

[REDACTED] NOVEMBER 29, 1985

Special Analysis

USSR: Forced Labor System

More than 4.5 million people in the USSR today are forced laborers [REDACTED] up from 4 million in the late 1970s. They account for 3 percent of the total labor force. Forced labor not only implements Soviet criminal codes and forces compliance with political norms, it also supports economic development. Despite international criticism of Moscow's policies, most prisoners suffer inhumane working and living conditions; treatment of dissidents is extraordinarily harsh. [REDACTED]

More than 2.3 million forced laborers are confined [REDACTED] The other 2.2 million have been sentenced directly to work projects in specific industries or released from camps to finish their sentences at work projects but are unconfined. The number of prisoners in labor camps has increased by 14 percent since 1977. The yearly growth rate of the camp population has averaged 1.9 percent since 1977, nearly twice that of the total labor force for the same period. [REDACTED]



Most forced laborers work in construction and manufacturing. The number engaged in logging has declined slightly, but some are being used in new timber areas in East Siberia. Forced labor produces wood manufactures, metal parts, construction materials, and some end products. Forced laborers also work in the oil, chemical, and concrete industries; mine coal, gold, and other minerals; and harvest or process a few agricultural products such as tea. There is not enough information to determine the extent of their contribution to specific industries or export goods. [REDACTED]

Requirements Growing

The conditions that led to the higher annual growth rate of forced labor from 1977 to 1984 remain. Labor shortages, especially in unskilled or unattractive and difficult jobs, have gotten worse. Large-scale construction projects—industrial complexes, pipelines, and railroads—and expansion in outlying regions have worsened the

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labor shortages. In addition, campaigns against crime and corruption have added more forced laborers and required an expansion of the labor camp network. Crackdowns on dissidents—refuseniks, human rights activists, religious nonconformists, and minority nationalists—continue. [REDACTED]

Outlook

The size of the Soviet forced labor population and its use in the economy will increase at about the same rate as it has in recent years. The campaigns against crime and corruption, and now against alcoholism and slack labor performance, will keep adding forced laborers to the system. Difficulty in attracting workers to unskilled jobs in construction and resource development projects in less developed regions shows no sign of letting up. [REDACTED]

The use of unconfined forced laborers will increase because it is the most economical approach to punishment; labor camps will be used for the severest punishment and to support selected industries. Because forced labor fills important economic and political needs—and because international human rights pressures have had such little effect—most political prisoners will continue to be subjected to confined labor under extremely harsh conditions. [REDACTED] CIA, NSA-