

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

INFORMATION
December 23, 1972

TOP SECRET/CODEWORD

MEMORANDUM FOR HENRY A. KISSINGER

FROM: Tom Latimer *TL*
SUBJECT: Sino Soviet Relations

You might be interested in the attached item which notes that the Soviets are claiming one of their border guards was killed in a "clash with the enemy." This is the first time since the Sino Soviet border talks began in October 1969 that the USSR has given official publicity to an incident resulting in Soviet casualties.

It is possible that the recent upsurge in anti-Chinese propaganda by Moscow results from ^{sudden} ~~certain~~ Soviet awareness of the advanced state of Chinese strategic weapons development. Bill Hyland will be doing a memo to you addressing this in more detail.

When you return from vacation you might want Carl Duckett to brief you on the status of Chinese strategic weapons development and deployment.

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

MORI/CDF C00445740

TOP SECRET/CODEWORD

USSR Publicizes 1971 Clash on Chinese Border

Kazakhstanskaya Pravda on 19 December carried a feature story alleging that a three-man Soviet unit on China's border had a "clash with the enemy" in the fall of last year, in which one Soviet border guard was apparently killed. The article mentions that one man's military ID card, "pierced by a bullet," is on display in connection with the observance of border guards day. Referring back to the border fighting in 1969, the newspaper heaps praise on one of the survivors who was decorated with the Order of Lenin.

This is the first time since the Sino-Soviet border talks began in October 1969 that the USSR has given official media publicity to an incident resulting in Soviet casualties. The *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* article lends some credibility to Western press reports from Moscow earlier this month alleging that there was a more serious clash in which five Soviets were killed in Kazakhstan late last month. While that story apparently came from a Soviet document, Soviet media have still not mentioned it.

Given the history of trouble in this remote frontier area and the growing antagonism between the two countries, incidents of this kind are possible at any time. There is no sign [redacted] however, of recent major clashes, and both Soviet and Chinese officials have been saying over the past few months that the frontier was relatively quiet. [redacted]

25X1

25X1

25X1

22 December 1972

-1-

TOP SECRET [redacted]

25X1