

TOP SECRET

CABINET 1

Confidential filing

The Soviet economy, The grain harvest.

SOVIET UNION

December 1979

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
11-12-79							
20-11-77							
18-11-87							
13-8-82							
2-7-84							
4-7-84							
16-6-87							
PREM 19/2532							

TO BE RETAINED AS TOP ENCLOSURE

Cabinet / Cabinet Committee Documents

Reference	Date
JIC (82)(N) 81	13/8/82

The documents listed above, which were enclosed on this file, have been removed and destroyed. Such documents are the responsibility of the Cabinet Office. When released they are available in the appropriate CAB (CABINET OFFICE) CLASSES

Signed Wayland

Date 20 July 2016

PREM Records Team

GRS 882

Restricted

DISTRIBUTION SELECTED
FILE COPY

RESTRICTED

FM MOSCOW

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 861

OF 160430Z JUNE 87

INFO PRIORITY MODUK, DTI/OTTER, WASHINGTON, BONN, PARIS

INFO PRIORITY UKDEL NATO, EAST EUROPEAN POSTS, PEKING, HELSINKI

INFO PRIORITY TOKYO

10 DOWNING ST.

SIC EMA/EMC/EME

CENTRAL COMMITTEE CONFERENCE ON THE ECONOMY

SUMMARY

1. THE REPORT ON LAST WEEK'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE CONFERENCE ON ECONOMIC REFORM REVEALS THAT THE LEADERSHIP HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO REACH AGREEMENT ON THE KEY ISSUE OF THE ROLE OF THE CENTRAL PLANNING ORGANS IN TIME FOR THE PLENUM WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE END OF THE MONTH.

DETAIL

2. THE REPORT ON THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE CONFERENCE OF 8-9 JUNE ON RADICAL RESTRUCTURING OF THE ECONOMY WAS PUBLISHED IN PRAYDA OF 13 JUNE. IT IS CLEAR FROM THE REPORT AND ESPECIALLY GORBACHEV'S CLOSING REMARKS THAT PREPARATIONS FOR THE PLENUM WHICH HE CONFIRMED WOULD TAKE PLACE AT THE END OF THE MONTH, HAVE RUN INTO PROBLEMS OVER THE ISSUE OF THE ROLE OF THE MINISTRIES AND THE CENTRAL PLANNING ORGANS. GORBACHEV SAID THAT 12 DOCUMENTS HAD BEEN PREPARED AND DISCUSSED BY THE POLITBURO BUT WOULD NOT BE ADOPTED UNTIL FURTHER DISCUSSION AT THE PLENUM AND SUPREME SOVIET SESSION. THIS SEEMS TO REPRESENT SOMETHING OF A SET BACK FOR GORBACHEV WHO HAD EVIDENTLY PLANNED TO HAVE A COMPLETED 'INTEGRAL ECONOMIC MECHANISM' APPROVED BY THE PLENUM AND GIVEN LEGAL SHAPE BY THE SUBSEQUENT SESSION OF THE SUPREME SOVIET. THE PLENUM AND SUPREME SOVIET SESSION WILL ENDORSE THE LAW ON THE SOCIALIST ENTERPRISE BUT AS GORBACHEV POINTED OUT THE LAW 'WILL NOT FUNCTION IF WE DO NOT RESOLVE THE QUESTIONS OF MANAGING THE ECONOMY FROM THE CENTRE'.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

3. IN HIS OPENING REMARKS GORBACHEV ASKED FOR THE VIEWS OF THE CONFERENCE ON THREE QUESTIONS:

A) THE PROGRESS OF PERESTROIKA IN THE SOCIETY AND THE ECONOMY.

B) THE LAW ON THE STATE ENTERPRISE

Restricted 1c)

C) THE ROLE OF THE CENTRAL ECONOMIC ORGANS.

GORBACHEV HIMSELF FOCUSED ON THE QUESTION OF THE CENTRAL ORGANS STRESSING THAT THERE HAD BEEN A GREAT DEAL OF DISCUSSION AT ALL LEVELS, INCLUDING THE POLITBURO, OF THIS DIFFICULT QUESTION.

SLYUNKOV'S REPORT

4. THE MAIN POINTS IN THE REPORT TO THE CONFERENCE DELIVERED BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE SECRETARY FOR THE ECONOMY SLYUNKOV WERE:

A) HE IDENTIFIED AS THE MAIN SOURCES OF INEFFICIENCY IN THE SOVIET ECONOMY THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PRODUCER OVER THE CONSUMER, WHICH LED TO SHORTAGES AND LOW QUALITY SEMICOLON MASSIVE SUBSIDIES, EASY CREDIT AND THE EXISTING PRICE SYSTEM. ENERGY PRICES WERE 2-3 TIMES BELOW WORLD LEVELS WHILE FOOD PRICES WERE ON AVERAGE HALF THE COST OF PRODUCTION.

B) HE CALLED FOR A RADICAL RESTRUCTURING OF THE MINISTRIES, WHICH SHOULD BE DEPRIVED OF THEIR OPERATIONAL CONTROL OVER ENTERPRISES. THE PART OF THE APPARAT WHICH EXERCISES OPERATIONAL ECONOMIC FUNCTIONS WOULD BE ELIMINATED.

C) HE CALLED FOR A 'SYSTEM OF EFFECTIVE EMPLOYMENT' AND REDEPLOYMENT OF WORKERS WHO WERE RELEASED.

THE DEBATE

5. THE MAIN POINTS OF INTEREST FROM THE DEBATE, WHICH FEATURED FREQUENT INTERJECTIONS BY GORBACHEV, WERE SUPPLIED BY THE ACADEMIC SPEAKERS:

A) ARBATOV (USA AND CANADA INSTITUTE) SAID IT WAS WRONG TO MAKE A 'SACRED COW' OF GROWTH RATES WHEN QUALITY NOT QUANTITY WAS THE PROBLEM.

B) BOGOMOLOV (INSTITUTE FOR THE ECONOMICS OF THE WORLD SOCIALIST SYSTEM) POINTED TO THE ADVANTAGES OF LAUNCHING ECONOMIC REFORM IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR FIRST, AS HUNGARY, CHINA AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA HAD DONE. HE STRESSED THE KEY ROLE OF THE MARKET, A QUESTION WHICH TENDED TO BE EVADED IN DISCUSSIONS OF THE SOVIET ECONOMY SEMICOLON AND REFERRED TO THE NEED FOR A CONVERTIBLE ROUBLE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE WITH SOCIALIST COUNTRIES.

C) POPOV SALE TRADE AND IDENTIFIED THE FAILURE TO PUSH THROUGH IDEAS OF WHOLESALE TRADE AS ONE OF THE FACTORS IN THE FAILURE OF THE 1965 ECONOMIC REFORM.

Restricted²

| GORBACHEV'S

GORBACHEV'S CONCLUDING REMARKS

6. IN HIS INTERJECTIONS AND CLOSING REMARKS GORBACHEV RETURNED TO THE FAMILIAR THEME THAT PERESTROIKA WAS PROCEEDING WITH GREAT DIFFICULTY BUT THAT THERE WAS NO ALTERNATIVE. HE ALSO ALLUDED SEVERAL TIMES AND RATHER DEFENSIVELY TO THE WIDE-RANGING CURRENT DISCUSSION OF ECONOMIC REFORM IN WHICH SOME VERY RADICAL VIEWS ARE BEING EXPRESSED. HE CALLED FOR AN ATMOSPHERE WHICH WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF ALL POINTS OF VIEW. THIS DID NOT MEAN THERE SHOULD NOT BE RESPONSIBILITY. THERE COULD EVEN BE MISTAKES AND THESE TOO COULD BE DISCUSSED 'BUT WE NEED DISCUSSIONS AND STATEMENTS IMBUED WITH CONCERN FOR SOCIALISM.... THOSE WHO WANT TO OFFER US ANTI-SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVES MUST BE REBUFFED'.

7. THE CONFERENCE, WHICH WAS DESCRIBED BY GORBACHEV AS THE FIRST 'TESTING-OUT' OF THE DISCUSSIONS IN THE POLITBURO AND GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE BEEN INTENDED BY HIM AS A WAY OF CIRCUMVENTING OPPOSITION AND STACKING THE CARDS AGAINST THE CENTRAL BUREAUCRACY IN ADVANCE OF THE PLENUM. THE LIST OF SPEAKERS SEEMED LOADED, - NO REPRESENTATIVE OF GOSPLAN AND ONLY THREE MINISTERS SPOKE. BUT ALTHOUGH SLYUNKOV'S REPORT AND SOME OF THE SPEAKERS IN THE DEBATE CALLED FOR REDUCTIONS IN THE POWERS OF THE MINISTRIES AND THE CENTRAL ORGANS, THE REPORT AS A WHOLE, WHICH WAS PUBLISHED AFTER A SHORT DELAY, DOES NOT PROVIDE CLEAR GUIDANCE FOR THE PLENUM.

GORBACHEV EVIDENTLY STILL HAS A FIGHT ON HIS HANDS IN OVERCOMING RESISTANCE FROM THE CENTRAL BUREAUCRACY BEFORE HE CAN FINALISE HIS PLANS FOR ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING.

CARTLEDGE

YYYY

MXHPAN 1217

EASTERN EUROPEAN ECONOMIC

LIMITED

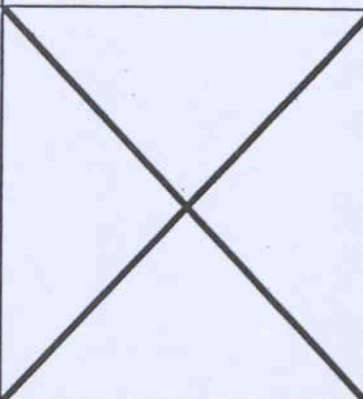
EED
SOV D
ECD(E)
NAD
SED
WED
ECONOMIC ADVISERS
TRED
PLANNING STAFF
ERD
PUSD
NEWS D
INFO D

PS
PS/LADY YOUNG
PS/MR RENTON
PS/PUS
MR BRAITHWAITE
SIR J. FRETWELL
MR RATFORD
MR KERR

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION
EASTERN EUROPEAN ECONOMIC

3
Restricted

A The National Archives

DEPARTMENT/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i> PIECE/ITEM <i>2532</i> (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
Extract details: <i>Minute from Hattfield to Powell dated 4 July 1984</i>	
CLOSED UNDER FOI EXEMPTION	
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958	<i>20 July 2016</i> <i>Wayland</i>
TEMPORARILY RETAINED	
MISSING AT TRANSFER	
NUMBER NOT USED	
MISSING (TNA USE ONLY)	
DOCUMENT PUT IN PLACE (TNA USE ONLY)	



COPY NO. 3

OF COPIES

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

MR. HATFIELD
Cabinet Office

The Prime Minister has read the item in the JIC Weekly Survey of Intelligence for 28 June entitled USSR: Withdrawal of Military Support for Harvest Transportation. She has noted that unusual deployments of army transport equipment are one of the indicators of possible military preparations by the Soviet Union. She has commented that we shall need to watch very carefully for other indicators. You will wish to consider whether the point should be reviewed again next week.

On the same report, the Prime Minister has asked whether she is right in thinking that the Soviet harvest is not expected to be good this year. She recalls reading accounts in the press to this effect. I should be grateful if this point could be covered in an early assessment.

BF

I am copying this minute to Sir Percy Cradock.

C. D. POWELL
2 July, 1984

CONFIDENTIAL

FM MOSCOW 181515Z NOV

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 697 OF 18 NOVEMBER.

SAVING TO UKDEL NATO.

MY TELNO 696: THE SOVIET ECONOMY.

1. THE SOVIET ECONOMY HAS MADE A POOR START TO THE CURRENT FIVE YEAR PLAN. IN HIS SPEECH TO THE PARTY PLENUM ON 16 NOVEMBER BREZHNEV DELIVERED A GLOOMY CATALOGUE OF ECONOMIC SHORT-COMINGS. ALTHOUGH HE REFERRED TO THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION AS COMPLICATING THE PROBLEMS OF THE SOVIET ECONOMY HE DID NOT ELABORATE. INSTEAD HE CONCENTRATED ON DOMESTIC ECONOMIC QUESTIONS, PARTICULARLY AGRICULTURE AND THE WAY THE ECONOMY IS RUN. THE NOT OF ANXIETY IN HIS SPEECH ABOUT FOOD PRODUCTION WAS PARTICULARLY STRIKING. HE GAVE NO FIGURES FOR THE HARVEST BUT IT WAS OBVIOUS FROM WHAT HE SAID THAT HIS HAD BEEN VERY DISAPPOINTING. (MOST PEOPLE ASSUME THAT IT WILL BE ABOUT 175 MILLION TONNES AGAINST A PLANNED TOTAL OF 236 MILLION TONNES.) HE IMPLIED THAT THE TARGETS HAD NOT TAKEN PROPER ACCOUNT OF THE RECURRING PATTERN OF BAD WEATHER.

2. THERE WAS NO SIGN THAT THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP HAS A NEW ECONOMIC APPROACH IN MIND. THE THRUST OF BREZHNEV'S SPEECH WAS THAT WHAT WAS MAINLY NEEDED WAS TO IMPLEMENT AGREED POLICIES, TO COMPLETE EXISTING TASKS AND TO AVOID DIFFUSION OF EFFORT. INEFFICIENCY AND WASTE LAY AT THE ROOT OF CURRENT DIFFICULTIES AND HAD TO BE REMOVED. HE EMPHASISED THE NEED FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN MANAGEMENT, CRITICISED THE WASTEFUL EFFECTS OF EXISTING METHODS OF CALCULATING PLAN FULFILMENT BY CRUDE MEASUREMENT OF GROSS PRODUCTION, AND COMPLAINED OF THE FAILURE SO FAR TO IMPLEMENT FULLY THE 1979 REFORMS.

3. BAIBAKOV'S ECONOMIC REPORT TO THE SUPREME SOVIET ON 17 NOVEMBER CONFIRMED THAT THE SOVIET ECONOMY IS WELL BELOW PLAN THIS YEAR. HE DID NOT GIVE NUMERICALLY EXPRESSED TARGETS FOR THE MAIN SECTORS FOR 1982 BUT HIS OUTLINE FOR 1985 RETAINED MOST OF THE OPTIMISTIC TARGETS PUBLISHED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR, ALBEIT WITH SOME SCALING DOWN. SOME OF THESE TARGETS ARE ALREADY OUT OF REACH. TO MEET ITS FIVE YEAR TARGET FIGURE OF 239 MILLION TONNE AVERAGE THE GRAIN HARVEST WILL HAVE TO AVERAGE OVER 250 MILLION TONNES A YEAR OVER THE NEXR FOUR YEARS - 15 MILLION HIGHER THAN THE 1978 RECORD. IT IS ALSO UNLIKELY THAT COAL PRODUCTION, WHICH HAS BEEN FALLING FOR THREE YEARS (TO 705-710 MILLION TONNES THIS YEAR) WILL REACH ITS 1985 TARGET OF 775 MILLION TONNES. OIL PRODUCTION MAY BE SUSTAINED AT ITS CURRENT LEVEL OF 600-610 MILLION TONNES, BUT IS UNLIKELY TO REACH 630 MILLION TONNES BY 1985.

CONFIDENTIAL

4. THAT SO MUCH OF THE 1981-5 FIVE YEAR PLAN SHOULD BE OUT OF REACH SO EARLY IN THE PLAN PERIOD MUST BE PROFOUNDLY DEPRESSING TO THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP. THE CONTINUING DISCREPANCY BETWEEN HOPE AND REALITY IN SETTING AND MEETING TARGETS IS A VIVID ILLUSTRATION OF WEAKNESS IN ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT, ON WHICH BREZHNEV COMMENTED. LITTLE IS APPARENTLY BEING DONE TO CORRECT IT BEYOND EXHORTATION TO APPLY MORE EFFECTIVELY THE PRESENT LARGELY DISCREDITED METHODS.

5. THE FAILURES HAVE DIRECT IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SOVIET EXTERNAL FINANCIAL POSITION. THERE IS NO REASON TO SUPPOSE THAT THE COUNTRY IS IN SERIOUS DIFFICULTY, BUT A CERTAIN STRINGENCY MAY LEAD THEM TO LOOK TWICE AT THE COST OF EXISTING AND - EVEN MORE - POTENTIAL EXTERNAL COMMITMENTS.

FCO PSE PASS SAVING UKDEL NATO

KEEBLE

REPEATED AS REQUESTED

FCO | WH
EESD

THIS TELEGRAM
WAS NOT
ADVANCED

2
CONFIDENTIAL

SOVIET ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

Summary

Soviet economic difficulties, already severe, will have been somewhat increased by Western measures introduced following the invasion of Afghanistan. Meat and milk production have been adversely affected and there have been hold-ups in projects relying on Western technology.

1. Western imposition of certain economic measures following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan came at a time when the Soviet economy was already in difficulties. In 1979 Soviet industrial output grew by only 3.4 per cent against a plan target of 5.7 per cent. National income increased by less than 2 per cent, well below the planned growth rate and the lowest since the Second World War. A major factor in these poor results was the severe winter of 1978-79 which disrupted industry and transport. The steel, chemical, pulp and paper industries fell behind their production plans. Coal and electricity supplies were also affected. Agriculture suffered from the severe frosts and a drought in the spring growing season, resulting in a poor grain harvest of 179m tons, (following a record harvest of 237m tons in 1978).
2. While denying Western forecasts that oil production is about to peak and then decline, Soviet officials have admitted that the efforts required to maintain future output of fuel and energy will make major demands on capital investment and scarce labour supplies, and require advanced technology. Oil, gas and coal deposits will need to be developed as fast as possible in an attempt to meet Soviet domestic needs and the commitment to supply all of Eastern Europe's natural gas and the bulk of its oil requirements up to 1985. Over the next few years, however, oil exports to the West (which at present provide about half of hard currency earnings) will decline sharply and the shortfall cannot be made good by expanding gas exports.
3. The Soviet Union is entering a period of tight labour supplies; the working age population will grow at only 0.3% a year in the 1980s compared with 1.6% a year in the 1970s. At present the highest birth-rate is in the Central Asian and Transcaucasian republics, where relatively little heavy industry is sited, few raw materials are located, and the population is generally immobile. The costs of bringing industry to these areas would be enormous. Meanwhile the labour pool in Western Russia will actually dwindle in the 1980s. These factors mean that industry needs to become more efficient, and automated. A number of measures to improve labour productivity and economic performance announced last summer are to be introduced gradually during the next few years. They include new and generally higher wholesale prices (intended to discourage waste) for energy and raw materials, and subsequently for manufactured products, to be introduced from 1 January 1982.

4. For many years the Soviet consumer has been promised better living standards, and in general conditions slowly improved during the 1970s. In the 1980s, however, the consumer will be squeezed between the increasing needs for investment in energy, heavy industry and agriculture, and the growing allocation of resources to defence. On paper, living conditions may improve, but in practice Soviet industry and agriculture will still fail to provide the public with the goods it wants in the right place and at the right time. Soviet commentators acknowledge that persistent shortages of consumer goods reduce incentives and cause low morale among the work-force. High among the causes of the decline in the urban birth-rate is the reduced but persistent housing shortage: 24 per cent of Muscovites still live in shared communal flats and the proportion is higher still in many provincial cities. Many of the population take refuge in drink; alcoholism is a major problem, contributing to increased infant mortality and rising death-rates among working males.

5. Plan results for the first half of 1980 show an improvement on the equivalent period last year, when output was hit by the severe winter of 1978/79. Industrial production increased by 4.2 per cent, compared with an annual target of 4.5 per cent. Labour productivity growth of 3.2 per cent was a considerable improvement over last year's figure, although still falling short of the annual plan. Oil production at 297 million tonnes is on target, suggesting that the reduced 1980 plan target of 606 million tonnes is a realistic one. Gas continues to do well but coal output has fallen below last year's level. In agriculture, partly as a result of US grain restrictions, meat output in the first half of this year was below that for the same period last year, with particularly sharp falls recorded in the RSFSR, Lithuania, Byelorussia and the Ukraine. Livestock figures indicate that cattle and pig herd levels are being maintained at the expense of sheep and goats. Meat output continues to increase but at a slower rate than planned and output in 1980 is likely to be below last year's - and well below the original 1980 target of 17.3 million tons. Much will depend on this year's grain harvest. Prospects so far are for a reasonable crop.

6. The US ban on high technology exports to the USSR, and the suspension of high technology exports by other countries as exceptions to the COCOM embargo, have undoubtedly affected certain sectors of the economy, but the extent is difficult to gauge. Kosygin admitted at the 34th Session of the CMEA in June that the Western restrictions had caused hold-ups in a number of projects, and made adjustments to economic plans necessary. He also said that future policies concerning the orientation of foreign trade would need to be reviewed, suggesting that the Soviet Union had found itself vulnerable to interruptions in technology imports. At the Central Committee meeting in June Brezhnev announced that he had sent a number of memoranda to the Central Committee, including one dealing with the import of equipment which also suggests that policy is under review.

CONFIDENTIAL

7. Even without Western economic measures against the Soviet Union, the 1980s promised to be a hard decade for the Soviet Union, with great problems of resource allocation and extra strains on the planning and management system. The 11th Five Year Plan is due to be presented by Brezhnev next February; the planners' task will have been made harder by uncertainty over the degree to which they can rely on future Western supplies of goods and technology.

CONFIDENTIAL



8001 ET
911001
Bonnie Amiller!
You may be interested
to see this.

Print - 27/11

CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 8319

From the Secretary of the Cabinet: Sir Robert Armstrong KCB, CVO

20th December, 1979

Ref. A01006

Dear Michael

For Print
[Signature]

As requested in your minute of 11th December I attach a note on the Soviet Grain Harvest, agreed between the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Ministry of Defence and the Cabinet Office.

I am copying this letter and attachment to George Walden (FCO) and Brian Norbury (Ministry of Defence).

Yours ever
Marti Vile

(M. J. Vile)

M. O'D. B. Alexander, Esq.

SOVIET UNION: THE 1979 GRAIN HARVEST

1. The 1979 Soviet grain harvest of 179 million tons was the worst since 1975. The 1976-78 average harvest was 219 million tons, last year's being an all-time record at 237 million tons. These variations are due to the fact that much of the Soviet Union's grain is grown under marginal conditions and is highly vulnerable to bad weather. The 1979 harvest was hit by the very severe winter of 1978-79, followed by floods and droughts during the growing season.
2. The Soviet leadership has in recent years treated agriculture as a top priority sector of the economy; it currently absorbs 27 per cent of all investment. However, the returns from these huge investment outlays have been disappointing and output has failed to keep up with growing requirements. The Soviet Union has thus been a major grain importer since 1972. Despite the record 1978 harvest, it imported some 19 million tons of grain over the following 12 months, and to meet its needs between the 1979 and 1980 harvests it has already ordered some 25 million tons and the total could rise as high as 35 million tons.
3. Little improvement is in prospect, although we believe the annual average level of grain harvest will continue to rise, with substantial fluctuations about the secular trend. On present evidence import requirements will vary in accordance with harvest yields and will be about 15-30 million tons a year for the foreseeable future. Well over half Soviet grain requirements are for feed grain, so imports could only be cut in the short term by drastically curtailing the already lagging meat production programme. This seems most unlikely as the Soviet leaders are committed to increasing per capita meat consumption and Soviet consumers have become used to a generally improving diet - though meat supply, which "like all basic foodstuffs is heavily subsidised," is usually inadequate.
4. Almost all of the Soviet Union's grain imports come from the USA and Canada. The Soviet Union's capacity to import is limited mainly by the need to pay in hard currency, but also by port and transport bottlenecks and inadequate storage facilities. It will find hard currency payments progressively more difficult in the 1980s with the expected decline in oil exports which now provide over 40 per cent of its hard currency earnings.
5. The poor 1979 grain harvest highlighted the Soviet Union's dependence on imports of grain from the West to satisfy consumer expectations. The prospects are for continued substantial grain imports despite the increasing strain these will place on the Soviet hard currency balance.



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

MR. VILE
CABINET OFFICE

AF 17/12/79

Soviet Grain Harvest

I should be grateful if you could let me have a background note on the results of this year's harvest in the Soviet Union. If, as I understand is the case, there has been a serious failure, I should be glad for an assessment of the implications. It may well be that the subject has already been dealt with in some more general assessment and if so a copy would be sufficient. If nothing has so far been done, I should be glad if you could put action in hand.

I am sending a copy of this minute to George Walden (Foreign and Commonwealth Office).

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

SL

11 December 1979



IT8.7/2-1993

2009:02



IT-8 Target

Printed on Kodak Professional Paper

Charge: R090212