U. S. CAIRO OFFICES MOVING TO BEIRUT
By ALBION ROSSSpecial to THE NEW YORK TIMES.
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U. S. CAIRO OFFICES MOVING TO BEIRUT

Lebanese Capital Emerging as Hub of Economic Life and Travel in Near East

By ALBION ROSS
Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

CAIRO, Feb. 14—The United States Government's regional agencies dealing with the Middle East and the State Department's regional services are leaving Cairo. Most of them will go to Beirut, Lebanon, but one or two are expected to move to Athens.

The destruction in the recent rioting of Shepheard's Hotel, which has been for several generations the symbol of Cairo's supremacy as the international hub of the Middle East, came at a moment when Cairo's position, relatively, as the center of travel and business for the Middle East, already was fading.

The decline of Cairo as an international travel and commercial center had been expedited by the opening a little more than a year ago of the international airport at Beirut, the most modern and elaborately equipped in the Orient. A network of airline schedules linking Beirut, by direct flights, to all of Western Europe, New York, Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires, as well as India, the Far East and the Middle East, has been set up.

Modern Hotels Built

Three additional modern hotels have been built in Beirut within little more than a year, including the only air-conditioned hotel in the Middle East. A small "Wall Street" has appeared, with buildings that in terms of the Levant are skyscrapers and of ultramodern design. Beirut also is a heavily frequented Mediterranean port, while Cairo is an inland city.

The new regional center for the United States Government agencies working in the Middle East will take up nearly all of a building near the American University and is expected eventually to occupy the whole building.

The regional offices of the Civil Aeronautics Authority and the Treasury Department are in the process of moving out of Cairo to Beirut. The office of the petroleum attaché for the area will be situated in the new regional center. The Technical Cooperation Administration office for the Arab states and Israel, which is running the Point Four program for the area under Ambassador Edwin Locke, will have its offices in the center. It is understood that the labor attaché's office for the area will be shifted later in the year from Cairo.

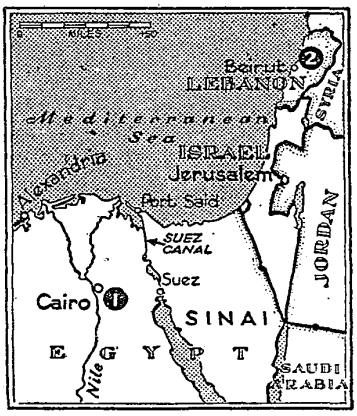
Center of U. N. Effort

United Nations efforts toward the economic and social regeneration of the Middle East center on Beirut as the headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, charged with carrying out the $250,000,000 Palestine refugee rehabilitation plan which is tied in with the program to increase the economic potential of the area and improve its general social condition. The refugee program is by far the largest United Nations operation in the Middle East.

The major factor in the declining importance of Cairo as the hub of the Middle East is the increasing importance of oil. Previously the importance of Egyptian cotton and the Egyptian market made Cairo a natural economic center. Pipelines constructed, under construction or planned, which bring oil out of Mesopotamia (the area in Iraq between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers), and the Persian Gulf to the Levant coast shifted the economic center of gravity.

Another factor in the declining importance of Cairo was the Palestine conflict, the creation of the State of Israel and the cessation of all land traffic between Egypt and other parts of the Middle East.

NEW NEAR EAST HUB



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Cairo (1) is being replaced by Beirut (2) as the crossroads of the Middle East region.

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