

## EGYPT: RUMBLINGS AT ASWAN PROMPT NEW DAM STUDY

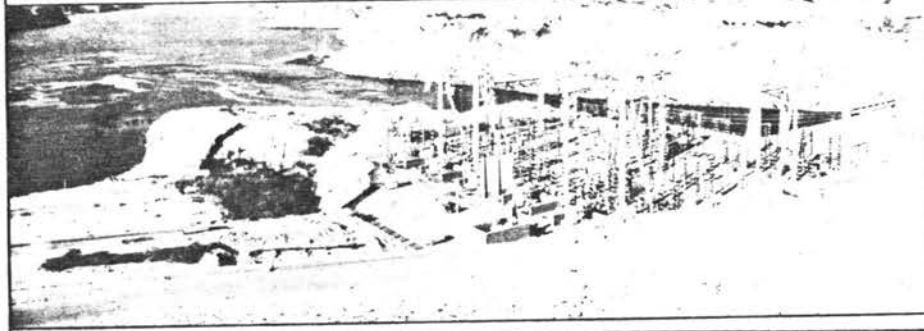
AN earthquake in 1981 and a series of small tremors in Upper Egypt have prompted the government to commission a study on whether the Aswan high dam could withstand a major upheaval. The study will be done by the US' Woodward-Clyde Consultants as part of a \$6 million, 18-month contract awarded in December. Funding will come from the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

The high dam, opened 20 years ago as a concrete sign of Soviet-Egyptian friendship, towers above the narrow Nile valley. Here live virtually all Egypt's 46 million people, beside waters controlled by the 2,000-MW dam.

The study — to be carried out both above and below the dam, as well as along the Red Sea coast — will determine how strong an earthquake the dam could withstand. Technology transfer is included in the contract.

Upper Egypt suffered its first recorded earthquake — measuring 5.5 on the Richter scale — in November 1981. Small tremors, which have been felt persistently in the area ever since, are believed to have been triggered by the dam's huge reservoir, Lake Nasser.

MEPhA/J Frosting



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Petroleum & Chemical Industries, Anwar Ashmawi.

o Canadian advisers are to start work in March on a three-year irrigation systems and soil project in a 21,000-hectare area of the Nile delta. The Canadian government is helping to finance the scheme with a \$ Can 35 million (\$28.1 million) grant.

o Egypt and Israel have named a retired US diplomat, Victor Dikeos, to head the Multi-national Force & Observers (MFO) in Sinai. His predecessor, Leamon Hunt, was shot dead in Rome on 15 February. The UK has decided to extend by 12 months its participation in the 2,600-man, 11-nation MFO, whose mandate falls due on 24 April. France's 40 pilots and navigators are expected to stay on, and the Egyptian government has asked the Australians to review a recent decision to pull out. The US provides 1,140 men, of whom 800 are from the 82nd airborne division. Deployment of the MFO started on 25 April 1982.

o The prices of heavier grades of crude oil are to be raised by \$0.25 a barrel from 1 March, the Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation (EGPC) announced on 28 February. While the principal Suez blend will remain at \$28 a barrel, Budran will rise by \$0.25 to \$20, Belayim to \$26.75 and Marine Belayim to

A panel from the US National Science Foundation was set up to make a preliminary study two years ago. Headed by Woodward-Clyde's Lloyd Cluff, it stated that cause for serious concern existed "only if there is the potential for larger quakes, closer to the dam."

The US firm will be looking for any active geological faults in the area which might threaten the dam. The reservoir, which lies behind, is not thought to have caused the quakes, but artificial lakes can "short-circuit earthquakes, making them occur earlier" than would have happened naturally. A decision on whether to strengthen it would be taken on Woodward-Clyde's recommendation.

The government is not keen to publicise the possibility of earthquakes around the dam, which is already undergoing a major facelift, courtesy of Washington (MEED 13:5:83). Once a showcase of Soviet engineering, it now has turbine runners that are cracking, and circuit breakers and most of a control system that must be replaced. Most of the bill, tentatively put at \$100 million, will be met by USAID.

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\$27.50. Egypt, which is not a member of OPEC, reviews prices monthly. The new prices do not reflect growing concern about the Gulf war and Iraqi threats to bomb Iran's Kharg island oil export terminal, an EGPC official said.

o The Chinese government has agreed to lend £E 50 million (\$61 million) for an international conference centre at Nasr city. The centre, for completion in three years, will cover about 28 hectares and will include a conference hall with seating for 3,500. The loan's maturity is 30 years.

o Discovery of a gas field, with reserves estimated at 400,000 million cubic metres, has been announced by the Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation. The field lies to the south of Abul Gharadik, in the Western Desert. Exploration has been financed by a \$25 million World Bank loan.

o The UK's Robertson Research International has a \$330,000 contract to study the possibilities of exploiting black sand, which is found in large quantities along the northern coast at Abu Khashba, Rashid and Damiatta. Black sand contains heavy minerals which are used in the nuclear power industry. The contract, signed in February with the state-owned Nuclear Material Agency, could lead to

the establishment of a plant with an annual capacity of 120,000 tons. The study is for completion in early 1985, Robertson says. If the results of the study are positive, the black sand could be used in the government's ambitious nuclear power programme, which calls for eight reactors to be built by 2000. Winners of a tender to build a plant at El-Daba, west of Alexandria, are planned to be announced later this year (MEED 2:12:83).

o Yugoslavia's President Spiljak left Cairo on 27 February after three days of talks covering closer bilateral co-operation and Middle East issues.

o President Mubarak met Hungary's Agriculture & Food Minister Jeno Vancsa on 25 February for talks aimed at obtaining more help for farming and land reclamation projects.

o The Confederation of British Industry will hold a one-day conference in London on 20 March to assess the Egyptian market. Chairman will be Lord Denman of Consolidated Gold Fields.

o Flats being built in the new cities will be heated by solar energy, as part of an effort to reduce consumption of traditional energy supplies, Electricity & Water Minister Mohammad Maher Abaza says.

o A European edition of the Cairo daily Al-Ahram is expected to start in April, an official at the Egyptian embassy in London says. Editorial matter will be relayed by satellite from Cairo to London, where four pages devoted to Arabs living in Europe and the US will be added. Al-Ahram celebrates 109 years of publication in August.

o Cotton planting for the 1984/85 season is to be increased to 1.2 million feddans (564,000 hectares) from 998,277 feddans (419,276 hectares) in 1983/84. Recent figures show that cotton production in 1983/84 reached 7,948,223 metric kantars which was boosted by an additional 696,808 metric kantars carried over from the preceding season. Official sales registrations to 10 February show the Soviet Union is one of Egypt's biggest customers for cotton this season, after Japan, in first place, Italy, Switzerland and West Germany.

o Chicken imports are put at 80 million birds for 1984, the state-owned General Company for Chickens told a poultry seminar in Alexandria. Total demand is 200 million birds, of which 120 million will be reared locally. Chicken consumption has trebled in the past five years.

o Two transformer stations were opened outside Cairo on 23 February. The \$8.5 million Giza station has a capacity of 100,000-kVA while the \$12.2 million Pyramid plant has a 250,000-kVA capacity.

o National Bank of Egypt has agreed to guarantee a \$35,187,110 medium-term loan to Nasr Petroleum Company. Manager is France's Banque Paribas.

o Defence Minister Mohamed Abdel-Halim Abu Ghazala arrives in London for a six-day visit on 4 March. UK Defence Department officials, describing the visit as "routine," say the minister will meet industrialists.

o A pro-government magazine, the Cairo weekly Al-Mussawar, has criticised the Khartoum government for its policy in southern Sudan. The article is believed to reflect Cairo's unease about the September