

OR MAYBE O'HANLON IS THE NEW JUDY MILLER

Because for the life of me, I can't understand how taking an "overly rigorous approach to the numbers" makes one "sloppy."

Yet according to Michael O'Hanlon, a senior fellow in foreign policy studies at the Brookings Institution who has closely followed statistics on Iraq for years, the average number of daily attacks on Iraqi civilians and US/allied forces has declined from 160 in August 2006 to 120 in August 2007.

The GAO's data may not reflect the downward trend experienced last month, says Mr. O'Hanlon. During his recent tour through Iraq, he adds, every local briefing he received from the US military said that attacks in that particular sector were down.

In addition, for the GAO to decline to judge whether attacks are sectarian or not is to take an overly rigorous approach to the numbers, says the Brookings expert.Â Â Â Â

"I just think they were flat-out sloppy," he says of GAO.

Doesn't taking a rigorous approach with numbers make you meticulous, as opposed to sloppy? (HT TP)