



AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE
NEWS ARTICLES

Iraqi Health Care, Education Projects Total Nearly \$1 Billion

By John J. Kruzel
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Feb. 4, 2008 – U.S. and Iraqi coffers have surged almost \$1 billion of capital into thousands of health care and education projects in Iraq, a military official said.

Army Brig. Gen. Jeffery J. Dorko, the commander of the Army Corps of Engineers' Gulf Region Division, yesterday provided reporters an update on a broad reconstruction program to build or renovate some 452 medical centers and 3,489 schools across the country.

"(Iraq's) finest resource is its people," Dorko said. "And we're here to partner with those incredibly talented engineers, their managers and leaders, and the government of Iraq ... to ensure that we get it right in providing the best infrastructure to serve the people of Iraq today and for decades and generations to come."

The general said \$573.9 million, disbursed in coordination with Iraq's Ministry of Health, will bolster health care by creating 142 new public clinics, 76 of which are completed. Each clinic was designed to serve roughly 110 patients a day, Dorko said, but medical personnel treat up to 300 daily. "Clearly, these facilities are meeting a great need in the neighborhoods that they've been built in," he added.

Dorko said about 11 clinics -- in some cases near-complete projects -- were damaged or destroyed by explosions. Construction delays at four clinics are being resolved, two smashed clinics are being rebuilt and five projects destroyed by detonations have been scrapped due to insufficient funds, he said.

Health care funding also has subsidized 25 renovation projects at 20 hospitals, with 17 projects completed, and construction on two new hospitals, one each in Maysan and Basra provinces.

The \$163 million Basra Children's Hospital is designed to care for children with cancer and to train doctors in pediatric oncology, Dorko said. The general noted that funding for the project is being provided by the United States, the United Nations and the international philanthropic organization Project Hope.

To enhance Iraqi education, \$373.2 million has been allotted to build 1,885 schools, repair 1,604 others and purchase school supplies. "The Ministry (of Education) identified its priority requirements in an inventory of more than 20,000 schools nationwide that it deemed that needed work, and the U.S. government stepped in to assist," Dorko said.

The general noted that USAID conducted the first major construction and renovation projects, followed by the Gulf Region Division. Smaller-scale projects, usually identified by local authorities, have been addressed by coalition commanders using emergency response program funds to build schools.

"In Baghdad province, GRD has completed 113 school projects. In some of the southern provinces, many of the schools had dirt floors that turned to mud during the rainy season," Dorko said, showing "before" and "after" pictures illustrating the dramatic improvements.

Funding for the projects is divided in part by the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund, the Iraq Security Forces Fund and the Commander's Emergency Response Fund, all of which are congressionally appropriated. CERF provides U.S. governmental funding directly to operational and tactical forces, enabling them to meet emergency needs of civilians, according to the Gulf Region Division Web site.

"U.S. funds are only a part of the overall broader effort, which will be continued with Iraq's own enormous human and capital resources, and the support of other donor nations," the site said.

Other contributors include the Developmental Fund of Iraq, which is composed of Iraqi and U.S. money and is managed by coalition forces in consultation with the Iraqi Governing Council, the Iraqi Minister of Finance, and the Governor of the Central Bank of Iraq. Additional support comes from the Economic Support Fund, which is provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

"We've accomplished a lot in our partnership, but there is still so much to do. We realize that," Dorko said. "And our goal is not just to leave behind bricks and mortar, but to leave behind knowledge and capability as to how best use this infrastructure to the benefit of the citizens of Iraq."