



The Bush administration is blocking an inquiry into the delay-plagued construction of the \$736m US embassy in Baghdad, a senior Democrat in Congress said today.

Henry Waxman, who is chairman of the oversight committee in the House of Representatives, asked US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice today to explain why her department certified the embassy as "substantially completed" in December despite inspections that reveal continued deficiencies in the facility's water, fire alarm and kitchen systems.

But the project stalled amid ballooning cost estimates as well as charges of corruption and shoddy work by the private contracting company overseeing the project.

In addition, two US state department employees who worked on the embassy project are now under criminal investigation.

[More...](#)