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Director of Central Intelligence

Assistant Director for Reports and Estimates

IM-2

Soviet Acquisition of Crude Rubber

1. Although information is rather sketchy with regard to Soviet acquisition of crude rubber in recent months, some information of this character is available.

2. Exports of crude rubber from the producing countries and re-exports from the United Kingdom to the USSR in 1947 totalled 43,022 tons, the largest quantity ever exported to that country in one year. Exports from Malaya in October alone amounted to 13,270 tons, which probably was responsible for recent reports of large purchases of crude rubber by the Soviets. The most recent report, that for January 1948, indicated Malayan exports to the USSR of 4,723 tons for that month.

3. USSR imports of crude rubber were 9,500 tons in 1946, 17,000 tons in 1945, and 24,000 tons in 1944. Small quantities of synthetic rubber were also imported in these years. There is reason to believe that beginning in 1946 the USSR has been taking about 30,000 tons of synthetic rubber annually from the largest German producer, which is located in the Soviet controlled zone and is producing about 40,000 tons per year.

4. Our estimates of new supply of rubber (imported, indigenous, reclaimed, synthetic) in recent years are as follows:

1945	129,000 tons
1946	152,000 tons
1947	212,000 tons.

5. The United Kingdom-USSR trade agreement of last fall provides for immediate commencement of negotiations with the object of supplying to the USSR several commodities, including rubber. In the light of this agreement and presumably other factors, the Rubber Secretariat in London suggests that USSR imports of crude rubber in 1948 may be of the order of 50,000-75,000 tons.

6. The above figures, when compared with the position of the USSR in rubber during the prewar and war years, indicate that the Soviets may be stockpiling rubber.

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7. [redacted]

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cc: Chief, Economics Group, ORE

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