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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

# INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY  USSR

DATE DISTR. // Dec 1953 25X1

SUBJECT Information Concerning Conditions East of Finnish-USSR Border.

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6. The main highways  [See Enclosure (A)] were 15 to 18 feet wide and trucks could pass each other easily. These roads were of gravel, mixed with clay, and were graded and well drained. Small bridges and most of the culverts were made of log wood, although there were some culverts of concrete. The maintenance of these roads had been taken care of by the Finnish Army. Material for road construction, such as gravel or sand, was available along the roadways. These roads, with the exception of during the rainy season in the

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spring and fall, were useable for all types of traffic.

7. The secondary motor roads leading to the main highways from the adjacent heavy-forested areas were few and far between. They were mere paths, showing no grading and little use; most of these secondary roads could not be used for heavy traffic or for motor vehicles.
8. The Murmansk to Leningrad railroad, as well as the railroad west from Suoyarvi to Finland, was single-tracked and wide-gauged. The roadbeds were of sand and gravel, and wooden ties were used. There were railroad sidings constructed in the larger towns. All equipment on these railroads was Finnish; all of the USSR equipment had been evacuated to the south and southeast.
9. It was the plan of the retreating Soviets to evacuate all the people who lived east of the Finnish-USSR border. Many of those of Finnish extraction and others who showed opposition to Communism had been moved into the interior prior to 1939. The retreat was so sudden that 20 to 25% of the population was left behind and most of those who were left behind were old people or small children. The people in the area were about 50% Russian and 50% Karelian, and a few Communist-Finnish families who had moved into the area after World War I. There were two languages spoken, Russian and Karelian (Finnish). Most of the young people up to 35 years were Communists and were not friendly but bitter. The older people generally maintained their independence and rather enjoyed the presence. Much of this condition could be traced to the fact that these older people had seen hundreds of their own people taken by the USSR and put into labor camps or forced into the Soviet army, and that when the proper time presented itself, they showed their bitterness towards the Soviets.
10. The terrain of this whole area was similar to the terrain found in Finland, west of the border. It was rolling country with an occasional large hill, dotted with numerous lakes of various sizes, and fast-moving creeks and small rivers, many of which were jammed with logs which were on their way to the saw mills downstream. Everywhere were dense forests of spruce and pine.
11. There was fishing in the various lakes, but the catches were used for local consumption. Wild life in this area consisted of birds, bears, elk and deer, which were plentiful.
12. Small rural settlements, consisting of from 10 to 20 buildings, were located at various distances from 20 to 30 miles apart along the main highways. Occasionally a single house with a small clearing would show up along the highways. More than half of the dwellings were empty.
13. An occasional small piece of land was cleared out of the forests and used for growing vegetables and grains, mostly potatoes, barley, oats and wheat. There was no reforestation.
14. Nearer to the larger towns, farms of from 40 to 60 acres were tilled. These farms had a few dairy cows, hogs and sheep, which grazed upon the native grasses of this area, and were used only for local consumption. The growing period in this area is from 90 to one-hundred days, and the quality and quantity of crops compares with those raised in east Finland.
15. The soil in this area was a sandy loam, with patches of gravel. It was tilled with old machinery, using small native horses.
16. Winters are very cold in this area and last from October through April. The temperatures in December, January and February, often fall as low as -50°. During the months of June, July and August, their summer, the temperatures are comfortable and go as high as 80° during the daytime, although the nights are cool.

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17. A typical home was one-story high, constructed with an exterior of either rough lumber or logs, and an interior finish of either wooden boards or rough plaster. The houses had no basements, and shingles were used for the roof. The houses usually contained two bedrooms, a living-room, and a combination kitchen and dining-room. Other buildings associated with the home usually had the same exterior as the house.
18. The only industry with exportable products in this area was that of logging, with small saw-mills located in various towns. At Kondopoga, there were two saw mills and one pulp mill, although these were not operating [redacted] 25X1  
Prior to World War II, these wood products were shipped by rail south and east to the more populated areas.
19. Each district had its own hospital, but nearly all the personnel had been evacuated leaving only a few old people to look after the sick. Each district also had its own public health system, but its personnel was not well trained. Only in the larger towns was there a doctor. The Public Health Hospitals, as well as the schools were taken over by the Finnish personnel of the Finnish military government.
20. The prevailing diseases in the area were those common to the lungs and throat, tuberculosis and dysentery. In 1943, in the Petrozavodsk area, there was a serious typhoid epidemic. There was very little venereal disease. The personal hygiene of the natives was very good; they followed their old custom of taking steam baths. Many of them had their own private steam-bath house, and the villages and towns had public steam-bath houses. In the summer of 1943, there were some cases of malaria; the cause of same was traced to the mosquito, a species known as anopheles maculipennis. The patients were treated with quinine and soon recovered.
21. With the exception of the people of the city of Kondopoga, which in normal times had a population of eight thousand, no other towns or villages had a municipal water system. Usually they took their water from lakes or springs, [redacted] 25X1  
department labeled it as safe.
22. There was a large hydroelectric plant at Kondopoga, also, which furnished power and light to the nearby villages.
23. Garbage disposal was handled by private collection, garbage was dumped in an area outside of the village limits where it was left to rot.
24. In the larger towns, there were Greek Orthodox churches, and these were faithfully attended by the older folks. The younger people being Communists did not attend church. The influence of Communism was noticeable in most of the homes, churches and in all schools, where signs such as "Stalin, our Father and Saviour" were posted in conspicuous places.
25. School books were written in both the Finnish and Russian languages; and [redacted] 25X1  
some school textbooks that were printed in Russian type, but written in the Finnish language.
26. The natives entertained themselves, much as [redacted] in Finland in the rural areas, 25X1  
by group gatherings, where folk-dancing and singing were done. The songs were old Karelian songs, which have been the theme for many [redacted] Finnish songs. 25X1  
Dances also were similar to the folk dances in Finland.
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- ENCLOSURE (A): [redacted] Sketch of Area Near Finnish/USSR Border 25X1

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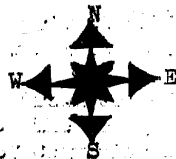
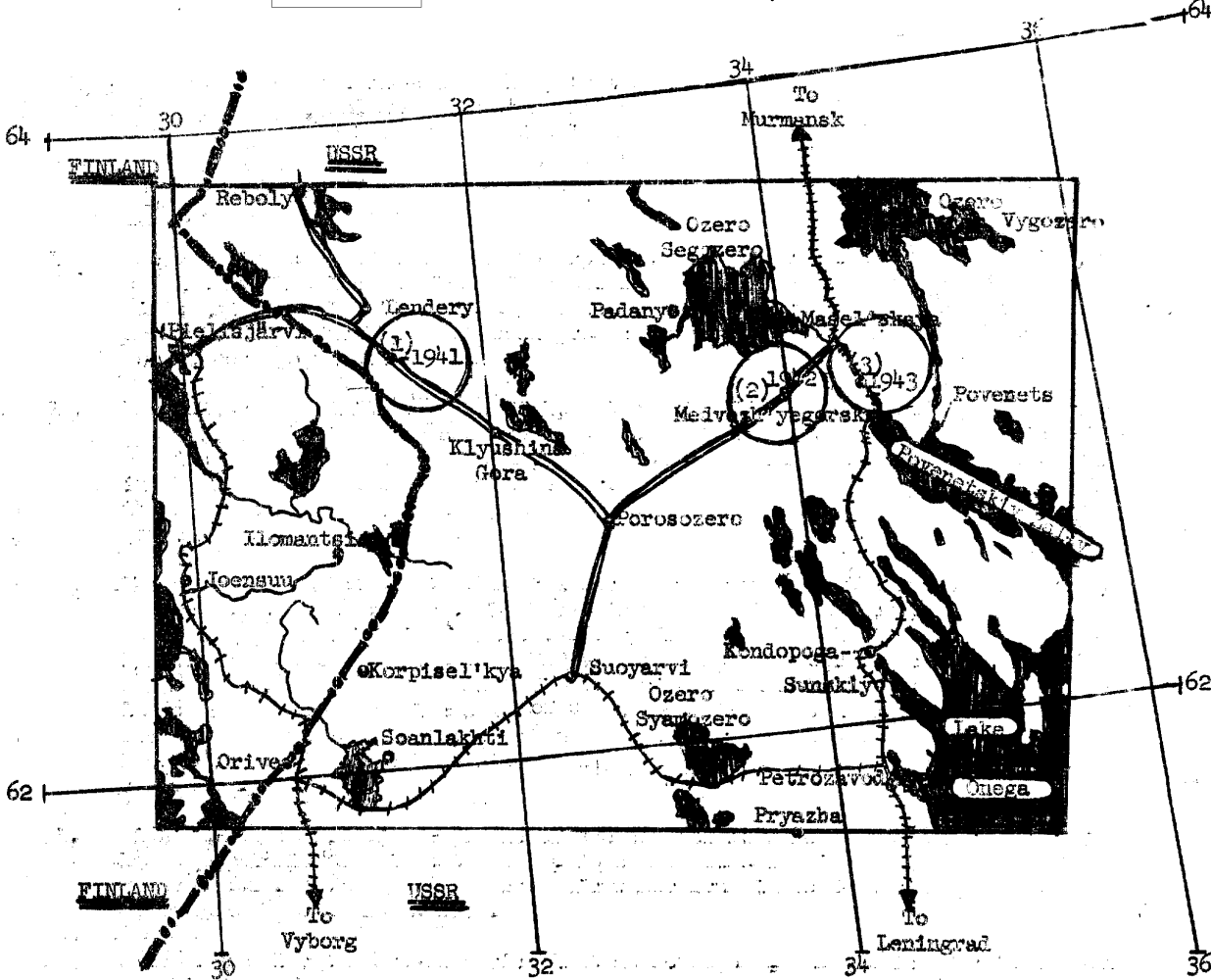
ENCLOSURE (A)

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SKETCH OF AREA NEAR FINNISH/USSR BORDER

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SCALE 1:2,000,000

-  -- Railroad
-  -- Main Highways

[  note: Highways drawn on the above map are intended to show only the general direction of same. ]

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