

REPUBLICANS SUPPORT BINDING BENCHMARKS TO HOLD IRAQI GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABLE

Republican leaders reiterated the growing support for benchmarks in their Party at a press conference yesterday afternoon. Senate Minority Whip Trent Lott “suggested...Bush will have to accept benchmarks for the Iraqi government that are tied to consequences, should they not be achieved.” House Minority Whip Roy Blunt also supported the push for binding benchmarks, “saying that any punishment for not meeting them should be a focal point of negotiations in the coming days.” *[The Washington Post, 5/1/07]*

Over the past week, Republicans have joined Democrats in supporting benchmarks as the best way to ensure progress is made in Iraq:

“Republican leaders in Congress said yesterday that negotiations on a second war spending bill should begin with benchmarks of success for the Iraqi government, and possible consequences if those benchmarks are not met.” *[The Washington Post, 5/1/07]*

“An area of common ground that appears to be emerging is that of setting benchmark goals for the Iraqi government to meet in the coming months.” *[NY Times, 4/28/07]*

“Boehner ‘believes members and the administration can and will discuss benchmarks as a way of measuring progress and holding the Iraqi government accountable.’” *[The Washington Post, 5/1/07]*

“Republicans, including Minority Whip Roy Blunt, said they were willing to consider benchmarks to make non-military U.S. aid contingent on the Iraqi government meeting certain goals.” *[USA Today, 4/27/07]*

“‘There are a number of Republicans who do think that some kind of benchmarks, properly crafted, would actually be helpful,’ said Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky.” *[USA Today, 5/2/07]*

“Rep. Bob Inglis (R-S.C.) has suggested that benchmarks be tied to U.S. troop positions within Iraq. If the benchmarks are not met, troops would remain in the country but would be removed from combat zones.” *[The Washington Post, 5/1/07]*

“In a sign that Republicans also are restless to see changes, Blunt and other Republicans could support binding benchmarks on the Iraqi government tied to a ‘consequences package.’” *[Roll Call 4/30/07]*

Republicans Leaders supported benchmarks back in January:

“Benchmarks provide a common sense yardstick by which to measure whether sufficient progress is being made in Iraq.” *[Minority Leader John Boehner, 1/22/07]*

“The benchmarks laid out today are stepping stones on which we should all agree...Success is going to require extra effort by the Iraqi government to secure their country, and the benchmarks laid out...are designed to monitor the Iraqis' progress toward that goal.” *[Minority Whip Roy Blunt, 1/22/07]*

Prepared by the Office of Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, 5/2/07