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[redacted]**USSR: Good Start for Winter Grains**

Prospects for the winter grain crop have been helped by good weather this fall. Satellite photography and press reports indicate that the sowing of winter grains was virtually complete by late last month and that good emergence was evident in most areas. The sown area is slightly larger than it was at the same time last year. Soil moisture in the southern Ukraine, North Caucasus, and South Volga areas was deficient in September, but most of the region received enough rainfall for germination last month, and only small isolated areas remain slightly dry. [redacted]

Comment: An estimated 6 to 7 percent more hectareage has been sown to winter grains this year than last. The general improvement in soil moisture is likely to result in a good winter grain crop as long as the winter weather remains normal. [redacted]

NETHERLANDS-US: Problems With Weapons Sale

A Dutch official told the US Embassy this week that his government is pessimistic about reaching a satisfactory offset agreement for purchasing the Patriot air defense weapon system. The Dutch believe that the US manufacturer has failed to meet their demand for 100-percent offset. The official indicated that his government might try to persuade the US to accept a government-to-government barter arrangement. [redacted]

Comment: The Dutch have long sought 100-percent offset to increase domestic employment and promote domestic industries. The Hague now may want to negotiate an agreement similar to one under consideration by the US and West Germany. Under this proposal, the US would provide the West Germans with a number of Patriots, to be manned by the West Germans, in return for Roland surface-to-air missile systems for defending US airbases. Dutch defense industries, however, produce few military systems that would be attractive under a barter arrangement. [redacted]

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