

March 2, 1969

Soviet Report to East German Leadership on Sino-Soviet Border Clashes

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Summary:

Soviet report summarizing Sino-Soviet military clashes along the border and the island of Damansky.

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On March 2, 1969, at 11 o'clock local time, the Chinese organized a provocation on the Island Damansky which is located on the river Ussuri south of Khabarovsk, between the points Bikin and Iman (Primorsky Region).

The ascertained facts are that this action had been prepared by the Chinese government for a long time. In December 1968 and in January/February 1969, groups of armed Chinese soldiers violated the border at the Damansky Island several times, operating from Hunzy. After protests by the Soviet border guards, the Chinese military returned to their border posts or marched along the line which constitutes the border between China and the USSR.

In the events of March 2, 1969, the border control forces at Hunzy played only a secondary role. An especially trained unit of the Chinese People's Liberation Army with a force of more than 200 men was used for the staging of this provocation. Secretly, this unit was brought on the Island Damanskiy during the night of March 2. The men in this unit had special gear and wore camouflage clothes. A telephone line to the unit was installed from the Chinese shore. Prior to this, reserves and munitions, among others PAC batteries, mines and armored artillery and heavy fire guns, had been pulled together near the Chinese shore. The stabilizers, shelling, mines and grenade splinters, and the kind of crates left in the tanks that were hit, found later provided the proof that these weapons had indeed been used.

Around 2 o'clock Moscow time (9 o'clock local time), our observation posts noted the advance of 30 armed Chinese military men on the Island of Damansky. Consequently, a group of Soviet border guards was dispatched to the location where the Chinese had violated the border. The officer in charge of the unit and a small contingent approached the border violators with the intention of registering protests and demanding (without using force) that they leave Soviet territory, as had been done repeatedly in the past. But within the first minutes of the exchange, our border guards came under crossfire and were insidiously shot without any warning. At the same time, fire on the remaining parts of our force was opened from an ambush on the island and from the Chinese shore. The guards then assumed combat order, and, reinforced by the approaching reserve from the nearby border post, threw back the Chinese surprise attack, and expelled them through decisive action from Soviet territory.

There were casualties and wounded men on both sides.

When the location on the island where the incident had happened was inspected, military equipment, telephones, and phone lines connecting to the Chinese mainland, as well as large numbers of scattered empty liquor bottles (which had obviously been used by the Chinese provocateurs and the participants in this adventure beforehand to gain courage) were found.

There are no settlements on the Island of Damansky and it is of no economic importance at all; there are no villages in the vicinity for dozens of miles. One can obviously draw the conclusion that it [the island] was chosen as the site for the provocation because such an endeavor could be prepared there secretly and then presented to the world in a version advantageous to the organizers.

During the provocation, the Chinese military committed incredibly brutal and cruel acts against the wounded Soviet border guards. Based on the on-site inspection and the expert knowledge of the medical commission which examined the bodies of the dead Soviet border guards, it can be stated that the wounded were shot by the

Chinese from close range [and/or] stabbed with bayonets and knives. The faces of some of the casualties were distorted beyond recognition, others had their uniforms and boots taken off by the Chinese. The cruelties committed by the Chinese toward the Soviet border guards can only be compared with the worst brutalities of the Chinese militarists and Chiang Kai-shek's [Jiang Jieshi's] men during the '20s and '30s.

The crime by the Mao Zedong group which caused loss of lives has far-reaching objectives.

The Maoists exacerbate the anti-Soviet hysteria and produce a chauvinist frenzy in the country, creating an atmosphere which enables them to establish Mao Zedong's anti-Soviet and chauvinist-great power course as the general line of Chinese policy at the IX Party Convention of the CPC.

It is also obvious that the Mao group has the intention of using the anti-Soviet psychosis it created for its subversive and divisive policy in the international Communist movement. The Maoists apparently strive to make an all-out effort to complicate and prevent the convention of the International Consultation of Communist and Workers' Parties in order to create distrust in the Soviet Union and the CCPU among the fraternal parties.

The new dangerous provocations of the Maoists reveal Beijing's intention to activate the opportunistic political flirtation with the imperialist countries - above all with the United States and West Germany. It is no accident that the ambush on the Soviet border unit was staged by the Chinese agencies at a time when Bonn started its provocation of holding the election of the Federal President in West Berlin.

The provocation in the area of the Island of Damansky is part of the Maoists' policy which aims at forcing a radical reversal in the foreign and domestic policies of the PR [People's Republic] of China and at transforming the country de facto into a power hostile toward the socialist countries.

The Mao Zedong group has prepared the organization of armed

along the Soviet-Chinese border for a long time. The Chinese authorities have been creating artificial tensions at the Soviet-Chinese border since 1960. Since this time the Chinese have undertaken several thousand border violations with provocative goals.

At the beginning of 1967, the number of border violations by Chinese authorities increased sharply. In some districts they tried to install demonstratively border patrols on the islands and those parts of the rivers belonging to the USSR. In December 1967 and in January 1968, the Chinese undertook large provocative actions on the island of Kirkinsi on the Ussuri [River] and in the area of the Kasakevich Canal. On January 23, 1969, the Chinese staged an armed attack on the Island of Damansky.

The border in the area of the Island of Damansky was established according to the Treaty of Beijing of 1860 and the enclosed map which the representatives of Russia and China signed in June 1863. According to the then drawn-up demarcation line the Island of Damansky is located on the territory of the USSR. This line has always been protected by Soviet border guards.

Confronted with the Chinese provocations at the border, the Soviet side, for years, has taken active steps towards a regulation of the situation.

The question of the borderline was discussed in the bilateral Soviet-Chinese Consultations on the Determination of the Borderline in Certain Controversial Areas of 1964. The Soviet side made a number proposals regarding the examination of the controversial border question. The Chinese leadership, however, was determined to let these consultations fail. The Chinese delegation put up the completely untenable demand to recognize the unequal character of the treaties delineating the Soviet-Chinese border and raised territorial claims against the Soviet Union about an area of altogether 1,575,000 square kilometer. On July 10, 1964, Mao Zedong declared in a conversation with Japanese members of parliament with regard to the Chinese territorial demands against the Soviet Union that "we have not yet presented the bill for this territory."

On August 22, 1964, the consultations were interrupted. Despite our repeated proposals the Chinese did not resume the conversations and did not react even when the question was mentioned in the Soviet foreign ministry note of August 31, 1967.

Meanwhile the Chinese authorities continued to violate grossly the Soviet-Chinese agreement of 1951 on the regulation of the navigation in the border rivers. In 1967 and 1968 they blew up the consultations of the mixed Soviet-Chinese navigation commission which had been established on the basis of the agreement of 1951.

In the Chinese border areas large military preparations set in (construction of airports, access routes, barracks and depots, training of militia, etc.).

The Chinese authorities consciously conjure up situations of conflict along the border and stage provocations there. On our part, all measures have been taken to avoid an escalation of the situation and to prevent incidents and conflicts. The Soviet border troops have been instructed not to use their arms and, if possible, to avoid armed collisions. The instruction on the non-use of arms was strictly enforced, although the Chinese acted extremely provocatively in many cases, employed the most deceitful tricks, picked fights, and attacked our border guards with stabbing weapons, with steel rod and other such things.

The armed provocation in the area of the Island of Damansky is a logical consequence of this course of the Chinese authorities and is part of a far-reaching plan by Beijing aiming at increasing the Maoists' anti-Soviet campaign.

Since March 3, 1969, the Soviet Embassy in Beijing has been exposed again to an organized siege by specially trained groups of Maoists. Brutal acts of force and rowdylike excesses against the representatives of Soviet institutions are occurring throughout China every day. All over the country, an unbridled anti-Soviet campaign has been kindled. It is characteristic that this whole campaign assumed a military coloration, that an atmosphere of chauvinistic frenzy has been created throughout the country.

Faced with this situation the CC of the CPSU and the Soviet government are undertaking the necessary steps to prevent further border violations. They will do everything necessary in order to frustrate the criminal intentions of the Mao Zedong group which are to create hostility between the Soviet people and the Chinese people.

The Soviet Government is led in its relations with the Chinese people by feelings of friendship and is intent on pursuing this policy in the future. Ill-considered provocative actions of the Chinese authorities will, however, be decisively repudiated on our part and brought to an end with determination.