

The New US Embassy Compound: A Shrub Grows in War Torn Baghdad

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✘ The U.S. State Dept. may designate a **one-million-dollar landscaping “allowance”** for the New Embassy Compound (NEC) under construction in the heart of war-torn Baghdad, Iraq — and that’s just for the first year, according to a draft planning document located by *The Peacock Report*. The compound is within a 64-acre tract envisioned along the Tigris River, where the Iraqi government already has allocated a total of 104 acres for official U.S. business. The construction of 27 buildings, a power plant, water treatment facility and eight guard towers is slated for completion by June 2007. Landscape maintenance services for this project will be performed during that time “by trained personnel using current, acceptable horticultural practices,” the Nov. 6 document says:

Landscaping maintenance shall include all turf, trees, beds, shrubs and ground cover within the NEC walls. All flower, ivy and juniper beds on and around the site shall be edged, weeded, mulched and fertilized to maintain a well cultivated appearance. Landscape maintenance shall reflect the highest degree of professional performance.

All walkways shall be seeded and overhanging limbs cut back. Sucker growth shall be removed from trees. Grass and weeds growing against the perimeter wall and buildings shall be trimmed. Fallen limbs and branches shall be removed in conjunction with each mowing.

Despite this need for an untold number of groundskeepers and construction professionals, many of whom will be housed in a still-to-be-constructed \$12 million Operations & Maintenance “Man Camp,” *Iraqis need not apply*.

Indeed, no matter how many jobs are created via this project, “Iraqi citizens are not currently able to be vetted so may not work on this contract,” the document says. “The majority of the employees are expected to be third country nationals.”

An additional *security measure* that the State Dept. will require from the selected contractor is the creation of an employee Code of Conduct. The internal rules shall, at a minimum, prohibit activities such as the acceptance of “shift relief from unqualified, incompetent or impaired individuals,” as well as conduct considered by the U.S. government to be “immoral, offensive, disorderly, criminal, or any other actions that may be construed as detrimental to the safety and well being of the site and its occupants.”

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