

PN 64.2702/7  
26 September 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT : Joint US-USSR Proposals for Cooperation in  
Science and Technology: Water Resources  
Cooperative Area

1. We have reexamined the Joint US-USSR Proposals for Cooperation in Science and Technology: Water Resources Cooperative Area. Our overall opinion of the bilateral agreement is the same as stated in November 1972. We feel the agreement has been and will continue to be beneficial to both countries and that no loss of US strategic technology will occur.

2. We do not believe that any significant new knowledge has been produced thus far. Most of the activity that has taken place thus far has been the exchange of technical information, bibliographic materials, and planning of future exchanges of scientific delegations.

3. We have seen no intelligence reporting that indicated a different Soviet attitude than that reflected in the official reports of the Project Working Group. Virtually all of our information on Soviet water resources comes from unclassified Soviet periodicals, newspaper accounts, and radio broadcasts. These sources indicate a strong desire on the part of the Soviets to continue to cooperate and are optimistic on the benefits to the USSR.

4. The Soviets are undertaking cooperative agreements in the water resources area with countries in addition to the US. Most notable are their agreements with Great Britain

APPROVED FOR RELEASE  
DATE: JUN 2004

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and France. The USSR and Great Britain signed a five-year agreement on cooperation in the field of environmental protection on May 21, 1974. Areas included are the protection of waters from pollution and comprehensive utilization of water resources. The hydrological agreement with France includes topics such as irrigation, hydrometeorology, and the use of computers to forecast spring floods. Iran also has agreed to expand cooperation with the Soviets beyond the current joint project on the Araks river which borders the two countries.

5. We believe the agreement will be beneficial to the US even though the US is probably ahead of the Soviets in the majority of the areas in the agreement. The US Working Group on Planning, Utilization, and Management of Water Resources, which visited the Soviet Union in May 1974, was impressed with the magnitude of the Soviet water resources development program. Areas where the US should benefit the most appear to be cold weather construction, the use of polymer films, explosives excavation, and groundwater research. The Soviets have more experience than the US in working with concrete that is pre-cast rather than cast-in-place, but concrete work and quality control is below that of the US. The US should benefit from the extensive Soviet work in drainage especially as it affects salinity of the soils. Another benefit will accrue to the US if the Soviets increase purchases of such items as irrigation equipment and arrange to use US consultants to advise on water resource problems. The only disadvantage to the US could lie in the field of computer assistance in water resource management and control if the Soviets then utilize the automated techniques in more strategic areas.

6. Several additional areas exist that might make the agreement of greater benefit to the US. In the area of explosives excavation, a visit to the Amu-Bukhara Canal or the Nurek dam site, both in Soviet Central Asia, would be of value. Extensive Soviet work on salinity problems has not been explored sufficiently at this point. Attempts to learn more about Soviet drainage technology are recommended.

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7. Soviet benefits will come from the acquisition of US hardware and technological capability. The Soviets are seeking an automated total water resource program similar to that in the US, including the use of computers and mathematical models in the planning, design, and implementation of the programs. The Soviets also hope to gain information on large river basin diversion.

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