

Final Press Briefing – BG Walsh

2 p.m. Oct. 3, 2007

Ocean Cliffs

- Good afternoon everyone. I want to thank you for all being here today. I also want to thank MG Bergner for inviting me to talk to you about reconstruction efforts in Iraq over the past year.
- The United States has contributed almost \$14 billion toward Iraq's rebuilding effort - estimated by the World Bank in 2003 to be around \$80 billion.
- As many of you have heard me say before, the U.S. contribution was always intended to "jumpstart" the rebuilding efforts – to help the Iraqi government lay a foundation upon which to continue to rebuild of their country.
- Every day we see the successes of the U.S. government's reconstruction program here –better essential services where, in many places, there were none; and 75 percent of the country with twice as much power as before the war.
- Many of the successes are things Americans take for granted – access to medical facilities, a fire station or school in your neighborhood, a paved road, clean water.
- At the end of Fiscal Year 2007, we have completed 4,112 of 4,694 planned projects – with 582 projects still ongoing. We have completed more than 80 percent of our planned projects! So you can see, we've been very busy working alongside our Iraqi partners.
- Of those projects, we have a broad range throughout the country in the areas of Buildings, Health and Education; Electricity; Water, Sewers and Irrigation; Securities and Justice; Transportation and Communications; and Oil.

- I'd like to talk to you about a few specific accomplishments we've made this year - in particular: oil, electricity, healthcare and capacity development.
- Oil and electricity are the corner stones in the economic development of Iraq. They are interdependent and linked.
 - Refineries need dependable electrical power to refine fuel.
 - Electrical generation requires high quality fuel to operate plants.
- More than 95 percent of Iraq's economy is fueled by oil exports – more than 95 percent! The antiquated infrastructure – much of it dating to the 1960s/1970s - is not efficient and has little maintenance throughout its lifespans.
- Imagine driving your car for 30 years without changing the oil, belts or filters. It is inconceivable, but the former regime put little funds toward infrastructure improvements or maintenance.
- Our goals in the oil sector were clear, we would reach 3,000 tons of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) capacity per day, 3 million barrels of crude oil capacity per day, and 800 million standard cubic feet of natural gas capacity per day.
- In June, we met those goals by completing \$1.7 billion worth of projects in the Oil Sector.
- We have set our goals and continue to stay on track to meet them.
- You can't talk about reconstruction without talking about electricity. People are not happy unless they flip a light switch and have power. I understand this frustration.
- However, we are getting there. As I've said before, our goal was to use our \$4 billion electrical budget to achieve 12 hours of power daily nationwide – and we've reached an average of 15 hours of power.

- In August, we had 25 days where we exceeded 5,000 MW; and in September, we were over 5,000 MW the entire month! Understanding that we are chasing an ever-growing demand, which is currently about 10,000 MW.
- We've completed more than 500 electrical projects in the areas of generation, transmission and distribution – more than 80 percent of our planned electrical projects.
- The Iraqi electrical generating capacity is improving, but lack of fuels and the failure to load shed are still issues. The Government of Iraq is using this forward momentum to continue the way ahead. The Minister of Electricity – Dr. Karim - has a strategic plan that 24 hours of power will be an attainable goal by the year 2010.
- We also are making great progress in the area of healthcare. GRD has turned over 64 Primary Healthcare Centers to the Ministry of Health. Of those 64, 28 are open and seeing patients – 12 of those in Baghdad alone.
- The centers, built to offer Iraqis preventative medical care in their own neighborhoods, were planned to see approximately 110 patients a day. All of the open clinics are seeing upwards of 350 patients a day – clearly filling a much needed gap.
- In Basrah, we are constructing the first new hospital in the country since the 1980s. The Basrah Children's Hospital will be a pediatric oncology facility located on 13 acres. The hospital construction is expected to be completed in July 2008.
- And we are ensuring that our Iraqi partners are trained and ready to operate these facilities through our capacity development program.
- Our efforts are focused on strengthening staff through training programs in all essential services – electrical power plants,

water plants, and health, transportation and communications facilities.

- We've developed programs to ensure that women have an equal opportunity for jobs and contracts in the reconstruction arena. In 2007, the U.S. Army awarded 742 contracts totaling \$75 million to women-owned businesses. I would say the program is working!
- We're also working on the renovation of seven vocational centers to aid the development of the nation's workforce with skilled laborers, tradesmen and technicians.
- So, as you can see, the U.S. government's program is yielding positive, tangible results every day in reconstruction, and we will continue to do so.
- As I change command next week and hand over the reins of the Gulf Region Division to Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Dorko, I am proud of the work the volunteers in my command have accomplished.
- Every day, I see firsthand the drive and determination of our military men and women, our civilians, contractors and Iraqi associates – who continue to put their lives on the line every day to undertake this worthy task.
- It's humbling and I'm grateful to the sacrifices they – and their families back home – have made to ensure that we are successful.
- Certainly, the work in Iraq is challenging and difficult, but reconstruction efforts are a vital component to Iraq's progress toward democracy. As I have said before, in my 29 years as an Army engineer, there is no place I would rather be than here in Iraq – assisting and watching as a nation rebuilds itself to eventually become the powerhouse it most certainly will be one day.

- I am proud to be a part of this historic endeavor, and I leave here with a heavy heart as there is much left to do. But I also leave with hope – we have accomplished much and will continue to do so under the leadership of BG Dorko.
- I am confident that by continuing to work with our Iraqi partners on reconstruction, we help build a brighter future for Iraq.
- Thank you for your interest in this important part of Iraq's future. Thank you MG Bergner for allowing me to join you today.