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NEW IRRIGATION PROJECT DESCRIBED

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[Article by Amuri al-Rimahi: "Computer Operates the Saddam Irrigation Project"]

[Text] One of the most important and modern projects accomplished recently in Iraq, despite war conditions, and under the slogan, "Agriculture is endless oil," is the great irrigation project called the "Saddam Irrigation Project."

Engineer Abd-al-Wahhab Mahmud, the Iraqi minister of irrigation, says about the project:

"The Saddam Irrigation Project constitutes one of Iraq's gigantic irrigation projects, as well as one of the major irrigation projects in the world. It was given President Saddam Husayn's name in order to immortalize his role in and concern for this project and for irrigation projects in Iraq.

"The guidance of the president had a great influence on the achievement of the first phase of the project in spite of war conditions. Work on this phase was completed due to continuous efforts by the Iraqi and Arab cadre in the project on its various levels." The minister stated that the project plans are among the most modern in the world. The main canal of the project is lined, and the branch canals form an integrated network of asbestos pipes buried underground. Water will flow through them under a definite pressure and will reach the fields by means of a special outlet.

As for the overall area of the project, the Iraqi minister of irrigations said: "It covers about 1 million dunams and is located in three governorates: al-Ta'mim, Salah-al-Din, and Diyala. The completed first phase of the project, which has been dedicated, totals 350,000 dunams. The main canal is 67 kilometers long and is lined with salt-resistant concrete. The branch pipeline canals total 265 kilometers."

He added: "The first phase includes 4 large barrages, 56 small barrages, and 4 siphons, among other things. In addition, there is an automatic control apparatus to operate the principal schedule of the barrages. The project is entirely managed by a computer that remotely controls regulation and irrigation operations in the project.

"Seven model modern villages have been built, including 577 spacious homes. Four experimental farms have been established for scientific, agricultural, and irrigation research, as well as a large farm for the growing of sugar beets.

"Work continues on completing the project's second phase, which includes a 35 kilometer extension of the principal canal and lining it with concrete to lower water losses to the lowest possible level."

The Iraqi minister of irrigation stated: "The fruits of this strategic project will have major positive impact on the flourishing of agriculture in Iraq. The project will contribute to providing food security for Iraq and the Arab world, inasmuch as a study has been done of crop rotations and of the crops suitable to the soil and weather conditions of the project, and this will lead to the choice of suitably productive crops and ones that are needed by industry, such as presently imported raw materials.

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