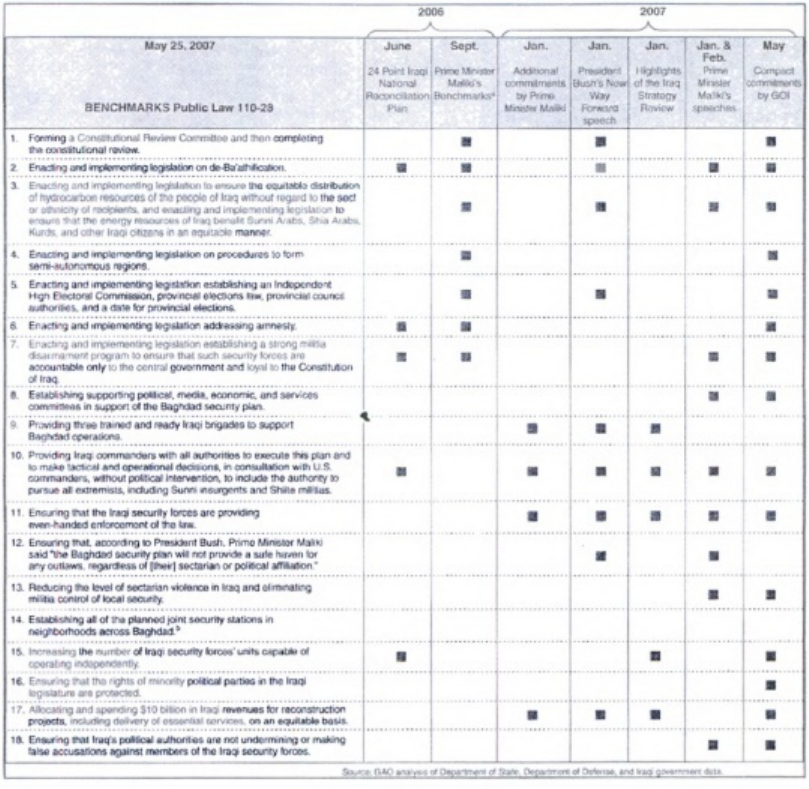
Figure 1: Origin of Iraqi Benchmarks



[a]Iraq's Policy Committee on National Security agreed upon a set of political, security, and economic benchmarks and an associated timeline in September 2006. These were reaffirmed by the Presidency Council on October 16, 2006.

[b]In December 2006 the Multi-National Force-Iraq and government of Iraq agreed to establish the Joint Security Stations.

GAO ASSESSMENT OF THE 18 BENCHMARKS

As of August 30, 2007, the Iraqi government met 3, partially met 4, and did not meet 11 of its 18 benchmarks. Overall, key legislation has not been passed, violence remains high, and it is unclear whether the Iraqi government will spend $10 billion in reconstruction funds.

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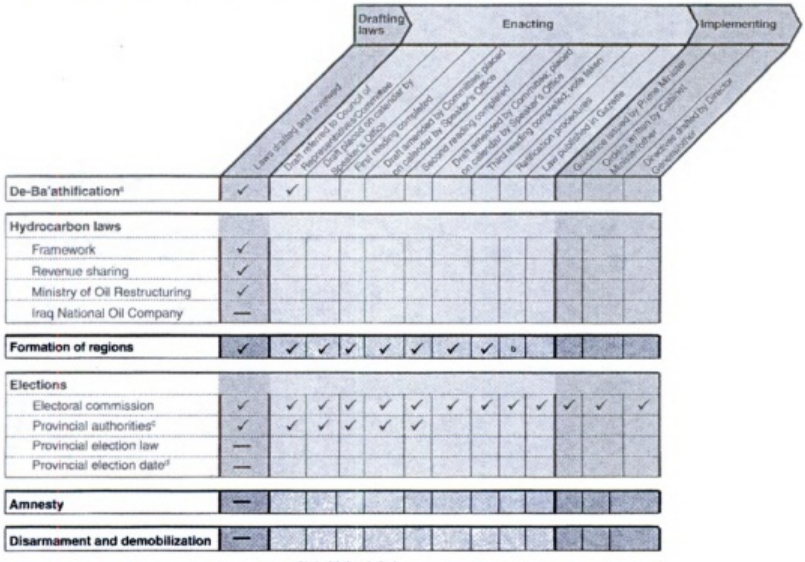
Figure 3: Enactment and Implementation Status of Six Legislative Benchmarks



Source: GAO analysis of Department of State, Department of Defense, UN and Iraqi government data.

Notes:

[a]The Iraqi legislature is considering several competing drafts.

[b]The Iraqi Constitution exempts the law on formation of regions from following the Presidency Council's ratification process that is set out in Article 138 of the Constitution.

[c]The draft deals with broader federal versus provincial powers, according to the United Nations.

[d]According to State, the Iraqi government may not need a law to set the election date, though to date this is unclear.

MIXED RESULTS IN ACHIEVING SECURITY BENCHMARKS

Two of nine security benchmarks have been met. Specifically, Iraq's government has established various committees in support of the Baghdad security plan and established almost all of the planned Joint Security Stations in Baghdad. The government has partially met the benchmarks of providing three trained and ready brigades for Baghdad operations and eliminating safe havens for outlawed groups. Five other benchmarks have not been met. The government has not eliminated militia control of local security, eliminated political intervention in military operations, ensured even-handed enforcement of the law, increased army units capable of independent operations, and ensured that political authorities made no false accusations against security forces. It is unclear whether sectarian violence in Iraq has decreased—a key security benchmark—since it is difficult to measure perpetrators' intents, and various other measures of population security from different sources show differing trends. As displayed in figure 4, average daily attacks against civilians have remained unchanged from February to July 2007.

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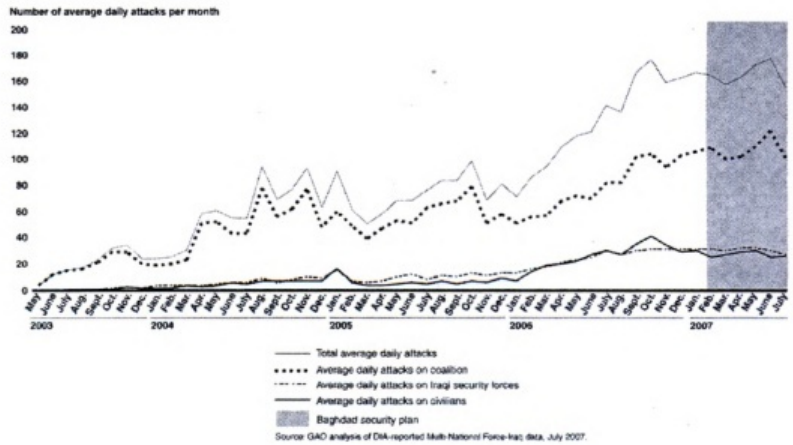
Figure 4: Average Number of Daily, Enemy-Initiated Attacks against the Coalition, Iraqi Security Forces, and Civilians (May 2003-July 2007)



COMPARISON OF GAO AND EXECUTIVE BRANCH ASSESSMENTS

Public Law 110–28 requires GAO to report to Congress by September 1, 2007,[3] on whether or not the government of Iraq has met 18 benchmarks contained in the act, and the status of the achievement of these benchmarks. The Act requires the administration to report in July and September 2007 on whether satisfactory progress is being made toward meeting the benchmarks. As stated previously, we considered and used a "partially met" rating in several circumstances. Figure 5 compares the two assessments.

[3] GAO provided this report to Congress on September 4, 2007, the first business day following September 1, 2007.

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Highlights

Highlights of GAO-07-1195, a report to Congressional Committees

Why GAO Did This Study

Public Law 110-28 requires GAO to report to Congress by September 1, 2007, on whether or not the government of Iraq has met 18 benchmarks contained in the Act, and the status of the achievement of these benchmarks. The benchmarks stem from commitments first articulated by the Iraqi government in June 2006.

In comparison, the Act requires the administration to report in July and September 2007 on whether satisfactory progress is being made toward meeting the benchmarks, not whether the benchmarks have been met.

To complete our work, we reviewed government documents and interviewed officials from U.S. agencies; the UN; and the government of Iraq. We also made multiple visits to Iraq during 2006 and 2007. Our analyses were enhanced by approximately 100 Iraq-related audits we have completed since May 2003.

What GAO Recommends

In future reports to Congress on the benchmarks, we recommend that the Secretaries of State and Defense: (1) specify clearly what step in the Iraqi legislative process each draft law has reached; (2) identify trends in sectarian violence together with broader measures of population security; and (3) better identify the operational readiness of Iraqi security forces.

State and DOD concurred with our recommendations but disagreed with our assessment of certain benchmarks.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on GAO-07-1195. For more information, contact Joseph A. Christoff at (202) 512-8979 or christoffj@gao.gov.

September 2007

SECURING, STABILIZING, AND REBUILDING IRAQ

Iraqi Government Has Not Met Most Legislative, Security, and Economic Benchmarks

What GAO Found

The January 2007 U.S. strategy seeks to provide the Iraqi government with the time and space needed to help Iraqi society reconcile. Our analysis of the 18 legislative, security and economic benchmarks shows that as of August 30, 2007, the Iraqi government met 3, partially met 4, and did not meet 11 of its 18 benchmarks. (See next page). Overall, key legislation has not been passed, violence remains high, and it is unclear whether the Iraqi government will spend $10 billion in reconstruction funds. These results do not diminish the courageous efforts of coalition forces.

The Iraqi government has met one of eight legislative benchmarks: the rights of minority political parties in Iraq's legislature are protected. The government also partially met one other benchmark to enact and implement legislation on the formation of regions; this law was enacted in October 2006 but will not be implemented until April 2008. Six other legislative benchmarks have not been met. Specifically, a review committee has not completed work on important revisions to Iraq's constitution. Further, the government has not enacted legislation on de-Ba'athification, oil revenue sharing, provincial elections, amnesty, or militia disarmament. The Administration's July 2007 report cited progress in achieving some of these benchmarks but provided little information on what step in the legislative process each benchmark had reached.

Two of nine security benchmarks have been met. Specifically, Iraq's government has established various committees in support of the Baghdad security plan and established almost all of the planned Joint Security Stations in Baghdad. The government has partially met the benchmarks of providing three trained and ready brigades for Baghdad operations and eliminating safe havens for outlawed groups. Five other benchmarks have not been met. The government has not eliminated militia control of local security, eliminated political intervention in military operations, ensured even-handed enforcement of the law, increased army units capable of independent operations, or ensured that political authorities made no false accusations against security forces. It is unclear whether sectarian violence in Iraq has decreased—a key security benchmark–since it is difficult to measure the perpetrator's intent and other measures of population security show differing trends.

Finally, the Iraqi government has partially met the economic benchmark of allocating and spending $10 billion on reconstruction. Preliminary data indicates that about $1.5 billion of central ministry funds had been spent, as of July 15, 2007. As the Congress considers the way forward in Iraq, it must balance the achievement of the 18 Iraqi benchmarks with the military progress, homeland security, foreign policy, and other goals of the United States. Future administration reporting to assist the Congress would be enhanced with adoption of the recommendations we make in this report.

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