

Chapter 10

Long-Term Bases and the New Embassy Compound

“I have never, that I can recall, heard the subject of a permanent base in Iraq discussed in any meeting.”

– US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld¹

The United States has been building large, expensive and long-lasting military bases in Iraq as well as an enormous new embassy compound in Baghdad. These construction projects are very controversial. Iraqis overwhelmingly oppose the bases, as numerous opinion polls have shown, and the US Congress has also rejected the spending of funds on “permanent” bases in Iraq. The bases and the embassy are widely seen as symbols that the US plans to wield exceptional military and political influence in Iraq – and in the region – for many years to come.

The Base Facilities

US forces initially established more than a hundred bases of different sizes in Iraq, including air bases, detention centers, ground force headquarters, logistical depots, and many smaller “forward operating bases” close to the theater of combat.² A year into the occupation, the Pentagon had already developed as many as fourteen bases beyond the level of temporary encampment.³ Tents or trailers had begun to give way to more permanent living accommodations and construction crews were building roadways, headquarters buildings and facilities for aircraft.

As of late 2006, the US had closed many facilities and turned over others to Iraq government forces. There still remain 55 US bases in the country,⁴ among which commanders have chosen a small number for long-term or “enduring” development. The base-building process is now far along, with construction of major concrete runways, communications, utilities, and extensive amenities for troops.

These enduring bases are located in different areas of the country, permitting military control over each sector of Iraq. The bases are centered on major military airfields, rebuilt from the Saddam era, which allow resident ground forces to protect US air strike capabilities. The airfields give the bases some degree of independence from vulnerable land-based re-supply and they enable close coordination between ground forces and tactical air operations.

Though Pentagon budgets have made it impossible to determine precisely the sums devoted to Iraq base construction, considerably more than a billion dollars has been spent on these special bases.⁵ In the 2006 supplemental budget, \$348 million was allocated for further construction.⁶

The key facilities are:

- **al-Balad**, also known as Camp Anaconda, 68 miles north of Baghdad; all Coalition air activity in Iraq is coordinated at this base
- **al-Talil**, 14 miles southwest of Nasiriyah, in the south
- **al-Asad**, about 120 miles west of Baghdad, near the Euphrates town of Khan al-Baghdadi
- **al-Qayyara**, about 50 miles southeast of Mosul, in the north.⁷
- **Camp Victory/Camp Liberty**, a complex near the Baghdad International Airport, where the US military command has its headquarters.

Other major upgraded facilities include Camp Marez, near Mosul Airport, Camp Cook, north of Baghdad, and a new base near Irbil in Kurdistan. Planning documents initially referred to these bases as “enduring bases,” but the Pentagon changed the term to “contingency operating bases” in February 2005.⁸

Planners reportedly see the bases as playing a political role in Iraq, particularly a capability to “influence” the areas around them and to intervene in local, national or Middle East conflicts. As a senior general involved in the planning told the *Washington Post*, “We don’t want to pick places that are too near Iraqi population centers, but we did want ones that would still allow us to influence an area and give us some power projection capacity.”⁹ The term “power projection capacity” apparently refers to potential military strikes against other countries, such as Syria and Iran.

These key US bases are enormous. Al-Balad/Anaconda is spread over fifteen square miles¹⁰ while al-Asad and al-Talil bases total nearly twenty square miles each.¹¹ Even in the vicinity of Baghdad, the US base complex Victory/Liberty is so big that it accommodates a 140 mile triathlon course.¹² A large number of US service personnel are stationed at these facilities, as well as private construction crews and other contract workers. For military personnel alone, al-Balad/Anaconda counts 20,000,¹³ al-Asad 17,000¹⁴ and Victory/Liberty 14,000.¹⁵ Construction and contract crews number thousands more.

At the center of these bases are large and sophisticated military airfields, with double runways of 10-12,000 feet, that can accommodate many aircraft, including fighters, drones, helicopters and large transport planes.¹⁶ Al-Balad hosts a total of 250 such aircraft, including 120 helicopters and numerous Predator drones, parked on vast fields of concrete aprons and runways.¹⁷ Newly-budgeted construction at the base includes a parking ramp for the air force’s huge C-5A Galaxy cargo plane, as well as upgraded lighting for round-the-clock operations. Balad’s air traffic is said to be among the world’s busiest, with 24/7 operations, comparable to Chicago’s O’Hare Airport.¹⁸ Al-Asad base airfield is also installing new lighting as well as a sophisticated air traffic control system.¹⁹

The bases are largely self-sufficient in terms of utilities, including power, phone systems, heating/cooling and hospital facilities.²⁰ While clean water, electricity or quality medical care are in short supply in the country, the bases are islands of fully-functioning

amenities – a long and expensive way from military tents or temporary huts set up hurriedly in the countryside. Ironically, the base projects proceed swiftly towards completion, while construction projects for Iraqis’ benefit such as water treatment plants, electricity generating stations, and health care facilities have been plagued by delays, shortfalls and failures.

Highly fortified perimeters protect the bases from their outside environment, and the Pentagon is further upgrading the perimeter security systems. At al-Talil, contractors are building a \$22 million double perimeter security fence with high-tech gate controls, guard towers and a moat-like protective ditch, while at al-Balad perimeter fences are being upgraded and the no-man’s land widened.²¹

The bases have reinforced concrete buildings, hardened protective bunkers, and elaborate electronic systems that are rarely, if ever, installed in temporary facilities. The bases also have extensive concrete barracks for troops and large internal road systems. And they have major logistics centers, enabling them to provide food, fuel, ammunition and other supplies to troops stationed in their sector of the country.

The bases provide elaborate amenities to bring a US life style to the troops. In addition to four mess halls and a big sports facility, Balad boasts two huge “post exchange” department stores and several fast food restaurants including a 24-hour Burger King, a Pizza Hut, a Starbucks knockoff called “Green Beans,” and Baskin Robbins ice cream outlets as well as a miniature golf course.²² Al-Asad has a football field, a Hertz Rent-a-Car office, an internet café, an indoor swimming pool, a movie theater showing the latest releases and even an automobile dealership. It also has a Burger King, a Pizza Hut and other fast food stores.²³ Victory/Liberty likewise has fast-food outlets, an elaborate gymnasium/sports facility, and Iraq’s largest “post exchange” department store.²⁴ Troops at these bases are provided with air-conditioning, satellite internet access, cable television and international phone service.

These bases represent vast construction projects costing hundreds of millions of dollars each. Military engineers told one journalist visiting al-Balad that 31,000 truckloads of sand and gravel had fed nine concrete mixing plants to build the base in the period prior to March 2006.²⁵ In addition to airstrips, control towers, roads, buildings and perimeter fortifications, the bases have complex underground networks of water pipes and communications cables.

Due to the opaque Pentagon budgets and the vague “supplemental” budgets, the full cost of each base and the grand total of the long-term facilities may never be known.²⁶ Base construction is spread among many budgets and includes un-costed work by military construction crews as well as contracts with big engineering firms like Halliburton’s KBR subsidiary. Al-Balad base is said to have cost at least \$230 million in “emergency funds” through December of 2005 and at least \$50 million more since then.²⁷ Al-Talil is currently budgeted for \$110 million in new spending,²⁸ while al-Asad is spending \$46 million in improvements like perimeter security, lighting and air traffic control upgrades.²⁹

A Perpetual Military Presence?

The question of new US bases in the Persian Gulf region arose in the late 1990s in the Washington debates stirred by the rising conservative tide. The Project for a New American Century assembled a powerful group of neo-conservatives to press for a more aggressive international US military posture.³⁰ Among its members were Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld, who would later become respectively Vice President and Secretary of Defense in the George W. Bush administration. In a report issued in 2000, the Project insisted on the need for a “substantial US force presence in the Gulf” to protect oil supplies and deter potential adversaries.³¹ At a time when the United States was abandoning major bases in Saudi Arabia, it was clear that the authors of the report were proposing new basing arrangements in other countries. But the location remained unspecified. By 2002, as the invasion of Iraq loomed, key members of the Project were holding high office.

Long-term US bases in Iraq are said to offer important advantages, according to US political and military strategists. On April 19, 2003, soon after US troops took control of Baghdad, reporters Thom Shanker and Eric Schmitt wrote a front-page article for the *New York Times* pointing to Pentagon plans to “maintain” four bases in Iraq for the long haul.³² Rather than speak of “permanent bases,” the military preferred then to talk about “permanent access” to Iraq.³³ At about the same time, senior administration officials told the *New York Times* that the US was planning “a long-term military relationship with the emerging government of Iraq, one that would grant the Pentagon access to military bases and project American influence into the heart of the region.”³⁴

Defense Secretary Rumsfeld quickly denied these reports, telling the press the same month that talk of a permanent US military presence in Iraq is “inaccurate and unfortunate.”³⁵ Both President Bush and Secretary Rumsfeld continued the denials, even though contractors were already working on these vast facilities. On February 17, 2005, Rumsfeld told the Senate Armed Services Committee: “I can assure you that we have no intention at the present time of putting permanent bases in Iraq.”³⁶ But members of Congress were beginning to wonder, since the Pentagon was asking them to authorize hundreds of millions in annual budgets to finance the base construction.

The emerging Iraqi authorities were also concerned. A November 15, 2003 agreement between the Iraqi Governing Council and the US-run Coalition Provisional Authority called for a “Status of Forces Agreement” that would regulate any future base use. The US promised to complete the agreement by February 2004, but the Pentagon evidently did not want to expose its long-term plans to public scrutiny. On several occasions, Iraqi officials were told “we’re not ready to talk about that.” More than three years later, the Pentagon still refuses to discuss the matter.³⁷

Surprisingly, military commanders in the field have been relatively frank in talking about the bases and their eventual long term use. Army Brigadier General Robert Pollman told a reporter in 2005: “Is this a swap for the Saudi bases? I don’t know... When we talk

about enduring bases here, we're talking about the present operation ... But this makes sense. It makes a lot of logical sense.”³⁸ General John Abizaid, commanding US General in Iraq, commented to the press on March 14, 2006 that the US may want to keep a long-term military presence in Iraq to bolster pro-US “moderates” and to “protect the flow of oil in the region.”³⁹

Larry Diamond, a Fellow at the conservative Hoover Institution at Stanford University and former adviser to Paul Bremer in Baghdad noted that the Bush administration would not declare that it is not seeking permanent bases in Iraq “because we are building permanent military bases in Iraq.” James Glanz of the *New York Times* notes that in the absence of a fully-functional Iraqi air force, the United States will be “responsible for air defenses” in Iraq “for some time to come.”⁴⁰ And GlobalSecurity comments that the giant new communications tower at al-Balad base is “another sign of permanency.”⁴¹

A military funding bill drawn up in the Pentagon and passed by Congress in May 2005 said directly that some base construction projects in unnamed countries would be “permanent.” It said the funding would cover “in some very limited cases, permanent facilities” that would “include barracks, administrative space, vehicle maintenance facilities, aviation facilities, mobilization-demobilization barracks, and community support facilities,” in short, just about everything that is going into the major bases now being constructed in Iraq.⁴²

Congressional Concerns

Many members of Congress have come to believe that the big bases stir up Iraqi resentment towards the United States. Congress members have also become increasingly suspicious that the construction projects are designed to be long-term. With growing pressure from constituents, Congress started to debate restrictive legislation. During 2005, legislators of both parties spoke out on the subject. In the supplemental defense budget legislation in the spring of 2006, Congress inserted an amendment banning permanent bases.⁴³ The Pentagon responded with intense lobbying to remove the amendment, implying that the Defense Department really wanted to build and operate permanent bases.⁴⁴ Bowing to the lobbying pressure, both houses of Congress removed the amendment, then restored it again. Surprisingly, the language on bases was later removed by the conference committee. So it did not appear in the final bill, that approved hundreds of millions of dollars to continue the building projects, mostly at the major bases. But Congress did issue a report with the legislation, concluding that the money was “of a magnitude normally associated with permanent bases.”⁴⁵

Soon afterwards, both houses of Congress voted to impose a ban on permanent bases in the 2007 regular budget appropriations and authorization bills for the Department of Defense and the Department of State.⁴⁶ Votes in favor of these moves were overwhelming (in the Senate 100-0). Congress also called on the Pentagon to provide a clear plan for its base construction project. Despite this progress, lawmakers have not used their full budget powers to stop the base construction. This enables the

administration to continue with the base-building projects and to continue the semantic argument about the applicability of the term “permanent.”⁴⁷

After the 2006 mid-term elections, the new Congress could have increased pressure on the base issue, but did not do so. In late May 2007, US officials spoke for the first time about a decades-long US troop presence in Iraq.⁴⁸ “I think it’s a great idea,” said Lieutenant General Raymond Odierno, operational commander of US forces in Iraq.⁴⁹ Meanwhile the construction projects continue, contractors keep pouring more concrete, and at least three giant bases are nearing completion.

Iraqi Opposition to Permanent Bases

A large majority of Iraqis oppose a long-term US presence in their country and consider bases as a key negative symbol of the occupation. Opinion polls have shown that Iraqis believe that the United States is planning to establish and keep such bases, even if the Iraqi government asks to remove them.⁵⁰

Among Iraqi politicians, though a few Kurdish leaders have said they favor permanent bases,⁵¹ a large number of leading figures in the parliament have strongly rejected the idea. A spokesman for the Accord Front Sunni coalition party said in September, 2006 that the front “will not allow permanent military bases on Iraqi soil under the pretext of protecting Iraq,”⁵² and a spokesman for the National Dialogue Front denounced such bases as “striking at Iraqi sovereignty.”⁵³ The Sunni Muslim Scholars Association said flatly: “we condemn these irresponsible proposals.”⁵⁴

The issue of long-term bases is likely to become a flash point in the Iraqi political system, if Washington insists on retaining the major bases – and thousands of personnel to operate them – long into the future. Broad political opposition will surely confront any Iraqi government that agrees to such an idea.

The New Embassy Compound

The US “New Embassy Compound,” under construction in the Green Zone in the center of Baghdad, will occupy 104 acres – ten times the size of the average US embassy and six times the size of the UN compound in New York.⁵⁵ It will be composed of 21 major buildings and many smaller ones.

Cost estimates, including all the perimeter security, self-contained utilities and other amenities, come to over \$1 billion.⁵⁶ The primary contract, totaling \$592 million, was funded by Congress in the spring of 2005.⁵⁷ The Congressional Research Service has complained that the real cost of the construction program cannot be accurately known, because of opaque budgets that prevent effective Congressional oversight.⁵⁸

The fortress-like complex that is rising in a park along the Tigris River is located inside the four square mile, high-security Green Zone enclave where the Iraqi government and US officials now have offices and residences. The Green Zone is itself ringed by miles of

concrete blast walls, razor-wire, guard towers and elaborate security entrances. But within the Green Zone, the new US embassy will have an even more elaborate security system and an even stronger walled perimeter with blast walls up to 15-feet thick. Buildings will be reinforced to 2.5 times the usual specifications – “hardened” to withstand direct mortar attacks and even aerial bombardment.⁵⁹

The embassy is designed with its own wastewater treatment plant, water wells and electrical generating station, enabling it to be “100 percent independent from city utilities.”⁶⁰

Scheduled to open in September 2007, the complex will include two big office structures as well as six residential buildings, with a total of more than 600 apartments. Reportedly, more than 1,000 diplomatic and support personnel will be working in the compound. There will be a number of houses for high level staff – including a palatial residence for the ambassador – as well as a sports and recreation building that includes a gym, locker rooms and a swimming pool.⁶¹ There will also be a movie theater, bowling alley, barber and beauty shops, a food court and dining area, a school, a warehouse, a power plant, a maintenance garage, storage depots, and, of course, stores and restaurants to bring US food and consumer experiences to the staff.⁶² Nearly all food served in the complex will be brought in from the United States, including a full range of Baskin-Robbins ice cream.

More than 2,000 security and defense staff will be living and working in the compound, including a large number of private contractors serving as bodyguards and a robust force of marines for the special perimeter defense system.⁶³ The marines will be living in a large-scale barracks building. They will deploy heavy weapons, including ground-to-air missiles to guard against air attack.⁶⁴ There will be five high-security entrances equipped with the latest barrier devices and electronic surveillance systems.⁶⁵ But the compound is still very vulnerable and has come under increasing mortar and rocket attack, killing some of the construction crew. In early May 2007, US civilian personnel at the embassy were ordered to spend minimal time outdoors and to wear armored vests and helmets when moving between buildings. The swimming pool and outdoor dining areas were declared off limits.⁶⁶

Reports in late 2006 suggest that the administration is expanding the Embassy staff still further in 2007, making the huge complex inadequate even before it is completed.⁶⁷ The large staffing has posed recruitment problems and strained the US foreign service system. Recruits to these posts are reportedly offered double their usual salary, a limited one-year posting, and four trips outside Iraq during their assignment.⁶⁸ One diplomat commented that “Baghdad dwarfs everything else, it is becoming a monster that has to be fed every year with a new crop of volunteers.”⁶⁹

Among the present professional staff of about 1,000, there are 200 career diplomats, hundreds of personnel from other US government departments and agencies (including a sizeable CIA contingent) and a large number of political appointees, described officially as technical experts but said by some diplomats to be Republican loyalists without much competence.⁷⁰ Some reports suggest that there are 4-5,000 people currently working in

the US compound, a number that includes security personnel, service staff, and construction workers.⁷¹ According to the Iraq Study Group report, only 6 of the 1000 regular embassy staff were fluent in Arabic.⁷²

The complex has caused much comment in Baghdad, where it is called “George W. Bush’s Palace,” a reference to the elaborate structures built by Saddam Hussein. Unlike the many failed reconstruction projects, the embassy complex is said to be well-built and on target for completion as scheduled.⁷³

The presence of a massive US embassy – the world’s largest – located in the Green Zone alongside the Iraqi government – is a powerful symbol in the center of Iraq’s capital city. Completely cut off from its surroundings, assured of full utilities and great comforts in the midst of suffering, the embassy looms large in contrast to its neighbor, the “sovereign” Iraqi government.⁷⁴

Conclusion

In spite of growing opposition within the US Congress and within the Iraqi government, the Bush administration is pushing rapidly ahead with its construction programs for the long-term bases and the massive embassy. Those who conceived these projects clearly had little sensitivity as to how Iraqis might react and little awareness of the powerful imagery and symbolism the US was creating. Such mammoth construction projects, costing billions of dollars, strongly suggest that their authors see Iraq as a US client state and as a base for US military operations in the Middle East region. As US Congress Member Ron Paul, a Republican from Texas, observed: “This [embassy] structure in Baghdad sends a message, like the military bases being built, that we expect to be in Iraq and running Iraq for a long time to come.”⁷⁵

¹ US Department of Defense, *News Briefing: Remarks by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld* (April 21, 2003)

² GlobalSecurity.org, *Iraq facilities*

According to the Washington Post, as of May 2005, there were still over 100 US bases in the country. See Bradley Graham, “Commanders Plan Eventual Consolidation of U.S. Bases in Iraq” *Washington Post* (May 22, 2005)

³ Christine Spolar, “14 ‘Enduring Bases’ Set in Iraq” *Chicago Tribune* (March 23, 2004)

⁴ A. Baker III and Lee H. Hamilton et al. “The Iraq Study Group Report” *Vintage Books, New York* (December 2006)

⁵ Peter Spiegel, “Bush’s Request for Iraqi Base Funding Make Some Wary of Extended Stay” *Los Angeles Times* (March 24, 2006) For a more detailed discussion of the spending and the problem of base construction items hidden or classified, see Congressional Research Service, *Military Construction in Support of Afghanistan and Iraq* (April 11, 2005).

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Graham, *op. cit.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Dahr Jamail, “Permanent US Colony” *truthout* (March 14, 2006).

¹¹ “Extended Presence of US in Iraq Looms Large” *Associated Press* (March 21, 2006);

GlobalSecurity.org, *al-Talil base*

¹² Sgt Andrew Miller, “Ironman Soldier Races Through Iraq” *DefendAmerica* (November 7, 2005)

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- ¹³ Thomas E. Ricks, "Biggest Base in Iraq Has Small-Town Feel" *Washington Post* (February 4, 2006)
- ¹⁴ Charles J. Hanley, "Iraqis Think US in Their Nation to Stay" *Associated Press* (March 20, 2006)
- ¹⁵ Joshua Hammer, "Digging In" *Mother Jones* (March/April 2005 Issue)
- ¹⁶ Victory/Liberty is the exception to this rule, since it is located near Baghdad International Airport and mainly relies on this facility.
- ¹⁷ Hanley *op. cit.*
- ¹⁸ Ricks, *op. cit.*
- ¹⁹ Hanley, *op. cit.*
- ²⁰ Thomas Ricks reported in early 2006 that the Balad base hospital performed 400 surgeries a month on the wounded (Ricks, *op. cit.*)
- ²¹ "Extended Presence of US in Iraq Looms Large" *Associated Press* (March 21, 2006)
- ²² Ricks *op. cit.*
- ²³ Oliver Poole, "Football and Pizza Point to US Staying for Long Haul" *Independent* (November 2, 2006)
- ²⁴ Hammer, *op. cit.*
- ²⁵ Hanley, *op. cit.*
- ²⁶ Congressional Research Service, *op. cit.* The Pentagon uses funds from current operations to build these bases as well as specially-budgeted construction monies. Generally, the budget requests provide little information and the supplemental budget process waives the detailed oversight process that is typical of regular budget appropriations.
- ²⁷ Spiegel, *op. cit.*
- ²⁸ Hanley, *op. cit.*
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*
- ³⁰ For instance, see Letter to President Clinton, *Project for the New American Century* (January 26, 1998)
- ³¹ Project for the New American Century, *Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces, and Resources For a New Century* (September 2000)
- ³² Thom Shanker and Eric Schmitt, "Pentagon Expects Long-Term Access to Four Key Bases in Iraq" *New York Times* (April 19, 2003)
- ³³ *Ibid.*
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵ "Enduring Bases in Iraq" *Iraq News Net* (October 1, 2004)
- ³⁶ Sam Graham-Felsen, "Operation: Enduring Presence" *AlterNet* (July 28, 2005)
- ³⁷ Private communication by a former US government official.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*
- ³⁹ Vicki Allen, "Abizaid Says US May Want to Keep Bases in Iraq" *Reuters* (March 15, 2006)
- ⁴⁰ James Glanz, "Rebuilding Iraq's Air Force a Challenge for US Trainers" *New York Times* (February 5, 2007)
- ⁴¹ Larry Diamond, "What Went Wrong in Iraq and Prospects for Democracy and Stability" Speech at UCLA Law School (February 3, 2005) ; James Glanz, "Hindered by Delays and Corruption, the Iraqi Air Force is Flying Again, But Barely" *New York Times* (February 5, 2007); and GlobalSecurity.org, *al-Balad*
- ⁴² Graham-Felsen, *op. cit.*
- ⁴³ Joseph R. Biden Jr., *Press Release: "Biden Asks Congress to Go on Record: No Permanent Bases in Iraq"* (April 27, 2006)
- ⁴⁴ Friends Committee on National Legislation, *Iraq, Conferees Eliminate Ban on Permanent Bases* (June 9, 2006)
- ⁴⁵ Becky Branford, "Iraq Bases Spur Questions over US Plans" *BBC* (March 30, 2006)
- ⁴⁶ The State bill prohibits funds from being spent to negotiate permanent basing rights in Iraq, while the Defense bill (H.R. 5631) prohibits funds from being spent to "establish" such facilities for the permanent basing of US forces.
- ⁴⁷ For a time line on the Congressional actions, see the web site of the Friends Committee on National Legislation at www.fcnl.org. See also Spiegel, *op. cit.* ; David R. Francis, "US Bases in Iraq: a costly legacy" *Christian Science Monitor* (April 3, 2006); and "Congress Heads off Permanent Iraq Bases" *Reuters* (September 30, 2006)
- ⁴⁸ White House Press Secretary Tony Snow first raised the issue on May 30, 2007 and Defense Secretary Robert Gates talked about it to reporters on May 31. See Ann Scott Tyson, "Gates, US Generals Back Long Iraq Stay" *Washington Post* (June 1, 2007)

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ World Public Opinion Poll, conducted by the Program on International Policy Attitudes, University of Maryland, *The Iraqi Public on the US Presence and the Future of Iraq* (September 27, 2006) p.9

⁵¹ "Iraq is not in Chaos" *Washington Post* (September 25, 2006)

⁵² Cited in "Iraqi MPs Condemn Talabani for Welcoming American Military Bases" *al-Hayat* (September 26, 2006) as translated by Mideast Wire.

⁵³ Cited in *ibid.*

⁵⁴ Cited in *ibid.*

⁵⁵ Charles Hanley, "US Building Massive Embassy in Baghdad" *Associated Press* (April 14, 2006)

⁵⁶ "New US Embassy in Iraq Cloaked in Mystery" *Associated Press* (April 14, 2006)

⁵⁷ The item was part of the emergency supplemental appropriation bill and signed into law May 11, 2005.

⁵⁸ Susan B. Epstein, "US Embassy in Iraq" *Congressional Research Service* (revised October 24, 2006)

⁵⁹ Tom Engelhardt, "A Permanent Basis for Withdrawal?" *Tom Dispatch* (February 14, 2006)

⁶⁰ As quoted in Hanley, *op. cit.*

⁶¹ Reportedly, the ambassador's residence will be 16,000 square feet and the deputy's residence will be 9,500 square feet. See Ed Pilkington, "One Building That's Been Built on Time and on Budget in Iraq: America's Fortress Embassy," *Guardian* (May 21, 2007)

⁶² Engelhardt, *op. cit.* See also Hanley, *op. cit.* and Paul McGeough, "Bush 'Palace' Shielded from Iraqi Storm" *Age* (August 28, 2006)

⁶³ Guy Dinmore, "US Twists Civilian Arms to Fill Fortress Baghdad" *Financial Times* (January 8, 2007)

⁶⁴ McGeough, *op. cit.*; "Bush 'Palace' Shielded from Iraqi Storm" *Age* (August 28, 2006)

⁶⁵ Hanley, *op. cit.*

⁶⁶ Embassy personnel not working in "hardened" buildings must wear flak jackets all the time, it seems.

See Robert H. Reid, "US Embassy: Wear Flak Jackets, Helmets" *Associated Press* (May 9, 2007)

According to recent reports, the elaborate supply chain that brings fresh food from the United States to the embassy compound in Baghdad was disrupted by insurgent attacks on convoys in May, 2007, suggesting that it may not be possible in future to keep fresh ice cream supplies in stock. See Karen DeYoung, "Taste of Home Runs Low in Iraq" *Washington Post* (May 24, 2007)

⁶⁷ Dinmore, *op. cit.*; Hanley, *op. cit.*

⁶⁸ Dinmore, *op. cit.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Hanley, *op. cit.* State Department spokesman Justin Higgins told Fox News in May 2006 that the embassy then had an "employee roster" of 5,747. Kelley Beaucar Vlahos, "US Embassy in Iraq a Fortress City Inside a War Zone" *Fox News* (May 11, 2006)

⁷² Baker and Hamilton, *op.cit.* p. 92. The number in the embassy who speak Arabic at any level is reported to be just 33.

⁷³ McGeough, *op. cit.*

⁷⁴ Hanley, *op. cit.*

⁷⁵ Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas), Speech before the US House of Representatives, "Why We Fight" (September 8, 2005)