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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Gulf Region Division

Reconstruction projects provide Iraqis with big improvements to essential services

BAGHDAD, Iraq – U.S. reconstruction efforts are providing successful, tangible results in the lives of Iraqis every day, said the commanding general of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Brig. Gen. Michael J. Walsh addressed the media at two press conferences recently at the Combined Press Information Center – one with Adm. Mark Fox from Multi-National Force – Iraq, the other with Ambassador Joseph Saloom from the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office.

“Every day in Iraq we see the successes of the U.S. government’s construction program – better essential services where, in many places, there were none; and 75 percent of the country with twice as much power as before the war,” Walsh said. “Many of the services are things Americans take for granted – access to medical facilities, a fire station or school in your neighborhood, a paved road, clean water.”

To date, the United States has contributed almost \$22 billion toward Iraq’s rebuilding effort – an effort that was estimated by the World Bank to be an overall \$60 billion to \$80 billion task in 2004. At the end of Fiscal Year 2006, the Department of Defense had obligated all of its \$13.4 billion Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Funds on a broad range of projects throughout the country.

“While our efforts to date have been successful, we should remember the U.S. contribution was intended to “jumpstart” the rebuilding efforts,” Walsh said, “to help the Iraqi government lay a foundation upon which to continue to rebuild of their country.”

As of Feb. 28, 2007, the Department of Defense has:

- Planned 3,832 projects, at a program cost of \$12.05 billion.
- Completed 3,183 projects, at a program cost of \$8.67 billion.

The projects are being completed throughout the country in the categories of Facilities, Public Works and Water, Oil and Electricity.

“Electrical demand rose 32 percent after 2003, and has risen more than 10 percent every year thereafter. At present, it is estimated that demand for power has increased more than 70 percent since 2003,” Walsh said. “That’s a good sign – it means that people are able to buy more luxury items – washing machines, televisions. However, it means as we add capacity to the Iraqi system, we find ourselves chasing this increasing demand.”

Walsh cited healthcare and potable water as other areas that reconstruction is making a difference in the daily lives of the Iraqi people, and invited media out to his projects to see for themselves.

The Erbil-Ifray Water Treatment Plant – a \$191 million project – is one of the three largest infrastructure projects in Iraq, and provides water to a population of more than 950,000. The Basrah Children’s Hospital, scheduled for completion in late 2008, will bring much needed specialty oncology care to Iraq’s children.

“Certainly, the work in Iraq is challenging and difficult, but reconstruction efforts are a vital component to Iraq’s progress toward democracy,” Walsh said. “Ultimately, it is up to the Iraqi people to rebuild and secure their country. We are giving them the assistance they need to ensure that success.”

Note: Get more information about the Gulf Region Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by e-mailing cegrd.pao@tac01.usace.army.mil or visiting our Web site at www.grd.usace.army.mil.