Madam Speaker, for months now this Democratic

Congress has tried to change course in Iraq, but a stubborn President,

supported by a rubber-stamp Republican Congress in both the House and

the Senate, has made that impossible.

In the spring, Republican leaders said by September, which is now, we

should know if the President's troop escalation plan is working. And if

it wasn't, then they would be ready to explore a different course.

Yesterday, the GAO released a report concluding that the Iraqi

Government had fallen short of meeting 11 of the 18 benchmarks that

President Bush said they would have to meet. The report also found that

four other benchmarks had only partially been met. That means that the

Iraqi Government has met only three of 18 benchmarks. Let's not forget

that the main reason that

the President gave for the troop escalation earlier this year was to

better secure the Nation so that the Iraqi Government could meet these

political objectives. The GAO report concludes that

and that the political promises have not been kept.

Madam Speaker, I would only hope that our Republican colleagues would

take a serious look and join us, as they said they would, in demanding

a change of course in Iraq.