

THE SOVIETS' 5-YEAR PLAN (1981-1985)

(ARCHIVED--07/06/83)

ISSUE BRIEF NUMBER IB81025

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DATE ORIGINATED 02/24/81
DATE UPDATED 05/19/83

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ISSUE DEFINITION

On Jan. 1, 1981 the Soviet Union's Eleventh Five Year Plan (1981-85) began. An analysis of the new plan provides some insights into Soviet priorities and economic prospects for the next half decade. The following are the plan's main goals: to allocate sufficient investment funds to ensure adequate growth of output in industry, agriculture, transportation, energy, and other sectors; to raise consumer income sufficiently to provide needed incentives and increase consumer satisfaction; to meet security needs at home and abroad; and to import technology, grain and other goods needed to meet priority domestic goals. Since the Soviet Union is entering a decade of possibly deepening economic malaise, many Western analysts believe that the Soviets will find it difficult to achieve even the fairly modest goals of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan with the means available to them.

BACKGROUND AND POLICY ANALYSIS

A Soviet five-year plan sets out the Soviet Union's basic goals for overall economic development and individual sectors. These are initially outlined in the Draft Directives, which are later approved formally by the highest bodies of the Party and State -- in most cases after the beginning of the actual plan period. In this particular case the delegates to the Twenty-Sixth Party Congress, held February 23 to March 3, 1981 in Moscow, discussed and approved the Eleventh Five-Year Plan. On March 5, the Plan as approved by the Congress was published. Aside from changes in wording, a few revisions of plan targets, and the specification of a new minimum wage of 80 rubles per month, the revised version of the plan was not much different from the Draft Guidelines. This was surprising since the Draft Guidelines were much less detailed than usual. On Nov. 20, 1981, the final version of the Plan, which was approved by the Central Committee of the Party on November 16 and the Supreme Soviet on November 19, was published. While many of the details are still missing, there are significant differences between the final and draft versions of the plan -- notably a further reduction in the rate of growth of planned investment.

Typically, a Soviet five-year plan is fairly aggregated; for instance, the current plan gives a target for grain without specifying targets for the various kinds of grain (e.g., wheat, rye). The annual plans are "fit" into the five-year plans. Disaggregated targets for the production of individual commodities are set; and productive units (e.g., enterprises, collective farms) are given specific, binding output targets. Characteristically, however, output targets for annual or five-year plans are quietly raised or lowered during the course of the plan.

The economic picture facing the Soviet Union at the beginning of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan is by no means favorable. During the 1950s the Soviet economy was growing faster than most industrial economies. In 1960 Khrushchev boasted that the U.S.S.R. would overtake the United States in most meaningful economic indicators within the next two decades. However, the Sixties and Seventies proved to be decades of continuously decelerating economic growth and sharply rising demand. On the eve of the 1980s the Soviet Union faces not just a continuation of this persistent slowdown, but a sharp deterioration in performance coupled with markedly increased demands, signifying not just malaise but perhaps an economic crisis.

Projected Performance of Soviet Eleventh Five-Year Plan

The Eleventh Soviet Five-Year Plan (1981-85) projects a modest slowdown in economic growth and postulates an ability to cope with the competing needs of investment for growth, consumption for labor incentives and citizen satisfaction and security programs for defense-establishment needs and control institutions. Even though it is a pragmatic and modest plan, most Western specialists feel that its stated ends cannot be attained with the means indicated, which are limited, as suggested below:

- (1) Resource Allocation -- The 2.6% average annual rate of growth of investment -- projected in the draft version was already the lowest in the postwar era. But, in the final version projected capital investment was reduced by 30 billion rubles. This makes dividing the slowly growing investment pie a critical problem. Either some priority civilian economic programs must be shortchanged or more investment must be diverted from consumption or defense. Less for consumption would lead to austerity, possible labor productivity problems and perhaps political unrest. Reduced defense priority would be unprecedented, and, hence, unlikely. Increased deliveries of oil at reduced prices to Poland, advances of hard currency to pay some of the interest on Poland's debt to the West, and Poland's failure to meet delivery obligations for coal and machinery were an additional burden on Soviet resources in 1981 and may continue in 1982. This is the first five-year plan in which the planned rate of growth of national income -- 18% -- is greater than that of investment -- in this case 10.4%.
- (2) Economic Reform -- decentralizing economic decision-making or adopting Western systems of management to increase efficiency may be too drastic politically and disruptive in the short run. The increased role of private agriculture is a singular departure from past plans.
- (3) System Modernization -- movement towards world levels of capital efficiency, labor productivity and quality of output is planned. Since the labor force will grow at a slower rate (about 0.5% annually) than in the past, increases in labor productivity are to account for 90% of the growth of national income. A Soviet "economic miracle" is sought, but elusive.
- (4) Western Technology and Credit -- a critical element for the priority sectors of energy, agricultural equipment, transport equipment, petrochemicals/chemicals, computers, but must be effectively absorbed and utilized, a traditional Soviet problem area. The final version of the plan called for a modest increase of 2.3% in trade with developed and developing non-socialist countries. But, it should be noted that trade with the Western industrialized countries commonly exceeds Soviet plans.

The priority sectors of the Plan are energy, agriculture, transportation,

metallurgy and machine building, petrochemicals and chemicals, and computers. Plans for these priority sectors are impressive, but the outlook for fulfillment is questionable. The Soviets' plans for these priority sectors and the likely problems that will arise in connection with them are outlined below:

Energy: If completed, the plan would expand the Soviet Union's role as an energy exporter. The Plan calls for a continued increase in primary energy output by means of a modest increase in oil output, an increase of 45% in natural gas production, an increase in coal use via Siberian thermal stations and long distance-high voltage transmission; long-distance electrical transmission from hydro stations with new industries to be located on site; an all-out atomic electric power program; and further emphasis on developing a national electric power grid. Nuclear and hydro sources are to furnish 70% of the increment in electric power generation. In the European part of the Soviet Union nuclear power is to supply 100% of the increment. New nuclear power plants are to be built in populated areas. A pipeline to bring gas from the Urengoi field in Siberia to the European natural gas network and new pipelines to bring Siberian gas to the central regions of the Soviet Union are also planned.

Agriculture: The draft plan's targets for grain, meat, and other quality foods presupposed 5 years of good weather despite the experience of previous five-year plans, in which one or two years have been poor crop years. In the final version the target for average annual grain production during the 5 years covered by the plan was set at the lower end of the range originally planned (see Table 2). Due to the poor harvest during the first year of the plan, achieving even this target will be difficult. Equally optimistic are the plans for meat production in 1985, which were increased in the final version. New land in Russian areas is to be developed. Agribusiness-type organization is emphasized. Increased output and efficiency are to result from improvements in fertilizer deliveries, transport, storage, and infrastructure. A plan to raise food production was announced in October 1980 and was to have been incorporated in the Draft Guidelines. In May 1982 Brezhnev presented some of its major features to the Central Committee of the Communist Party. They included the following: (1) some incentives for farm workers and specialists; (2) some devolution of managerial responsibility from the ministries to raion (district) agricultural-industrial complexes (RAPO); and (3) a pledge to increase the share of investment devoted to agriculture from 27% to 33% during the Twelfth Five-Year Plan - not during the current plan.

Transportation: Serious bottlenecks in rail transport developed during 1979 due to poor weather. Since the

outbreak of war between Iraq and Iran, the latter's exports have been diverted to the land route across the USSR, exacerbating rail transport bottlenecks. In addition, the long-term buildup of the transportation overload in Siberia and the North, where energy and other materials are found, continued. Brezhnev's November 1979 call for assigning high priority to improving transportation was not reflected in the Plan. Plans in this sector include completion of the Baikal-Amur railroad, conversion of 3,000 miles of track from diesel-fired to electric, and containerization of all lines. Modest improvement in auto transport with more trucks from Kama and some new roads is also planned.

Metallurgy and Machine Building: In a noteworthy departure from previous Soviet practice, a target for steel production was not released. The Plan did, however, set a target -- 118 MMT -- for rolled steel. Significantly, this target is no higher than the 1980 target. Rolled steel requirements for pipe, machine building and construction appear to exceed planned production, however. Some additional quality steel may be obtained from Western suppliers and, in the medium-term, from the new Polish steel mill at Katowice. New metallurgical developments are planned in East Siberia. The metallurgy project at Kursk, which was initially featured in the Ninth (1971-75) Five-Year Plan, has apparently been further postponed.

Petrochemicals and Chemicals: A shift of energy intensive output from East Europe and European Russia to energy surplus Siberian areas is contemplated. The plan emphasizes fertilizer output for agriculture. The omission of the Orenburg petrochemical plant from the Plan is puzzling in view of the high priority that petrochemicals have traditionally enjoyed in the Soviet Union.

Computers: Continued expansion toward a national economic reporting system, improved use of computers in plants, ports, mills, etc.

In general, the above are the priority sectors. The plans are not detailed. Specific quantifiable commitments have not been made, suggesting lack of firm decisions. Even those with firm targets, e.g., energy, will require consistent increases in investment, imports, some administrative reform, defense-like priority, and a good deal of luck. But attainment of goals would be significant, both domestically and in foreign policy.

To be sure, defense is an additional priority sector, but, in keeping with Soviet practice, the plan does not discuss it directly. The production of the Soviet defense industries is included in the plans for such sectors as metallurgy and machine-building and motor vehicles. Total defense expenditures, as reported in the Soviet budgets, are believed to be considerably understated. To repeat, a reduction in resources allocated to defense would be unprecedented and, hence, is highly unlikely. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) predicts that Soviet defense spending will continue to increase by about 4%-5% annually during the Eleventh Five-Year Plan. Similarly, the Wharton Econometric Forecasting Associates found that an

annual increase of 4-5% would be consistent with other elements of the plan.

Some observers, among them Keith Bush of Radio Liberty, argue that the 30 billion ruble reduction in the growth of capital investments -- from the 12%-15% projected in the Draft Guidelines to the 10.4% projected in the final version -- indicates that the Soviet leaders have decided on a higher rate of defense spending than they had originally planned. Wharton, however, argues that there is not sufficient information to support this inference.

The necessity of shifting to underdeveloped, underpopulated, and inhospitable Siberian regions in order to increase production of energy, metals, and other commodities exacerbates production problems and costs. (Some information on the regional distribution of production is provided in Table 5.)

Some of the targets for basic economic indicators and key commodities are presented below. Table 1 and Table 2 show some of the changes made between the publication of the Draft Guidelines and the final version of the plan. As an aid in judging the feasibility of the production plans, the output of key industrial and agricultural commodities during 1980 and 1981 is shown in Table 6.

TABLE 1. Soviet economic indicators
(% annual growth)

	<u>1981-85</u> <u>plan</u>	<u>1982</u> <u>plan</u>	<u>1982</u> <u>plan</u>	<u>1983</u> <u>plan</u>
National income	3.4	3.0	2.6	3.3
Industrial production	4.7	4.7	2.8	3.2
of which				
Investment goods	4.7	4.8	2.8	3.1
Consumer goods	4.7	4.6	2.9	3.5
Labor productivity in industry	4.2	4.1	2.1	2.9
Investments	1.9	-2.0	2.0	3.2
Agricultural production	2.4*	n.a.	4.0	10.5

* Downward revision of original 4% projection.

Sources: Izvestiya ; Business Eastern Europe , Feb. 11, 1983, p. 43.

TABLE 2. Targets for Selected Commodities

n=	<u>Draft Guidelines</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>Final Versio</u>
<u>Industry :</u>				
	Cement (million metric tons)	140-142		-
	Steel (million metric tons)	-		168
	Rolled steel (million metric tons)	117-120		118
	Mineral Fertilizer (million metric tons)	150-155		150.8
<u>Energy</u>				
	Oil (million metric tons)	620-645		630
	Gas (billion cubic meters)	600-640		630
	Coal (million metric tons)	700-800		775
	Electrical generation (billion kwh)	1,550-1,600		1,555
<u>Agriculture :</u>				
	Grain (million metric tons) (a)	238-243		239
	Meat production (million metric tons)	17-17.5		18.2 (b)
	(a) Average annual production during the plan.			
	(b) Production in 1985.			

Soviet foreign trade is slated to increase by 22.5% during the Eleventh Plan. Tables 3 and 4 present some data on Soviet trade during the Tenth Five-Year Plan.

TABLE 3. Soviet Trade with Major Western Trading Partners, 1980

<u>Country</u>	<u>Soviet Exports</u>	<u>Soviet Imports</u>
	(in million U.S. dollars)	
Federal Republic	\$3,976.8	\$4,372.8
France	3,565.2	2,464.8
Japan	1,805.6	2,546.8
Italy	2,890.0	1,157.3
United Kingdom	1,828.8	1,059.6
United States	425.9	1,509.7

TABLE 4. Soviet Trade with Eastern Europe, 1975 and 1980

	<u>1975</u>	<u>1980</u>
	(in million rubles)	
Soviet Exports	11,867	20,919
Soviet Imports	11,312	19,096
Trade Balance	555	1,823

TABLE 5. Regional Production Patterns in the Soviet Union, 1980 (a)

	<u>RSSFSR</u>		<u>Central Asia and Kazakh SSR</u>	<u>Caucasus</u>	<u>Ukraine</u>
	<u>Europe</u>	<u>=Siberia=</u>			
<u>Energy</u>					
Oil (MMT)	189	315	27.9	17	8
Gas (BCM)	42	161	113.8	15	51
Coal (MMT)	95	262	126.4	(b)	197
<u>Metallurgy</u>					
Iron Ore (MMT)	51	16	25.8	1.1	125.5
Steel (MMT)	29	15	6	(b)	58

(a) Regional figures will not add to total Soviet production due to omission of total for the Urals, which divide the European and Siberian parts of the Soviet Union.

(b) Not available or not applicable.

Soviet Performance During the Eleventh Five Year Plan

The Eleventh Five-Year Plan did not get off to a particularly good start. Official Soviet statistics showed that increases in national income, industrial production, and labor productivity during 1981 fell short of plan. Table 6 compares the output of key commodities during 1981 with levels achieved in 1980.

TABLE 6. Production of Key Commodities During 1981,
as Compared with 1980

	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>
<u>Industry</u>		
Cement (MMT)	125	127
Steel (MMT)	148	149
Rolled Steel (MMT)	103	103
Mineral Fertilizer (MMT) (a)	104	--
<u>Energy</u>		
Oil (MMT)	603	609
Gas (BCM)	435	465
Coal (MMT)	716	704
Electrical generation (billion Kwh)	1,295	1,325
<u>Agriculture</u>		
Meat (MMT)	15.1	15.2
Grain (MMT)	189.2	175 (b)
Milk (MMT)	90.9	88.5

(a) Calculated on the basis of 100% nutrient content.

(b) USDA estimate.

Coal production continued to decline, but the output of natural gas registered a 7% increase and exceeded the plan. Although it was 1 ton less than planned, the increase in oil production may be significant in view of the CIA prediction that output will soon peak and then decline to 500-550 MMT annually (the equivalent of 10 to 11 million barrels per day) by 1985.

Due to unfavorable weather and chronic inefficiencies in the agricultural sector, 1981 was the third bad year in a row for Soviet agriculture. The Soviets have not yet formally announced how much grain was harvested, but a few Soviet officials have unofficially indicated that the harvest was in the 150-158 MMT range. Even if the Soviets import the maximum amount of grain possible given port handling capacity (variously estimated as 42, 45, or if extreme measures are used 50 MMT), targets for meat and milk are unlikely to be met and production may decline significantly. The delay in the official announcement is viewed as an indication that the harvest was very disappointing and/or that the Soviet Union is unwilling to publicize a low figure at a time of high international tension. In addition, the sugar beet harvest was the smallest in 19 years; milk production fell by a little over 2 MMT, while meat production increased only slightly. Egg production, however, continued to increase.

1982 appears to have been a better year for the Soviet grain production, but still quite disappointing when compared with the official production target of 238 MMT. Although the Soviets have not released grain production figures for 1982, the United States Department of Agriculture estimates this total at 180 MMT. Milk, egg, and butter production increased in 1982 while meat production (industrially processed meat) dropped slightly.

The USSR Central Statistical Administration released its 1982 production figures on Jan. 23, 1983. According to the Soviets, overall industrial production and labor productivity only grew by 2.8% and 2.1%, respectively.

TABLE 7. SOVIET INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION -- 1982 FIGURES

<u>Item</u>	<u>Unit</u>	1982	% changes over 1981
Electric power	bn kwh*	1,366	3
Oil (including gas condensate)	mn tons**	613	.5
Gas	bn cu m	501	8
Coal	mn tons	718	2
Steel	mn tons	147	-.9
Rolled steel	mn tons	102	-.7
Steel pipes	mn tons	17.9	-2
Iron ore	mn tons	244	.8
Mineral fertilizer (100% nutrients)	mn tons	26.7	3
Plant protection chemicals	'000 tons	533	6
Sulfuric acid	mn tons	23.8	-1
Synthetic rubber and plastics	mn tons	4.1	-.8
Chemical fiber	'000 tons*	1,200	2
Trucks and cars	'000	2,173	-1
Metal-cutting machine tools	mn rubles	2,068	6
Cement	mn tons	124	-3
Paper	mn tons	5.4	.7
Meat	mn tons	9.2	-.9

* kilowatt-hours

** million tons million metric tons; thousand tons thousand

Source: Pravda Jan. 23, 1983

At the November 1982 Plenum of the Supreme Soviet, the following key output figures were released for 1983:

Electric power	1,405 bn kwh
Oil (including gas condensate)	619 mn tons
Gas	529 mn tons
Coal	723 mn tons
Rolled metal (steel)	106.5 mn tons

* Note: See unit abbreviations in Chart 7

Source: Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report: Soviet Union. Nov. 23, 1982.

Production of mineral fertilizer, synthetic rubber and plastics, chemical fiber and meat are planned to grow this year by 5.8%, 9.1%, 9%, and 6.1%, respectively. Labor productivity is expected to increase by 3.0%. Likewise, the volume of overall industrial production is expected to grow by 3.2%.

1983 seems to have gotten off to a positive beginning with industrial production and labor productivity growing in the first quarter by 4.7% and 2.9%, respectively. These totals represent substantial gains over the 1.5% and 2.1% figures for last year's growth in those areas. Oil output increased by 2% while the increase in gas output was 8%. In agriculture, the production of milk, meat, and eggs were reported to have risen by 11%, 5% and 7%, respectively. The output of agricultural machinery likewise rose by 9%.

TABLE 8. Soviet industrial production -- First quarter 1983

<u>Item</u>	<u>Unit</u> *	<u>First quarter</u> <u>1983</u>	<u>% changes over</u> <u>First qtr. 1982</u>
Electric power	bn kwh	381.0	3
Oil (including gas condensate)	mn tons	153.0	2
Gas	bn cu m	135.0	8
Coal	mn tons	186.0	.1
Steel	mn tons	37.9	3
Rolled steel	mn tons	26.4	2
Steel pipes	mn tons	4.7	6
Iron ore	mn tons	60.2	2
Mineral fertilizer (100% nutrients)	mn tons	7.4	12
Plant protection chemicals	'000 tons	144.0	4
Sulfuric acid	mn tons	6.4	5
Synthetic rubber and plastics	mn tons	1.1	7
Chemical fiber	'000 tons*	327.0	3
Trucks and cars	'000	328.0	2
Metal-cutting machine tools	mn rubles	538.0	4
Cement	mn tons	31.2	9
Paper	mn tons	1.4	7
Meat	mn tons	2.2	7

* See abbreviations for units above

Source: Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta Apr. 18, 1983. p. 10.

More recently, in mid-May, the Soviet press reported that "In general the plan for the four months measured by the total volume of production was overfilled by all union republics and industrial ministries." Increases in industrial production and labor productivity were placed at 4.4% and 3.6% respectively over the first four months of 1982.

Some attribute the recent improvements in Soviet productivity and output to Yuri Andropov's discipline campaign. The new Soviet leader has been continually emphasizing the need for increased labor productivity in his major speeches and public addresses and has taken various measures to enforce labor discipline, including sending police to raid public places during work hours.

Note: Although these 1983 figures represent notable improvements over those of the previous year, one must take into consideration the fact that production in the beginning of 1982 was particularly poor.)

This "get-back-to-work-drive" appears to be one way the new Soviet leadership is attempting to maintain a rate of economic growth that would ensure the simultaneous and continuous growth of defense, investment and consumption. It seems that the projected rates of growth for the Eleventh and Twelfth Five-Year Plans will be inadequate. Other possible methods for stimulating economic growth may include: improvement in industrial efficiency by correcting imbalances within key sectors, e.g., transportation; investment in new industrial equipment; and build-up of agricultural infrastructure. Furthermore, Andropov appears to be in the process of both making extensive personnel changes throughout the economy with the intent of increasing professionalism and adopting a more centralized approach to economic decisionmaking, focusing on the local level. More structural changes may be in the offing, as suggested by the leader's stress on "drawing upon world experience", e.g., the German Democratic Republic and Bulgaria, to improve economic performance.

In terms of foreign economic relations, the new Soviet leadership has expressed an interest in engaging in more trade outside of the Eastern bloc. What they appear to want from advanced industrial countries is equipment, not products. This desire for equipment also appears to be true in terms of Soviet trade with Eastern Europe. Eastern Europe has traditionally been a major supplier of machinery to the U.S.S.R.

The new Plan suggests a number of questions:

- (1) Will the Soviets be able to allocate enough resources to industry, agriculture, and transportation to attain goals? Will consumption and/or defense be held down?
- (2) Which economic sectors will, in practice, be given adequate resources and which held back? Can the Soviets afford to hold back the lower priority sectors and suffer the consequences of the resulting shortfalls and bottlenecks?
- (3) How will consumers do better without emphasis on consumer industries? What if real income does not increase?
- (4) How can they cope with the regional resource disequilibrium in which the primary energy and non-energy resources are

located in Siberia, the only growing labor pool is in the Central Asian Republics of the South, but the majority of industry remains in the developed European regions west of the Urals? (See Table 5 above.)

- (5) Can Soviet society adjust to a low growth/no growth environment, if that is the consequence of current policy and realities?
- (6) How will the leadership change -- affect economic plans and performance?

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CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

- 05/15/83 -- Official production figures for the first four months of 1983 were released.
- 01/31/83 -- The new Soviet leader Yuri Andropov paid an unexpected visit to the Orzhonikidze Machine Tool Factory, where he answered workers' questions and stressed the need for improved labor discipline.
- 12/23/82 -- The Central Statistical Board released the final economic and production figures for 1982.
- 11/23/82 -- The 1983 Plan was discussed at the Plenum of the Supreme Soviet.
- 11/22/82 -- Yuri Andropov spoke critically of the Soviet economy, citing labor productivity and economic organization and administration as particularly problematic.
- 07/21/82 - The official Soviet news agency, Tass, reported that

Soviet industrial growth was only 2.7% during the first six months of 1982 instead of the 4.7% targeted for 1982.

- 05/24/82 -- At a Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party Brezhnev presented some of the major provisions of a plan to increase agricultural production.
- 01/23/82 -- Plan fulfillment report for 1981 issued.
- 11/20/81 -- Final version of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan published.
- 11/17/81 -- In a speech to the Supreme Soviet the Chairman of the State Planning Commission, N.K. Baibakov, revealed a few of the targets for the 1982 annual plan.
- 11/16/81 -- Plenum of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party held.
- 03/05/81 -- The Eleventh Five-Year Plan was published in revised form.
- 03/02/81 -- The delegates to the Twenty-Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union formally approved the Five-Year plan, as revised.
- 12/02/80 -- Draft Guidelines for the Eleventh Five-Year Plan were published in Pravda and Izvestia.

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