

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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## INTERIOR ANNOUNCES COOPERATIVE MHD RESEARCH WITH SOVIET UNION

The Interior Department's Office of Coal Research completed negotiations yesterday with Soviet representatives for joint research on the magnetohydrodynamic method of generating electricity.

MHD generation is still in the systems stage of experiment in the United States. The USSR has a 25 megawatt pilot plant in Moscow that operates minimally. However, the Soviets have encountered technical problems and both countries agreed that an exchange of scientific data would be mutually beneficial to achieve the primary objective of commercialization of MHD.

Dr. George Hill, Director of the Office of Coal Research in the Department of the Interior and Dr. Aleksandr Y. Sheindlin, director of scientific research in high temperatures at the Russian Academy of Sciences, were the signatories to the new memorandum of understanding for cooperation in MHD research. Conceptual designs and materials developed in the U.S. will be tested on the Soviet MHD plant in Moscow.

The Office of Coal Research has stimulated most of the MHD research in the U.S. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, AVCO Corporation of Boston, the University of Tennessee, Westinghouse, the U.S. Bureau of Mines and other research organizations are under contract to the Office of Coal Research for work on the MHD method.

Power generation by magnetohydrodynamic processes had demonstrated considerably greater power generating efficiency than by the conventional steam generating method. MHD has the added advantages of using very little water, and it allows the use of high-sulphur coal which is otherwise in disrepute because of its polluting characteristics upon burning. In the MHD process, however, the sulphur is removed by the reaction with the seeding material, potassium.

The understanding reached yesterday between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. government science teams is an outgrowth of the scientific exchange agreements between the two countries that derived from President Nixon's May 1972 visit to the Soviet Union.

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