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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
National Foreign Assessment Center
Office of Imagery Analysis

IMAGERY ANALYSIS MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Construction Status of the Soyuz Gas Pipeline, USSR

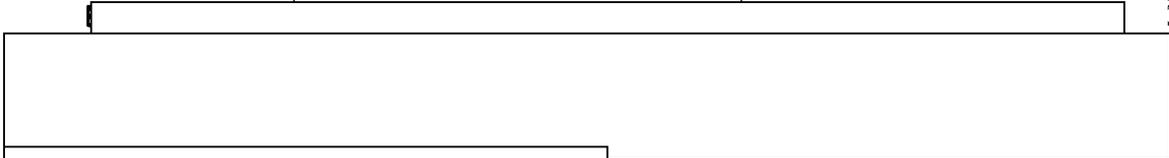
The Soviet press recently reported that the 2,700 kilometer (km) Soyuz (Orenburg) gas pipeline, an international effort to provide natural gas from the Orenburg Gas Fields to the western USSR and eastern Europe, would be operational by late September 1978. Analysis of [redacted]

[redacted] indicates that the pipeline could have been capable of limited operation in late September but that all construction was probably not complete. In mid-August, several short segments of pipeline were still under construction and a number of compressor stations were not complete.

The pipeline begins near Orenburg and crosses into Czechoslovakia near Uzhgorod (see Figure 1). It connects to an existing pipeline network in Czechoslovakia for distribution to other east European countries.

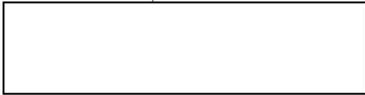
The only portions of the pipeline not completed [redacted] in mid-August were along the last 500 km at the western end. This section contained at least ten short segments where the pipe had not been welded, primarily at road crossings. At one river crossing, pipe had not been installed on completed supports. The only long segment of unwelded pipe was about 1.5 km long. Pipeline crews were working on this segment and the several shorter incomplete segments. About 20 percent of the pipe in this section had not been buried.

The rest of the pipeline appeared complete. Most of it was probably completed by early spring of 1978 since crops had been planted over the line where it crosses farmland.

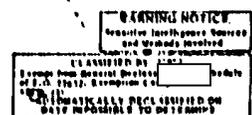


[redacted] The pattern of completing alternate compressor stations, also observed on other Soviet pipelines, would enable the Soviets to transport some gas before all compressors are installed.

Comments and queries on the contents of this memorandum are welcome. They may be directed to [redacted] Office of Imagery Analysis, [redacted]



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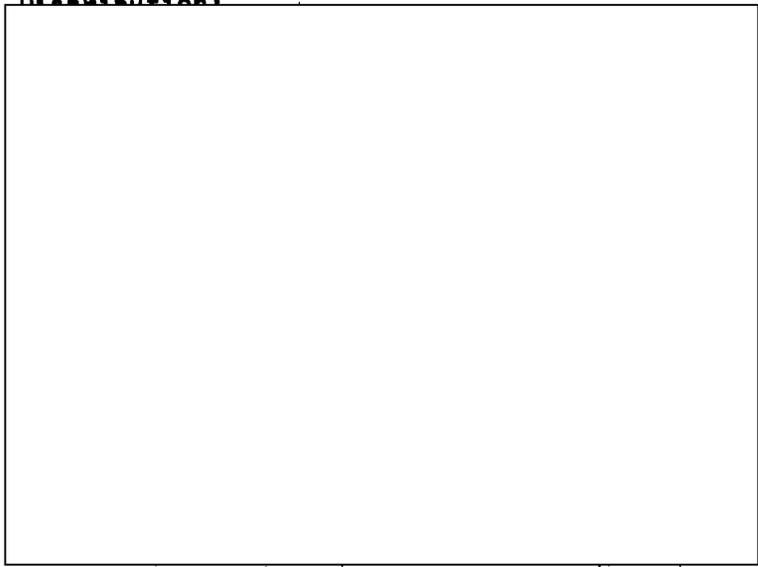


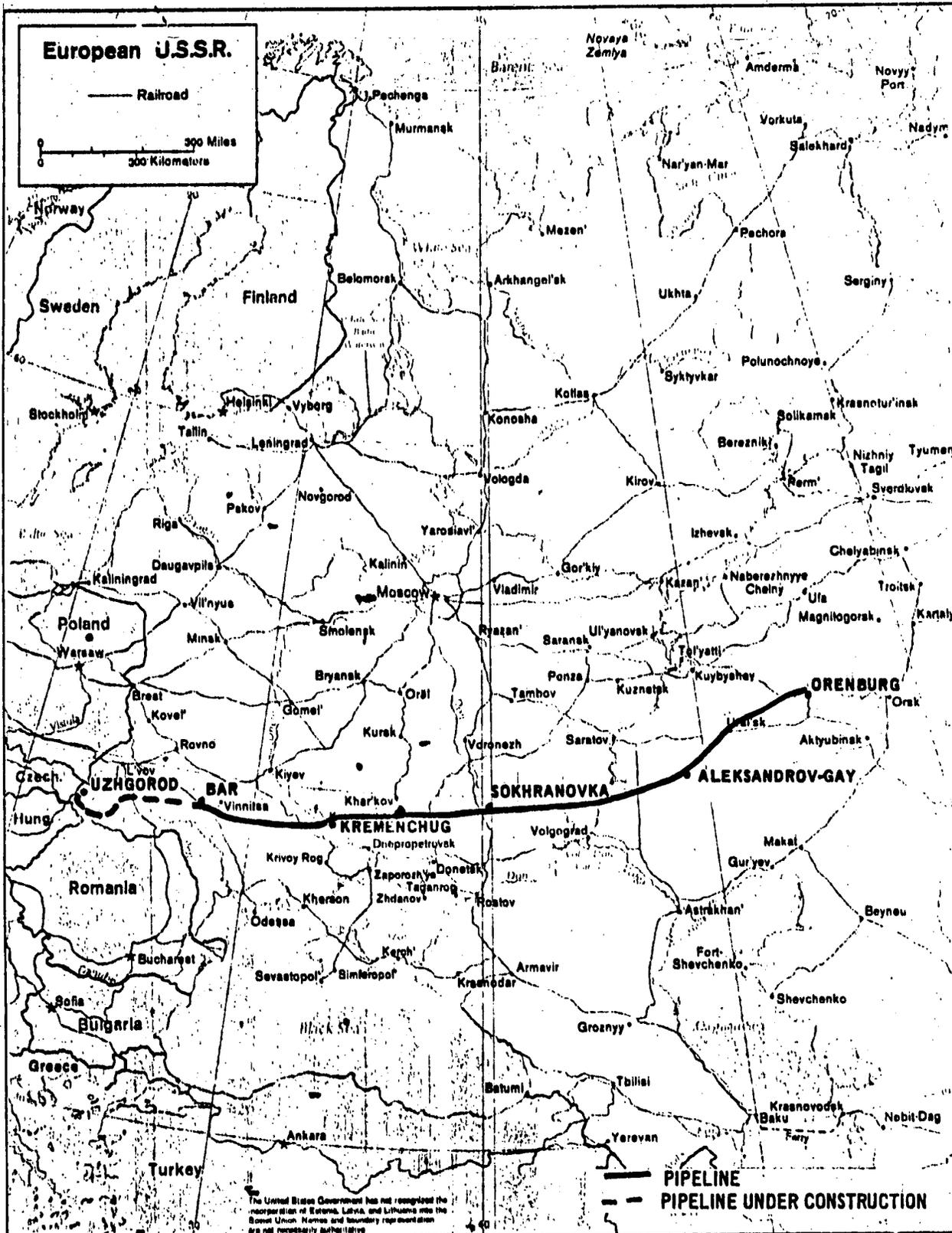


Requirement: C-ER8-80,576

OIA Project Number and Status: 4A0253 (Continuing)

Distribution:





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FIGURE 1. SOYUZ PIPELINE, AUGUST 1978