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JOINT ACTION ON NILE BASIN DISCUSSED

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[Article by Ahmad Nafi': "Egypt: What Is Extent of Its Need for Fresh Water or What Is Truly Called 20th Century Oil? Truth of Ethiopia's Position and Extent of Its Cooperation With Nile Basin Countries; What Is Position of Nile Basin Countries in Face of First Practical Test for Setting Nile Basin Authority and Toward Transfer of Technology in Sphere of Water Resources; Preparation of Joint Plans To Regain Lost Resources and To Extend Study on Equatorial Lakes for 2 More Years?"]

[Text] The Nile basin countries have agreed on a new phase of cooperation which has its goal and its means. The goal is to agree on plans for the nine countries over whose lands the river spreads its power--plans which these countries will implement for the good of their peoples. The means in the present phase is to complete the hydrometeorological studies on the equatorial lakes basin. These are the studies which the Nile basin countries started in August 1967 in two phases, the second of which will end with the end of this year.

This agreement embodies a new step in a pioneer work adopted by all the countries overlooking the same river. This work has come as a result of the increased awareness of the importance of cooperation among the Nile countries to realize the maximum advantage possible from the resources of the river for the benefit of all the countries concerned. The agreement has also come as a natural result of the years that have witnessed for the first time cooperation among technicians from various countries in united studies to control the river water and to prepare for regaining the resources lost in the upper equatorial areas.

This agreement was reached in an extraordinary meeting held by the Technical Committee in charge of the project for the studies on the equatorial lakes basin. This extraordinary meeting was held in Cairo on 9 and 10 July because the second phase of the project ends next December. This has made it necessary to determine the future of the project and to decide on the idea prevalent among the parties concerned, namely the idea of setting up a Nile basin authority similar to the Joint Egyptian-Sudanese Committee for the Nile Water.

At this meeting, which was attended by representatives of all the Nile basin countries, including Ethiopia, several issues were decided, the most important being:

First, extend work in the project for 2 more years, beginning in January 1981. One of the goals of this phase is to improve verification of the measurements made by the "mathematical model" set up to measure drainage in any part of the equatorial lakes by gathering more data, by training the engineers of the countries involved in the project on the model and by continuing the studies on the [water] storage systems and potentials.

'Abd-al-Badi' Abu-al-Huda, an Egyptian engineer, has been chosen director for the first year of the extended period of the project. (Boshijia), a Tanzanian engineer, will be in charge of managing the project in the second year.

Second, urge the Nile basin countries to define their position in principle vis-a-vis the idea of setting up a technical authority for the Nile basin countries. It was deemed fit to decide on the idea in principle before embarking on the details and on drawing up the agreement concerning this idea.

Third, the Technical Committee has proposed that the project's goals after the 2-year extension be the following:

- A. Continue gathering and analyzing data, storage studies and national plans for exploitation of the water resources.
- B. Transfer technology in the sphere of water resources, including underground water resources, to all of the basin's countries.

By analyzing these decisions, it becomes evident that there is full conviction on the need to extend the duration of the project which was motivated by the interest of the Nile basin countries in agricultural expansion as a means to raise the living standard of their peoples. It also becomes evident that there is more than just a feeling of satisfaction with the results realized so far and with the goals set for the coming phase, namely exploiting all of the Nile's resources--foremost of which is regaining the resources lost to the swamps spread throughout the equatorial areas. The specific loss estimated so far (a loss occurring in Sudan's territories) has been calculated at 36 billion cubic meters [annually], not to mention other losses that have not been calculated so far due to factors beyond the control of the technicians. Despite this, the outcome of the Cairo meeting is considered a practical test for the intentions of all the Nile basin countries, especially those of Ethiopia because Ethiopia has to decide right away the extent of its readiness to march forward with the other countries toward setting up a Nile basin authority to utilize and use to advantage all of the river's resources. The other countries called upon to take part in the joint action in this sphere are: Egypt, Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania and Zaire.

When we single out Ethiopia in particular to this regard, we do not do so out of bias or out of unfairness but because Ethiopia is the only country that has come up with feeble excuses to disavow the international agreements on the Nile River and to deny the gained rights of one of the river basin's countries. Ethiopia's latest attempts in this regard have been its statements that Egypt has conveyed the river water to the Sinai without consulting its partners in the river. Moreover, Ethiopia has procrastinated for years in joining the Technical Committee for the present studies on the upper equatorial lakes. It was finally compelled

to join the other countries on the basin as an observer just to keep abreast, it seems, with the ongoing negotiations. For these reasons, the parties concerned familiarized the Ethiopian delegation during its presence in Cairo with Egypt's current and future projects. During its stay, the Ethiopian delegation also visited the canal area and saw the old and new culverts carrying Egypt's share of the Nile water to the Sinai lands. The delegation was even familiarized with Egypt's real share which is hardly enough for Egypt and saw how Egypt re-uses drainage water after mixing it with fresh water.

National Plans for Exploitation of Nile

Therefore, it is true that the decisions represent a practical test for the intentions of each state because the Nile countries are now required to prepare a national plan for exploiting their water resources. These plans are closely linked with the projects for the full exploitation of the Nile waters and they all represent inseparable links in one chain. The water resources include, naturally, the natural rivers, rainwater and underground water. All of these are elements which ultimately determine the need for major irrigation projects, the site of such projects and the extent of the projects' effects on the countries' relations with one another, the extent of the advantage taken of such projects and the method of operating the projects.

For example, the needs of the countries of East Africa are different from those of Egypt and Sudan. The East African countries are in dire need of energy which can be generated through the construction of a dam on Lake Mobutu (Lake Albert formerly). The construction of such a dam seems necessary to realize the desired benefit from several water control projects on the Nile River, including the pioneer project being currently implemented by Egypt and Sudan in al-Sudud [Dams] area in southern Sudan through opening the canal known as the Jongli Canal.

In its first phase, which will end in 1984, this project will save 4-5 billion cubic meters of water wasted in the area of plant obstructions. In the second phase this water volume will be doubled, provided that the Albert [Mobutu] dam be built to regulate the flow of water in quantities compatible with the canal's capacity. This means that Egypt and Sudan want water to be stored in Lake Mobutu to secure a steady water flow from Uganda's lakes (the upper sources) to Bahr al-Jabal and then to the White Nile in Sudan.

Thus, the river countries meet on the need for drawing up joint plans to exploit the river resources in a manner that yields varied benefits to each of these countries. It must be acknowledged that all the Nile River countries are in need of its hidden resources. But the kind differs from one location to another. For example, the countries flooded by tropical rains for more than 6 months a year do not need to store water for lean years, keeping in mind that the cost of water storage projects is enormous. However, these countries may be in need of electricity. Consequently, it becomes vital that agreement be reached on the types of projects that realize the goals of the Nile basin countries, despite the difference in these goals. The way to achieve this is multisided joint action using various means.

Preserving Natural Resources

This leads us to the issue of explaining the increased need for fresh water in every part of the world, considering that fresh water is the cornerstone in any agricultural or industrial progress. Fresh water, in the words of Engineer Muhammad 'Abd-al-Hadi Samahah, the minister of irrigation, will pose the most serious crisis in natural resources in the last decade of the 20th century. As of this time, fresh water is the oil of the 20th century.

This is why the minister of irrigation believes that Egypt is facing at present and will face in the future a heavy burden to preserve its natural resources, the most important of which is fresh water. Egypt must confront with all its capabilities in the various spheres any attempts to reduce any part of this resource, regardless of how meager. Egypt is a desert country in which there is almost no rainwater. Moreover, the underground water which Egypt contains and which is economically usable for various purposes is limited in volume. Therefore, any expansion in agriculture, drinking or industry depends fundamentally on the Nile River waters which God has given Egypt and its people as a blessing. Throughout our long history, the Nile has continued to carry a vastly abundant wealth between its banks and Egypt owes its existence and its entity to this great river. There isn't in the entire world a country whose life depends on a river as Egypt's life depends on the Nile River waters.

This fact has been firmly established in the minds of Egyptians since the beginning of time, says Engineer Samahah, one of the men of the fourth generation of Egyptians who have been working to control the river and who have turned it into something like an ascetic who glides quietly and who desires nothing more than a sustenance from life. After being uncontrollable and inclined toward flooding here and there and destroying land, crop and life, major engineering works have been carried out to harness this river. Mina built the river's northern bridge to secure the country's safety and to preserve the civilization of the deep-rooted Egyptian people. Then Mina's successors came and built dams, barrages and storage works to preserve billions of cubic meters of the river's golden waters which used to flow into the sea. Thus, the Egyptians have continued to live in a long and hard struggle to tame the river and to exploit it properly and the Nile has continued to be a vast sphere in which Egyptian engineering art has roamed, innovated and created to save the river's civilization from drowning and destruction and to build on the river's gates [ma'abir] the most ancient civilization known to the world generation after generation.

Egypt's Rights to Nile Waters

Within the framework of the serious and purposeful efforts to preserve every drop of the river's water and to develop its resources, the Egyptians started to contact the fraternal countries on the Nile basin to agree on the ideal method for exploiting and developing the waters of this great river in the interest of all the Nile basin countries. On 15 May 1902, an agreement was concluded between Britain and Ethiopia on the demarcation of the Ethiopian-Sudanese borders. Even though the treaty was intended fundamentally for stabilizing the borders between the two countries, it did, however, include a pledge on the part of the Ethiopian

king not to issue any orders or permit the issuance of any orders regarding any works on the Blue Nile, Tana Lake or (al-Subat) River that could obstruct the flow of their waters into the Nile River unless the Sudanese government approves such works in advance. In 1929, a Nile water agreement was concluded to control the use of the river water in Sudan so that such use may not affect Egypt's gained right and natural right to the Nile waters. The agreement contained mutual assurances, to which Britain was a party, that no irrigation or power-generating projects would be set up without prior agreement with the Egyptian government.

In 1949, the Egyptian government began to think of implementing the projects connected with its water policy which had been formulated in 1933, including the country's agricultural expansion program until 1953, within the limits of the additional storage water produced by elevating the Aswan Dam for the second time, construction of Jabal al-Awliya' Dam and continuous storage in the equatorial lakes. As a result of the Ugandan government's consideration of exploiting the Victoria waterfalls on the Nile River to generate power by building a dam for this purpose, the Egyptian government thought of turning toward water storage in Lake Victoria and coordinating the two countries' interests in this regard. Negotiations were held for Egypt's participation in this important project from the start in terms of design, construction and operation of the dam after its completion, with participation in the dam's costs and its annual operation costs in view of the common benefit accruing to both countries. Agreement was actually reached to build this dam near Owen waterfalls so as to benefit from the constant water storage in Lake Victoria and to form a reserve in the lake for Egypt's benefit. Agreement was also reached to send Egyptian engineers to the dam site to take part with the Ugandan officials in supervising operation of the dam to realize the interests of both Egypt and Uganda. This vital accomplishment is still serving the purpose for which it was constructed through cooperation between the Egyptian and Ugandan technicians.

Within the framework of these various agreements, major works have been built on the Nile River outside Egypt's borders. Sannar Dam was built on the Blue Nile in 1935 to serve Sudan. Jabal al-Awliya' Dam was built in 1937 in the interest of summer cultivation in Egypt, considering that annual storage in this dam amounts to nearly 3.5 billion cubic meters. However, all these agreements do not meet Egypt's needs to exploit its historical and natural right to the Nile River waters. This is why Egypt concluded with the fraternal Sudan on 18 May 1959 an agreement for the full utilization of the river waters. Under the canopy of this agreement, projects were built to control the river and to divide its benefits between the two countries. In accordance with this agreement, Egypt built the High Dam near Aswan and Sudan built Al-Rusayris Dam on the Blue Nile. The agreement also provided for Sudan to construct any other works which it deems necessary for it to exploit its share of the waters, including the Jongli Canal which is being built at present.

This agreement, in accordance with which the Joint Egyptian-Sudanese Technical Authority for the Nile River Waters was formed, constituted the beginning for agreement with the countries overlooking the equatorial lakes plateau to cooperate with the UN Development Program by setting up the Technical Committee for conducting hydrometeorological studies on the equatorial lakes basin. The work of this committee has developed in a manner that heralds formation of a technical authority for the Nile basin countries.

The only thing lacking for the creation of this authority is the political decision that will enable it to start its studies for implementing the major projects in light of the existing and future studies.

Initial Projects of Common Interest

There is a semi-agreement in principle on the projects whose implementation is urgent, including:

Use of the equatorial lakes as large storage sites that regulate the volume of water flowing from them so as to make the water inflow into Sudan, including runover, constant and as close to the average as possible.

Raise the capacity of Bahr al-Jabal in Southern Sudan.

Establish partial storage in Bahr al-Ghazal basin in Southern Sudan.

Build storage facilities in al-Subat River basin and look for storage [sites] in the upper Blue Nile River in Ethiopia.

Generally, the initial estimates of the waters that can be supplied--estimated near Aswan--after the construction of some of these projects amounts to nearly 18 billion cubic meters of water which will be divided equally between Egypt and Sudan. These projects, whose initial construction costs are estimated at 700 million pounds, will save nearly 7 billion cubic meters of water lost in the obstructions area between Jongli and Malakal, a similar quantity of water lost in Bahr al-Ghazal basin and 4 billion cubic meters lost in Mashar swamps. This concerns the water projects that can be exploited in the area of the equatorial plateau and down to Sudan only. The costs do not include those of the other projects connected with these storage projects, such as the projects to exploit the waterfalls in the interest of all nine countries.

Inevitability of Cooperation for Common Goal

In this regard, Engineer Samahah says that it is evident that reaching the goal of controlling the Nile, of making full use of its resources and of building the projects that increase its yield and reduce the loss throughout the river's course cannot be easy unless firm technical cooperation is established among all the countries located on its basin. Each of these countries must understand the rights that the other countries have to this common river. The countries located near the source or near the upper Nile should not imagine that the water flowing in their territories belongs to them solely or is their exclusive property to dispose of in any manner they wish. They must feel the opposite and must think that any project to utilize the river must be agreed upon in advance with the other countries that may be affected by such a project. This principle cannot diminish the sovereignty of a state over the part of the joint river's course that passes through its territories but indicates respect and concern for the common partnership and is compatible with the rules and spirit of the international law.

The minister of irrigation adds that he hopes that Ethiopia has been convinced through its participation in the Technical Committee's meetings in Cairo of the advantage of sincere cooperation among the river's countries. Egypt still welcomes, as I have made clear in my statement to the People's Assembly, anyone who wants to work to develop the Nile River waters for the benefit of all of the river's sons and within the framework of the international law and convention and of the bilateral or multilateral agreements concerning the Nile, as well as within the framework of respect for the rights of utilization of the various countries.

In contrast to Ethiopia's position, Egypt believes in the necessity of starting immediate contacts with Ethiopia to study the hydraulics of the Ethiopian [river] sources because of their major significance insofar as the Nile waters are concerned. This doesn't mean that Egypt doesn't approve of the projects being built in the Ethiopian plateau. However, the technical studies necessary for the phase of exploiting all the river sources and tributaries in an ideal manner is a totally different story. Ethiopia has before it the example of the spirit which motivated the East African countries to take voluntarily the initiative of cooperation in discovering all the wasted resources in the equatorial lakes, in the tributaries and in the streams that flow into them with the aim of embarking on joint action to regain these wasted resources.

Energetic Policy on Nile

The minister of irrigation points out that Egypt has received this initiative with the interest it deserves. Egypt has been and will always be active insofar as the Nile waters are concerned. Egypt has also always been eager to strengthen cooperation with the Nile countries and has been a pioneer in the sphere of creative cooperation among the nine countries. Egypt's relationship to the Nile has never been confined to the mere use of the river waters. This relationship has gone beyond to broader and more comprehensive spheres so that the Nile may truly become "the blessing of the Egyptians." Egypt does not conceal its projects and its need for the river water. The increasing mouths year after year, according to Engineer Samahah, require new land to be added to our arable area in order to meet the needs of these enormous numbers. In the year 2000, Egypt's population will amount to 80 million persons. To maintain the individual's current share of land (0.17 feddans per capita), we need to increase the cultivable area by at least 7 million feddans. This turns the need to secure the water necessary for these lands into an enormous national undertaking.

It is also for this reason that Egypt seeks creative cooperation in implementing projects in the interest of the Nile peoples. Egypt has given the example for this cooperation in all the major projects in which it has been involved as a party.

Egypt acted with full abidance by the international principles when it constructed the High Dam in cooperation with the fraternal Sudan and, previously, in constructing the Owen Dam in Uganda. Egypt has paid full reparations for the lands submerged as a result of construction of the two dams. Egypt expects Ethiopia to observe these principles which commit all the countries along the sources of the Nile River to consult with the countries at the mouth of the river before

their flow or undermine any part of the natural or gained right of the countries at the mouth of the river. This is what Ethiopia is not observing at present by taking measures to implement some projects that may change the long-established legal system [status] of the Nile. This is something that neither Egypt nor the other Nile countries can accept.

Required Understanding and Sound Commitment

It is obvious that Ethiopia has resorted to diverting attention from its attempt to violate the international law by claiming that Egypt is violating the principles of the legal system [status] of the Nile River by diverting a part of the river waters to Egyptian territories in the Sinai without consultation with the other Nile countries. Ethiopia has disregarded several fundamental facts in its claim, the first being the fact that the Sinai, as Egyptian territory, is a part of the Nile basin and that every inch of its lands is entitled to be irrigated by the Nile waters within the framework of the use of Egypt's gained right and natural right to the Nile waters. One of the seven branches of the Nile, known as (al-Bayluzi) branch, in reference to the town of (Bayluz) or al-Tinah, used to flow into the Sinai and pour into al-Bardawil Lake which has gained its suitability for breeding certain types of fish from the silt settling in it. This is something proven by the atlases. The second fact is that there is no law or convention that commits the countries on the mouth of a river to consult with the countries along the sources of a river before using their rightful share of the water in any part of the country. Such commitment exists in one case only, namely when the country at the mouth thinks of building a dam that may submerge any lands in the country at the source of the river. This is something by which Egypt abides.

The importance of the Nile river projects thus becomes obvious. The problems of these projects are big and many-sided. The countries of the Nile basin are numerous and their goals are different. Yet, there is no alternative before these countries to the cooperation that takes into consideration only the common interests in total freedom from the political whims and even in freedom from the differences in the social systems—a cooperation that asks to regain the wasted resources. There is no alternative before these countries other than setting up the proposed authority for the Nile basin—an authority that comprises all the parties concerned, including Ethiopia. This is not difficult to achieve by the Nile countries if the concept of fraternity, sincerity and peace for the interest of all the peoples is firmly established in these countries.

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THIRD FIVE-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN ANALYZED

Paris AL-NAHAR AL-'ARABI WA AL-DUWALI in Arabic Oct 80 p 35

[Article: "The Third Five-Year Development Plan: Saudi Labor Force...For Saudi Arabia"]

[Text] It was a big surprise when the broad headlines revealed the Third Five-Year Development Plan for Saudi Arabia. Contrary to the expectations of the majority of the observers, it did not vary much from the Second Five-Year Development Plan. In fact, and to some extent, it complemented it on the economic and social levels. It also reflects the weight of a class called the "nonruling technocrats." This plan was also considered as "liberal radicalism" among the circles of businessmen.

Plan Objectives

The plan concentrates on the development of Saudi labor, modernization, development and evolution of cities and of rural areas as well as the evolution of the social sectors. In order to accomplish all of this, \$300 billion have been allocated to the plan, \$50 billion of which have been added as reparations for inflation which is expected to reach an annual average of 7 percent throughout the 5-year period (1980-85). Comparing the third plan with the second plan, allocations for expenditures have been increased at a rate of 36 percent or an increase from \$44 billion to \$59 billion.

This increase, for a country like Saudi Arabia, is causing considerable speculation. How could the Saudi community bear the weight of the economic changes which the plan will fund? According to Sheikh Hisham Nazir, the Saudi minister of planning, the case is not how these monies will be expended, but what should be done to increase the returns on the investments and make the plan a success. Clearly, the events at Mecca did not give enough warning to the Saudi leadership as if to say: "Decisions are irreversible." How could this be possible and Saudi Arabia produces 9.5 million barrels of oil per day and the country itself is in need of no more than 5 million barrels per day? Juhman Ibn Said al-Attiba, the leader of the Mecca operation, has repeatedly responded by saying that Saudi Arabia will not decrease its oil production, as the plan has adopted, but that expending such huge amounts would require changes to be made in the social structure. The opponents of this idea have decreased in number and the reason is obvious: the industrial and agricultural investments will absorb 36.3 percent