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Author(s)	Yu. Dmitriyev
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Author: Yu. Dmitriyev

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At the time it was not desirable to write about the provocations on the border. The Maoists, we hoped, would change their behavior. Surely they would not forget the sincere, generous aid of the Soviet people!

They did not remember all of it. The bandit shots on Damansky (as is now clear to everyone) were a logical sequence in the adventurist, Jesuitical course of Mao Tse-tung.

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I recalled a Soviet government statement saying that since 1962 Chinese servicemen and civilians had been systematically violating the Soviet border and attempting, without authorization, to "absorb" individual sections of Soviet territory. It was just such a section of our land that our cutter was approaching, a small, sandy island where Chinese had landed.

We went ashore with Vasily Dvoryanov, an officer in the border guards and an old-timer in the Amur area. We walked on coarse gravel that had been ground to a luster by the river sand and approached the tower. There we found the border detail, headed by Sr. Sgt. Anatoly Grechanyuk, a lean, smiling Ukrainian. The senior man in the detail reported on the situation to the officer. Opposite the tower, some 20 meters away, was a low canvas tent. Near it was a blackened vat, for cooking food, that had been dug into the ground, and wood was lying about.

"Haven't they gone away? " Dvoryanov asked.

"No, Comrade Major."

There was a pause. They were talking about the self-styled "landing force," a group of Chinese who were on our island illegally. Grechanyuk continued his account:

"They appeared here a few weeks ago. The first glimmer of daybreak had hardly appeared when nine boats quickly approached the island. There were 18 Chinese citizens aboard, mainly young people. They were all very defiant. The man in charge of the Soviet detail, Sgt. Belyash, indicated to them in sign language that the Chinese were violating the border. This had no effect on the uninvited guests.

"An hour later a Soviet interpreter arrived on the island. He politely explained to the Chinese citizens that they were on U.S.S.R. territory and should return to their own shore. They replied with threats.

"By evening of that same day some of the boats had gone home. A few of the Chinese remained on our island. What were these people doing? Were they doing some kind of farming here, perhaps? No. They played cards and drank khanzha [Chinese grain vodka]."

At that time I also visited other islands where the Chinese had moved in illegally. Everyone who observed their behavior was increasingly convinced that these actions were instigated and planned in advance. Then suddenly the Chinese side, contrary to the traditional agreement, refused to let our specialists make water fences on their sectors of the Amur, although the scientific work was conducted in the interests of both countries. Then they interfered with the work of our fishermen and the navigation of Soviet ships.

And then, of course, the behavior of the uninvited guests, which reached the point of scandalous insolence, aroused anger. After violating the U.S.S.R. state border, they then attempted to insult our officials and servicemen. They made attempts to provoke brawling and fighting. For instance, Wang Chan-keng, a 26-year-old native of the village of Kunho in Aigun County, tried to put his head under a deck hatch to prevent it from closing. Later, while he was under guard, he attacked our soldier who was on duty.

Observing the regulations customary between socialist states, the Soviet border guards immediately handed the violators over to the Chinese authorities. Instead of being punished, the hooligans, who had thrown aside all restraint, were usually greeted as heroes on the Chinese shore; people shook their hands and congratulated them.

Unfortunately, as the years passed, the situation on the border with the C.P.R. grew worse and worse. The Peking authorities embarked on a path of continuous provocations. The hung weiping appeared on the Amur to replace the "landing force" described above. Here are some examples of the provocational actions.

Winter, 1967, Kurmandinsky Island in the Amur. From Dec. 7 to Dec. 9 the situation on this sector deteriorated abruptly. Chinese in two tractors and a truck attempted to violate the border regime; they drove on our territory, although there was a fairly good dirt road on their side. On Dec. 23 a whole column, consisting of six trucks, two buses and one passenger car with soldiers and local residents under the command of five officers, made an ostentatious attempt to drive across Soviet territory toward their Moho Island. Our detail, led by the officer Maznyak, barred the way to the violators. The Chinese shrieked insults. They kept repeating quotations from the works of Mao, tried to run our border guards down and waved sticks and carbines.

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Sometimes the tactics were changed. Our Sgts. Krikunov and Grigoryev were offered three bottles of vodka. And in exchange the Soviet border guards were to let their vehicles through. The soldiers indignantly refused. The provocation was foiled.

Drunken border violators staged a big orgy in late January, 1967, near the village of Petropavlovka. They tried to force our border detail back from the occupied frontier. The soldiers, headed by the officer Boruchenko, did not yield. The hooligans had to retreat. The next day some drunken hung weiping grabbed some khanzha and little red books of Mao's quotations and raved for hours on end within sight of our soldiers.

In that same year, on the eve of Soviet Army Day, an unpleasant border incident took place on the Ussuri River near the Soviet city of Bikin. At 11:00 a.m., local time, a truckload of local residents came toward our side from the Chinese town of Jaoho. Fog had crept over the land. The violators tried to take advantage of the poor visibility. But our detail, made up of Jr. Sgt. L. Gumennov and Pvts. V. Uryupin and L. Kurov, barred the truck's way. Clearly and with dignity the sergeant said: "The territory on which you are now standing belongs to the Soviet Union. I ask you to leave it."

Obviously this was just what the provocateurs from Jaoho had been waiting for. They began cursing, and a bloodcurdling shriek rang out. Women, teenagers and children began coming toward the site of the incident. Many of them were wearing hung weiping badges. One had the feeling they had been forced to come here by

the thugs with red bands on their right arms. They were the leaders. They did more than all the others-they pushed our border guards, tried to grab the lapels of their coats and urged our soldiers to disobey the officers.

Then the quoting of Mao began-one high-pitched voice shouted the words and the crowd repeated them. Here and there people began to sing "The East Is Red." This orgy on the Ussuri ice lasted for several days. It was obvious that the provocation had been prepared in advance. The boots of all the hung weiping were cleated so that they could keep their footing on the ice. In the buses, to which they returned from time to time, khanzha was prepared "to raise their spirits."

But not all the Jaoho residents who had been herded here shared this great-power intoxication of the Maoists. Some Chinese, especially elderly ones, who know the value of Soviet assistance and friendship, covered their eyes. And one old man, when none of the provocateurs with the red armbands - the so-called "representatives of the revolutionary masses" - were nearby, very quietly urged the local residents to return home and stop the outrages.

My notebook recounts quite a few such instances. In the Far East I was told that the Chinese violate the elementary rules of navigation on the rivers, at times creating hazardous situations, wreck the boundary markers and predatorily fish for valuable breeds of fish. But perhaps this is enough. No matter whom I happened to meet in these regions-fisherman, border guard, sailor, pilot or builder-everyone realized that all this is the result of the Mao Tse-tung group's antipopular, chauvinistic policy, and everyone expressed confidence that the Chinese people, who are great and strong, will surmount the national tragedy caused by the ruinous course of the Peking rulers.

And here is one more thing. I remember that when I then returned to Moscow, many people asked: "How is it on the border? Is it terrible?" No, it's not terrible; there are no bullets whistling on the Amur and the Ussuri. Everything I've described here in these notes at that time did not go beyond the normal bounds of border life. The defenders of the Soviet border showed great tact and restraint.

Once again the bandit shots have rung out. The insolent Maoists have resorted to a monstrous, armed provocation. But the Soviet border guards are heroically standing guard over the sacred frontiers of the homeland. They are prepared to rebuff any bandit forays from beyond the cordon.

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against the Soviet border troops guarding Damansky Island.

The Soviet government resolutely rejects the unfounded territorial claims of the Chinese authorities.

Damansky Island is an integral part of Soviet territory. The false assertions put forward by the Chinese authorities in this respect are nothing but an attempt to confuse public opinion in China and other countries.

The Soviet government considers it necessary to emphasize with utmost firmness that the borders of the Soviet Union are sacred and inviolable. The Soviet government again states that it resolutely opposes the military clashes on the Soviet-Chinese border. All the assertions by Peking propaganda that the Soviet Union and the C.P.S.U. are hostile toward the Chinese people and the Chinese People's Republic are absolutely groundless. The Soviet Union does not seek clashes; on the contrary, it takes all possible steps to avoid them.

At the same time, the Soviet government states that if the U.S.S.R.'s legal rights are flouted or if further attempts are made to violate the sanctity of Soviet territory, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and all its peoples will resolutely defend it and will deal a crushing rebuff to such violations.

In lodging a strong protest with the C.P.R. government against the fresh provocation in the Damansky Island area, a provocation deliberately calculated to create an atmosphere of estrangement between the peoples of the C.P.R. and the U.S.S.R., the Soviet government warns that all responsibility for the potentially grave consequences of such adventurist actions by the Chinese authorities rests entirely with the Chinese side.—Moscow, March 15, 1969.

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(Editorial)—U.S.S.R. BORDERS ARE SACRED AND INVIOLABLE. (Pravda, March 17, p. 1. 1,000 words. Condensed text:) ... On March 2, as is known, on Peking's orders a bandit attack planned in advance was made on Soviet border guards in the area of Damansky Island in the Ussuri River. ...

The Chinese government has failed to draw the proper conclusions from the warning [in the subsequent Soviet statement] and continues to provoke incidents. On March 14 a group of armed Chinese soldiers made a fresh attempt to invade Soviet territory—Damansky Island. On March 15 a large armed detachment of Chinese soldiers, supported by artillery and mortar fire from the shore, attacked Soviet border guards protecting the island and attempted to capture it. The provocateurs received their just deserts this time too; as a result of the resolute steps taken, they were driven from the island.

The armed provocations on the Soviet-Chinese border and the predatory aspirations of the Mao Tse-tung group have been accompanied by an intensification of anti-Soviet hysteria. Official Chinese organs have made completely unfounded and essentially aggressive territorial claims in an attempt to create grounds for exacerbating tension in Soviet-Chinese relations.

The Soviet people resolutely reject the Maoists' insolent encroachments on our soil. Damansky Island is an integral part of Soviet territory. And the false assertions made by Chinese authorities vainly attempting to declare the island "incontrovertibly Chinese" are nothing but attempts to mislead public opinion in China and other countries. These attempts are futile. The progressive world public condemns the aggressive aspirations and actions of the Maoist authorities.

The borders of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics are sacred and inviolable. ...

In cities and villages, at industrial enterprises, on collective and state farms, in scientific and cultural institutions and in troop units mass rallies and meetings are being held at which Soviet people angrily condemn the infamous crimes organized by Mao and his henchmen. ...

Needless to say, our people have not equated and do not equate the chauvinistic, adventurist Mao clique with the Chinese people. Recent events show that the Mao Tse-tung group is ready to sacrifice the vital interests of its own people and their socialist gains, the interests of friendship between the peoples of the Soviet Union and China and the interests of the revolutionary and progressive forces of mankind for the sake of its own great-power, hegemonic aspirations. This merely plays into the hands of imperialist reaction, which is attempting at all costs to undermine and weaken the might of the countries in the socialist commonwealth, the unity and solidarity of the international Communist movement and the front of the anti-imperialist, national-liberation struggle. The Mao group is organizing armed provocations on our country's borders at a time when the heroic people of Vietnam, with the support of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, is courageously repulsing the aggression perpetrated by American imperialism. The policy of Mao and his henchmen is a treacherous, perfidious policy; its failure is inevitable. ...

PROVOCATEURS REBUFFED. (Pravda, March 17, p. 1; Izvestia, March 18. 650 words. Condensed text:) Editors' Note: On March 15 the Soviet government statement on the Maoists' new armed provocation in the area of the Soviet Damansky Island in the Ussuri River was broadcast over the radio. Pravda, Izvestia and Tass Correspondents Zh. Chesnokov, A. Pushkar and N. Glushchenko asked Maj. Gen. V. F. Lobanov, chief of troops of the Red-Banner Pacific Border Military District, to describe the chronology of the events on the border. Here is what he said:

... "On March 12 an officer of the Chinese border post at Hutou came to hold talks with our border guards. Citing Mao Tse-tung's instructions, the Chinese officer threatened to use armed force against the Soviet border guards protecting Damansky Island.

"On March 14, in broad daylight, armed Chinese provocateurs came to the island in groups, one after another, parading their predatory aims. They did not succeed in taking

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