis of today's GAO report. You'll recall the WaPo reported last week that someone had liberated a copy of the GAO to prevent BushCo from "softening" its conclusions. But the numbers suggest that some of the conclusions **were** softened: whereas on Thursday, the WaPo reported Iraq had met three and partially met two of the benchmarks, the GAO has since added two more partially met objectives—on not providing a safe haven for outlaws, and on preparing three Iraqi brigades in Baghdad. In other words, over the weekend, Bush squeezed two more gentleman's C's out of the GAO.

More interesting still is the chart on page 12, which shows **why** Bush tried so hard to get GAO to give it some more passing grades. That chart shows how much more generous BushCo was in its July 2007 assessment. How else to explain that in July, BushCo found that Iraq had made satisfactory progress on eight benchmarks, whereas today's softened GAO report finds that Iraq has made satisfactory progress on only three. And BushCo gave Iraq more positive grades than GAO did on two other benchmarks.

The GAO has quantified just how much lying Bush has already been doing in his assessments of success in Iraq.

It's instructive, too, to see where there are variances.

- GAO says Iraq has failed to form a Constitutional Review Committee; BushCo says it has fully satisfied this benchmark
- GAO says Iraq has partially

met benchmarks on forming semi-autonomous regions; BushCo says it has met this objective

- GAO says Iraq has failed to establish provincial authorities; BushCo says it has partially met this benchmark
- Rather than judge Iraq as failing to pass amnesty and disarmament, BushCo says simply that "conditions are not present for these benchmarks"
- GAO says Iraq has partially met its goal of three Iraqi brigades in Baghdad; BushCo says it has met this objective (on Thursday the report said Iraq had failed to meet this objective)
- GAO says Iraq has partially met its goal of "not providing a safe haven for outlaws"; BushCo is satisfied with Iraq's progress on this score (on Thursday the report said Iraq had failed to meet this objective)
- GAO says Iraq has failed to eliminate militia control of local security; BushCo gives it partial credit
- GAO says Iraq has partially met its spending goal;

BushCo gives it full credit

The key part of the GAO report is not just that it shows that the surge has been a failure. It also quantifies how much BushCo is lying to us to make us believe that it has succeeded.