

Jordan

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less vulnerable to attack or soon buy a new system, US deputy assistant secretary for defence Robert Pelletreau told a congressional hearing. Jordan will have to turn to the Soviet Union if the US fails to upgrade the missiles, because the US will not sell Amman such a system and other suppliers are too expensive, he warned. US officials said in mid-1986 that the Soviet Union had agreed to supply three types of mobile surface-to-air missile (MEED 21:6:86).

#### IN BRIEF

● The local **Jahshan Contracting Company** has a JD 6.4 million (\$19.2 million) contract to build the 26-kilometre first phase of a four-lane highway linking Amman and Irbid (MEED 27:9:86). The first phase, from Irbid to Thagrat Asfour, is for completion in 23 months. Tenders for the second and third phases — from Thagrat Asfour to Jerash, and Jerash to Baqaa — are still being prepared. The project is being financed from the budget.

● The local **International Contracting & Investment Company (Icico)** has a JD 1.1 million (\$3.3 million) contract to build an integrated paramedical training institute in Irbid (MEED 1:11:86). The scheme includes a nurses' training school and residential quarters, and is partly financed by the World Bank. Work is to start in two months, for completion in 20 months.

● The **Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA)** has awarded a \$1.3 million contract to **American Advanced Electronic Systems** to set up a telecommunications system to link JEA projects with its tele-control centre near Amman. The US Agency for International Development (USAID) is expected to fund the project according to its October 1986 agreement to support technical schemes (MEED 4:10:86).

● Prequalified contractors are invited to bid by 21 March for construction of the Naur bypass.

● Bids are invited by 28 March to supply 99 submersible pumps, with capacities of 10-500 cubic metres an hour. Client is the **Water Authority of Jordan**.

● Prequalification is invited by 1 March for construction of two liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) filling stations, and related facilities in Amman and Irbid; client is **Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company**. Tender closing date for prequalified firms is 3 May. The same closing date applies to a separate tender for construction of an LPG storage sphere and related accessories at the Amman LPG station.

● The first phase of the Irbid water services project has been completed at a cost of \$18 million, of which the US Agency for International Development (USAID) provided \$13.5 million. The first phase comprises a 12,000-cubic-metre-a-day wastewater treatment plant in the Wadi al-Hamam area, northwest of the city. Work has started on the scheme's second phase, to provide water distribution and wastewater collection systems for around 10,500 homes in the Irbid area; completion is expected in 1988. A third phase, to cover villages in Irbid governorate, is still being designed by the consultants — **Weston International** and **Stanley Consultants**, both of the US, and two local companies, **Sigma Consulting Engineers** and **MRR**.

● The \$20.5 million Aqaba wastewater plant has started up; it will meet the town's wastewater treatment needs to 2000. The plant was built by the local **Hudhud Shand**, with the UK's **Howard Humphreys & Partners** acting as consultant. The US Agency for International Development (USAID) lent \$7.5 million for the scheme; remaining costs were met by the government.

● Gross national product (GNP) rose by 3.7 per cent, to JD 1,918.4 million (\$5,744 million), in 1986, says general statistics department director-general Abdul-Hadi Alawin. The consumer price index dropped to 131.3 in November 1986, from 131.5 in November 1985 (1980 = 100).

● A \$15 million loan from the Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank (IDB) was signed on 9 February. It will be used to finance oil imports from an IDB member country, and brings to \$53 million IDB assistance in the past five months.

● National carrier **Royal Jordanian** has leased a wide-bodied **Lockheed TriStar** passenger airliner to **Sudan Airways**, according to a five-year agreement. About 30 Jordanians, including pilots, cockpit crew and maintenance staff, will be seconded to Sudan as part of the agreement, whose value has not been disclosed.

● The **Arab Potash Company** produced just above 1.1 million tonnes of potash in 1986 — 21 per cent more than in 1985. Contracts have already been signed for the company's expected 1987 production of 1.2 million tonnes.

● India's Civil Aviation Minister Jagdish Tytler arrived on 10 February for talks about possible direct air links with Jordan. Flights are now routed through Gulf countries. **Air India** has no immediate plans to start flights to Jordan, officials say, but **Royal Jordanian** hopes to operate at least two direct flights a week to Bombay or New Delhi.

● Passport applications from residents of the occupied West Bank should be speeded up, Interior Minister Rajai Dajani says. The order also applies to identity cards, birth certificates and other official documents.

● King Hussain began private talks with Syria's President Asad on 10 February, during his fourth visit to Damascus since December 1985. The discussions were expected to focus on Lebanon and the Gulf war, diplomats say.

● Nayef Khail al-Bayed — also known as Abu al-Raid — was executed on 29 January, the Interior Ministry said on 7 February. Al-Bayed was convicted of the 1984 assassination of Fahd al-Qawasmeh, the deposed mayor of Hebron in the occupied West Bank and a member of the executive committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

## KUWAIT

● A tender has been announced for a contract to carry out replacement works for cooling systems, and build an electrical and excess gas restoring unit in the northern liquid gas storage area. Bids are due in on 7 April; client is **Kuwait National Petroleum Company**. Prequalified companies are: Italy's **Technipetrol**; the US' **Lummus Crest**; France's **Sofregaz**; Switzerland's **Sulzer Gebrueder**; **JGC**

**Corporation, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Hitachi Zosen Corporation**, all of Japan; and four UK companies — **Udec Refrigeration, J Kenyon, Taylor Woodrow Management & Engineering** and **Liquid Gas Equipment**.

● The UK office of **Western Geophysical Company of America** has a KD 761,432 (\$2.7 million) contract to do a seismic survey for **Kuwait Oil Company**. Work, over the next 18 months, will entail delineating a newly discovered oil field in the Abdaliya area, between the Managish and Maqwa fields (MEED 6:9:86).

● Closing date for the tender to build a hospital on Failaka island has again been postponed; offers must now be in by 22 February (MEED 3:1:87; 29:11:86).

● The local **Al-Khorafi Construction Company** signed an KD 828,400 (\$3 million) contract on 3 February to build a complex for the Kuwait Blind Society. The three-storey building will include a theatre, printing press, guest houses and library; there is also a swimming pool. Designs were by the local **Sami al-Bader**.

● Local firms have been awarded two contracts by **Kuwait Oil Company. Kuwait Shipbuilding & Repairyard Company** is to design and build two reservoirs; **All Sayegh Contracting Company** is to maintain roads.

● Eight local and international companies have prequalified to bid for contract MEW/22/2/87-86/87 — to carry out repair works, and maintain instruments, telemetry, computer and control appliances. Client is the Electricity & Water Ministry; closing date is 8 March.

● Six international companies have been invited to bid by 22 February for Communications Ministry contract PTT/8609-86/87 — supply and installation of appliances to protect telephone lines from interference from transmission cables. The firms are: **Hitachi, C Itoh & Company** and **Sumitomo Corporation** — all of Japan; Sweden's **Ericsson**; West Germany's **Krone**, and a French company identified as **Henry Boiet**.

● The Public Works Ministry has invited bids from 12 local firms for a contract to build sea reservoirs between Fintas and Massilah. Tender closing date is 1 March.

● A tender to landscape and maintain gardens in the fifth agricultural area has been invited by the Public Authority for Agriculture & Fisheries Wealth Affairs. Offers must be in by 8 March.

## LEBANON

### Pound hits 100 to the dollar

A landmark in the economy's accelerating decline was reached on 11 February, when the value of the local currency fell below \$1 = £Leb 100 for the first time. In the past 12 months, the Lebanese pound has lost 82 per cent of its value against the dollar; there has been a 60 per cent depreciation since mid-1986 and a 30 per cent drop since the start of 1987.

The main factor in the currency's collapse has been the extent of the country's disintegration after more than 10 years of