Mr. Speaker, today there are two distinct messages coming

out of Washington. The first message is from a majority of the Congress

and underscores impatience with the lack of political progress in Iraq.

We call for a new direction, including enforceable benchmarks for the

performance of the Iraqi government. The other message is from the

White House. The message the President is sending is that America's

military commitment in Iraq remains open-ended, no matter what.

The President keeps saying that we're making progress in Iraq. This

claim cannot be reconciled with the facts. Nearly everyone agrees that

there is no military solution possible in Iraq; rather, the Iraqis must

make the political compromises necessary to end the violence.

But where is the progress on the benchmarks that the President

himself has endorsed? Where is the agreement to fairly share Iraq's oil

wealth among all of Iraq's people? Where is the law reversing the

disastrous de-Baathification policy? Where are the promised new

election laws? Where is the progress on amending the Iraqi constitution

to address longstanding Sunni concerns? The Iraqi government has

repeatedly promised action on all of these, but there is little forward

movement after many months.

Benchmarks are only real if there are consequences for failure to

meet them. Back in January, the President said, and I quote, ``if the

Iraqi government does not follow through on its promises, it will lose

the support of the American people--and it will lose the support of the

Iraqi people.'' But by vetoing the Iraq Accountability Act, the

President has made it clear that failure to follow through on the

benchmarks will not result in the loss of the White House's support for

this open-ended war.

From the beginning, the Bush Administration has been wrong so many

times about nearly every aspect of the war in Iraq. Now the President

comes to Congress again to ask for yet another blank check. We should

not give him one. I urge the House to override the President's veto.