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## CURRENT SUPPORT MEMORANDUM

FURTHER CONSTRUCTION ON  
THE TAYSHET - LENA RAILROAD

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM  
RELEASE AS SANITIZED  
1998

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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FURTHER CONSTRUCTION ON  
THE TAYSHET - LENA RAILROAD

A recent press article clarifies the status of the long-planned Baykal-Amur Mainline (BAM).1/ The railroad was originally planned in the 1930's as a second route to the Far East to supplement the vulnerable Trans-Siberian Railroad.2/ In 1938-39 construction was under way from Tayshet to the east, but little progress was made.3/ The postwar entry of China into the Communist Bloc reduced the vulnerability of the Trans-Siberian line and work was slowly resumed. By 1951-52 the line was in temporary operation as far as Ust'-Kut,4/ permitting further shipments to the north-east via the Lena River. In the absence of indications that the rail line was being extended, it seemed probable that construction was suspended around 1953.

It now appears that construction is planned to continue. A recent magazine article stated that in the next fifteen years a new main line railroad connecting the Angara-Ilinskiy region with the Southern Yakutian coal basin is to be built.5/

The railroad, planned to be built in the Seventh and Eighth Five-Year Plans, will run northeast from Ust'Kut through Kirensk and Olekminsk to Aldan.6/ The railroad will probably follow the west bank of the Lena River to Kirensk, cross the river and proceed up the Lena Valley to the Olekma River, from there it will go directly to Aldan.7/ Although the exact route is unknown, by following this route the mountainous region between the Lena River and Aldan will be avoided. (See map) Some reports indicate that construction may have already progressed beyond Ust'Kut.8/

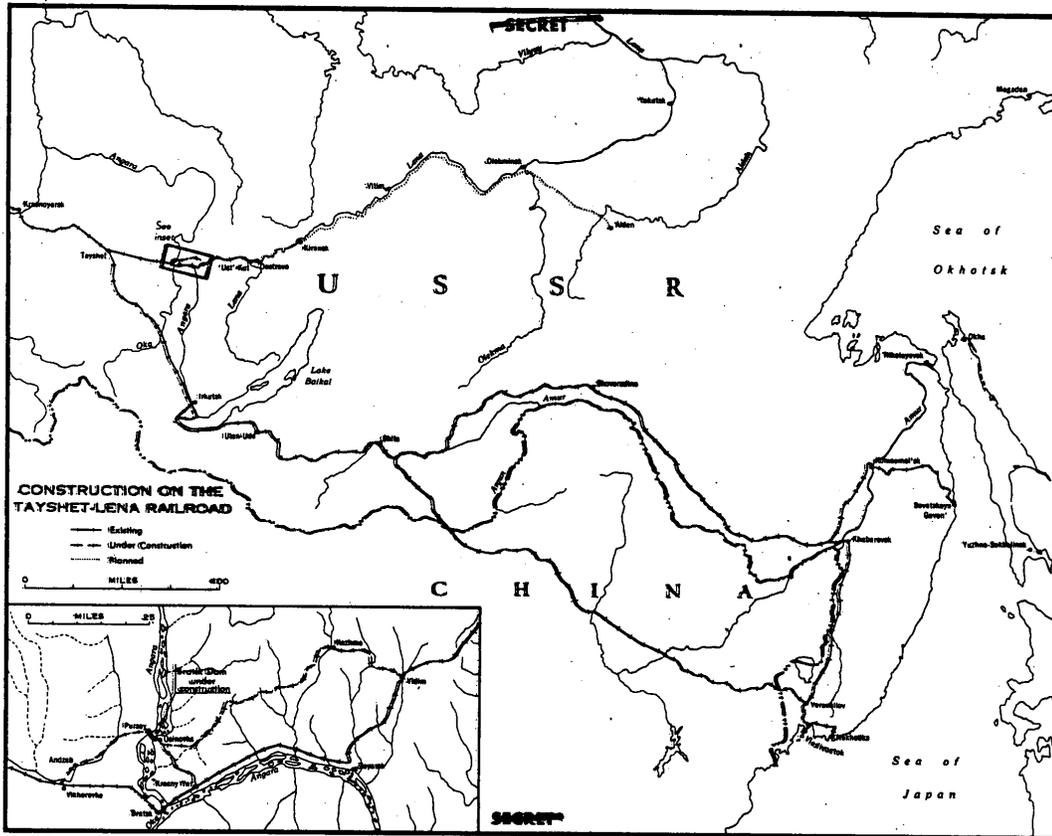
Such a railroad, if built, would give year round access to the mineral rich region of the southern Yakutsk ASSR and greatly aid in the planned economic development of the entire area. Plans for construction beyond Aldan, if any, are unknown.

The article also revealed that a 200 kilometer section of track in the Bratsk area (see insert map) must be relocated to go around the area to be flooded by construction of the Bratsk Dam. The new route will leave the present line at Vikhorevka, pass through stations Andzeb and Pursey, cross the Angara River via the Bratsk Dam, proceed eastward and rejoin the old track at Vidim. This line relocation is necessary due to changes in plans for the Bratsk Hydroelectric Station, as a result of which the water level will be raised considerably higher than the 30 meters anticipated when the railroad was built.9/ Cost of the line will be over 200,000,000 rubles, slightly more than 1,000,000 rubles per kilometer.10/ One explanation of the unit cost, which is considered very low for the type of terrain to be crossed, is that construction expenditures for the 40 kilometers from Vikhorevka to Pursey may be charged to the Bratsk Hydroelectric Project. This sector of line will be rushed to completion and used as a supply line to the dam construction area. The unit cost for the remaining 160 kilometers would then be about 1,250,000 rubles per kilometer, which is a more reasonable figure.

The relocated line will not be completed until 1960 since it requires a crossing of the Angara River via the dam which will not be completed before that time. The present tracks will remain in operation until completion of the new sector.

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Analyst:

Coord :

1. Gudok, 6 Jun 56, p 2, U
2. New York Times, 21 Nov 54, p 28, U
3. CIA. 00, 25 Jan 56, info Jun 38-Jul 39, C
4. Priroda #3, Mar 56, U
5. Plannovoye Khozydystvo #3, 1956, p 80, U
6. Ibid.
7. Gudok, 6 Jun 56, p 2, U
8. IB Int 11 g g , 0 May - 12 Jun 56, p 2 ,
9. Gudok, 6 Jun 56, p 2, U
10. Current Digest of the Soviet Press, 23 May 56, Speech of Com. N. K. Balbakov, (Pravda, 25 Feb 56, p 6-7), p 17, U

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