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NOTES ON STATUS OF SYNTHETIC RUBBER
INDUSTRY IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES ^{1/}

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INTRODUCTION

Several oil producing Arab countries have been studying separately the possibility of establishing petrochemical industries. Synthetic rubber has been considered as an integrated part of a petrochemical complex in these studies. The insufficient local market to support economic capacities and the uncertainty of export to foreign markets have caused limited success in these studies. Among Arab countries, only Egypt is considering seriously the establishment of synthetic rubber plant as an integrated part of a petrochemical complex.

The Industrial Development Centre for Arab States (IDCAS) has been studying the subject of promoting petrochemical industries in the Arab countries through regional cooperation and coordination. A preliminary study has been prepared showing possible production of various chemical intermediates and final products from available raw materials at various production sites in both the Mediterranean area and the Gulf area.

Based on consents received from Arab Governments, the preliminary plan is now being elaborated so as to prepare a preliminary basic plan and sub-regional plans for the development of petrochemical industry in the Arab countries with recommended collective strategy for the area and alternative proposals to meet requirements of such a plan through cooperation and coordination in vertical and horizontal development and in supporting services.

This paper will give a brief account on market and plans of synthetic rubber in the Arab countries together with proposed project according to the preliminary study.

MARKET

The data which appear in this paper on market in the Arab countries have been taken from a study prepared for IDCAS by the French Petroleum Institute. The forecasts have been based on field data collected by IDCAS.

The data on market in other countries have been taken from a study prepared for IDCAS by Snam Progetti.

The most important types of synthetic rubber are S.B.R., Polybutadiene, butyl rubber and neoprene. The most widespread types for general use are S.B.R. and polybutadiene.

For the purpose of market studies, the Arab countries have been divided into the following sub-regions:

North Africa : Morocco
 Algeria
 Tunisia

North East Africa: Libya
 Egypt
 Sudan

Middle East: Jordan
 Syria
 Iraq
 Kuwait
 Lebanon
 Saudi Arabia

The consumption of synthetic rubber in Arab countries and Western Europe for 1970, 1975 and 1980 is given in Tables I, II and III.

TABLE I - DEMAND FOR SYNTHETIC RUBBERS (M.T./Y)

	1970	1975	1980
MOROCCO	5 500	8 700	12 300
ALGERIA	7 100	10 100	14 800
TUNISIA	2 800	3 400	4 900
SUB TOTAL NORTH AFRICA	14 800	22 200	32 000
LIBYA	1 500	2 700	5 000
A.R.D	5 500	11 800	20 000
SAUDI	1 600	2 400	3 100
SUB TOTAL NORTH AFRICA TOTAL	8 600	16 900	28 100
JORDAN	1 800	2 100	3 000
SYRIA	2 500	3 500	5 000
IRAQ	3 600	4 800	6 000
KUWAIT	1 500	2 000	2 600
LEBANON	2 500	3 200	4 200
SAUDI ARABIA	4 500	5 500	7 500
SUB TOTAL MIDDLE EAST	16 400	21 100	28 300
TOTAL ARAB COUNTRIES	39 800	60 200	89 000

TABLE II. CONSUMPTION OF SYNTHETIC RUBBER
in Western Europe

(Thousand t/y)

	CONSUMPTION OF SYNTHETIC RUBBER			Growth rate 1970/80 (%)
	1970	1975	1980	
TOTAL	197	320	450	8.6
FRANCE	253	340	480	6.6
WEST GERMANY	358	480	650	6.1
BELGIUM	43	65	65	7.0
NETHERLANDS	29	45	60	7.5
UNITED KINGDOM	274	375	500	6.2
SPAIN	65	115	200	9.0
OTHER COUNTRIES	189	262	375	7.0
TOTAL CONSUMPTION IN W. EUROPE	1,428	2,000	2,800	7.0

TABLE III. CONSUMPTION OF SYNTHETIC RUBBER
 IN ARAB COUNTRIES
 (T/T)

CONSUMPTION OF SYNTHETIC RUBBER

	1970	1975	1980	GROWTH RATE 1970/80 (T)
NORTH AMERICA	23,400	32,100	51,000	10.0
MIDDLE EAST	16,400	21,100	28,000	5.0
TOTAL CONSUMPTION	39,800	53,200	79,000	6.8
-- OF WHICH : SEP	28,000	40,000	58,000	

Per Capita Consumption

The estimated per capita consumption in Kilogramms/year synthetic rubber in all the Arab Countries is as follows:

1970 : 0.44

1975 : 0.62

1980 : 1.2

Present and Future Capacities

Production of synthetic rubber is not in existence in the Arab countries at the present time. However, some countries have studied the possibility of establishing synthetic rubber plants as part of a petrochemical complex. Because of limited market in these countries, these studies have achieved little success.

Two petrochemical complexes are planned in Egypt up to 1980, one in Alexandria and the other in Cairo.

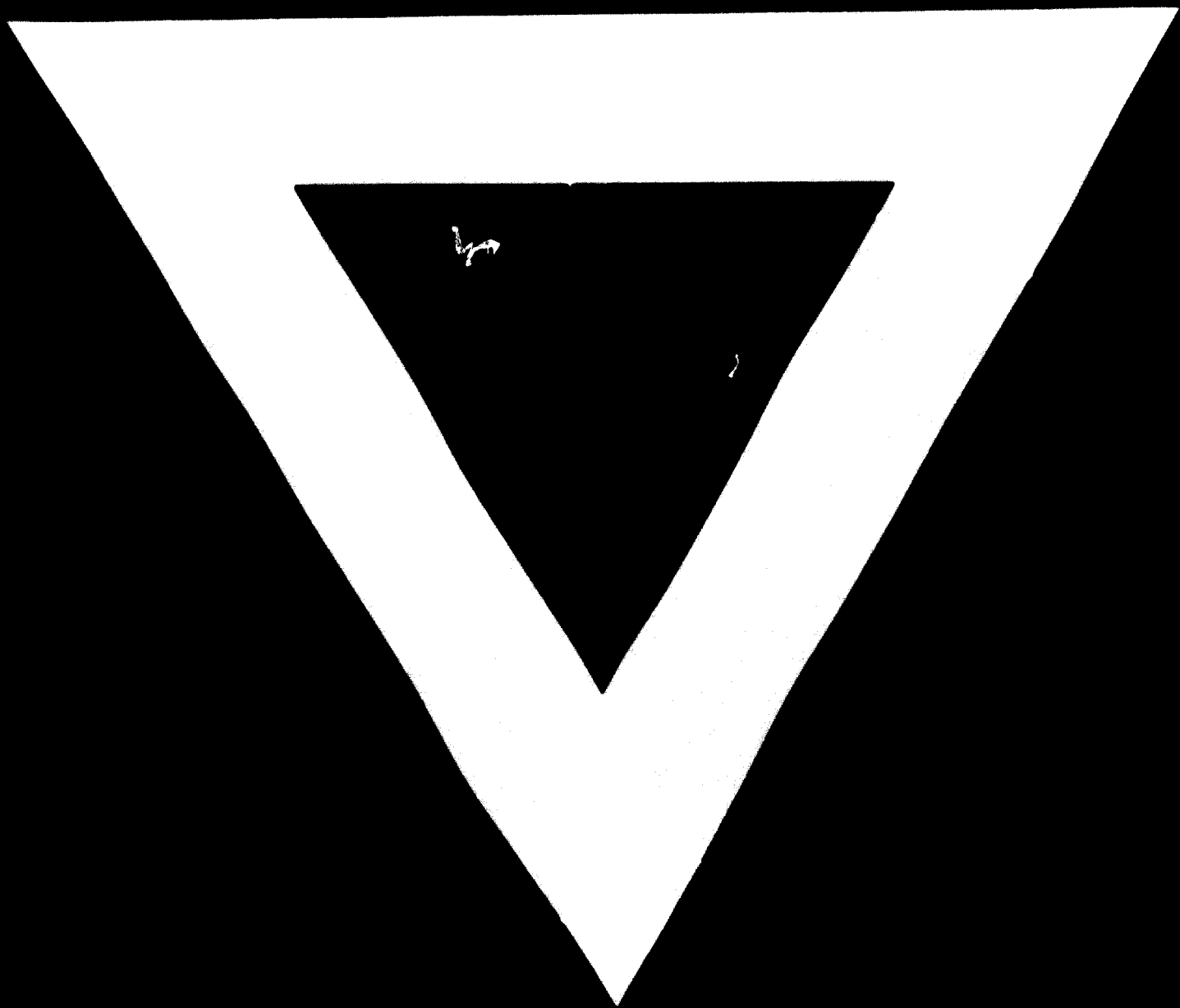
The Alexandria complex is to be implemented in two phases. The first phase includes a butadiene extraction unit and a polybutadiene plant of 15000 tons capacity. The second phase includes S.B.R. plant of 15000 tons capacity.

No other Arab country has announced any plans for establishing synthetic rubber project.

Proposed Alteration of Alexandria
Synthetic Rubber Projects

The preliminary study conducted by IDCAS suggests the following to the Alexandria complex :

1. Cancellation of the polybutadiene project in favour of increasing the capacity of S.B.R. to 30 000 tons/year.
2. The additional quantities of butadiene required for the proposed increased capacity of S.B.R. plant are to be obtained from proposed butadiene extraction units in Libya and in Kuwait in quantities of 5000 tons of butadiene from each of these two countries.



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