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## Nasiriyah Drainage Pump Station turned over to Iraqi Government

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The inverted siphon structure at the Nasiriyah Drainage Pump Station is being built from the ground up, according to U.S. Army Corps of Engineer officials. [USACE Photo]

**AN NASIRIYAH, Iraq** – In a simple ceremony recently, the Iraqi government’s Ministry of Water Resources (MWR) took responsibility for completing the Nasiriyah Drainage Pump Station (NDPS) from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) southern district.

The pump station, a critical project for improving agriculture in the south, has progressed to being 70 percent complete, according to Lt. Col. Dale Johnson, Camp Adder area engineer, USACE. He emphasized that when USACE and its prime contractor, Washington International, Inc. (WI) reinvigorated the project in August 2005, construction at the pump station had been touch-and-go since 1992.

“The project began in 1983 with a Brazilian contractor who worked for three years and was forced to stop building because of political upheavals at the time, he said. “Work resumed again in 1992, but because of flooding and structural failures work was stopped again. In 1999, more work was done, but we didn’t know the extent of that until WI started work on the project.”

However, once the project was underway, the contractor discovered unforeseen problems at the site, such as concrete and electrical issues. These created new costs not originally considered at the time the contract was let. Moreover, the time it would have taken to correct these issues created logistical problems that could not be easily resolved.

“USACE has reviewed and verified the cost challenges facing the contractor,” said Johnson. “A mandated ceiling on the available funds was set by Congress, and the funds needed to finish the drainage pump station exceeded that.” He added that work was suspended until the transition took place.

The contractor had reached to critical decision point on the project. The funding had allowed for complete cleanup of the station, which was buried in silt and mud; establishing the internal electrical system; completing a major concrete structure which would allow the siphon to function properly; and refitting and installing of nine of the 12 pumps, each with a capacity of pumping 316,000 gallons per minute. Because of the extensive up front reclamation and repair cost, it was determined, with agreement from the Iraqi government, to partner with the Iraqi MWR



Workers at the Nasiriyah Drainage Pump Station do some rebar work on the new facility. [USACE Photos by James Bullinger]

to complete the project.

“The U.S. Government has offered the government of Iraq a grant agreement to support the completion of the project by the MWR,” said Johnson. “The Senior Consultant for Water Resources with the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office of U.S. Embassy Mission notified Minister Latif Rashid, MWR by letter of the U.S. decision to terminate the construction contract, and that the transition would take place as soon as possible.”

He explained that the governments developed a plan for the transition, which was in March 1. “The MWR will determine how and when they will proceed with the completion of the project, said Johnson. “The Corps is willing continue to have an advisory role with this pro-

ject. Through the MWR many jobs may continue and I anticipate there will be additional work and jobs, based on the requirements that the project needs.”

He underscored the fact that the Iraqi government, engineers and construction companies are capable of completing this project, and have demonstrated successes within similar projects like the Eastern Euphrates Drain project in Al Muthanna and the Zuba Bridge in Dhi Qar.

Larry Jeffers, USACE project manager, said that the NDPS is designed to pump runoff water drained into the Euphrates eastern drain and main outflow drain under the Euphrates River and out to the Persian Gulf. Work includes civil, electrical, mechanical, architectural design, installation of 12 pumps, 12 swing gates 14 supporting systems and secondary 6kv substation for the siphon.

He described the project as the largest drainage pump system in the Middle East and said that it drains 60,000 hectares or 232 square miles of productive farmland. This provides income for rural farmers and food for Iraq’s people. In time, Iraq could export things such as dates and rice which would help to stabilize and build a healthy agricultural economy.

“Iraq has fertile farmland between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, but irrigation runoff water is contaminated with high concentrations of salt from the soil,” Jeffers said. “Runoff water is collected by a drainage canal system and diverted around the pump station and is currently drained by gravity. Pumps will reduce water backup which causes Nasiriyah’s high water table of contaminated water seepage into the Euphrates.

“It is important that the provincial and local officials help safeguard the work site, buildings, equipment and materials. It is also important to lend support to the transition process to engage and work with these officials to keep the people and workers informed about the situation.”

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