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CURRENT SUPPORT MEMORANDUM

PLANS FOR RAILROAD DEVELOPMENT
IN NORTHWEST R.S.F.S.R.

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This report represents the immediate views of the
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PLANS FOR RAILROAD DEVELOPMENT
IN NORTHWEST R.S.F.S.R.

A 24 June Soviet newspaper article on the double tracking of the Pechora railroad includes a map which presents the over-all plan for rail construction in the northwest part of the R.S.F.S.R. This article confirms and clarifies earlier 1956 press reports and fragmentary information gleaned from reports of PWs released as early as 1948.1/ Three major railroad construction efforts are planned. Their status and future prospects are as follows:

1. Rudnichnyy - Syktyvkar - Mikun - Mezen: (Total length about 900 kilometers). Construction on part of this line in the Rudnichnyy area was reported under way in 1948 - 1950.2/ At that time, it was rumored that the line would eventually run from Rudnichnyy to Syktyvkar. Inconclusive reports of construction continued throughout the Fifth Five Year Plan.

The Sixth Five Year Plan directives originally called for construction of railroad from Mikun to Koslan.3/ Additional directives have since provided for extension of this line northwestward to Mezen on the White Sea and southeastward to Syktyvkar.4/ The whole sector Mezen - Koslan - Mikun - Syktyvkar, about 620 kilometers long, is to be completed during the Sixth Five Year Plan.

The new map shows a line projected from Rudnichnyy through Syktyvkar and Mikun to Koslan. A short sector from Syktyvkar to Mikun is to be double tracked.

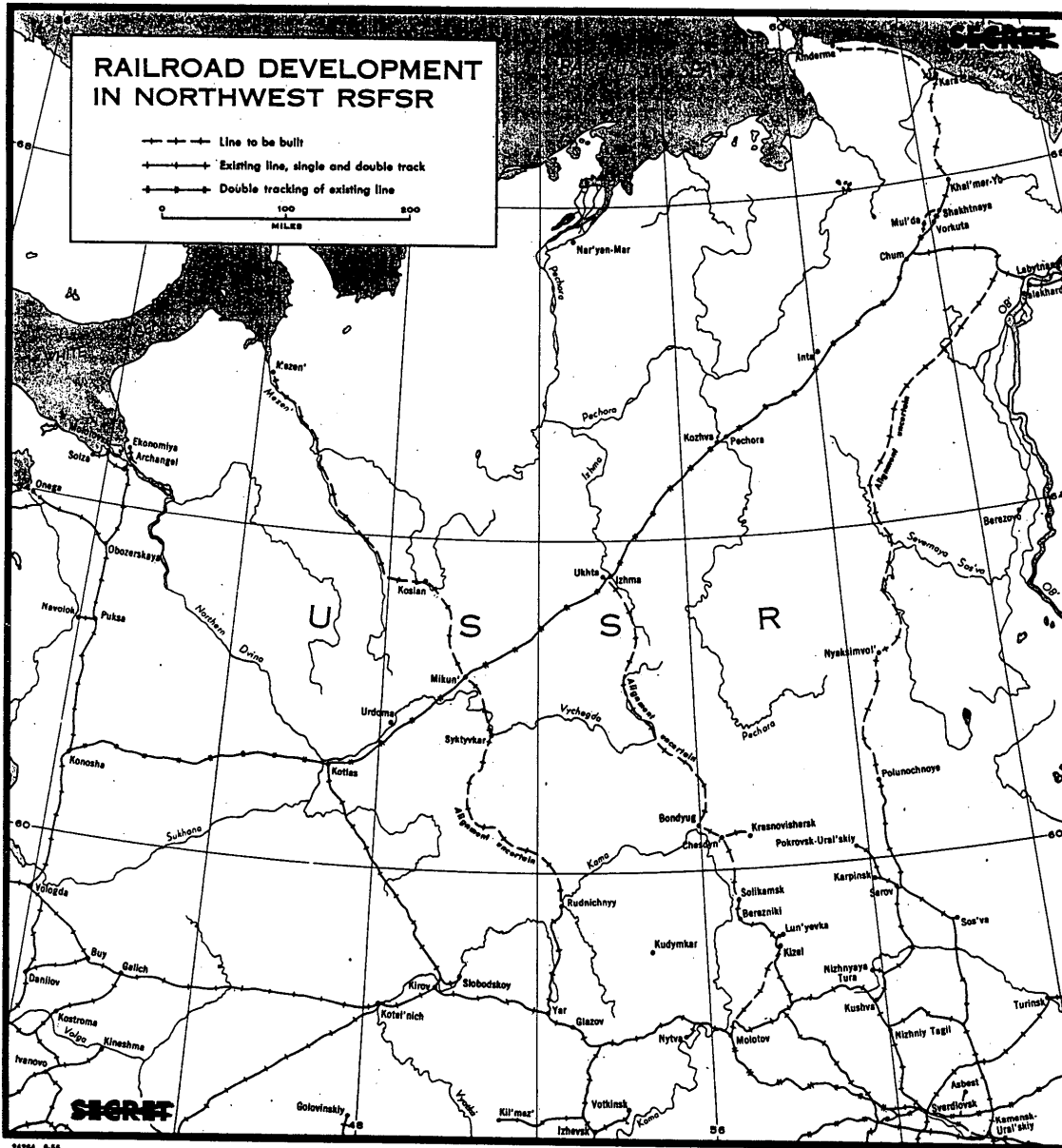
Of the three major lines shown on the map, the Rudnichnyy - Mezen line will probably be completed first. Open sources indicate that the sector from Syktyvkar to Mezen is planned for completion in the Sixth Five Year Plan and that construction and survey work is already under way.5/ The connecting link from Syktyvkar to Rudnichnyy, only about 280 kilometers (the shortest of the Pechora Railroad - North Urals connections), will also probably be completed. This line will allow development of a major new Soviet port at Mezen with direct rail access to the industrial regions of the North Urals and North Volga.

2. Solikamsk - Ukhta: (Total length about 525 kilometers) PW reports of December 1954 indicate construction was under way on a track northward from Solikamsk. The roadbed was completed to a point about 195 kilometers north of Solikamsk and broad gauge ties and rails were being laid.7/ Rumors indicated that construction was planned northward to a point on the Pechora Railroad but no northern terminal could be determined. The new map reveals that this line will run to Ukhta. The line may be farther along than firm evidence indicates. Completion in the Sixth Five Year Plan is possible and may be concurrent with development of the coking coals of the Pechora Basin. The line will permit shipment of coking coals to the northern Urals which in turn will decrease their dependence on long hauls from the Kuznetsk Basin. This line also suggests increasing development of the timber, petroleum, and ore resources of the Ukhta region.

3. Polunochnoye - Area of Salekhard: (Total length about 825 kilometers) The new map shows this line, about which there was little earlier information, running northward along the eastern slopes of the Urals to the Salekhard - Vorkuta line. The route is as yet undetermined beyond Nyaksimvol' and is being surveyed at present.8/ Construction will presumably start during the Sixth Five Year Plan but will not be completed until the Seventh Five Year Plan.9/

In addition to the major construction efforts noted, the 24 June Gudok map indicates that the Pechora Railroad is completed as far as Khal'mer-Yu and is projected at least as far as Kara. This short northern extension will connect the Pechora Railroad with the Northern Sea Route.

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Analyst:

Coord :

1. Gudok, 24 Jun 56, p 3, U
2. CIA. CS, 20 Apr 55, p 1-2, C
3. CIA. FDD Summary #864, 20 Mar 56, (Pravda, 15 Jan 56), p 17, OFF USE
4. Gudok, 23 May 56, p 1, U
CIA. FBIS Daily Report, USSR and Eastern Europe, 28 May 56, pp CC15-16, OFF USE
5. CIA. CS, 20 Apr 55, p 1-2, C
6. Gudok, 23 May 56, p 1, U
7. Army, IR, RVT-1064-55, 6 Sep 55, C
8. Gudok, 23 May 56, p 1, U
9. Plannovoye Khozyaystvo #3, 1956, p 73, U

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