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*Status of Construction  
on the Soviet Gas  
Export Pipeline*

Pipelaying for the natural gas pipeline from Siberia to Western Europe appears to be generally on schedule, but compressor station construction has been complicated by the US embargo. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Soviet media have asserted that the pace of pipelaying more than doubled between July and September and that by the beginning of October 700 kilometers of pipe had been laid. The photographs of the part of the route covered during September make Soviet claims concerning pipelaying appear credible. Soviet plans that call for 1,500 kilometers of pipe laid by the end of the year probably will be attained. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the US sanctions created indecision in the Gas and Petroleum Pipeline Construction Ministry. Planning for compressor station construction in some cases had come to a complete halt. [REDACTED] starts on two stations along the central portion of the pipeline had been delayed because the design institutes did not know what equipment would be available. In addition, the large number of compressor stations that are being built for high-priority domestic lines may be diverting needed labor away from construction of compressor stations for the export pipeline. [REDACTED]

The uncertainties surrounding further deliveries by West European firms and the ability to substitute Soviet-manufactured turbines suggest engineering plans for compressor stations may still be in abeyance. The Soviets have said they could begin deliveries using reduced compressor power pending completion of the necessary stations. If stations on the Siberian portion of the line are delayed, the Soviets also could link the section being built eastward from the Uzhgorod export terminal to a recently completed domestic pipeline that brings Urengoy gas to Kursk. This would, however, reduce the availability of gas to the domestic economy. [REDACTED]