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Nasiriyah Water Treatment Plant Story Continues To Unfold After Turnover

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Panoramic view of Nasiriyah Water Treatment Plant (USACE Photo)

TALLIL, Iraq—The Nasiriyah Water Treatment Plant story continues to unfold following the turnover of the plant to Iraqi authorities.

The latest development was the installation of parts acquired by the Dhi Qar Provincial Reconstruction Team to connect power lines to the source of power, according to Navy Cmdr. Mike Lang, who oversaw construction of the project in his capacity as officer in charge of the Adder Area Office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The \$277 million water treatment system was handed over Iraqi control earlier this year and the contractor "oversight" phase ended Dec. 10. One problem at that point was that the perma-

nent power supply was not hooked up, resulting in the plant operating at only 20% capacity on generator power. While the Ministry of Electricity ran power lines to the site and up to the transformers at various locations, the ministry failed to purchase the essential equipment needed to connect the lines to the transformers, "the load break elbows," Lang explained.

The remedy was the acquisition of the needed parts by the Dhi Qar PRT. The parts were acquired and the connections were made recently. A subsequent hitch, a problem with the electrical substation providing the power, is being resolved, according to people familiar with the situation. Once the fix is complete, the facility will be capable of supplying fresh, drinkable water at rates of up to 10,000 m³/

hour or about 44,000 gallons per minutes.

Staffing is another issue at the facility. According to Lang, the Iraqi Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works currently has a staff size averaging 45 persons a day at the facility, of whom 11 are fully trained. He said a fully staffed facility requires a staff of 105 persons to operate three shifts or a 24 hour a day operation. Training of additional personnel was being provided through late December under a Gulf Region Division Water Sector Sustainment Program contract.

The facility is designed to serve over three-quarters of a million people in five cities: Ad Dawayah, Ash Shatrah, Al Gharraf, Nasiriyah, and Suq Ash Shuyukh. It consists a main treatment plant, three booster pump stations, five elevated storage tanks, a 110 kilometer transmission pipe, and multiple city tie-ins.

One major problem going forward is the distribution system in each of the five cities going from transmission lines to homes and businesses in these areas. Since the tie-in lines are quite old, they will not be able to handle the water pressure of the new system, resulting in many leaks and flooding. A proposal to remedy this problem at an estimated cost of \$8.8 million has been readied by the Dhi Qar PRT, according to a person involved in the planning process, who added that the PRT and GRS are expected to press ahead expeditiously if the project gets funded.

Long term operations and maintenance is the responsibility of the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works.

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