



AFRICA/EGYPT - The construction of the Grand Renaissance Dam involves Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia (and even Israel?)

Cairo (Agenzia Fides) - The construction of the Grand Renaissance Dam which is currently under construction on the Blue Nile is creating tension between Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia. According to a report published by a tripartite committee composed of experts from Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia, in fact, the dam built by Ethiopia will deprive Egyptians of 12 billion cubic meters of water a year.

Ayman Ali, one of the directors of the Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi warned that "Egypt is entitled to defend its interests, as others have the right to defend theirs" and added that Ethiopia must prove that the dam "will not damage Egypt, otherwise all options will be on the table", implying the possibility of a military attack. The possible Egyptian reactions to the Ethiopian initiative had been discussed during a meeting of the leading politicians in the presence of Egyptian President Morsi. The meeting was to remain confidential but was broadcast live on TV, causing embarrassment in the Egyptian presidency because some of those present launched bellicose proposals (such as resorting to sabotage or the financing of Ethiopian guerrilla movements) to block the construction of the work, and others expressed criticism not only of Ethiopia but also of Sudan. The government in Khartoum said it was in fact in favor of the construction of the dam.

"The Egyptians will not like our point of view but Sudan will benefit greatly from the dam," said Sudan's Minister of Communications, Ahmed Bilal Osman. Sudan expects to increase its water reserves, reducing its dependence on rainfall to meet its water needs.

According to several Egyptian newspapers, Sudan Egyptian intelligence chief, Mohamed Raafat Shehata was sent to Sudan to try to reconcile the positions of Khartoum and Cairo. The visit has however not been confirmed officially by the two governments.

Meanwhile, according to intelligence Maghreb, Ethiopia has intensified military contacts with Israel in view of a possible crisis with Egypt. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 06/06/2013)