



For Immediate Release
Feb. 11, 2007
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Help Build Portable Water Treatment Plant

By A. Al Bahrani
Gulf Region South
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

BASRAH, Iraq -The Umm Qasr water treatment plant, one of the six largest infrastructure projects in southern Iraq, provides potable water for Umm Qasr port facilities and the town of Umm Qasr, thanks to the efforts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The Corps has drilled two wells for water, built the building, installed 10 storage tanks, supplied and installed the reverse osmosis equipment and hooked up the power. "Everything has been done from the ground up," said Natalie Sudman, project engineer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region South District. "These things were requested by the Basrah governorate. They are now debating whether or not the water is specifically for the Port or for all of the public."

The \$341,322 project is one of the more important ones for Umm Qasr, according to Mr. Ali, an Iraqi project engineer with the Corps. "I think that the water treatment plants and the other projects that we (Corps) do benefit individual Iraqis and help make a positive difference in their everyday lives," Ali said, adding that the reverse osmosis plant will start operations early this year and have the capacity to produce up to 25 cubic meters of water per hour.

"Before the war in 2003, which liberated Iraq from tyranny, Umm Qasr citizens used to buy drinking water from the



An Iraqi laborer works to prepare for the installation of a chain link fence to protect the storage tanks at the Umm Qasr water treatment facility. (USACE photo by A. Al Bahrani)

city of Basrah, which is about 60 kilometers away," Ali said. "Currently there are more than six water treatment plants projects under construction in the southern region of Iraq. Most of them are scheduled to (start) later this year."

The Corps provided the two wells, each 20 to 30 meters deep, to ensure a reliable source of water, Sudman said. "These newly completed wells bring water right from the ground," she said. "The project is expected to provide potable water to approximately 200,000 citizens."

She added that the new storage tanks, capable of storing 25 cubic meters of wa-

ter each, will allow the plant to have a surplus, enabling water to be available all the time. "If the plant needs to be shut down for maintenance or if the power goes out for a while or something of that nature, there will still be a reserve of water available for people to use," she said.

The Army Corps of Engineers' mission also is to provide contract oversight for the project. "We're responsible for making sure that the contractor builds the water treatment plant according to plans and specifications," Sudman said. "The Iraqi government will assume full responsibility for this project and for the national reconstruction. To ensure that happens, these projects involve working with and training Iraq's workers to manage and implement their own projects."

In order to provide a reliable source of power for the water treatment plant, the Corps has installed a 1,200-kilovolt electric generator. "The completion of the plant will

have great impact on the town of Umm Qasr, which has suffered from a shortage of potable water for over 20 years," Ali said. "The growth potential for Basrah is unlimited as long as there is a clean reliable source of water serving the community."

Money for these infrastructure upgrades comes from the Iraqi Relief and Reconstruction Fund (IRRF) effort. With the IRRF funds and the Corps' assistance, the national infrastructure is starting to take new shape in Basrah, and the people are beginning to realize that multinational coalition forces are here to help Iraqi people in rebuild their nation.

As of Dec. 31, 2006, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has 825 water projects planned throughout Iraq – with 506 projects completed. Of those, 480 are water treatment and sewage projects providing potable water capacity to approximately 2.2 million Iraqis.

Note: Mr. A. Al Bahrani is a public affairs specialist works for the Gulf Region South District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Iraq. For more information, contact Betsy Weiner, public affairs officer at (540) 542-1528. Email requests can be sent to CEGRD.PAO@tac01.usace.army.mil. For more information on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq, visit www.grd.usace.army.mil.