

U.S. paid for Iraqi army base never built

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- A U.S. Defense Department report says the U.S. military paid more than \$30 million to a Florida company for an Iraqi army barracks project it never built. A report from the Defense Department's Office of Inspector General said the U.S. military paid the Florida-based Ellis Environmental Group \$31.9 million of a \$34.2 million contract to house one brigade and three battalions of the Iraqi military in Ramadi, USA Today said Friday. The military scrapped the barracks project because the Iraqi Defense Ministry did not obtain land usage rights for the base's headquarters. The Pentagon report highlights the military's oversight of \$5.2 billion in war funds appropriated by Congress to train and equip Iraqi security forces. The report cites a lack of adequate records pertaining to equipment slated for the Iraqis, from garbage trucks to grenade launchers, the newspaper said. Air Force spokesman Michael Hawkins said the auditors are reviewing the contract, but pointed to documentation pertaining to \$15 million worth of supplies targeted for the Ramadi headquarters and said construction on roads and airstrips began before termination of the project.

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