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29 JUN 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: (See Distribution List)

FROM:

[Redacted]

Chief, Strategic Resources Division  
Office of Global Issues

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SUBJECT:

Soviet Crop Conditions

[Redacted]

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1. The attached memorandum is the third in a series of assessments analyzing crop conditions in the Soviet Union. Additional memoranda will be issued periodically during the remainder of the crop season, especially if crop prospects change markedly.

[Redacted]

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2. This assessment was produced by

[Redacted]

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the  
Agricultural Assessments Branch, Strategic Resources Division,  
Office of Global Issues.

[Redacted]

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3. Comments and questions are welcome and may be addressed to the Chief, Agricultural Assessments Branch,

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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Attachment:

USSR: Grain Crop Conditions Stabilize

[Redacted]

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GI M 84-10119, June 1984

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

GI M 84-10119

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SUBJECT: Soviet Crop Conditions [redacted]

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OGI/SRD/AAB, [redacted] (29 June 84)

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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

29 JUN 1984

USSR: Grain Crop Conditions Stabilize

Summary

Timely, widespread rains during the past several weeks have broken the severe drought that devastated the grain crop in and around the Volga Valley, an area that produces about one-fourth of the annual Soviet grain harvest. The rains have temporarily halted further damage to the surviving grain crops; but additional rainfall is needed to replenish subsoil moisture reserves. In the remainder of the grain region, crop prospects are still generally good to excellent. If optimum weather persists through the end of the crop season, total Soviet grain production could reach 200 million tons--5 million tons more than last year's estimated output. [redacted]

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This memorandum was prepared by [redacted]

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[redacted] the Agricultural Assessments Branch, Strategic Resources Division, Office of Global Issues. Comments may be directed to [redacted] Chief, Strategic Resources Division, [redacted]

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GI M 84-10119

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USSR: Grain Crop Conditions Stabilize

Crop conditions in the USSR have stabilized over the past three weeks. The drought that devastated the grain crop in the Volga Valley and adjacent regions abated on 6 June, and subsequent weather has been mostly favorable throughout the grain belt. Barring any future bouts of adverse weather, we believe that the 1984 Soviet grain crop could still come in as high as 200 million tons. A crop of this size would be above last year's estimated output of 195 million tons, and the best showing since the 1978 record of 237 million tons. [redacted]

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Regional Crop and Weather Conditions as of Late June

**Volga Valley and Adjacent Regions.** Following severe drought conditions during May in the Volga Valley, western Kazakhstan, Volga Vyatka, Central Black Earth, western Urals, and northern North Caucasus regions, meteorological data show that the high pressure system responsible for the most damaging weather dissipated by 6 June. Since then, precipitation has been 60 percent above normal--according to reporting from 12 Soviet weather stations in the valley--halting further damage to the surviving grain crops. The relief, however, came too late for most crops in Volgograd, Saratov, and parts of Stavropol, Rostov, Voronezh, and Uralsk oblasts. [redacted]

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Farther north (northern Volga Valley, Volga Vyatka, and western Urals regions), where damage was less severe and the crops were in a less vulnerable stage of development, the rains were beneficial. Nevertheless, even a moderate recovery there will require ideal growing conditions for the remainder of the crop season. As a result, we expect production of both winter and spring grains to be well below average<sup>1</sup> throughout the drought area. [redacted]

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**Ukraine, Moldavia, and Krasnodar Kray.** Growing conditions during the past several weeks in these areas have remained mostly favorable. Periodic rainfall maintained soil moisture at adequate levels during the critical flowering period<sup>2</sup> for both winter grains (early June) and spring grains (mid-June). Unless the weather deteriorates markedly during the harvest--just now

<sup>1</sup> Unless stated otherwise, the term "average" refers to the average for the 1976-80 period. [redacted]

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<sup>2</sup> Flowering is the stage of crop development when maximum potential yields are determined. [redacted]

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underway in the southern oblasts--production here should be above average. Analysis of meteorological data [redacted] indicate that potential harvest problems currently exist only in Moldavia and the western Ukraine, where excessively wet field conditions could delay or perhaps even preclude combining operations. [redacted]

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#### **Baltics, Belorussia, Central, and Northwest Regions.**

Prospects are good for record or near-record yields here. Except for the extreme eastern part of the Central region--which was hurt somewhat by the drought--this area has been virtually problem-free thus far. Cool, wet weather has predominated since planting, and moisture reserves are more than adequate to sustain the crops until harvest--still several weeks away. [redacted]

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**Kazakhstan, Siberia, and the Eastern Urals.** Early-season crop prospects are good in the main spring grain regions east of the Ural mountains. According to Soviet press reports, planting was completed on time, and sowing plans were overfulfilled in Kazakhstan--which usually accounts for some 13 percent of total Soviet grain output. Initial crop development, [redacted] is generally good to excellent, and meteorological data show that soil moisture is still above-average in most areas following the normal dry down that has occurred during the past month. Despite the good start, however, we cannot yet make a reliable production estimate. Weather conditions during July and August--as the crops pass through the flowering and ripening stages--will play the key role in determining the final harvest outcome. [redacted]

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#### Outlook for Total Grain Production

Because of the recent improvement in the weather, we believe that Moscow can still harvest a grain crop as large as 200 million tons. This assessment presumes excellent growing and harvesting conditions for the remainder of the crop season. During the next two to three weeks, such conditions would include:

- o generally dry weather in the Ukraine, Moldavia, and North Caucasus as the grain harvesting campaign gets into full swing;
- o continued rainfall throughout the Volga Valley and surrounding areas. Although damage there has been halted temporarily, crops remain particularly vulnerable to moisture and/or heat stress; and,
- o the onset of normal summer rains in Kazakhstan. These rains are necessary to sustain healthy plant development through the heat of the summer, one of the requisites of high grain yields.

Should the weather deteriorate markedly, however, Soviet grain output would fall well below this mark. [redacted]

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## USSR: Regional Soil Moisture and Grain Crop Conditions

Region	Average <sup>1</sup> Grain Production Million Tons	% Grain Area With Fair to Good Soil Moisture <sup>2</sup>				Imagery Assessment	Production Outlook Relative to Average <sup>4</sup>
		First Meter		Top Layer <sup>3</sup>			
		31 May	17 June	31 May	17 June		
Northwest	1.4	100	90	100	100	good	above
Central	11.3	68	91	76	90	fair to good	above
Volga-Vyatka	4.8	12	65	35	95	poor	below
Central Black Earth	12.2	59	70	82	85	poor to fair	below
Volga (including Bashkir)	27.0	17	34	26	51	very poor	below
North Caucasus (Krasnodar)	7.7	89	95	95	95	good	above
North Caucasus (rest)	10.4	50	55	78	60	poor to fair	below
Urals	12.7	63	56	72	78	fair	below
W. Siberia	17.9	90	80	92	100	good	above
E. Siberia	7.0	100	100	100	100	good	above
Ukraine	43.2	87	87	96	82	good/excel	above
Kazakhstan <sup>5</sup>	27.5	59	50	66	65	good	above
Belorussia	6.2	100	100	95	100	good/excel	above
Baltics	5.1	96	95	98	85	good/excel	above
Moldavia	3.0	100	100	100	100	good	above
Other <sup>6</sup>	7.7						
USSR	205.1	66	70	75	76		

<sup>1</sup> 1976-1980 actual averages for USSR, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Belorussia, Baltics, Moldavia. Averages for other regions are estimates.

<sup>2</sup> 40-100% of plant available soil moisture.

<sup>3</sup> The top or active soil layer is that layer from which most of the moisture exchange (through evaporation/precipitation) occurs with the atmosphere.

<sup>4</sup> Based on optimum weather to harvest.

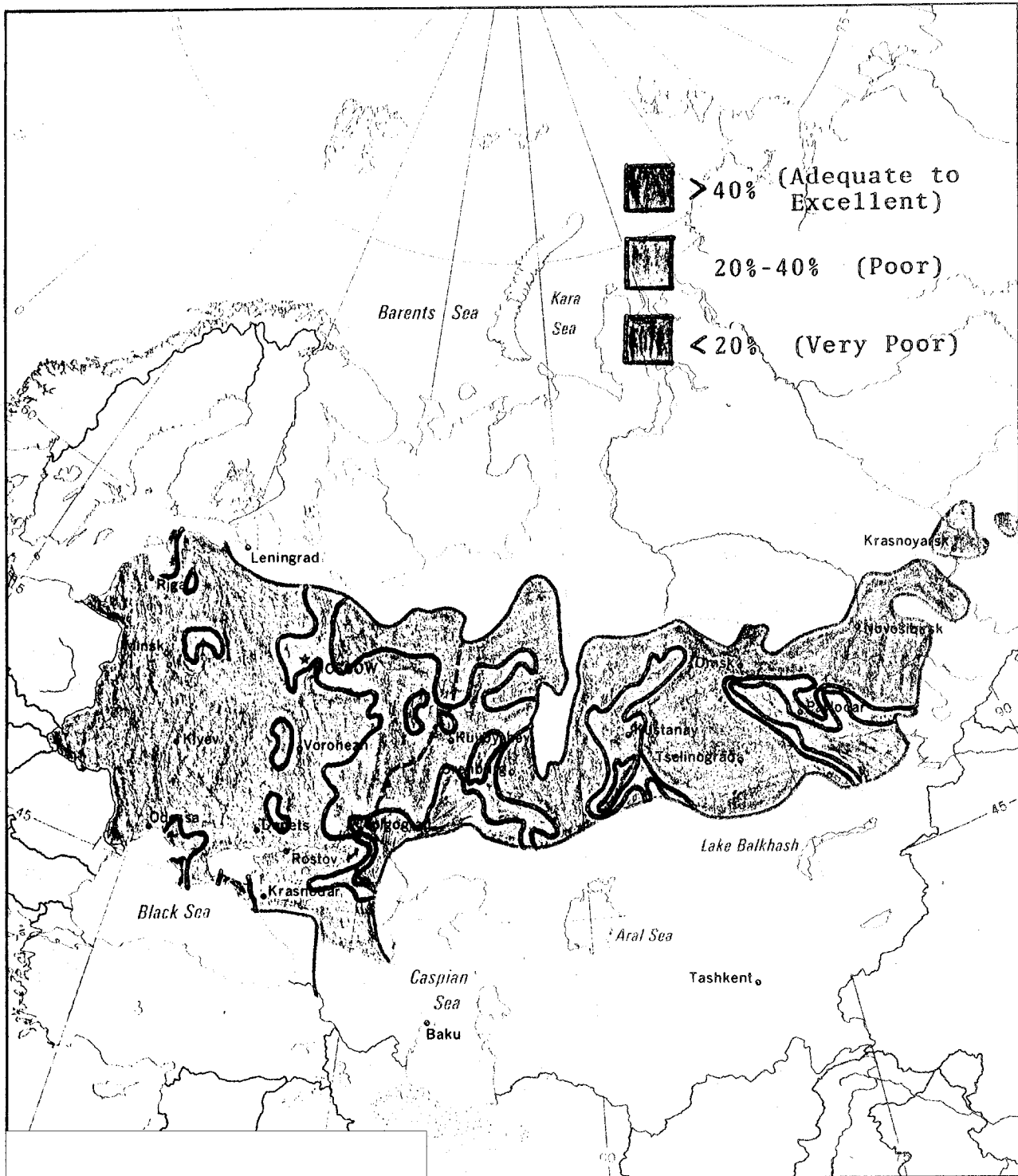
<sup>5</sup> Soil moisture is usually relatively low at this time of year. Kazakhstan receives most of its precipitation during June and July.

<sup>6</sup> Includes Central Asia and Transcaucasus Republics, areas with relatively stable production from year to year.

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USSR: Percent Soil Moisture in Active Layer\*, 31 May 1984

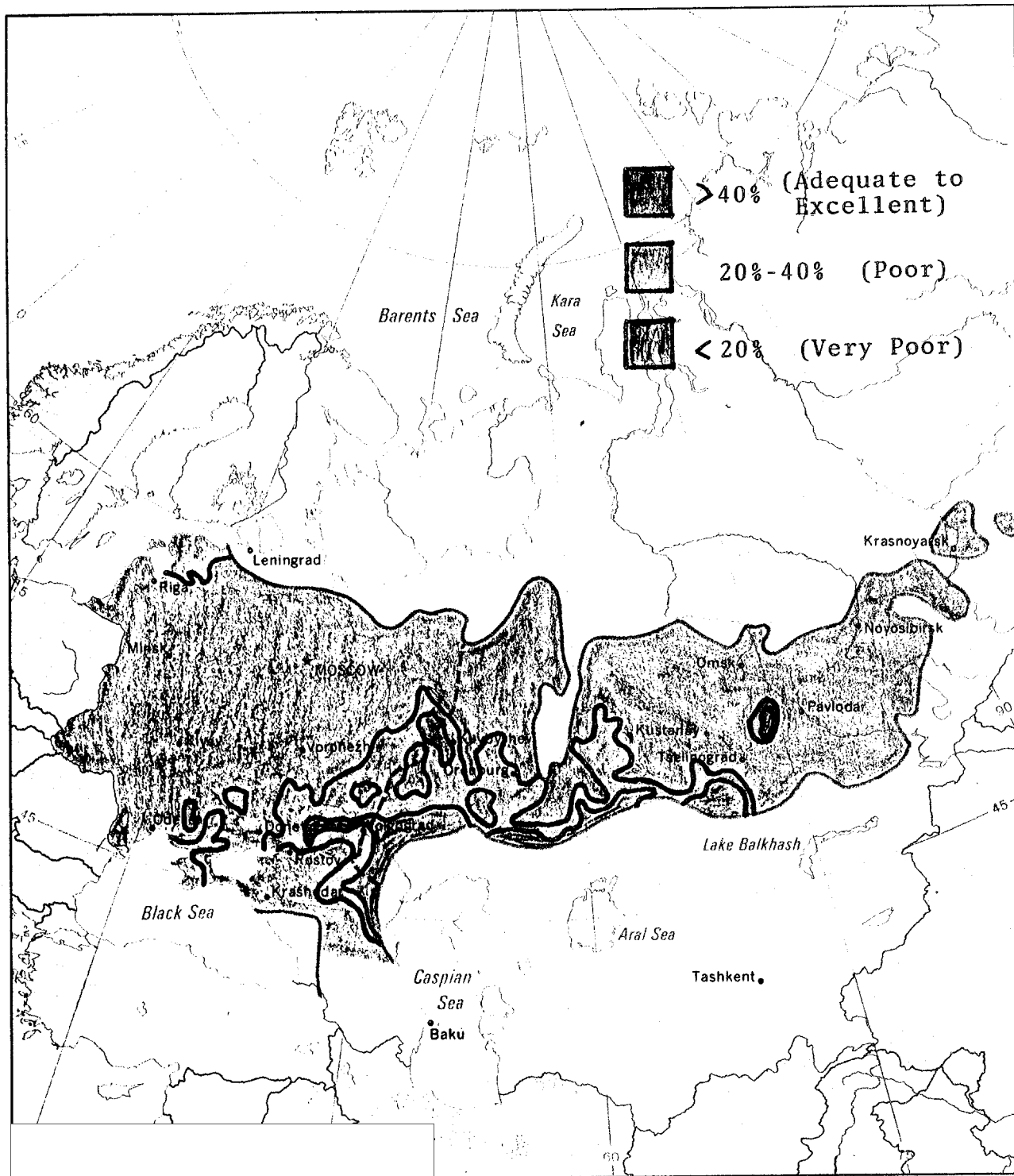


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\* The active layer is the depth of soil from which moisture is available to crop roots.



USSR: Percent Soil Moisture in Active Layer\*, 17 June 1984



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\* The active layer is the depth of soil from which moisture is available to crop roots.

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