USSR
GOVERNMENT
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of March 29, 1969

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On the morning of March 2, 1969, a Soviet observation post discovered the violation by some 30 Chinese servicemen of the Soviet border at Damansky Island. A group of Soviet frontier guards, led by an officer, headed for the violators with the intention, as was the case in the past, of making a protest and demanding that the latter leave Soviet territory. But each time the Chinese authorities provoked border incidents, the Soviet side did not have any justification for engaging in actions leading to clashes and bloodshed. Such

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Recently on the Ussuri River in the Damansky Island district there had been armed border incidents provoked by the Chinese side. The Chinese authorities did not have, nor can they have any justification for organizing such incidents, for engaging in actions leading to clashes and bloodshed. Such events can only bring joy to those who would like by any means available to create deep enmity between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. Such events have nothing in common with the interests of the Soviet and Chinese peoples.

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and then suddenly, without any warning, opened fire at them point-blank.

Simultaneously from ambushes on Damansky Island, to which the Chinese soldiers had earlier advanced under cover of darkness, and from the Chinese bank fire was opened by artillery, mortars and automatic weapons at another group of Soviet frontier guards stationed near the Soviet bank, who went into action and with the support of the neighbouring frontier post drove the violators from Soviet territory. This perfidious attack resulted in casualties on both sides, in dead and wounded.

Despite the Soviet Government's warning and appeal to abstain from such provocations, the Chinese side, on March 14-15, in this same district made new attempts at armed intrusion into Soviet territory. Sub-units of the regular Chinese Army supported by artillery and mortar fire attacked Soviet frontier troops guarding Damansky Island. The attack was resolutely repulsed and the violators were driven off Soviet territory. This provocation by the Chinese side resulted in new casualties.

Today the Chinese authorities in their statements attempt to disclaim responsibility for the armed clashes. They assert that Soviet frontier guards, not the Chinese, violated the state border and that this island does not belong to the Soviet Union. The Chinese side does not contest the fact that its servicemen acted in accordance with a plan prepared beforehand, although it attempts, by making false statements, to present the Chinese violators' use of weapons as a "forced measure".

It is clear from the Chinese statements that the question of Damansky Island is only part of the alleged territorial problem inherited from the past and which still awaits its solution and is connected
with the recarving of state frontiers. The Chinese Government shows no desire to take into account the existing treaties between China and the USSR, ignores the practice of Soviet-Chinese inter-state relations which had existed for many years and juggles with history, adapting it to its territorial claims. Obviously, all this stems from the radical changes that have taken place during the last few years in the policy pursued by the PRC Government with regard to the Soviet Union and the Soviet people.

As is known, Chinese official propaganda in general raises questions concerning the present borders of China with her neighbouring countries where the inhabitants had long ago through historical processes become a united population. Claims are being made on neighbouring territories under the pretext that at one time or other there had been disputes about them between some feudal rulers, emperors and tsars, or that Chinese conquerors or merchants had been in those places.

History is replete with examples of those who coveted alien territories: some feudal conquerors of the past were declared as "just" and others as being "unjust". Such an approach to invaders and oppressors of the peoples is alien to the Leninist policy.

The Soviet-Chinese border in the Far East, as it exists today, was established many generations ago and stretches along natural frontiers separating the territories of the Soviet Union and China. This border was officially recognized by the Aigun (1858), the Tientsin (1858) and the Peking (1860) treaties. In 1861 the two sides put their signatures and af-
fixed their state seals to a map on which the demarcation line in the Ussuri territory was drawn. In the Damansky Island district this line passes directly along the Chinese bank of the Ussuri River. Both the Soviet and the Chinese states have the originals of the above-mentioned documents.

The status concerning territorial questions established in these treaties as well as in the protocols, maps and descriptions is fully valid to the present day. The Soviet Government takes the position that these principles are to be strictly and unswervingly observed by the two sides. If the PRC Government adheres to a similar position on this question, then there are no grounds for friction and conflicts on the Soviet-Chinese border.

Following the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia, the Soviet Republic solemnly renounced the inequitable and secret treaties with China, the spheres of influence of tsarist Russia in China, extraterritorial rights and consular jurisdiction. It turned over for China's educational needs the Russian share of the indemnity forced upon China by the imperialist states after suppressing what is known as the "Boxer" uprising, liquidated former Russian concessions in China, gave China back the right of way to the Chinese Eastern Railway. The nullification of the above-mentioned treaties was made official by the Agreement on general principles for settling questions between the Soviet Union and China as of May 31, 1924. This Agreement did not consider Russian-Chinese treaties defining the state border to be among the inequitable or secret agreements. There was no talk of their being annulled or revised.

Sun Yat-sen, the great Chinese revolutionary and democrat, had time and again pointed out that the Soviet Government had voluntarily annulled all
inequitable treaties and had rejected all unjust claims and rights of the tsarist government in China. In his political behest of March 12, 1925, Sun Yat-sen, addressing the Soviet and Chinese peoples, expressed the hope that the USSR and free China would unite and form a powerful alliance and that in the great struggle for the liberation of the oppressed peoples of the world they would advance side by side towards victory.

It should be recalled that the leaders of the CPC and later also the PRC Government had repeatedly noted that after the October Revolution the Soviet state based its relations with China on the principles of equality and respect for the sovereign rights of the Chinese people. Mao Tse-tung at the 7th CPC Congress in 1945 pointed out that “the Soviet Union was the first to renounce inequitable treaties and conclude with China new equal treaties”. Mao Tse-tung also spoke about this in Moscow on December 16, 1949.

And thus the question of one-sided treaties in Soviet-Chinese relations about which Chinese propaganda today keeps clamouring is an utter fabrication. The sole idea behind Peking propaganda is to incite among the Chinese people enmity and hostility towards our country, towards the Soviet people.

Historically the picture would be incomplete if no mention is made of the heroic struggle of the Soviet people led by the Communist Party and Lenin personally for the liberation of the Soviet Far East from foreign interventionists in 1918-22, who attempted to tear away from the young Soviet Republic the Primorye and Khabarovsk territories, and Eastern Siberia. The Soviet people defended their Far Eastern lands at the cost of enormous efforts and sacrifice.
Later the Japanese militarists and their accomplices time and again attempted to test Soviet border defences in the Far East. After occupying Manchuria they tried to capture islands on the Amur and the Ussuri belonging to the Soviet Union. These islands became at times the scene of serious armed encounters where the Japanese aggressors were given a crushing rebuff.

Obviously this was not a matter of islands only but of more serious claims by the Japanese imperialists to the sacred and inviolable borders of the Soviet Union and its ally, the Mongolian People's Republic. It is well known how matters ended: at first at Khasan and later at Khalkhin-gol the aggressors were completely routed and thrown back.

In 1945 after militarist Japan was defeated by the Soviet Army and, for the first time in many years, a calm situation prevailed on the Ussuri and Amur rivers.

The victory of the Chinese revolution and the establishment of the People's Republic of China created all requisites for developing good-neighbourly relations, for ensuring a stable peace on the Soviet-Chinese frontiers. In accordance with the Treaty on friendship, alliance and mutual assistance concluded in 1950 between the USSR and the PRC, both sides built their relations on the basis of the principles of "mutual respect of state sovereignty and territorial integrity". In early 1950s, at the request of the Chinese side, the Soviet Union turned over to the PRC complete sets of topographical maps showing the frontier line. At that time the Chinese authorities made no remarks with regard to the border line on the maps, and this line was observed in practice.

Taking into account the economic needs of both countries, a Soviet-Chinese agreement was signed in 1951 on the procedure for navigation on the
Amur, Ussuri, Argun and Sungacha border rivers and on Lake Khanka and on regulating shipping on these waterways. The agreement on this particular economic problem fully proceeds from the above-mentioned treaties which established the borders between the two countries. On the basis of this agreement normal shipping along these waterways was conducted in a spirit of cooperation.

The people living on both sides of the frontier maintained good friendly relations with one another, developed border trade, cultural and other ties. Soviet and Chinese frontier guards settled all questions that arose in a businesslike manner; there had been no misunderstandings that required the interference of central organs.

The Chinese authorities showed interest in using several Soviet islands on the Ussuri and Amur rivers for economic and production purposes (the procuring of hay, wood, etc.), in providing Chinese fishermen with the opportunity of fishing in the Soviet part of the rivers. For this they addressed competent Soviet authorities for permission. Their requests were favourably considered and satisfied by the Soviet side. The procedure of asking for the use of Soviet islands and the Soviet part of the rivers which was observed by the Chinese authorities for many years is one of the proofs that the Chinese side never questioned the fact that the above islands, Damansky Island included, belonged to the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Government, true to Lenin's behests, did everything depending on it to strengthen Soviet-Chinese friendship and cooperation.
The foundation for this friendship was already laid during the years when the Soviet Union rendered the Chinese people large-scale and all-round assistance in their struggle for national and social liberation. The help given by the Soviet Republic to the revolutionary forces of China in 1923-27, the political, economic and military support rendered China by the Soviet Union in repelling the aggression of Japanese imperialism in 1937-45 are bright pages in the history of Soviet-Chinese relations, of the friendly ties between the working people of our two countries. It was precisely the Soviet Army which inflicted a crushing defeat on the crack Kwantung grouping of the Japanese militarists and thus made an outstanding contribution to China's liberation from Japanese occupation.

The extensive and all-round assistance given by the Soviet Union to the people of China and to the Chinese Communists in scoring the victory of the people's revolution that led to the establishment of the People's Republic of China was a genuine manifestation of proletarian internationalism. Mao Tsetung declared in December 1949: "The Soviet people and the Soviet Government for almost 30 years have again and again given assistance to the cause of liberating the Chinese people. This fraternal friendship extended by the Soviet people and the Soviet Government to the Chinese people in their period of trial will never be forgotten."

It can be said without any exaggeration that the Soviet Union—its credits, delivery of modern industrial equipment, provision of enormous scientific and technical know-how free of charge, at the request of the Chinese Government—helped China to create the basis of modern industry, to lay the economic foundation of socialism. Thousands of Soviet specialists worked in China side by side with
Chinese workers and engineers in building up a number of industrial branches completely new for China—the aircraft, automobile, radio engineering and many other branches. Thousands of Chinese citizens received professional training in educational establishments of the Soviet Union, in Soviet plants and laboratories.

Jenmin Jihpao, the organ of the Central Committee of the CPC, in February 1959, when it still wrote the truth about our country, pointed out that Soviet assistance to China "is unprecedented in scale. The Chinese people will always consider Soviet assistance one of the most important factors in our country's rapid progress".

During that period Soviet-Chinese trade also developed on a most extensive scale, and its annual turnover by 1959 reached almost 2,000 million roubles. This was equitable and mutually advantageous cooperation. If not for the position of the Chinese side, trade, economic and scientific-technological cooperation between our countries could undoubtedly develop further and successfully. This still holds true today.

In the international sphere the Soviet Union and China jointly waged the struggle against imperialism, for strengthening world security. When a threat to PRC security arose, the Soviet Union, true to its obligations under the Treaty of friendship, alliance and mutual assistance, invariably came out in support of People's China and together with the latter defeated the aggressive designs of imperialist quarters.

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This good-neighbourly cooperation, embodying the principles of socialist internationalism, was violated
following a change in both the domestic and foreign policy of the Chinese Government in the early 1960s. It was also then that the situation on the frontiers became tense. At first these were small, insignificant violations of the existing border regime, committed as a rule by the civilian population, or, at any rate, by people not in military uniform. In separate sectors Chinese servicemen attempted to violate openly the state border of the Soviet Union. Simultaneously air fields, spur tracks, barracks and dumps were built in districts bordering on the USSR.

Official Chinese propaganda started to hail openly the predatory campaigns against the peoples of Asia and Europe launched by Jenghiz Khan who was declared "the emperor of China", Kang-hsi, the Manchurian Emperor, Chinese emperors and feudal rulers who conducted a policy of conquest. School books and other PRC publications were refashioned in the same spirit; maps were published on which vast territories of the Soviet Union were marked as being Chinese. On some of the maps showing China "in the period of its greatest power", the borders were marked in such a way that the land on which today almost all the peoples of Asia and even many peoples of Europe live was shown to be part of China.

During that period the Soviet Government took quite a number of constructive steps to avert the sharpening of border friction, to lessen tension. With these aims in view the Soviet Government on May 17, 1963, proposed to the PRC Government that bilateral consultations be held between our states. These consultations began in February 1964 in Peking. The Soviet delegation was headed by Deputy Minister P. I. Zyryanov, a Plenipotentiary representative of the USSR, the Chinese—by Tseng
Yung-tsuan, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The Soviet side submitted proposals whose adoption would have made it possible within the shortest period to carry out by mutual consent the specification of individual sectors of the Soviet-Chinese state border line. The Soviet delegation was guided by the consideration that the successful completion of consultations would be an important contribution to maintaining friendly relations between our peoples and states.

However, the conduct of the Chinese representatives at the 1964 consultations showed that the Chinese side had no intention of reaching an agreement. The PRC delegation attempted to question the state border, which had been historically formed and confirmed by treaties. The Chinese side regarded the idea of the consultations as an opportunity of artificially creating "territorial problems" that would complicate relations between our peoples and countries for many years to come.

The consultations in Peking were not completed. Agreement was reached in principle to continue them in Moscow on October 15, 1964. However, despite numerous reminders from the Soviet side during that period and in the following years, the PRC Government evaded the completion of these consultations.

Incidentally, it should not have been difficult to reach an agreement and rule out in the future false rumours and misunderstanding. Only one thing was required to achieve this—good will on the part of the Chinese side, for the Chinese representatives to act in the spirit expressed by Premier Chou En-lai when he declared on April 28, 1960, at a press conference in Katmandou, capital of Nepal, in replying to a question by one of the correspondents whether there were "sectors of a non-established
border between the USSR and the PRC”: “There are insignificant discrepancies on maps. They can be easily solved peacefully.” Nevertheless, this statement was not substantiated by practical measures. Violations of the border by the Chinese side not only continued, but the number of them increased.

Thus, the armed provocations of the Chinese authorities on the Ussuri River in the Damansky Island district are no accidental. These actions, like the creation of tension on the Soviet-Chinese border in general, cause serious harm to the cause of socialism and peace, to the common front of the anti-imperialist struggle, to the friendship of the Soviet and Chinese peoples.

Guided by a constant desire to ensure a stable peace and security, to maintain friendship and cooperation with the Chinese people, the Soviet Government considers it necessary to take urgent practical measures to normalize the situation on the Soviet-Chinese border. It calls upon the PRC Government to abstain from actions on the border which could lead to complications, calls for solving differences, if they arise, in a calm atmosphere and by negotiation.

The Soviet Government is also in favour of resumption in the near future of consultations which started in Peking in 1964 between Soviet and Chinese official representatives.

The Soviet Government is firmly convinced that in the final analysis the basic interests of the Soviet and Chinese peoples will make it possible to eliminate and overcome the difficulties in Soviet-Chinese relations.
The USSR Government has declared and considers it necessary to declare once again that it resolutely rejects any encroachments on Soviet territory from any side. And attempts to talk with the Soviet Union, with the Soviet people in the language of guns will meet with a firm rebuff.

The Soviet people unanimously support the Leninist foreign policy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the USSR Government, the measures taken to ensure the inviolability and security of the sacred borders of our socialist land.

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The above Statement of the Soviet Government to the Government of the Chinese People's Republic was handed in at the Chinese Embassy in Moscow on March 29.
Заявление правительства СССР
на английском языке

Цена 3 коп.