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## CURRENT SUPPORT BRIEF

LARGE EXPORTS CONTRIBUTE TO SHORTAGE OF FERTILIZERS  
IN THE USSR

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

This report represents the immediate views of the  
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LARGE EXPORTS CONTRIBUTE TO SHORTAGE OF FERTILIZERS  
IN THE USSR

Despite Soviet agriculture's pressing needs for chemicals, exports of some fertilizer materials in 1960 continued to increase at a high rate at the expense of production for domestic use. Data in the recently published Soviet yearbook, The National Economy of the USSR in 1960, indicate that quantities of potassium and phosphorus fertilizers supplied to agriculture declined in 1960 while exports of materials containing these plant nutrients continued to rise. This is an understandable situation reflecting both agriculture's relatively low priority and the fact that fertilizer materials are very desirable export commodities, readily marketable and relatively high priced.

In view of frequent pledges by Soviet leaders this year to give a higher priority to agriculture and especially to increase fertilizer supplies, a reversal of the export trend would seem logical. Thus far this year, however, there have been no indications that such a reversal has taken place and several suggestions that it has not.

At the January USSR Central Committee Plenum it was noted that shortages of apatite concentrate were limiting the production of superphosphate fertilizer. USSR Gosplan blamed the shortages on inadequate facilities for producing concentrates <sup>1/</sup> but the extensive exports were not mentioned. More detailed information became available in August 1961 when the Chairman of the State Committee on Chemistry, V. Fedorov, reported that superphosphate plants in the USSR operated at only 83 to 84 percent of capacity in 1959-60 because of shortages of apatite concentrate and sulfuric acid. <sup>2/</sup> These statements suggest that the shortage of apatite concentrate in 1960 amounted to about 250 thousand to 500 thousand tons which compares with exports of 1.8 million tons that year. Exports of potassium fertilizer in 1960 were 629 thousand tons or about one-third of the quantity supplied to agriculture. At the Plenum it was stated that funds for construction of two potassium combines in the Ukraine were not being allocated as planned.

Since 1955 about one-third of the exports of apatite concentrate and almost all exports of the potassium fertilizer have been sold to the Free World. Practically all of the exported apatite concentrate is sold to either Eastern or Western European countries. In 1958 and 1959 the largest importer of potassium fertilizer from the USSR was Japan which took about one-third of total Soviet exports.

Although the USSR plans to increase the supply of fertilizers to agriculture to three times the 1958 level by 1965, the regime has also revealed plans for a continued rise in export of fertilizer materials. Between 1958 and 1965 Soviet exports of apatite concentrate to the European Satellites are scheduled to increase 150 percent, or from 1.0 million tons to 2.5 million tons. <sup>3/</sup> Exports of potassium salts to Japan are scheduled to increase through 1962, <sup>4/</sup> and a trade agreement has been signed with Italy for the exports of increasing quantities of potassium salts through 1965. <sup>5/</sup>

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## C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

Table 1

Supply of Potassium and Phosphorus Fertilizers  
to Agriculture in the USSR,  
1958-60 6/

Year	Thousand metric tons	
	Potassium Fertilizers	Phosphorus Fertilizers
1958	1,786	4,391
1959	1,892	4,480
1960	1,842	4,403

Table 2

Soviet Exports of Potassium Fertilizer and Apatite  
Concentrates, 1955-60 7/

Year	Potassium Fertilizer		Apatite Concentrate*	
	Thousand Metric Tons	Percent to Non-Bloc	Thousand Metric Tons	Percent to Non-Bloc
1955	46	100	899	37
1956	107	79	1,124	37
1957	221	76	1,262	38
1958	395	95	1,505	34
1959	439	92	1,661	34
1960	629	n.a.	1,806	n.a.

Table 3

Production of all Types of Mineral Fertilizers  
and Supply to Agriculture 8/

Year	Production Million Metric Tons	Percent Increase	Supply Million Metric Tons	Percent Increase
1955	9.6		8.6	
1956	10.6	13.5	9.4	9.3
1957	11.8	8.3	10.4	10.6
1958	12.4	5.1	10.6	1.9
1959	12.9	4.0	11.1	1.0
1960	13.9	7.8	11.4	2.7

\* Phosphorus ore concentrates used in making superphosphate fertilizer. The USSR also exports relatively small quantities of phosphorus fertilizer materials in the form of unconcentrated apatite ore and superphosphate.

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Analyst:



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Coord:

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