

July 30, 1981

CC CPSU Politburo Meeting

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Summary:

CC CPSU officials consult about burying dead Soviet soldiers

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

(Top Secret)SPECIAL FOLDEROnly copy(Working record)CC CPSU Politburo meeting of 30 July 1981Chaired by Cde. M. A. SUSLOV. Present were Cdes. Yu. V. Andropov, M. S. Gorbachev, A. P. Kirilenko, A. Ya. Pel'she, [N]. A. Tikhonov, V. V. Kuznetsov, B. N. Ponomarev, M. S. Solomentsev, I. V. Kapitonov, V. I. Dolgikh, M. V. Zimyanin, K. V. RusakovSUSLOV has the agenda. I would like to consult about one issue. Cde. Tikhonov has submitted a note to the CC CPSU and a draft instruction regarding perpetuating the memory of the soldiers who have died in Afghanistan. It is proposed to allocate a thousand rubles to each family to put an epitaph on the headstone. The matter is not the money, of course, but whether if we perpetuate the memory of soldiers who died in Afghanistan, what will we write about this on the epitaph of the headstone; in some cemeteries there could be several such headstones, so from the political point of view this would not be entirely correct. What do you think, comrades?ANDROPOV. Of course, I think we need to bury soldiers who died in Afghanistan with honors, but it seems to be that it is a bit early to perpetuate their memory right now.KIRILENKO. I think that it would be inadvisable to erect epitaphs right now.PONOMAREV. Many letters are coming to the CC CPSU and other organizations; parents of the dead especially complain that their children and relatives died in Afghanistan. We need to consider this.TIKHONOV. Of course, they always need to be buried. It's another matter whether inscriptions ought to be made. ANDROPOV. Two questions arise from this. First, the issue of burial with honors and, second, about perpetuating the memory. I think we ought to accept this proposal to bury dead soldiers with honors, but regarding perpetuating the memory, we need to wait a while.TIKHONOV. It's good that together with the Ministry of Defense we will submit new proposals on the basis of an exchange of opinions.SUSLOV. Comrades, we also ought to think about replies to the parents and relatives whose children and friends died in Afghanistan. We should not take liberties here. The replies should be brief and, moreover, standard. We could charge Cdes. Zimyanin, [General of the Army and Chief of the Main Political Directorate A. A.] Yepishev, [N. I., Chief of the CC CPSU Administrative Organs Department, which oversaw the military] Savinkin, and [possibly General of the Army and Chief of the Main Directorate of the Border Troops V. A.] Matrosov with thinking about this.[Source: A. A. Lyakhovskiy's "Plamya Afgana" ("Flame of the Afghanistan veteran")", Iskon, Moscow, 1999; Translated for CWIHP by Gary Goldberg]