

Munich, 1 October 1963 (Non-Target Communist Area Analysis  
Department: USSR - cz)

On a tour of the existing irrigation areas in European Russia, following the debacle of this year's grain harvest and the dramatic decision to contract over 8.5 million tons wheat from the western world, Khrushchev has proclaimed two measures to alleviate the Soviet grain problem: vastly greater chemical fertilizer production and an expansion of the irrigated area.

In a speech to agricultural workers in the south Ukraine (Radio Moscow October 1, 1963) Khrushchev put the priority on fertilizer production with the irrigation of land as a measure of secondary importance.

"This is not because we under-estimate the value of irrigation, but rather, it is beyond our means to solve two such problems simultaneously...It must be kept in mind that the construction of irrigation systems requires colossal capital investments and takes a long time...We will work on both tasks, but raising fertilizer output is of primary importance...so that in the near future we will get a guaranteed additional reserve of 28 to 35 million tons grain" /from the new fertilized, irrigated areas which will cover 5 1/2 to 6 million hectares/.

This is the first recognition that the competing demands of the two ameliorating measures are beyond the current investment capabilities of the Soviet Union, and require priority consideration. Fertilizer output is scheduled to reach 35 million tons by 1965, and 100 million tons by 1970, the Soviet leader disclosed. In actuality, fertilizer production to date is hopelessly behind plan. During the first half of 1963 the annual rate of production was running at 19 million tons, compared to a planned rate of 25-29 million.

On the measure to expand the irrigated land, it is rather significant that this is not a new disclosure by the First Secretary. At the XXII Party Congress (1961) he called for an expansion of from 9 to 28 million hectares of land under irrigation

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during the coming decade.

The decision to limit the newly irrigated areas only to state farm administration is not surprising as almost all of the capital investments from state sources has accrued to the benefit of the sovkhozy. He assured the collective farmers, however, that existing kolkhozy with irrigation systems would not be turned into state farms.

MD/1853