

1984

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Syria

SYRIA

HYDROELECTRICITY

Concern over Euphrates water level

The eight 100 mw turbines at the Tabqa hydro power station on the Euphrates normally operate at around 65 per cent of capacity, generating some 2,500 kwh/y, or 45 per cent of the country's total. This year the water level has been much lower and, at one point, only three turbines were said to be in operation. Partly this has been due to low rainfall, but the Syrian authorities believe that it is preponderantly due to Turkey's Keban dam, and that the situation will become even worse with construction of the Ataturk dam - to the extent that they have asked the Gulf states not to provide any finance for Ataturk until agreement is reached between Turkey, Iraq and Syria on use of the river's water.

There does not seem much likelihood of an agreement between Iraq and Syria on any subject in the near future and, to cope with the crisis, Syria is considering building a smaller dam upstream from Tabqa. Currently, under Soviet supervision a dam is being built 25 km downstream from Tabqa; the first of its three 70 mw turbines is expected to come into operation by late 1985. Three dams may also be built on the Khabur River, which flows into the Euphrates south of Deir es-Zor, and they will generate some power. The Tishrin dam under construction on the Kebir Shemali River near Latakia is expected to come into service next year, and it too will produce a certain amount of electricity; but it seems clear that bickering with both Turkey and Iraq over division of river water will continue for many years.

TURKEY

IRAN-IRAQ WAR

Tankers at Kharg Island

Turkey's efforts to maintain good relations with both Iraq and Iran became somewhat difficult in early June as a result of an Iraqi missile attack on a Turkish vessel in the Gulf. In fact the consequent ban imposed by the government on Turkish tankers using Iran's Kharg Island terminal was lifted on June 20, after only two weeks, despite a failure to obtain any Iraqi guarantee of immunity.

Under a useful goods for oil exchange Turkey imports some 100,000 b/d of Iranian crude; it also lifts oil at the Ceyhan terminal of the Iraqi crude oil pipeline that runs through its territory and which is in the process of expansion (see under Iraq) - a conjunction which indicates the extent of the dilemma. Following the incident there was a lull in Iraqi attacks on vessels in the Gulf, but they have since been renewed.

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