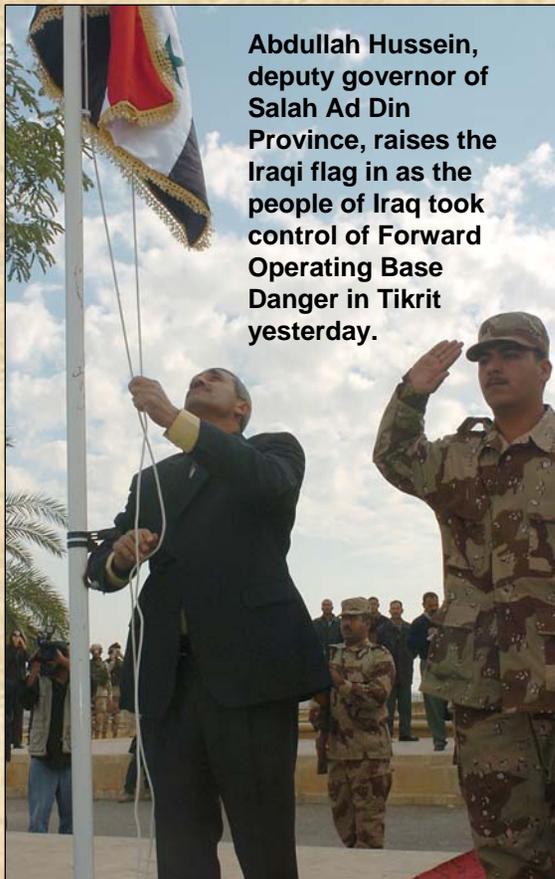


EYE ON IRAQ

November 23, 2005

The Iraqi people, with help from coalition nations, continue to succeed in reconstruction, economic development and fighting terrorism



Abdullah Hussein, deputy governor of Salah Ad Din Province, raises the Iraqi flag in as the people of Iraq took control of Forward Operating Base Danger in Tikrit yesterday.



Iraqi Sheiks and United States Army soldiers stand together as the Iraqi flag is raised and the Iraqi National Anthem played at the key exchange and flag raising ceremony.



The palace complex is on more than 1,000 acres of land along the Tigris River.

FOB DANGER:
'The most significant transition to date'

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Hamad Hamood Shekti, Governor of Salah Ad Din Province, speaks at the key exchange and flag raising ceremony representing the Transfer of Authority of Forward Operating Base Danger in Tikrit, Iraq.



INSET: The U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, Dr. Zalmay Khalilzad, and General George Casey Jr., Commanding General Multi National Forces Iraq, await the beginning of the Transfer of Authority ceremony.

Complex now in Iraqi hands

The Iraqi government took control of Saddam Hussein's palace complex from U.S. coalition forces in a historic ceremony yesterday in Tikrit.

Three different U.S. Army units have used the complex, known as Forward Operating Base Danger, since 2003.

"Now it is the property of the Iraqi people," said Hamad Hamood Shekti, governor of the Salah Ad Din Province. "Tourists will be allowed to see the palaces."

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Deputy Governor of Salah Ad Din Province Abdullah Hussein and his youngest son wait for the ceremony to begin.



Lt. Gen. Aziz, commander of the 4th Iraqi Army Division, and Provincial Council Chairman Rasheed Ahmed Osman, honor the Iraqi flag as it is raised during the Transfer of Authority.

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“The passing of this facility is a simple ceremony that vividly demonstrates the continuing progress being made by the Iraqi government and their people,” said Col. Mark McKnight, who handed the “key to the palace” to Shekti during the ceremony, signifying the release of U.S. control.

Although 24 other coalition operating bases have been turned over to the people of Iraq, ten of them in north central Iraq, the Tikrit palace complex is the most significant transition to date. The complex is on more than 1,000 acres of land along the Tigris River. There are 136 buildings on the property, with a combined 1.5 million square feet of administrative and living space.



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