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Soviet Vitamins

1. Attached for forwarding to _____ of DCS is information on Soviet vitamins prepared in response to a request from Mr. Mike Goldman, US Department of Commerce, CARE, Sino-Soviet Bloc. Mr. Goldman needed the information for use in responding to a request from Senator Russell. Prior approval to service the request was obtained from the Office of the Legislative Counsel.

2. The information on vitamins is from unclassified sources and may be regarded as unclassified.

Attachment: a/s

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Soviet Vitamins

The USSR publishes virtually no data in absolute terms relating to production of vitamins. According to a Western publication of May 1964, annual consumption of vitamins of all kinds in the USSR then totalled 5,000 to 6,000 tons, including 1,300 tons consumed in agriculture. 1/ Production of vitamins was scheduled to grow by about 250 percent during the Soviet Seven Year Plan (1959-65). Actual production in this period, however, rose by only 180 percent. 2/ A further increase of at least 150 percent is scheduled during the Five-Year Plan (1966-70).

The USSR produces both vitamin A and vitamin E. Production of the latter in 1965 was planned to be 24 times the level of 1958, which suggests that production in 1958 probably was very small. Production of vitamin A at enterprises of the Far Eastern fishing industry amounted to 20 trillion units in the first 11 months of 1966.

We have no information on the Soviet process for production of vitamin E. Vitamin A probably is produced largely from natural sources, although small-scale output of synthetic vitamin A cannot be completely ruled out. An experimental Soviet plant reportedly extracts carotene, a substance used in production of vitamin A, from algae. 3/ The Estonian Academy of Science reportedly has developed a process for rapid conversion of the hydrocarbon isoprene into citral, a raw material for vitamins A, E, and K. 4/ Previously citral was obtained from expensive coriander oils. In a 1964 reference to the isoprene process, it was claimed that vitamins

synthesized in this way would be about 90 percent cheaper than those obtained by conventional processes (presumably in the USSR), and 50-60 percent cheaper than a US process that uses another chemical raw material. 5/ The Soviet claim cannot be confirmed, and we have seen no reports of commercial production by this process.

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1. Chemical Trade Journal and Chemical Engineer, 15 May 64.
 2. MEDITSINSKAYA PROMYSHLENNOST' SSSR, No. 11, 1966, p. 3-6.
 3. Soviet News Bulletin, 20 Jan 65.
 4. Soviet News, 4 Apr 67, p. 8.
 5. Comtel Reuters, East-West Trade Notes, No. 20/64, 14 May 64.