

65

[REDACTED]

september 04, 1990

USSR: BW Accident Exposed

The weekly *Literaturnaya Gazeta* reports the anthrax epidemic at Sverdlovsk in 1979 was caused by an accident at a secret military biological weapons facility, not by contaminated meat as authorities have claimed. The article says that human casualties occurred a week or more before symptoms appeared in livestock and that 70 people died. It also claims the coverup is continuing and demands a legislative inquiry to name those responsible for the disaster. (C MF)

[REDACTED] The author's assessment, evidently based on personal research, generally agrees with US intelligence assessments and is the first accurate account in a major Soviet publication. Although the military will resist any admission of BW activities, the call for an investigation may be hard to ignore. In particular, Russian Republic President Yel'tsin's long association with Sverdlovsk may compel a new explanation of the epidemic. [REDACTED] the Soviets have been cleaning up the Sverdlovsk BW plant since late 1988, possibly anticipating a visit by foreign inspectors. Thus, even an honest investigation may find little direct evidence of BW production. (S NEW TN) [REDACTED]

Approved for Release _____

Date 6-10-96

(9)