



<Back | 

For Immediate Release
 December 18, 2006
 Gulf Region Southern District
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
News Release: 1817001206

Army Engineers Work to Improve Iraq's Oil Export

By A. Al Bahrani

BASRAH, Iraq -- The regime change in Iraq has opened many new opportunities and important development projects in the southern oil fields of Iraq.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is working on various projects to ramp up oil production for the new democratic country and help improve Iraq's economy.

One important project is the Al Basrah Oil Terminal, formerly known as Mina Al-Baker and now called "ABOT," and is considered to be the gateway to Iraq's prosperity.

"Right now oil is Iraq's major export. It isn't easy to increase oil exports, but the Corps has plans of raising the crude output to meet 3 million barrels per day in 2007," said Bob Tillisch, oil program manager with the Basrah Area Office of the Gulf Region South District.

He said that experts estimate Iraq has about 115 billion barrels of oil reserves, concentrated mainly in the south.

"The main objective of the ABOT development project is to create a strong and reliable source of income for Iraq, improve Iraq conditions, and creates new opportunities for employment," Tillisch said. According to Tillisch, during Phase One of the refurbishment of the ABOT a hydraulic bridge system was installed at Platform B, and the telescopic platform bridging systems at Berths 1 were removed, repaired and reinstalled.

Also, the hydraulic power units, the directional control valves and other system-critical equipment were refurbished.

Tillisch explained that the ABOT previously operated with a functioning fire and gas protection system, and that there were no fire or gas detection sensors, or pressure alarm systems.

The emergency shutdown valves were either corroded or



The Al Basrah Oil Terminal, or ABOT, is Iraq's principle export facility located in the Persian Gulf. [ARMY PHOTO BY A. AL BAHRANI]



One of refurbishment projects the Army Corps of Engineers oversees at the ABOT is lighting and power. Here workmen install new lighting fixtures along a walkway. [ARMY PHOTO BY DAVID ANDERSON]

and the firewater pumps did not work effectively.

“During Phase Two, we (USACE) provided a modern fire-diesel and electrical fire-water pumps throughout the platform. The new system will have fire-fighting foam capabilities in order to increase effectiveness. This replaces the previous system which was ineffective.”

At present, there is no effective way of metering how much oil is being pumped from the tanker ships.

Iraq's South Oil Company (SOC) has to measure the cargo manually.

Tillisch said the USACE will supply modern metering devices which will ensure that the total amount of oil exported from the platform is accurately measured electronically.

“The renovation includes new radio communication equipment throughout the southern Iraq oil fields and refineries including the ABOT. This will ensure that pumping oil from the mainland to the platform is done safely and effectively by a modern communication system.”

“The installation of radios, battery back up systems and other equipment will greatly increase safety to enable the South Oil Company to operate in an orderly and efficient means. In case of an emergency at the platform, it can be shut down immediately. Such an action will increase safety here at the ABOT,” he said.

David Anderson, a construction representative with the USACE, said the USACE will provide an emergency shutdown system for the platform.



Workers lower a new hose assembly with fire-fighting foam onto the upper platform of the ABOT. The Army Corps of Engineers is working several projects to increase safety and lifesaving equipment at the ABOT. [ARMY PHOTO BY DAVID ANDERSON]

source of lighting and power for the ABOT, USACE refurbished the four old diesel generators installed in 1979.

The Corps is also providing life-saving equipment and life rafts for evacuation from the ABOT in case of an accident.

“Remember, being on the ABOT is almost like being on a ship,” Anderson said. “All SOC personnel can safely use the SOLAS life-saving equipment, which are approved life-saving boats.”

For Anderson, this \$50 million project has been designed to increase the terminal's loading capacity to three million barrels of oil and to enhance the reliability and safety of the terminal operations.

The ABOT program will help all of Iraq's people.

Note: Mr. A. Al Bahrani is a public affairs specialist with the Gulf Region South District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Iraq. For more information, contact James Bullinger, public affairs officer at (540) 665-2100. 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.

[Privacy and Security Notice](#) | [Contact Us](#)

