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Nasiriyah Prison Supports Iraq security system

by Lisa Coghlan
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AN NASIRIYAH, Iraq -- Supporting the security and justice systems in Iraq is one of the main challenges that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) confronts to help the Iraqi Government develop the infrastructure countrywide.

According to Rick Mers, a project engineer with the Gulf Region South (GRS) District "The New Nasiriyah Maximum Security Correctional Facility, which is built by the USACE in the Dhi Qar Province, is considered to be the biggest prison in the south of Iraq.

"The project is a new maximum security correctional facility located near the city of Nasiriyah. The prison will hold up to 800 inmates and includes holding areas, laundry, dining facilities, and administrative offices." he said.



Rick Mers and Michael Osborne, USACE engineers with Gulf Region South District, inspect in a site visit the construction progress at An Nasiriyah Maximum Security Correctional Facility and direct the subcontractors to correct discrepancies. (USACE PHOTO BY LISA COGHLAN)



One of the holding area buildings at An Nasiriyah Maximum Security Correctional Facility (USACE PHOTO BY LISA COGHLAN)

Michael Osborne, a resident engineer with the GRS, said that prison will help to provide employment for security personnel, medical personnel and support staff. It will also improve the quality of security correctional facilities south of Iraq.

"Phase 1 has two maximum-security buildings. Each building will house 400 inmates and has a visitor control building,

"The construction at Phase I started Nov. 2, 2004. It encompasses 26 acres and will have an exercise area, a medical clinic, maintenance buildings, and a kitchen and laundry facility." Mers said.

Osborne said that the correctional facility would be self-sufficient with an administrative building, armory, water treatment plant, storage tanks, and a sewage treatment plant.

"It will also be capable of producing its

own electric power within its utility area. There is also a room for prayers and other religious events," he said.

Mers explained that the prison will generally run on generators' power because the Dhi Qar Province routinely has outages at the electricity power supply which is caused by the outdated equipments that have been used for years.

"The correctional facility has four generators and fuel tanks, associated transformers and switchgears to provide power," Osborne said.

Mers said that Phase I projected completion date is Oct. 2007.

"The second phase was just awarded a couple of days ago. The second phase of construction is an additional 400-inmate security building would be built to further enhance a larger inmate population" he added.

"The multi-million dollar project is less than half of the way through to completion. The completion of these modern correctional facilities will help improve the quality and availability of inmate incarceration space." Mers said.



An Iraqi laborer moving through the construction site to get some work done. The background is the holding areas, which are built according to the specifications of modern prison designs. (USACE PHOTO BY LISA COGHLAN)

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