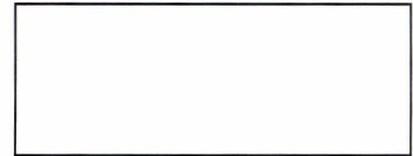


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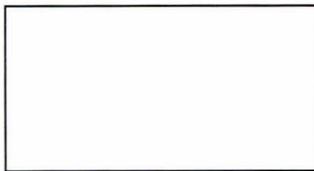
# Scientific and Technical Intelligence Report

## *The Major Function of The Soviet Sensitive Operations Complexes*

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THE MAJOR FUNCTION OF THE SOVIET SENSITIVE OPERATIONS COMPLEXES

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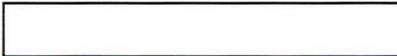
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## PREFACE

The Sensitive Operations Complexes (SOCs) are 12 large installations in the USSR whose function has been in doubt for some years. Many different proposals have been offered to explain the SOCs, including their use for storage and/or maintenance of nuclear weapons. The purpose of this report is to determine the most probable function of these installations. Practically all of the evidence about the SOCs has come from overhead photography. Since no installation in the West resembles the SOCs, their identification has depended largely on establishing correlations between them and other installations in the USSR. Information through January 1969 is included.

This report was prepared by the Office of Scientific Intelligence and coordinated with the Directorate of Intelligence.

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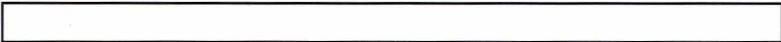
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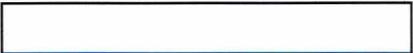


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## THE MAJOR FUNCTION OF THE SOVIET SENSITIVE OPERATIONS COMPLEXES

### PROBLEM

To evaluate the major function of the Soviet Sensitive Operations Complexes.

### CONCLUSIONS

1. The storage and maintenance of nuclear weapons, with those for tactical systems possibly predominating, are the primary functions of the Soviet Sensitive Operations Complexes. It is possible, however, that types of weapons other than nuclear are collocated at these sites. them have been the presence of small, distinctive "detonator" buildings at both stockpile sites and the SOCs; the provision of visual security for transloading operations within the bridge cranes at the rail-to-road transfer points at the SOCs, stockpile sites, and production sites; and the construction of a delta bunker, originally unique to the SOCs, at two of the national and one of the regional stockpile sites within the past two years.
2. The evidence of a nuclear weapon storage function for the SOCs consists of their sharing certain unique features with the Soviet nuclear stockpile sites and production sites. Among

### SUMMARY

The Sensitive Operations Complexes are 12 highly secured installations in the USSR. (Figure 1.) Ten SOCs, all in the European USSR, are complete and operational. Two others are under construction, one in the European USSR and the other in Siberia, northwest of the city of Irkutsk. These installations have the following features in common: a main support area; extensive rail facilities, usually including nine or more spurs and a rail-to-road transfer point with a bridge crane; a military support area; and a separately secured operations area with three to eight large earth-covered bunkers.

The SOCs more closely resemble known nuclear stockpile sites than any other type of Soviet facility and share with them some unique features. A delta bunker, originally found only at the SOCs, has been added to three known nuclear stockpile sites, while small "detonator" buildings, once unique to the stockpile sites, have been found at the SOCs.

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### Soviet SOC and National Nuclear Stockpile Sites



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Close examination of the bridge crane rail-to-road transfer points at the SOCs and similar points at known nuclear weapon storage and manufacturing centers has shown not only a marked resemblance of transshipment methods and rail cars but also the use of a walled enclosure or end curtains on the bridge cranes themselves to provide ground-level visual security for transloading operations. As far as is known, stringent security of this kind is not practiced at other Soviet rail-to-road transfer points.

A civil defense function seems unlikely for the SOCs primarily because of the heavy security, which would be excessive for a civil defense establishment, and the unsuitability of the SOC bunkers for this purpose. A missile storage function for the SOCs appears unlikely because no missiles, missile canisters or missile handling equipment have ever been seen at the SOCs. Moreover, only the smallest of missiles (26 feet in length or less) could negotiate the entrances to the bunkers.

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A significant feature of the SOCs is the presence at each of two types of bunkers in a definite numerical ratio. While this could indicate that the Soviets use one type for warhead storage and one for warhead maintenance, it could also indicate collocated storage of other weapons.

## DISCUSSION

### INTRODUCTION

The first evidence of SOC construction was noted at Berezovka in Talent photography in December 1959. Chebsara and Golovchino probably were begun concurrently with Berezovka. Construction activity followed at Nyandoma in 1960 and at Bulyzhino, Rechitsa, and Mikhaylovka in 1961 (figure 2). This chronology indicates that planning for the SOCs could have begun as early as 1957. Construction activity was in progress at seven of the SOCs in 1962. Most of them were externally completed (i.e., the bunkers were earth covered) in 1965-66, indicative of a leisurely construction pace. All except two were operational in 1969, and Malin and Zalari, first observed in 1967 are still under construction.

These large installations have been the subject of much investigation by the Intelligence Community, particularly after details of their construction were observed on large-scale photography. Most of the evidence for the function of the SOCs has been reported previously and consists almost exclusively of satellite photography. Moreover, since no such installations exist outside the USSR, determination of the SOCs' function has had to be inferred from their resemblance, or lack of resemblance, to Soviet installations whose functions are known.

### THE SENSITIVE OPERATION COMPLEXES

The SOCs are divided into three functional areas: the main housing and administrative area,

the operations area, and the rail facility. The main housing and administration area contains most of the housing at the site as well as support facilities, such as schools and hospitals, and an administration building. The operations area has large earth-covered bunkers and adjacent military support. The extensive rail facilities, including spurs, sidings, and a rail-to-road transfer point, are a distinctive feature of the SOCs.

#### The Main Support Area

This area of the SOCs contains principally multistory apartment buildings and two-family houses. The number of apartment buildings at the SOCs varies from 10 at Nyandoma to 35 at Golovchino. Two-family units range from four at Golovchino to 21 at Mikhaylovka. The estimated population housed at the main administration and housing area varies from 1,800 at Nyandoma to 3,090 at Golovchino. All of the SOCs have a commissary-club, schools, hospital, fire house and extensive recreation and athletic facilities. Administration of the SOCs is apparently centered in a two-story, U-shaped building, found at all of the sites, and possibly in other institutional type buildings seen at many of the SOCs. All of these facilities are usually well laid out, well landscaped and represent a high quality living area by Soviet standards.<sup>1</sup>

Heat for these buildings is furnished by one or more steam plants. Electric power is furnished by long-distance power lines. In some instances, auxiliary power plants have been identified. The steam and electric power plants are

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usually operated on diesel fuel, but in some cases natural gas or coal is used. Water comes from wells in the area.<sup>1</sup>

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At three of the SOCs, Berezovka, Chebsara and Golovchino, there are two types of bunkers, the alpha and the beta. At Berezovka and Chebsara, they are found in a ratio of three alpha bunkers to two beta bunkers. At Golovchino, there are three alpha, one beta, and four unknown type of bunkers. Five of the SOCs have delta and gamma bunkers in a ratio of two gammas to one delta, and two sites, Borisoglebsk and Mikhaylovka, each have two eta and two theta bunkers. Malin and Zalari are presently under construction, but each has one delta-type bunker and more than one of a new type.\* The reason for this mix of bunkers in a definite ratio is not known but could be related to weapon storage and maintenance procedures in the USSR that are not comparable to those in the United States. The possibility that other weapons are collocated with nuclear weapons also cannot be ruled out at this time.<sup>1 2</sup>

Operations Area

The operations area of the SOCs consists of a large, highly secured area with two or three fences; its principal feature is a group of three to eight large earth-covered bunkers. These bunkers are from one-half to one and one-half miles apart and are individually secured by one or two fences. [redacted] most are two-story. Adjacent to the operations area are military housing and related support facilities, evidently to house security forces. A helicopter pad is present at all the completed SOCs and in many cases is near the operations area. At Berezovka and Golovchino, this pad is within the operations area. There are usually three buildings inside the operations area and near its entrance. One of these buildings is a high-bay, drive-through building. These are probably checkout buildings for objects going to and from the bunkers.<sup>1 2</sup>

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The entrances to the bunkers are protected from blast effects. In the alpha and beta types, this is achieved by right angle turns at the entrances. In all the other types, protection is provided by two thick blast doors at each entrance. All of the entrances restrict objects that can enter to those that are no longer than 26 feet. The elevators present the same restriction.<sup>2 3</sup>

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The bunker walls are [redacted] and constructed of concrete. The bunkers [redacted] are usually located in ravines or other low areas to take advantage of terrain, and all, except at Berezovka, are in forested areas which provide good concealment from the ground. The main features of the bunkers are three or four long bays which are considered to be storage areas. The two-story bunkers have an elevator shaft about [redacted]. Of the six types of completed bunkers found at the SOCs, only the gamma types are single-story.<sup>2</sup> [redacted]

The military barracks located near the operations areas are estimated to house from 1,230 at Zhukhovka to 720 at Chebsara. At all of the SOCs, a communications facility is located in the operations area or at the military barracks,

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\*The two types of bunkers found at Malin and Zalari are a modified delta bunker and one, with six storage bays, designated iota. Detailed drawings and mensuration were not available on these bunkers and the installations themselves were not complete in time for this report.

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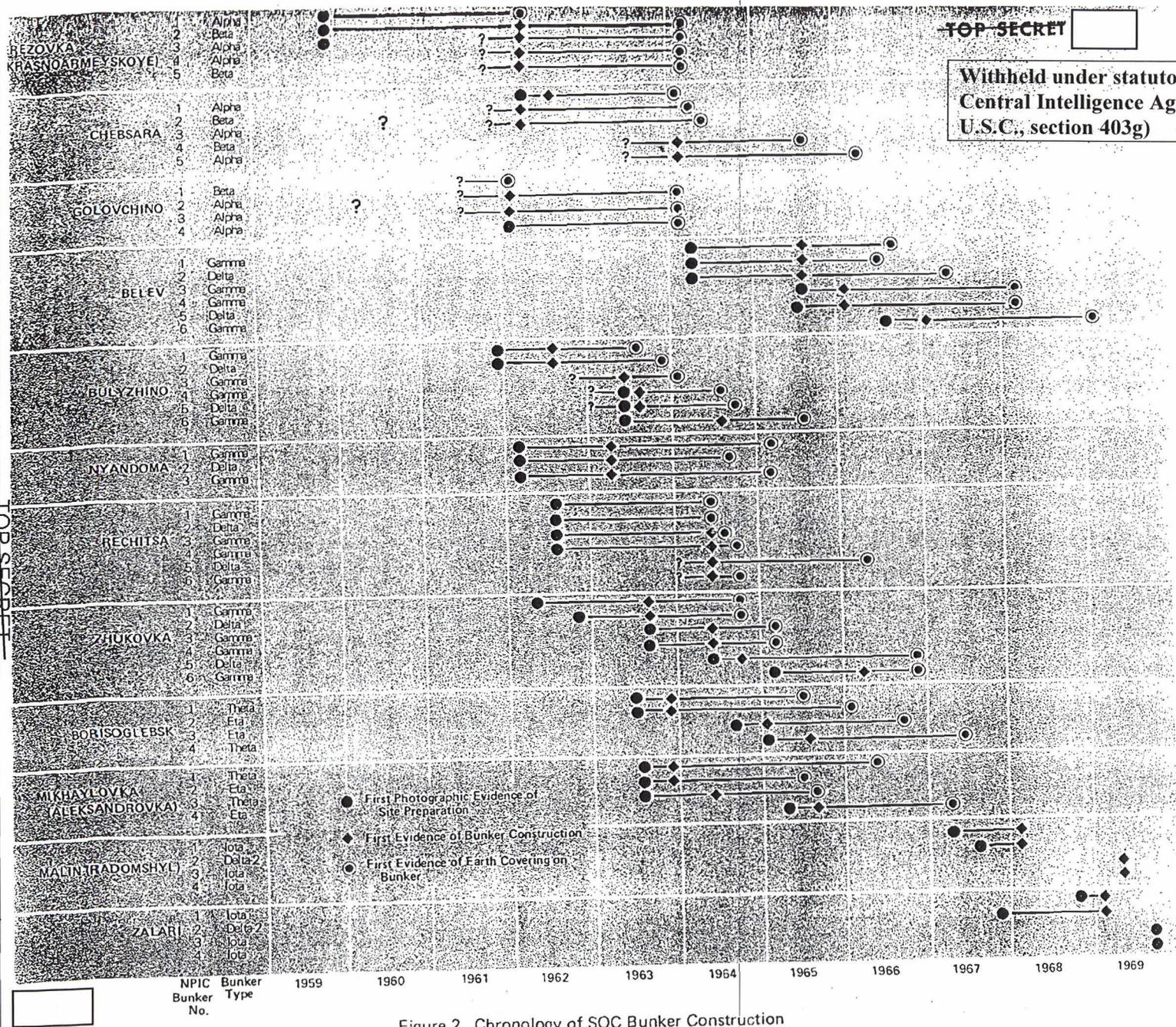


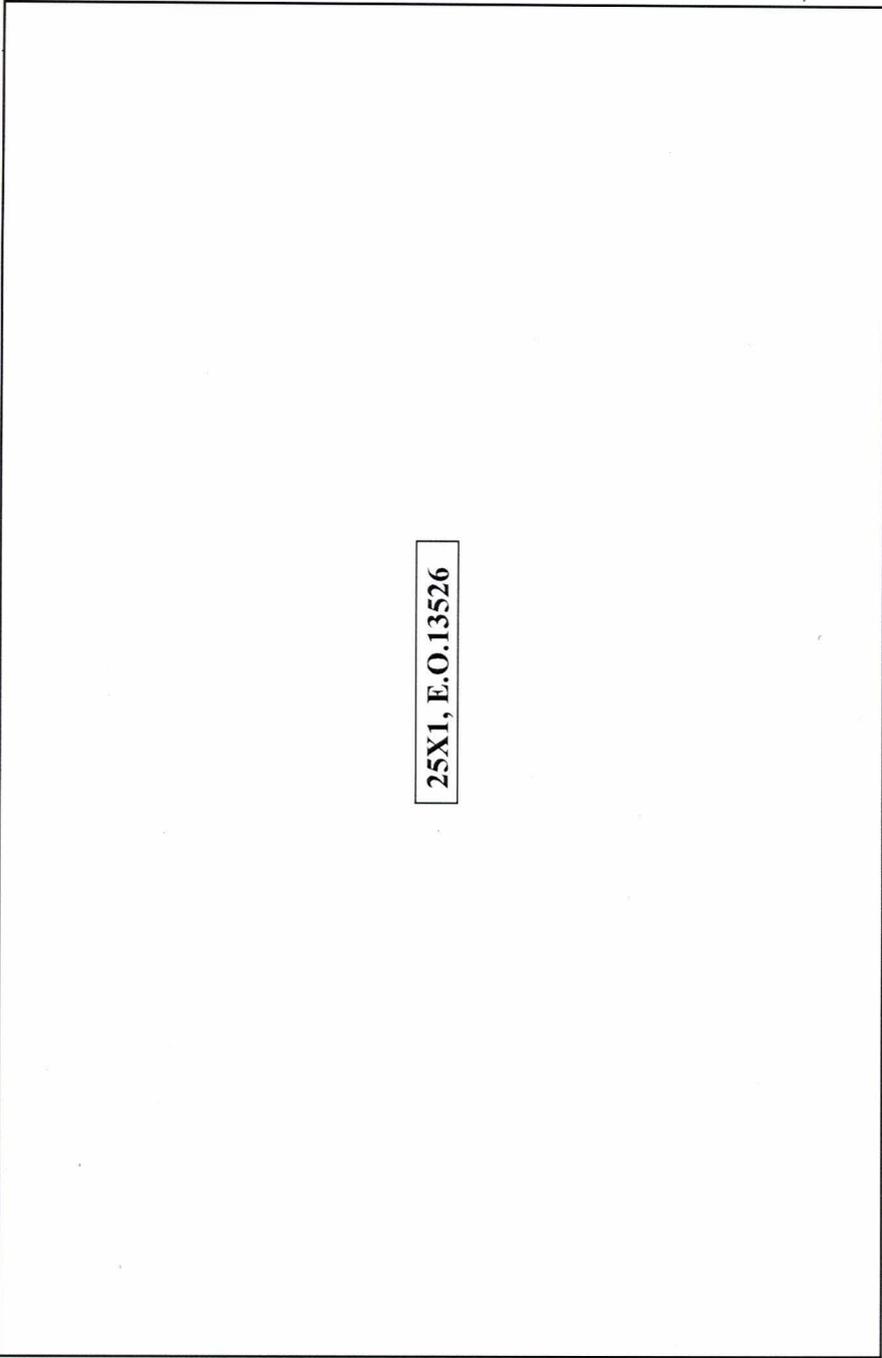
Figure 2. Chronology of SOC Bunker Construction

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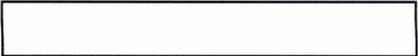
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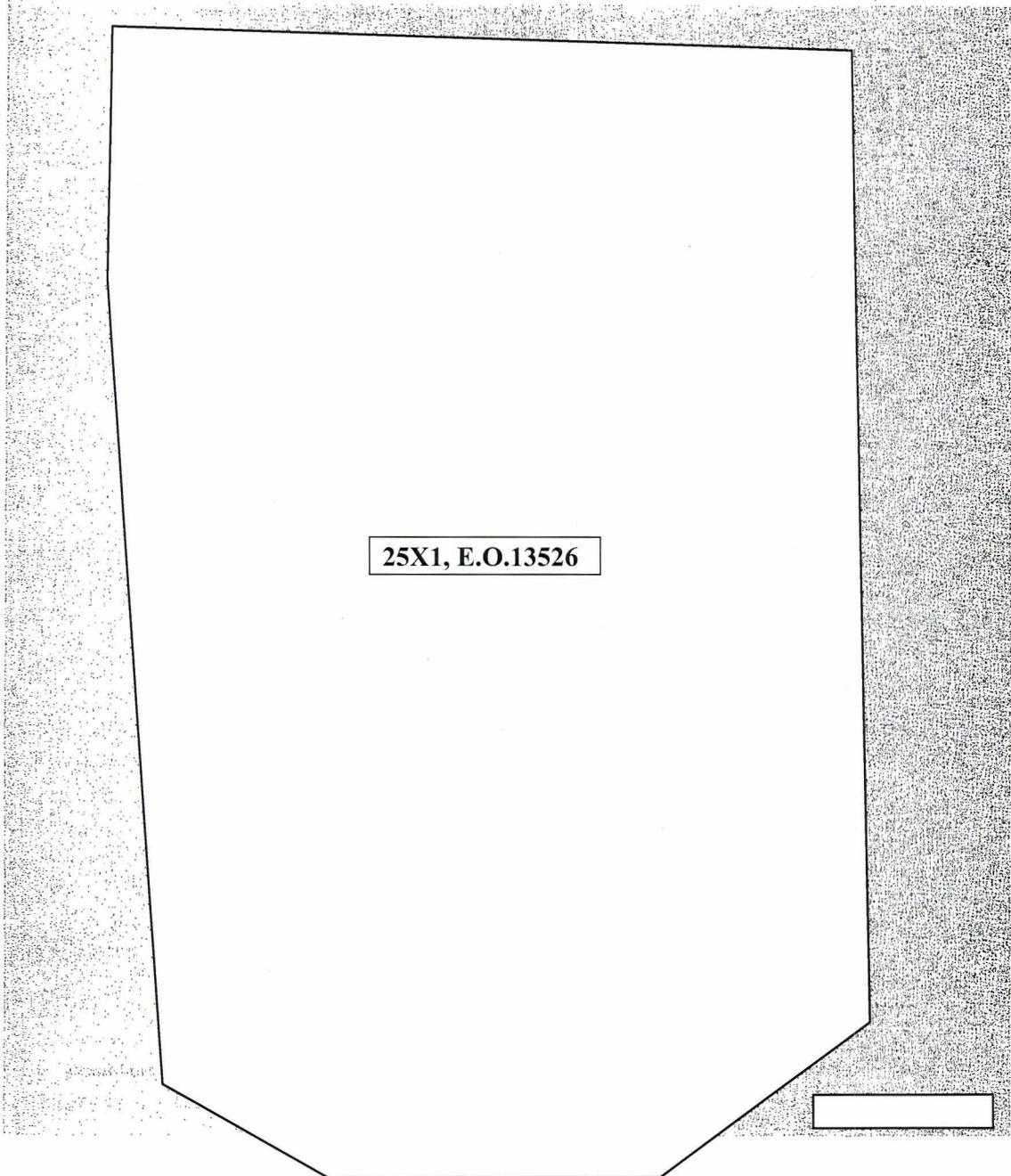
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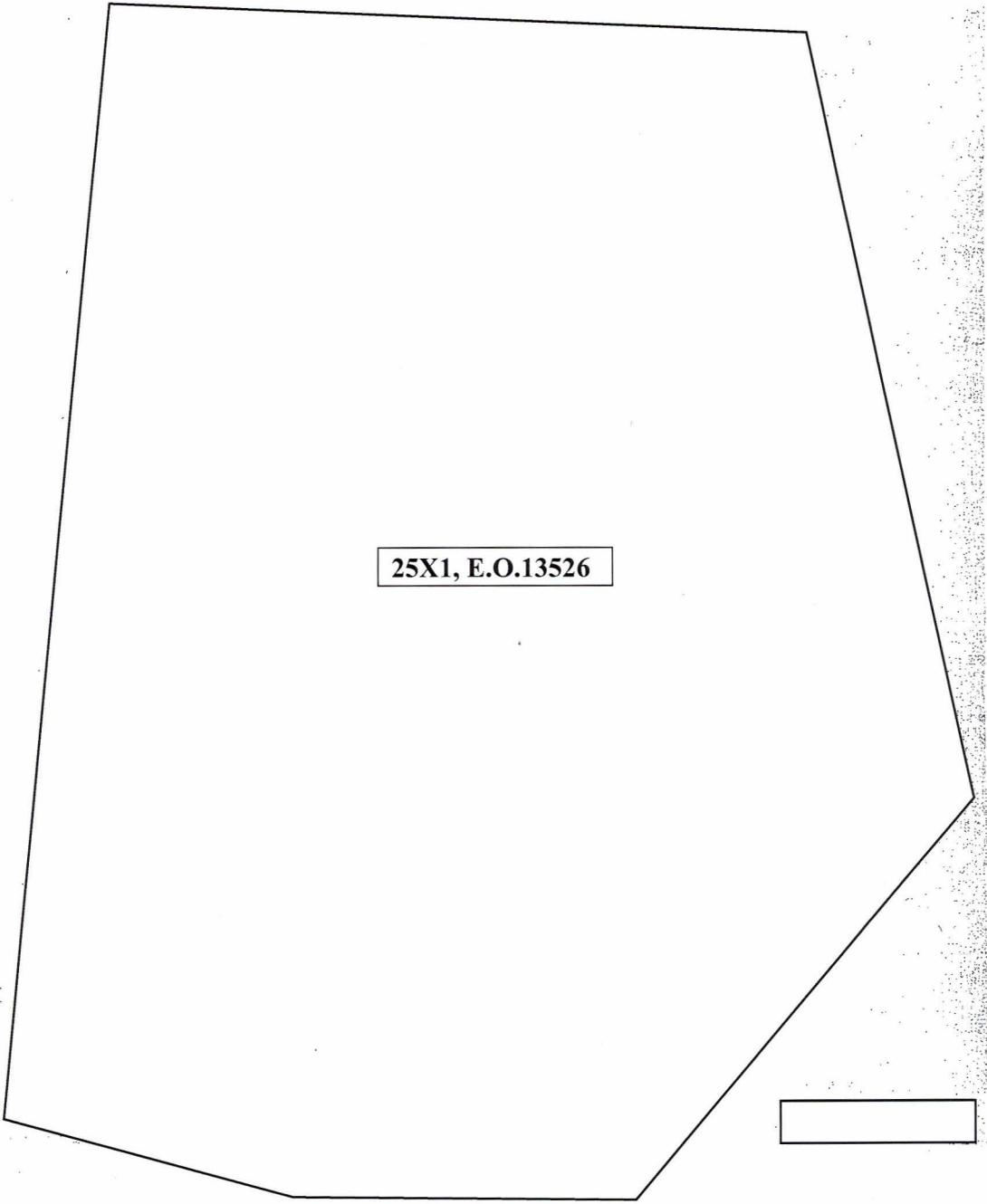
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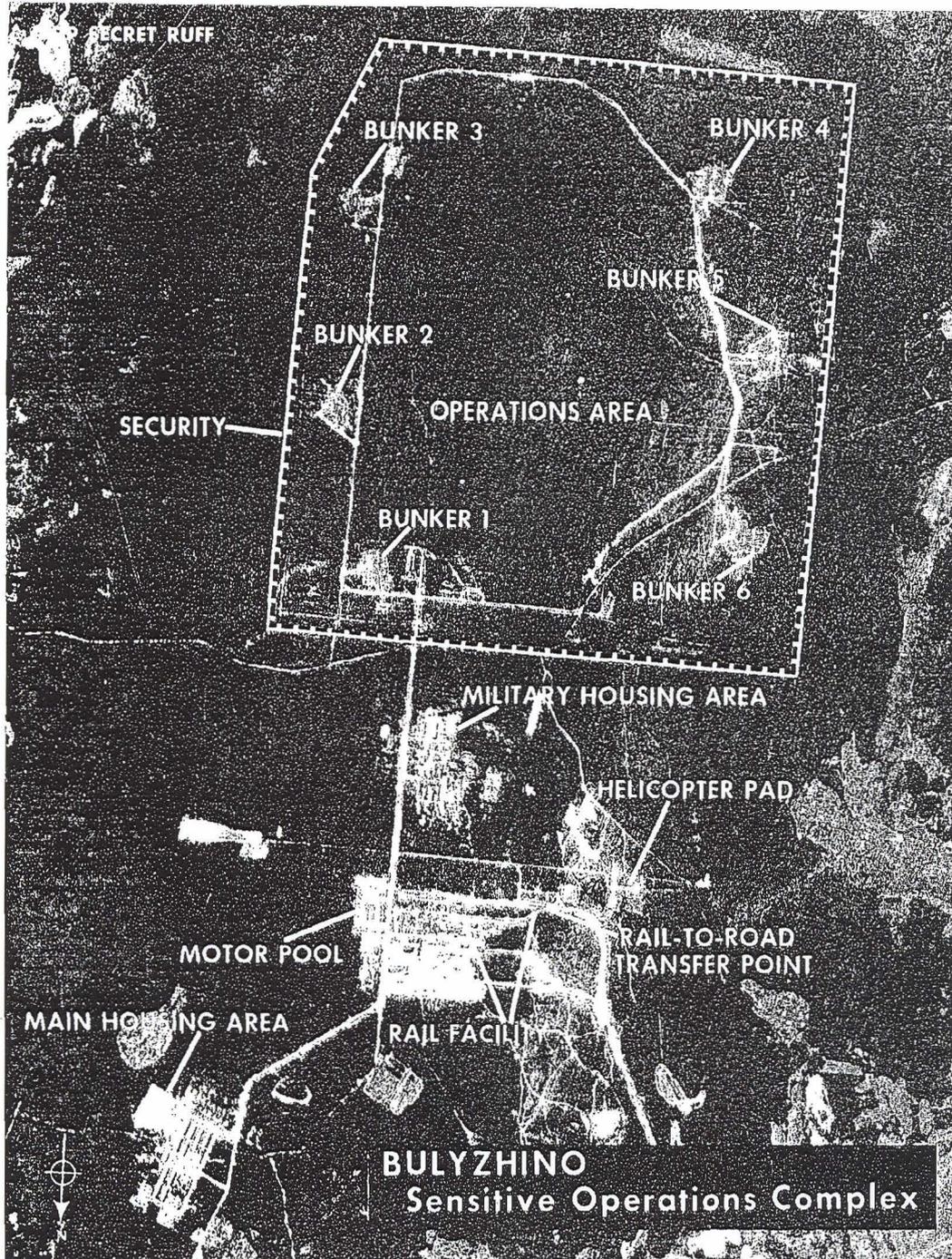


Figure 4a. Comparison of SOCs and Nuclear Storage Sites

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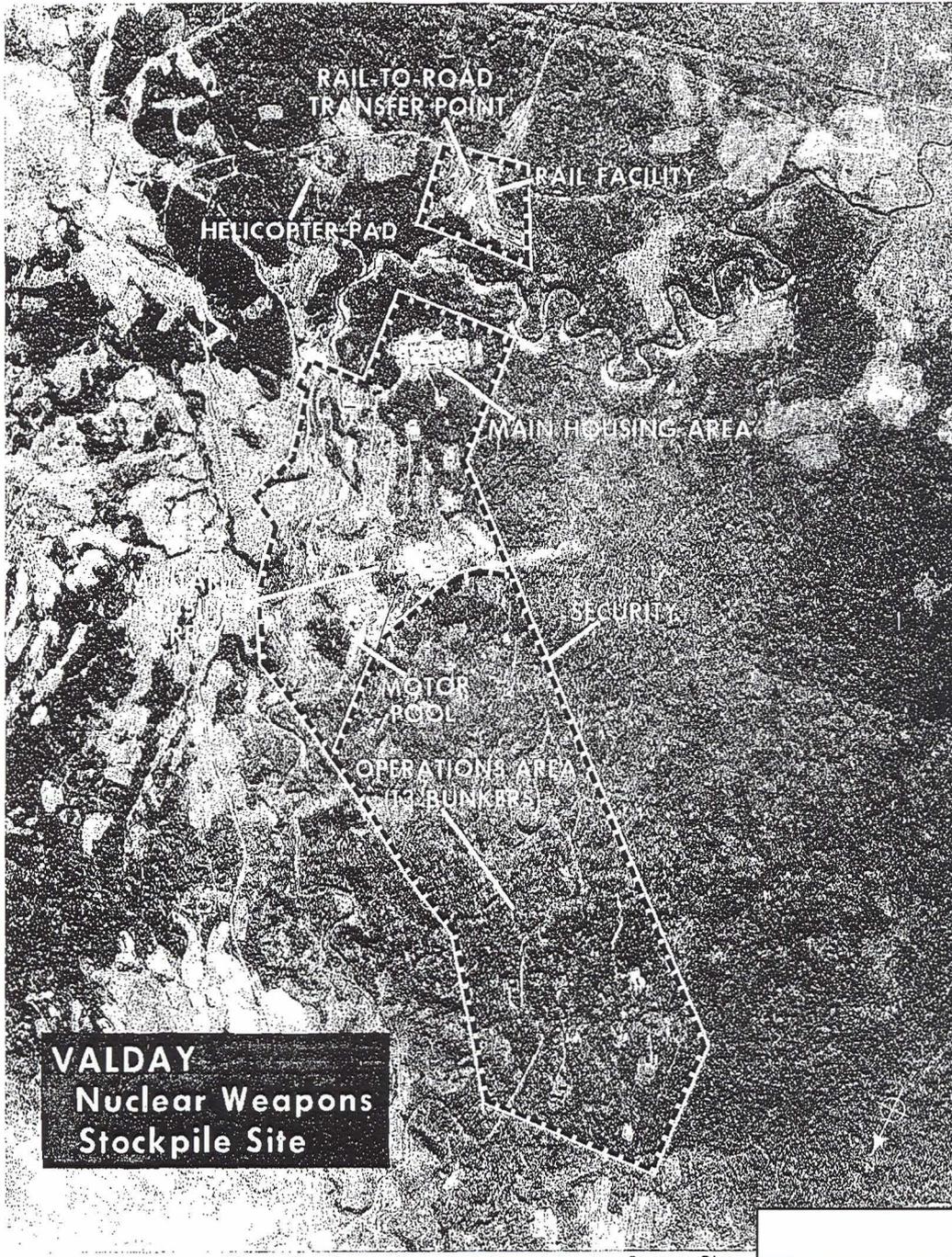


Figure 4b. Comparison of SOCs and Nuclear Storage Sites

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between 1963 and 1965, later than all but two of the national stockpile sites (Nalchik and Korfovskiy). During this period the Soviets are estimated to have begun increasing substantially their tactical nuclear weapons, and building the SOCs in the European USSR (and one north of the Mongolian border) put them where the Soviets have the greatest need for tactical weapons.\* Thus it seems not unlikely that the SOCs are "national" stockpile sites in the sense that they could provide large amounts of storage space for tactical nuclear weapons during peacetime, but could be used to provide direct backup supply to the field during hostilities. Earlier studies concluded that the storage space in the SOCs, if used for nuclear weapons, would not be excessive; that conclusion is still believed to be valid.<sup>2 1</sup>

The SOC bunkers themselves provide roughly two to five times the amount of storage space estimated for the national bunkers and differ from them in external appearance.<sup>2 2</sup> Comparison of the two plus knowledge of the internal arrangement of the SOC bunkers suggest, however, that they evolved from the nationals and that they combine under one roof the storage and auxiliary space which, at the nationals, is divided between the bunkers and their entrance buildings. An internal arrangement similar to that of the SOC bunkers is found, in turn, on a much smaller scale in the square nuclear storage and handling bunkers at the tactical SSM support facilities and apparently also in the Type IV airfield nuclear storage bunker.<sup>2 6-15 20</sup>

The support buildings in the SOC operations areas are fewer than those in the operations areas at the national stockpile sites. Furthermore, three buildings found at most, though not all, of the nationals—the "A" building, the "B"

\*The SOCs are not distributed evenly among the Soviet military districts (figure 1).

building and a so-called maintenance and assembly building—have not been built at the SOCs.<sup>1 6-15</sup> Nevertheless, a number of other structures have been found that are common to at least some of both types of facility and, taken together, provide a strong tie between the SOCs and the nuclear weapon storage program.

Probably the most striking of these ties has been the construction of a SOC delta bunker at the Mozhaysk and Delyatin national stockpile sites and at the storage site serving the Olenegorsk Arctic staging base.<sup>1 2 3 2 4</sup> Heretofore the delta bunker had been seen only at seven of the 12 SOCs. At Mozhaysk, the delta bunker was built in the operations area, but apparently primary access to it is by a road through the eastern fence that surrounds the operations area. This road joins the road that connects the nearby Type III nuclear storage site, the helicopter pad and the rail facility to the stockpile site itself.<sup>1 1 2 5</sup> At Delyatin, the delta bunker was built in the support area next to the helicopter pad and is separately secured.<sup>2 3</sup> At Olenegorsk, the delta bunker is being built outside the perimeter fence and also probably will be separately secured upon completion.<sup>2 4</sup> The reason for separating these bunkers from the other storage bunkers and vaults is not known. It is possible that the particular nuclear weapons they store require minimal maintenance and, thus, the delta bunkers need not be near the operational support buildings but can be located outside the operations area or the facility itself. If the delta bunkers do not store nuclear weapons but rather auxiliary equipment or nonnuclear weapons, which is possible, there also would be no reason for placing them in the operations areas of the older nuclear stockpile sites. Should the delta bunker have a nonnuclear function at the known nuclear stockpile sites, then the same could hold true for it and for one

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type of bunker at each of the first and third SOC generation sites, which might then explain the definite ratio of bunker types found at the SOCs. Whether these types would store auxiliary equipment or a nonnuclear weapon is open to further question.

A second striking tie is provided by the aforementioned secured traveling bridge cranes and by the transloading operations within them. The bridge cranes are found at the nuclear weapon production sites and at all but two of the national stockpile sites, as well as at all of the SOCs.<sup>\*1 6-15</sup> They are not unique to these facilities, being used at a variety of manufacturing plants, but the visual security provided them is. In fact, this type of visual security apparently does not exist for most of the rail-to-road transfer points of the strategic missile complexes or for transloading points at other military storage installations, although the rail facilities and the installations themselves are singly or doubly fenced. Satellite photography has shown several transloading operations in the SOC bridge cranes involving rail cars approximately 78 feet long with a long platform extending from one end. The latter evidently facilitates the movement of material in and out of the cars. With such an arrangement, the overhead crane can directly transfer material to or from the platform and trucks or vans by vertically lifting it, carrying it across, and lowering it.<sup>\*\*</sup> A transloading operation involving the same type of long car and extended platform

\*Delyatin and Sudak—probably the oldest of the stockpile sites—have an overhead crane but no long, movable bridge crane in their transloading facilities. At Delyatin the facility is on site; at Sudak it is in Feodosiya; at both it is walled for visual security.<sup>6 14</sup>

\*\*It has also been reported that tactical surface-to-surface missiles are transported in long, platform-equipped rail cars, and warhead vans apparently use similar platforms. One was photographed with a warhead canister on the platform during a Soviet SCUD unit training exercise in East Germany.<sup>26 27</sup>

was photographed within the bridge crane at the Kasli nuclear weapons research and production site (figure 5). Furthermore, the objects seen on the transloading platform at Kasli appeared comparable in size to those seen on the platforms at the SOCs.

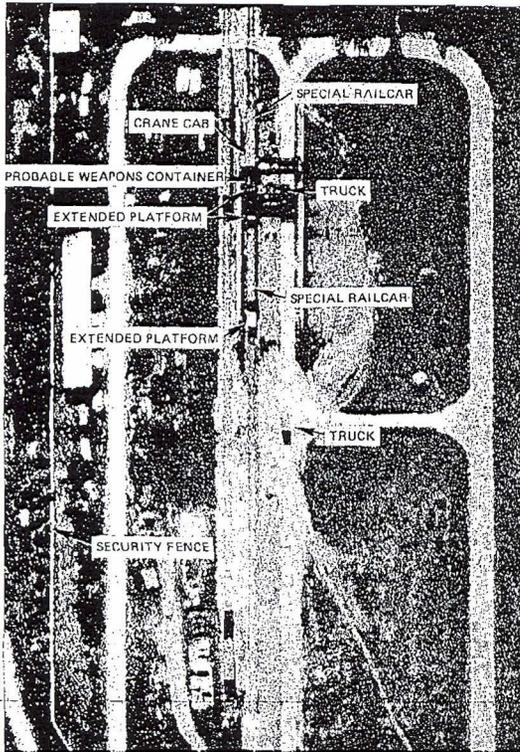
A third tie is provided by two small buildings that have been found in the operations areas of the SOCs and the national stockpile sites and within some of the nuclear warhead storage and handling facilities at airfields and at MRBM, IRBM and ICBM launch sites.<sup>28 29</sup> They are believed to be unique to nuclear weapon storage facilities and the SOCs and are always built in pairs, placed approximately the same distance from one another and well away from other buildings or bunkers. Sometimes they are re-vetted and sometimes separately secured. They probably are used to store explosive components such as detonators, but why they have not been built at all facilities of a given type is not known.

Two other sets of buildings have been found at a few of the SOCs and at some other nuclear facilities. One set, occurring at Berezovka, Mozhaysk and the Main Support Complex of the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site, consists of a high-bay, drive-through building with a two-story, hipped-roof administration type of building perpendicular to it and connected to it by a wide corridor.<sup>3 11 30</sup> The second set of buildings, occurring at Malin, Zalari and the Dodonovo national stockpile site, is of fairly recent construction. It consists of a long, flat-roofed, two-story building similar to the administration building at the first three generations of SOCs, with a shorter drive-in building perpendicular to it and connected to it by a fairly narrow corridor.<sup>31</sup> The similarity of building placement and the combination of an administration type of building with a drive-in or

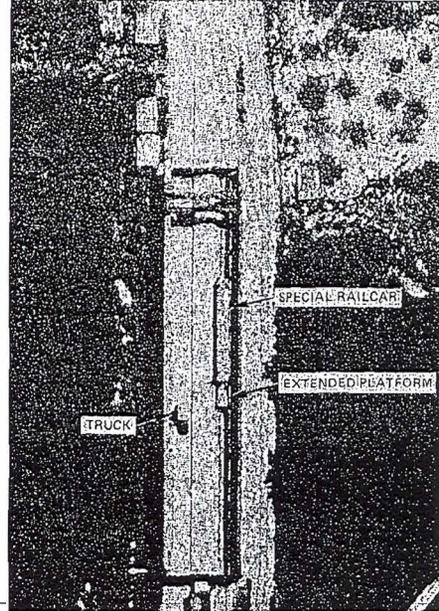
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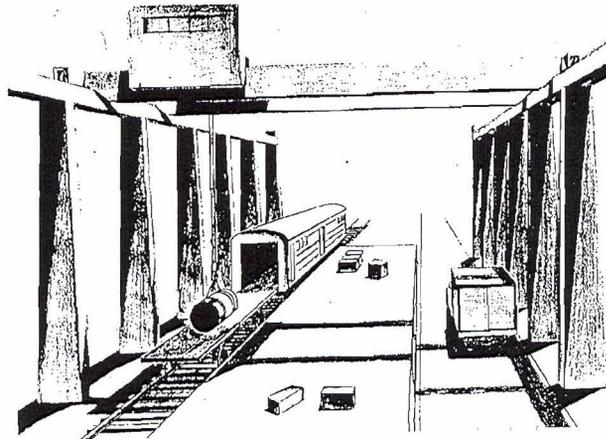
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RAIL-TO-ROAD TRANSFER POINT, ZHUKOVKA SENSITIVE OPERATIONS COMPLEX



RAIL-TO-ROAD TRANSFER POINT, KASLI NUCLEAR WEAPONS COMPLEX



ARTIST'S CONCEPT OF TRANSLOADING OPERATION AT KASLI



Figure 5. Transloading Operations at Kasli and the SOCs

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drive-through building in the two sets suggest a similarity of function. Their locations within the sites differ, however, and nothing about the buildings themselves suggests a nuclear weapons function for them, even though their presence at known nuclear sites does.

At a number of SOCs and national stockpile sites, mock-up or actual transport aircraft fuselages have been identified in the operations or support areas. They are believed to be used for training exercises and probably would equip crews equally to load weapons on helicopters at the sites themselves or on transports at airfields where they had been taken by truck.

Comint has provided some information about the SOCs but it has been of limited value. Messages intercepted between January 1963 and August 1966 have indicated new Field Post Numbers or new Branch Post Offices at towns in the vicinity of Berezovka, Borisoglebsk, Bulyzhino and Belev. Sebez is believed to be the address of the Bulyzhino SOC because there is no other installation near the small village of Sebez that would require a postal zone of its own.<sup>32 33</sup> A message addressed to FPN 89558-N at Borisoglebsk in August 1966 indicates the presence of a new military unit in the area within about a year of the SOC's completion, but provides no firm tie between that unit and the SOC and no indication of the unit's function.<sup>34</sup> FPN 32170 appeared in Comint at Anisovka Stantsiya, the location of the Berezovka rail facility, in January 1963, some eight months after the SOC itself probably was completed. It belongs to a block from which a number of FPNs were assigned to units at nuclear weapon stockpile sites, but it is not, in itself, firm evidence that Berezovka is a nuclear stockpile site.<sup>35</sup> Reasonable evidence of a nuclear connection, in fact, has been found only for the Belev SOC where analysis of personal

messages indicates that a man named Lyamtsev addressed at Tula 50, a Branch Post Office that first appeared in 1966 and probably serves the Belev SOC, probably is the same Lyamtsev who formerly had been addressed at Magadan 11, the address of the Ugoynyy Kopi nuclear weapons storage site at Shakhterskiy near Anadyr.<sup>36</sup>

#### CONSIDERATION OF OTHER FUNCTIONS FOR THE SOCs

The possibility that the SOCs serve as missile storage bases has been considered by the Intelligence Community at some length. The importance of such a function, particularly as a base for rail-launched ICBMs, has not been overlooked. There has been no photographic evidence of missile handling equipment at the SOCs, however, nor have missiles or missile containers been seen there. Furthermore, the size of bunker entrances, the distance between their blast doors, and the dimensions of their elevators—all argue against the bunkers' being used to store missiles or missile components longer than about 26 feet.<sup>2</sup> Neither missile fuel storage facilities nor missile fuel handling equipment have been seen at the SOCs. Finally, the rail-to-road transfer points at the SOCs do not resemble those at missile launch complexes but, as noted, do resemble the ones at nuclear weapons storage facilities.<sup>37</sup> For these reasons it is deemed highly improbable that the SOCs serve an MRBM, IRBM, or ICBM storage function.

A civil defense function also has been considered for the SOCs because of their dispersal throughout the most populated areas of the USSR. Two of their features, however, argue against this function. The first is their strong security, which is excessive for civil defense facilities, and the second is the size of the bunkers, which are much too large for storage of items such as medical supplies that would be

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stockpiled at a civil defense installation. Furthermore, since the bunker construction at the SOCs appears more nearly suitable for storage and handling of materials than for sheltering people, their use as fallout shelters for large numbers of people appears most unlikely.

A military command and control function for the SOCs is equally unlikely because of their dissimilarity to known command and control

centers. At the latter, the bunkers are built adjacent to the housing and are of a different design and smaller size than the SOC bunkers.<sup>38</sup> The manufacture of critical military items, the storage of critical military items (other than nuclear) and the storage of food for use during wartime also have been considered as possible functions for the SOCs. All, however, have serious flaws when considered in detail and have been ruled out.

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## REFERENCES

The source references supporting this paper are identified in a list published separately. Copies of the list are available to authorized personnel and may be obtained from the originating office through regular channels. Requests for the list of references should include the publication number and date of this report.

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