

# Russia, Egypt say they aim to build nuclear power plant

February 10 2015, by Brian Rohan And Vladimir Isachenkov

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In this image released by the Egyptian Presidency, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, left, exchanges an assault rifle with Russian President Vladimir Putin upon his arrival at the Cairo International Airport in Egypt, Monday, Feb. 9, 2015. Putin arrived in Cairo on Monday to meet his Egyptian counterpart, with both sides eager to strengthen ties and show both have options outside of the West to pursue their goals. The visit, the first by Putin to Egypt in a decade, is largely symbolic, analysts say. (AP Photo/Egyptian Presidency)

The presidents of Egypt and Russia on Tuesday said the two countries would build Egypt's first nuclear power plant together and boost natural gas trade and other ties.

The announcement came during the second day of Russian President Vladimir Putin's lavish, two-day state visit meant to deepen a bilateral relationship unimpeded by foreign criticism.

The plant would be built at the existing nuclear site in Dabaa, on the Mediterranean coast west of the port city of Alexandria, where a research reactor has stood for years.

At a joint news conference with Putin in Cairo, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi said they had signed a memorandum of understanding on the construction.

Putin stressed that the deal was not finalized but that it had major potential. Egypt began its nuclear program in 1954 and in 1961, acquired a 2-megawatt research reactor, built by the Soviet Union. Plans to expand the site have been decades in the making but repeatedly fell through. In 2010, that reactor suffered a breakdown, though no radiation was reported to have leaked out.

"If final decisions are made, it will mean not just building a [nuclear power plant](#), it means the creation of the entire new atomic industry in Egypt," Putin said.

Boosting electricity generation has been a priority for Egypt, where shortages lead to frequent blackouts in cities, especially in the summer, which have stoked popular anger.

Sergei Kiriyyenko, the head of Russia's Rosatom state-controlled nuclear corporation, said the agreement signed envisages a power plant with four

reactors producing 1,200 megawatts each.



In this image released by the Egyptian Presidency, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, left, shakes hands with Russian President Vladimir Putin upon his arrival at the Cairo International Airport in Egypt, Monday, Feb. 9, 2015. Putin arrived in Cairo on Monday to meet his Egyptian counterpart, with both sides eager to strengthen ties and show both have options outside of the West to pursue their goals. The visit, the first by Putin to Egypt in a decade, is largely symbolic, analysts say. (AP Photo/Ahmed Fouad, Egyptian Presidency)

In remarks carried by Russian news agencies, Kiriyenko said that technical and commercial details of the project have yet to be finalized. He said it envisages new technology with strong safety measures that take into account lessons learned during the March 2011 Fukushima

disaster in Japan.

Along with the reactors, the plant will also have desalination capacities, Kiriyyenko said, adding that Rosatom will provide its fuel, personnel training, and build necessary infrastructure.

In other key deals, el-Sissi said the two nations signed agreements to improve investment and the natural gas business, as well as create a Russian industrial zone along the Suez Canal, the expansion of which has been a star project for the Egyptian president.

The visit has been important to both presidents, eager to show they have options outside of the West to pursue their ambitions. Putin's visit has gotten the red carpet treatment, with much pageantry and a stream of images highlighting the two leaders' events.

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