

Reassessing Sino-Soviet Border Conflict

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On March 2, 1969, an armed clash erupted between Chinese and Soviet border guards in the area of disputed Zhenbao (Damansky) Island, leaving scores of dead on both sides. Not surprisingly, Beijing and Moscow blamed each other for the “unprovoked aggression” and threatened a “firm rebuff” and “resolute counterblows” should “provocations” continue. On March 15 another battle was fought in the same location, but this time each side was better prepared, tanks and artillery were used, regular troops engaged, and a large number of casualties sustained on both sides, as each allegedly fought in “self-defence.” Despite significant volume of research on the crisis, more questions remain unresolved than answered. Who initiated the confrontation and why? Was there a real possibility of a general war between China and the Soviet Union? How were tensions diffused? How did 1969 standoff affect Sino-Soviet relations in the long run? Newly available evidence allows at last to resolve some of the controversy. While we still cannot say with certainty who fired the first shot at Zhenbao, the Chinese were the ones who initiated the confrontation by breaking the ‘rules of engagement’. The incident was an outcome of China’s policy of active self-defence in response to a perceived Soviet threat in the border region. This policy was approved in Beijing, with Mao’s consent, and implemented by the border authorities, perhaps too zealously. In addition to considerations of self-defence, Mao may have used the border confrontation to aid his domestic political goals, such as gaining support for his platform at the Ninth Party Congress. On the other hand, proposition that Mao perpetrated Sino-Soviet tensions to direct his foreign policy towards rapprochement with the US is misplaced.

Despite Mao’s bellicose remarks, the Chairman feared a war with the Soviet Union, but he also thought it extremely unlikely – until the summer of 1969. Then, faced with increasing Soviet strength in the border region, frequent armed skirmishes, and apparent Soviet intent to launch a pre-emptive nuclear strike, Mao changed his mind. War preparations in China intensified, reaching high point in October, just as border negotiations, sponsored by Moscow, at last got underway. Ironically, Soviet diplomatic gestures towards Beijing were misinterpreted by the

Chinese leaders who thought the Soviets used negotiations as a smokescreen for a surprise attack. Genuine war scare prompted Beijing to rethink its foreign policy priorities and seek rapprochement with the United States.

The Soviet leadership was taken by surprise on March 2, but the March 15 Zhenbao incident was directed by Moscow with the intent of ‘teaching the Chinese a lesson.’ Subsequently, the Soviets adopted a carrot-and-stick method to bring China to the negotiations table, for the Soviet Union stood nothing to gain from the border tensions. The Soviets did not want and did not expect a war. The Politburo did not intend to carry out a pre-emptive nuclear strike, though the question certainly came up for consideration. Nevertheless, by late summer 1969, Soviet leadership grew ever more anxious about mounting tensions, and increased pressure on Beijing, using threats of nuclear strike to back up diplomatic initiatives. Kosygin’s talks with Zhou Enlai in Beijing airport laid the foundations for a pragmatic Sino-Soviet dialogue, but deep mutual mistrust precipitated a prisoner’s dilemma, when each side, despite negotiations, continued to see the other as hostile with all the ensuing consequences: arms race, political tensions, poor cross-border economic and cultural relations. Nevertheless, the protracted border talks, albeit deadlocked from the outset, provided a forum for the two sides to make their views known and helped ensure that the border skirmishes of 1969 would not be repeated.

March 2 border clash was not the first armed clash on the Sino-Soviet border. Li Ke and Hao Shenghang put the total number of incidents between October 1964 and March 1969 at 4189, of these 17 happened at Zhenbao between October 1967 and January 1969.^[1] By March 1969 border incidents were routine occurrences, and the two sides worked out a code of behaviour, “a pattern of almost ritualistic practices and unwritten rules to resolve border violations in a non-shooting fashion.”^[2] This pattern, as evident from the Chinese sources, was such: “a Chinese patrol would approach the island on the ice and that in response, ... [a] Soviet patrol would be dispatched in vehicles to head them or force them back.”^[3] In Soviet accounts, the standard practice was that a Soviet patrol would

“approach the border violators, lodge ... protest and demand their withdrawal from the Soviet territory.”^[4] By early 1969, however, the border situation was worsening rapidly, and encounters had become “more assertive and then violent.”^[5] Chinese sources indicate that the Soviet border guards landed on Zhenbao on December 17, 1968, using sticks to beat Chinese soldiers.^[6] Another incident occurred on January 23, 1969 when the Soviet border guards used “their fists, boots and gun-butts” and chased the Chinese down in a command car to force them off Zhenbao.^[7]

As border encounters grew more violent in early 1969, Heilongjiang Provincial Military District set in motion instructions, conveyed by the Central Military Commission a year earlier, to prepare a “counterattack for the purpose of self-defence” and to “fight no battle unless victory is certain.”^[8] On January 25, 1969, District authorities proposed a plan to counter Soviet ‘invasion’ of Zhenbao. According to the plan, if the Soviets used force to occupy the island, Chinese border patrol would be reinforced by additional units, hidden nearby, to expel the violators.^[9] Shenyang Military District approved the plan. On 19 February the Zhenbao plan was approved by the General Staff and China’s Foreign Ministry. The General Staff instructed the Shenyang Military District and the Hejiang Sub-district that “in conducting the operation it is necessary to ... wait until the opponent shows his strengths, not to show one’s weaknesses, not to be active so as to avoid getting into trouble.”^[10] The importance of adequate preparation was also emphasized. CCP Central Committee agreed that Zhenbao be chosen as the site for the implementation of the plan. Shenyang Military District ruled out the use of fire arms except in self-defence. District commander, general Chen Xilian, recalls that the battle was in preparation for two to three months. Specially trained and equipped units were dispatched to the island in advance: “when the Soviet troops attempted their provocation on 2 March, they actually were hopelessly outnumbered by us.”^[11]

Although the plans for the operation were approved in Beijing, the initiative was taken locally. Heilongjiang authorities “devised a strategy to respond to a [perceived – S.R.] regional security threat” (harassment by the Soviet border guards), but the “province’s excessive zeal in carrying out Mao’s instructions to combat revisionism at home and abroad” ^[12] meant that the CMC’s instruction of “giving tit for tat” and “gaining mastery by striking only after the enemy has struck” would be interpreted loosely by the local authorities. ^[13] Indeed, at the time, “Heilongjiang was a hotbed of revolutionary activity” and “in this context, it is not surprising that the province would also try to play a leading role in using military means to counter what was then perceived as the Soviet ideological threat on its border.” ^[14] As early as 1970, Robinson suggested, with insight, that “one can ... conceive of regional authorities misinterpreting or changing standing orders concerning the handling of border incidents in order to demonstrate zealotry in guarding against Soviet revisionism.” ^[15] The People’s Liberation Army was particularly eager to show its loyalty to Mao, and the Chairman reiterated that “although the Chinese troops’ equipment was inferior, this inferiority was compensated by their daring spirit.” ^[16]

While Heilongjiang proposed the Zhenbao operation on 2 March, and zealously carried it out, a number of key government agencies, including the General Staff, the CCP Central Committee, and the Foreign Ministry gave their approval. On the Russian side, Soviet official publications, exhaustive studies, and diplomatic memoirs uniformly blame the Chinese for provoking the Zhenbao incident, tying it to factional struggle in Chinese leadership, attempts by the ruling elite to mobilise the population for a new phase of the ‘continuous revolution,’ and to point the people’s attention away from past policy failures. Soviet Foreign Ministry statement on March 7 claimed, for example, that “these criminal actions of Mao Zedong’s clique [are meant to] create such an atmosphere in [China] as to let them distract the Chinese people from major economic and political failures ...

[and] to impose an anti-Soviet platform on the [Ninth Party] Congress.”^[17] In a comprehensive study, Soviet authors Borisov and Koloskov agree that “the armed provocation on the Sino-Soviet border was ... used for fuelling nationalist and chauvinist sentiment in the PRC, in the context of which the organizers of the ‘Cultural Revolution’ planned to strike new blows against the opposition, make another step in solidifying their rule.”^[18] Recently, a former Soviet diplomat in Beijing claimed that “the real reasons for the military actions in Damansky region were in their organizers’ hope to create a favourable ... climate to push through legislation ... setting Lin Biao as Mao’s closest comrade, deputy and a heir.”^[19] Few Russian authors have actually considered that the Chinese actions may have been motivated by self-defence. One exception is a recent study by Goncharov and Usov, who believe that the Zhenbao plan was meant to “to show the correctness of their position on the border issue; to prove the aggressive nature of Soviet policies with respect to China; to prove in deed that China does not fear military pressures from the Soviet Union, and will not let itself be treated like Czechoslovakia; [and] by means of firm but restrained policies to ... prevent unpredicted escalation of the conflict.”^[20]

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the Chinese scholars tend to believe in exclusively defensive nature of the Zhenbao incident. Li Ke and Hao Shenghang adopt the view that the Zhenbao plan was “defensive”, and Yang Kuisong cites a number of recently made available Chinese sources to argue that the plan was “a well-calculated attempt at a defensive counter-attack.”^[21] Mao, of course, perceived the USSR as hostile and aggressive. Since the Sino-Soviet border negotiations collapsed in the fall of 1964, the Soviet Union began to increase steadily the strength of its forces in the Far East, bringing the number of divisions stationed on the border with China from 17 to 29 by 1969. The USSR also deployed ABM systems and “up-to-date weapons of annihilation”, which, Khrushchev claimed as early as September 1964 might be used to “defend [Soviet] borders.”^[22] Mao grew increasingly worrisome in 1968, and his suspicion of Soviet intentions was

reinforced in the aftermath of the Prague events and the inauguration of the Brezhnev doctrine. In the fall of 1968, Mao repeatedly returns to the question of war in his conversations with foreign delegations. On October 1, addressing Albanian defence minister Beqir Balluku, asks anxiously: “for what purposes does the Soviet Union send troops to Bulgaria?”^[23] Later on, speaking to the head of Australia’s communist party, E.F. Hill, Mao again and again assesses the possibility of war. In a short exchange with Kang Sheng, Mao notes,

- (Mao) “During Khrushchev’s times, he often claimed that war was inevitable. But now they no longer make this kind of noise. To say that war is inevitable really means that war is avoidable. In recent years they no longer mention this issue. Isn’t that they seldom touch upon this issue?”
- (Kang Sheng) “They never mention this issue now. They sent troops to Czechoslovakia.”
- (Mao) “If that is the case, they, both the United States and the Soviet Union, and some other countries, are preparing to spread the war. As far as this is concerned, it seems that a war might begin.”^[24]

But Mao has his doubts:

“we must take people’s consciousness into consideration. When the United States stopped bombing North Vietnam, American soldiers in Vietnam were very glad and they even cheered. This indicates that their morale is not high. Is the morale of American soldiers high? Is the morale of Soviet soldiers high?”^[25]

Mao further observes that “the populations of [the US and the Soviet Union] are similar, if they are to fight a large war, they will feel shortage in manpower.”^[26] He implies that if a war is to be fought, it will be a nuclear war. 1968 was marked by student unrest in much of Europe and in the United States. Mao took this as a sign of impending revolution or general war. He wondered: “will the war give rise to revolution, or will revolution prevent war?” At the present, Mao tells Hill, “all under Heaven is Great Chaos. ... This situation will not last long.”^[27]

Of course, Mao did not want a war. On October 1, 1969, when the entire country

prepared for seemingly imminent showdown with the Soviet Union, Mao told a North Korean official: “In the past ten days or so, there has been no fighting along the Chinese-Soviet borders. So long as there is no fighting, we are anxious to see it. We do not want to fight a war.”^[28] But in late 1968 he did not yet know which of China’s two archenemies, the Soviet Union or the United States, would be more likely to launch an attack on the People’s Republic, and managed to maintain equidistance between the two. In fact, Beijing’s anti-American and anti-Soviet propaganda abated somewhat during this period, reflecting Mao’s willingness to compromise with Moscow and Washington to alleviate tensions. On November 25 Renmin Ribao published Mao Zedong’s report to the 2nd Plenary Session of the CCP 7th Central Committee, originally delivered in March 1949. Remarkably, the line where Mao referred to the “world anti-imperialist front headed by the Soviet Union” was left unedited.^[29] The same article also called for negotiations with the enemy: “We should not refuse to enter into negotiations because we are afraid of trouble and want to avoid complications, nor should we enter into negotiations with our minds in haze.”^[30] On November 25, 1968 Beijing invited the United States to hold ambassadorial talks in February, provided Washington accepted a number of crucial demands. On November 3, Renmin Ribao published President Johnson’s speech concerning a bombing halt over North Vietnam, which “surprised many observers not only because of the very fact of its publication but also because no adverse comment was appended.”^[31] Another positive sign may have been Mao’s agreement to publish Nixon’s inaugural address unedited in the *Renmin Ribao* and the *Hongqi*.^[32] This is not to say that anti-Soviet or anti-American propaganda subsided. But Mao wanted to keep the door open on both sides. He did not want a war, and sent signals to both Moscow and Washington, although, as we know now, many of his “signals” were too subtle for the American or the Soviet policy-makers to grasp.

If defence of Zhenbao was an effort by the Chinese leadership (Mao Zedong) to deter a perceived Soviet aggression, to “draw the line” against the Russians, other

considerations may have played in.^[33] Robinson gives credence to the factional struggle explanation. Lin Biao, he suggests, “may have felt that a foreign threat would provide additional argumentation for continued military administration and thus enhance his own chances of long-term survival.”^[34] But recent studies provide sufficient evidence to undermine this proposition: by late 1968 the military re-established political control, and Zhou Enlai rarely crossed Lin Biao in administrative matters, there was no real clash of authority. Besides, Zhou Enlai himself approved the Zhenbao plan, invalidating Robinson’s remark that he “would not have been so foolish as to think that China could get away with such a blatant act without retribution.”^[35]

A further possibility is that Mao “perpetrated the March 2 incident as a means of diverting attention from tensions built up during the Cultural Revolution, and ... planned to use the resulting war scare as an incentive to carry through reforms that had run into popular opposition,” namely, efforts to relocate millions of urban-dwellers to the countryside, the barefoot doctor campaign, educational reform.^[36] Robinson points out that

“by late 1968 or early 1969, an impasse had come about between those who wished to reverse course and put society back together and those who wanted to press forward with what were later called the Cultural Revolution’s “Socialist newborn things” – institutions and processes that presumably would guarantee China would never again run the risk of capitalist restoration.”^[37]

The anti-Soviet atmosphere and nationalist sentiment of the Ninth Party Congress can be traced to the events at Zhenbao, and the Congress did, in fact, establish the military into position of undisputed power, but no evidence exists to suggest that the Zhenbao plan was a part of a calculated strategy to mobilise the delegates or the population at large in order to push through needed reforms.

In the foreign policy realm, could Mao’s approval of Heilongjiang’s initiative be linked to his decision to lean ‘the other way’, that is – to show the new

Washington administration that China would be willing to forge closer links with the United States? This view found stern supporters in the West. As Philip Short points out,

“Mao’s plan was of breathtaking simplicity. If the Soviet Union had become China’s main enemy, then the United States, in the principle that ‘my enemy’s enemy is my friend,’ had become a potential ally... The fighting on Zhenbao Island was the beginning of a prolonged Chinese effort to convince the newly elected US President, Richard Nixon, that Beijing’s foreign policy priorities had undergone a fundamental change.”^[38]

But if any spectacular change did take place, there is very little evidence for it. Publication of Nixon’s inaugural address, for example, was accompanied by a commentary, which still referred to the President-elect as a “panic-stricken chieftain of US imperialism.”^[39] The Warsaw talks invitation was suspended indefinitely in February, allegedly to protest the defection of a Chinese diplomat to the U.S. About the time Beijing was considering the submitted proposals for defence of Zhenbao, Chinese press predicted that “crises-ridden U.S. imperialism will not last long” and that the “Soviet-U.S. collusion is doing all sorts of evil deeds.”^[40] Today, the available evidence is too scarce to suspect that the Zhenbao incident was a part of Mao’s calculated strategy to launch a Sino-American rapprochement.

For months preceding the March 2 clash at Zhenbao, Mao remained worried about the possibility of Soviet invasion. But when the first blood was drawn, “the Chinese leadership ... appeared more inclined to risk further military confrontation rather than to resume their talks with the Soviets.”^[41] Mao did not want a war, but in the public and even among the more restricted circles, he pushed a hard line: no negotiations with the Soviet revisionists and preparedness for war. Speaking to the First Plenary Session of the CCP Ninth Central Committee (April 28, 1969) Mao reiterated his position on the Sino-Soviet confrontation: “We should be prepared for war year by year. People may ask:

what is they do not come? No matter whether they come or not, we should be prepared.”^[42] The kind of war Mao anticipated would be the one fought on Chinese territory – the people’s war. He said: “When others invade our territory and attack us, we shall not invade others’ territory. ... Even if they invited me to come out, I will not come out. ... It is easy for us to fight [an invading enemy] since he will fall into people’s encirclement.”^[43] In a March 15 meeting with the Central Cultural Revolution Group, Mao called on every county to establish militia regiments.^[44] With Mao’s blessing the entire country made feverish preparations for war. “Third-line construction” intensified as Mao sought to relocate China’s military and strategic industries to remote sites in China’s south-west and north-west. Military budget was increased by 34% in June to help cover the costs of third-line policies. Mao did not want a war, and he took appropriate measures to contain the conflict. Soviet charge d’affaires Yelizavetin recalls that in the wake of the second Zhenbao clash, Soviet diplomats in Beijing expected further harassment and massive anti-Soviet demonstrations. But nothing of this sort happened, while “rumours circulated that ‘... defence minister and Mao’s heir, marshal Lin Biao, travelled to the border. After having acquainted himself with the situation, he decided that ‘the Soviets’ patience should no longer be tested.’”^[45] On March 22 Mao instructed Zhou Enlai to “immediately prepare to hold diplomatic negotiations” with Moscow.^[46] At the same time the Chairman believed that war would be avoided. Border skirmishes would continue, he thought, but the Soviet Union was not in a position to launch a large-scale attack on China, since “the focus of the Soviet global strategy lay in Europe.”^[47] But in early June 1969, as British and American newspapers predicted Soviet invasion, and the Soviet military undertook major manoeuvres on the border, Mao became increasingly worried. He asked the four marshals, Chen Yi, Ye Jianying, Xu Xiangqian, and Nie Rongzhen to prepare a report for the Party leadership concerning the possibility of attack by either the United States or the Soviet Union against China. The report was submitted on 11 July and concluded that “in the foreseeable future it is unlikely that U.S. imperialists and Soviet revisionists

will launch a large-scale war against China, either jointly or separately.”^[48] Mao probably shared this view.^[49] Yet, at the same time, border skirmishes continued: in Heilongjiang and Xinjiang in June, more hostilities ensued in July, on the Pacha Island of the Amur river. On August 13, a bloody clash erupted in Xinjiang, apparently on Soviet initiative, leaving scores of Chinese border guards dead. In the aftermath of the clash Soviet government floated the idea of preemptive nuclear strike against China, throwing Mao and much of China into unprecedented war scare. Beijing was partly evacuated, and those that remained dug air-shelters and tunnels day and night and stockpiled food. Mao feared that a Soviet nuclear attack against Beijing might at once eliminate the entire Chinese leadership, and he ordered high-ranked officials, even those that had been purged already, re-assigned to provinces all across China. Ministries, too, were downsized, most civil servants went to the hastily assembled “May 7th Cadre Schools”, for ‘manual labour’ and ‘political re-education.’ Furniture and most belongings were left behind, flats returned to the government, but in general, as Barnouin and Yu note, the relocation campaign was “both efficiently organised and highly disciplined.”^[50] Of the entire Chinese leadership, only Zhou Enlai remained in Beijing, in a secret location, to oversee government operations. Mao himself went to Wuhan. On August 27 the CCP Central Committee and the Central Military Commission established the “Leading Group for People’s Air Defence” to oversee evacuations. On August 28, the Central Committee issued an order for general mobilisation in border provinces and regions. The order called on the people to assist the People’s Liberation Army by all possible means, disbanded all “mass organisations,” promoting factional struggles, imposed still penalties for sabotage and failure to show up at work.^[51]

War preparations and Mao’s fears intensified as a crucial date approached – September 13th, the date when the deadline for negotiations with the Chinese, set by the Soviet government in a note on June 13, expired. On September 6th, the Soviet delegation, headed by Premier Kosygin, arrived in Hanoi to attend the funeral of Ho Chi Min. Kosygin made contact with the Chinese delegation,

requesting that a meeting be arranged between himself and Zhou Enlai. The Chinese side called on Mao for instructions. The night of September 10-11, Yelizavetin was summoned to the foreign ministry and instructed to inform Moscow that Zhou Enlai agreed to meet Kosygin in Beijing. The Chinese leadership at last accepted the Soviet invitation to negotiate, but as a testament to the sour Sino-Soviet relations, the meeting would be held in Beijing airport. Kosygin, however, did not expect a red-carpet welcome. The meeting would be business-like and down to the point – things have gone to far. He ordered his plane, en route to Moscow, turned around, and flew to Beijing immediately.

Moscow had long been weary of the worsening Sino-Soviet relations and grew ever more suspicious of Mao's course as China upgraded its anti-Soviet propaganda to new heights in the early 1960s. Especially worrisome were bitter Chinese complaints about the 'unequal' treaties and disagreements on the territorial issues. On July 10, 1964 Mao raised sentiment in Moscow when he told a visiting Japanese delegation that China maintained a claim for some 1.5 million square miles in the Soviet Far East. "More than one hundred years ago they occupied the entire area east of Lake Baikal, including Khabarovsk, Vladivostok, and the Kamchatka Peninsula. That account it difficult to square. We have yet to settle that account," Mao said. ^[52] In the unfriendly atmosphere of late 1964, Sino-Soviet border negotiations collapsed, as the head of the Chinese delegation declared, ominously, that "if the Soviet side [did] not yield, the Chinese side [would] think of other ways to resolve the problem." ^[53] In the next few years, Soviet citizens and diplomats in China would suffer increased harassment, and the embassy itself would be attacked and besieged for days. By 1967 Soviet intelligence data showed a massive concentration of Chinese troops on the Amur, the Ussuri and the Yalu rivers – about 400 thousand. ^[54] As the border incidents intensified in the mid-1960s, the Soviet government grew more anxious. At the same time, anti-Chinese propaganda remained relatively low-key. Robinson's survey of 306 periodical articles and radio broadcasts from October 1, 1968 through late February 1969 reveals that since early November until March, Soviet

press fell completely silent on the border issues.^[55]

First indications that Moscow's policies towards China were changing came soon after the March 2 Zhenbao incident. As the Soviet decision-makers shifted gears, anti-Maoist propaganda exploded with a myriad allegations against Beijing, filling up front pages of major Soviet newspapers as soon as March 8.^[56] It is widely recognised that the second battle at Zhenbao, that on March 15, was initiated by the Soviets to 'teach the Chinese a lesson.' Elaborate preparations were made in advance, tanks and artillery were utilised, but not aircraft – showing, perhaps, signs of restraint on the Soviet side and unwillingness to escalate the conflict. Subsequent Soviet policy towards China, characterised by mounting military pressures, ominous threats and vicious propaganda, replaced Moscow's relatively benign and passive stand vis-à-vis its unsettling southern neighbour. Even so, Kremlin stood ready for negotiations, adopting a classic carrot-and-stick strategy to steer Sino-Soviet relations away from a dreaded military confrontation. On March 21, Premier Kosygin phoned up the Soviet embassy in Beijing. In his conversation with Yelizavetin he said, "I have been requested by the CPSU CC Politburo to speak to Mao Zedong or Zhou Enlai personally. We tried to contact them [by phone], but some cad at the Beijing telephone station, answers rudely, and refuses to connect me with them."^[57] Kosygin apparently suggested that he could even meet with Zhou Enlai in person, "if need be."^[58] Soviet embassy then "visited [Chinese] foreign ministry several times, stating that 'following the instructions of the Soviet Council of Ministers, [we] have a message to convey.'"^[59] On Mao's instructions, Zhou Enlai advised Moscow that "in light of the current Sino-Soviet relations, telephone contact no longer seems appropriate. If the Soviet government has anything to say, please use diplomatic channels to convey [your opinion] to the Chinese government."^[60] Within the next few days, Moscow instructed the Soviet embassy to evacuate all women and children. But the embassy replied that "it is not expedient to rush this through."^[61] Meanwhile, "just in case", Soviet

embassy requested the Chinese foreign ministry to issue exit visas for the diplomats' dependants. Yelizavetin recalls that the Chinese were "clearly disturbed by this move for understandable reasons, and were trying to figure out what might follow after the Soviet diplomats' families left Beijing."^[62] On March 29 Soviet Union released an official statement calling on the Chinese leadership to "refrain from activities in the border area, which could cause difficulties, and ... to settle the differences, if they occur, in a quite atmosphere and by means of negotiations."^[63] On the practical side, the Soviet government suggested that the border consultations be re-launched "in the near future."^[64] In the meantime, the note warned that "attempts to speak to the Soviet Union and the Soviet people the language of arms will be resolutely countered."^[65] On April 1, Lin Biao, while delivering his report to the Ninth Party Congress, stressed that "our Party and Government have consistently stood for negotiations through diplomatic channels to reach a fair and reasonable settlement."^[66] He mentioned the Soviet request for resuming the border consultations, and said that the Chinese side was preparing its response. In the end he called on the nations of the world "to bury US imperialism, Soviet revisionism and their lackeys."^[67] The Soviet government remained somewhat puzzled and worried. On April 11, it reminded the Chinese about its readiness to begin border consultations "in Moscow, on 15 April, 1969 or any other nearest time, suitable for the Chinese side."^[68] The next day, Beijing replied: "we will give you an answer, please calm down."^[69] The Soviet government, however, was anxious to diffuse the crisis, and on April 26 proposed to resume lower-level talks on river navigation in Khabarovsk. The talks opened on June 18, but apparently the Chinese sides attempted, as it had done in the past, "to bring up for discussion problems that were not within the competence of the commission,"^[70] for on July 12, the Soviet government declared that the Chinese "flatly refused" to continue.^[71] As Robinson points out, the Chinese delegation may have hoped that the Russians would simply walk out of the

discussion forum. This time, however, Soviet delegation decided to stay. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union continued to pressure China militarily. In July, for example, “training exercises” were held on the Amur river, involving Soviet pacific fleet. Border incidents continued. Faced with these developments, the Chinese delegation “decided to remain in Khabarovsk and agreed to the continuation of commission’s work.”^[72] By August 8, the two sides concluded a new annual agreement “on certain specific issues.”^[73]

While specific issues were discussed in Khabarovsk, Soviet government laboured to coerce China to the negotiations table to deal with the broader question of Sino-Soviet boundary. On May 24 the Chinese finally replied to the Soviet March 29 invitation to resume border talks. While insisting that the Soviets recognise all border treaties in existence between the two states “are unequal treaties, imposed by Tsarist imperialism” (the demand that brought about the failure of 1964 talks), the Chinese suggested that the *status quo* is maintained in the border region, and that the two sides’ border guards refrain from opening fire. The Chinese government expressed its readiness, in general terms, to begin talks, but warned that the Soviet government “must stop all provocations and military threats.”^[74] “Small war, big war, nuclear war – cannot intimidate the Chinese people,” the note said.^[75] In response, the Soviet government issued another statement – a subtle ultimatum – on June 13. Declaring, that the Soviet Union “treats with understanding those considerations, presented in the [May 24] statement of ... the PRC [namely], that the two sides should avoid border conflicts, and that the border guards ... should not fire on each other,” the statement suggested that the border negotiations begin within the “nearest two-three months.”^[76] “All honest people know, that the Soviet people are busy with peaceful, creative work, build communism, that they never attacked anyone and does not intend to do so. ... If the PRC government is ready to normalise the situation on the Sino-Soviet border, the door for this is open,” the statement concluded.^[77] In July, the Soviet government continued to take diplomatic initiatives in an effort to launch border

negotiations. On July 10, Foreign Minister Gromyko again invited the Chinese side to participate in the general border talks, as well as to consider inter-state relations.^[78] On July 26, the Council of Ministers sent a confidential request to the State Council of the PRC suggesting that the two sides hold high-level talks. Commenting on this request during his conversation with Kosygin on September 11, Zhou Enlai said: “We received a letter from you. But that was a tense moment.”^[79] From the Chinese point of view, things were deteriorating rapidly. On August 13, a new clash erupted at Zhalanashkol (Tiehlikti), on the Soviet border with the Chinese province of Xinjiang. Soviet tanks opened fire on a group of Chinese border guards, killing 20. In the aftermath of the hostilities, Moscow gradually hardened its stand vis-à-vis Beijing, resorting to thinly veiled threats of nuclear retaliation. *Pravda*’s August 28 editorial, for example, claimed that “The USSR has enough strength to look after itself,” warning at the same time that “war, should it break out in present conditions and with present-day devices, because of the lethal weapons and the present means of their delivery would not leave a single continent unaffected.”^[80] On September 1 Soviet Chief of Staff M. Zakharov published an article in *Izvestiya*, warning that “any attempts to encroach upon the Far-Eastern borders of the Soviet Union ... – no matter who makes them, are inevitably doomed to a scandalous failure.”^[81] Growing concern over the Soviet war threats was voiced in the West. *The Times* reported that “the Soviet leaders have been sounding out their Warsaw Pact allies, as well as communist leaders in Western Europe, as to their attitude should Russia ever take the extreme step of striking against China.”^[82] The Soviet government went on the defensive on September 2 and 3: “Rumours are spread”, radio Moscow announced, “that the Soviet Union allegedly intends to strike at China with its atomic weapons. These inventions are absolutely groundless.”^[83] The report reiterated the Soviets’ readiness to begin negotiations, “if the other side shows reciprocity.”^[84]

Rumours were not completely groundless, however. Kissinger recalls that on August 18 a Soviet embassy official “out of the blue” asked William Stearman, a

US State Department specialist, “what the US reaction would be to a Soviet attack on Chinese nuclear facilities.”^[85] In the late August US intelligence reported a standdown of the Soviet air force in the Far East. “Such a move,” Kissinger writes, “is often a sign of a possible attack; at a minimum it is a brutal warning in an intensified war of nerves.”^[86] On September 10, a member of the Soviet mission to the United Nations remarked to his US colleague that “if current Chinese hostility continued, a military engagement might become unavoidable.”^[87] Did the Soviet government really consider a pre-emptive strike against China’s nuclear installations or, as *The Times* suggested “such reports may have been planted by the Russians themselves, in order to alert Peking to the dangers of assertive border policies”?^[88] Although only indirect evidence is available, the Soviet Union probably never planned to strike the first blow against China, and the Soviet leadership did not believe that the Chinese would go as far as to stage a massive aggression against the USSR. On June 7 Brezhnev remarked that “there is a large distance from screaming declarations to real capabilities. ... Soviet people have strong nerves, and will not be scared by screams.”^[89] Soviet Union drastically built up armed forces in the border region, and viciously attacked China’s leadership in the press and in various socialist forums, where Moscow commanded overwhelming support. At the same time, it is simply not true that, as H. Salisbury observed *The Times*, “the ideological and propaganda preparations for war on the Russian side are equally intensive to those on the side of China.”^[90] The Soviet Government did not call on the people to prepare for war in the same way as Guanmin Ribao called on the Chinese people “to prepare to fight against the Soviet revisionism in a regular as well as in a nuclear war.”^[91] On August 14 *Pravda* reported that civil defence preparations were underway in a border region of Kazakhstan, but a Western reporter in Moscow observed four days later that “last week’s fighting on the Chinese border seems to make little impressions on the Russians ... They are more interested in the fresh green peppers and goose berries, which have arrived in the city markets.”^[92] On

the other hand, some witness accounts suggest that the Soviet leadership contemplated a pre-emptive strike against China: “Soviet Defence Minister Andrei Grechko reportedly advocated a ‘nuclear blockbuster’ against China’s industrial centres, while others called for surgical strikes against Chinese nuclear facilities.”^[93] High-level Soviet defector Arkady Shevchenko recalls that “the Politburo was terrified that the Chinese might make a large scale intrusion into Soviet territory. ... A nightmare vision of invasion by millions of Chinese made the Soviet leaders almost frantic.”^[94] But Shevchenko also notes that “fortunately, not many military men shared Grechko’s mad, bellicose stance.”^[95] Civilian leadership was probably even less inclined to launch a first strike and risk retaliation, even if the Politburo was “completely surprised” by the March 2 clash.^[96] Clear superiority of Soviet strategic and regular forces would make it easy to give a “firm rebuff” to a large-scale Chinese intrusion. But in the Soviet government’s view, China would not launch a war against its northern neighbour. Soviet leadership, it now appears, believed that “the armed provocation on the Sino-Soviet border was ... used for fuelling nationalist and chauvinist sentiment in the PRC, in the context of which the organizers of the ‘Cultural Revolution’ planned to strike new blows against the opposition, make another step in solidifying their rule.”^[97] Of course, Moscow was deeply concerned over the border tensions and frequent skirmishes, for it had nothing to gain from recurrent hostilities. The Soviet government did not need, as the four marshals believed, to “use military mobilization to consolidate ... political control and to suppress resistance ... at home and in Eastern Europe.”^[98] Soviet leaders wanted to ease border tensions, to increase cross-border trade, to build their relations with China on pragmatic basis. For this to happen, the Chinese had to be brought to negotiations table by threats of war, if necessary. As Kosygin told Zhou Enlai when the two met: “in the USSR, neither the CPSU nor the Soviet Government call the people to war, [they] never tell the people: tighten your belts and prepare for war, but, on the contrary, talk peace all the time. We understand that the PRC has enough internal business, and a war is a reckless undertaking. Nobody is

saying, of course, that the Chinese are preparing for war.”^[99]

Ironically, of course, the Chinese *were* preparing for war. The Chinese leadership thought the Soviets might launch an attack on the October 1, the National Day, and Lin Biao “ordered China’s entire military forces to enter ‘first-degree combat readiness.’”^[100] As Yang Kuisong points out, “the Chinese leaders seemed almost surprised that no Soviet invasion took place on 1 October.”^[101] But war preparations did not slow down: the Chinese leadership “chose to treat the arrival of Soviet delegation for negotiations on border issues on 20 October as a cover-up for a surprise attack on China.”^[102] Despite these preparations, the Chinese leadership was far from united on the question of inevitability of war. On September 17 the four marshals submitted another report, stressing again that “Soviet revisionists dare not start a major war against China” because of “political considerations”, that is – uncertainty as to the American reaction to Soviet invasion. The marshals noted that “several times the U.S. imperialists have expressed a willingness to improve relations with China,” and that the Chinese should respond positively: “such tactical actions may bring about results of strategic significance.”^[103] The report reflected changing attitude of Mao himself. Mao was bent on finishing up the business of Cultural Revolution and lost his enthusiasm for promoting international Maoism as early as April, 1969, he remained resolutely opposed to Sino-US rapprochement, and seemingly intended to cling to the policy of equidistance. Things began to change in the course of the summer. In their first report to the party leadership, the four marshals, though pointing to US hostility, noted that “the Soviet revisionists have made China their main enemy, imposing a more serious threat to our security than the U.S. imperialists,” who take China “as a “potential threat,” rather than a real threat.”^[104] When asked by Swedish ambassador in June 1969, “which superpower, the United States or the Soviet Union, presented the most serious threat to China,” Zhou Enlai commented “now the situation is changing; we should wait and see.”^[105] Faced, on the one hand, with mounting Soviet military

pressure, and, on the other hand, signs of US willingness to reconsider its relations with the People's Republic, the four marshals "began to emphasise in their discussions the need for allying with the less dangerous enemy in order to confront the more dangerous enemy," resorting to examples from Chinese history to support their propositions.^[106] In September marshal Chen Yi submitted another report to the party leadership, in which he called for a "breakthrough in the Sino-American relations." Chen Yi proposed to use the Warsaw talks as a way to secretly launch negotiations with the United States, but he thought, too, that meetings "at the ministerial or even higher levels" had to be held so that "basic and related problems in Sino-American relations can be solved."^[107] Given the state of Sino-American relations, Chen's ideas were revolutionary – he called them 'wild' – but at the height of war scare in Beijing, Mao was favourably disposed to such proposals. Li Zhisui recalls how "with the war fever at its hottest" Mao presented him with a riddle:

"We have the Soviet Union to the north and the west, India to the south, and Japan to the east. If all our enemies were to unite, attacking us from the north, south, east, and west, what do you think we should do?"^[108]

Dr. Li had no answer. Then Mao said: "Beyond Japan is the United States. Didn't our ancestors counsel negotiating with faraway countries while fighting with those that are near?"^[109] At that time, no one in Mao's entourage took the Chairman's remark seriously. In the press, criticism of the "US imperialist chieftain Nixon" continued unabated, but the course of Chinese foreign policy had already changed. In December 1969, Chinese diplomatic staff in Poland was allowed to negotiate with the US representatives, and on January 8, 1970, the two sides agreed to resume the Warsaw talks.

An indirect result of Soviet coercive diplomacy was the Sino-American rapprochement, which profoundly changed the course of Cold War. Moscow's "active" foreign policy towards China achieved partial relaxation of Sino-Soviet tensions, but fell far short of a breakthrough in inter-state relations. The main factor seems to have been Beijing's unwillingness to engage with the USSR.

Indeed, Zhou's reason for meeting Kosygin in September was to avoid a seemingly imminent war with the Soviet Union. He wanted to assure the Soviet premier that the Chinese would not invade the USSR, and expected similar assurances from the Soviets:

“The Soviet side insists that the Chinese want a war. But we are going through the Cultural Revolution, why would we need a war? China has a large territory, we have enough of it. We are communists and do not need to expand. There are rumours about the possibility of a pre-emptive strike. But this is an aggression, a war. We declare that in this case, we will fight to the end. But we do not want this.”^[110]

Zhou repeatedly stressed the necessity to avoid border clashes: the two sides, he said, “should avoid armed conflicts, withdraw ... forces from the border regions, so they are not in contact ... Not to fire a single shot.”^[111]

The Government of the PRC, he said, “has one aim – to avoid armed conflict.”^[112] Beyond this, normalisation of the Sino-Soviet relations was not on Zhou's agenda. Kosygin, for his part, agreed that the border clashes must be avoided and pledged Soviet cooperation. He proposed to improve railroad and air links, restore direct phone lines between the governments. Kosygin pushed to go further: “a new five-year plan is being drafted in the Soviet Union. The planning authority could take into the account the wishes of the Chinese side.”^[113]

But Zhou said the PRC “was not ready for this.”^[114] Kosygin suggested then to return the ambassadors and resume information exchange concerning international questions. Zhou vaguely promised to take the matter to the Politburo. In the end, Kosygin declared: “the Soviet government would want the relations between the USSR and the PRC – first of all, interstate – to normalise gradually. We'll do our best to solve together all the sharp problems and gradually move on to comradely relations.”^[115]

Zhou was not as optimistic: “a good start”, he said.^[116] When the Chinese side published a communiqué about the meeting, it dropped the line “constructive conversation” from the text, agreed to by both sides.^[117]

Mao felt certain that all Soviet talk about peace was a mere veil for an imminent surprise attack against China. As Yang Kuisong pointed out, Chinese leadership suspected that Soviet diplomatic gestures served a smokescreen for a Pearl Harbour scenario and thought that “behind Moscow’s seemingly moderate attitude lay a well-prepared conspiracy.”^[118] When the Kosygin-Zhou conversation notes were reviewed after the meeting, the CCP leaders discovered that “Kosygin had never actually promised that Moscow would launch a nuclear war against China.”^[119] It was also noted that the “Soviet diplomats continuously asserted that a conflict between China and the Soviet Union was inevitable.”^[120] Intelligence reports suggested that the Soviet Union was ready to launch a nuclear attack on China. On September 16, *London Evening Post* published an article by Victor Louis, who was regarded in the West as an unofficial spokesman for Moscow on a number of sensitive issues. The article suggested the Soviet leadership was considering a pre-emptive nuclear strike against Beijing and even planned to replace the Chinese leadership. These comments, which, Goncharov and Usov argue, were intended to “push on the weakest spot for the Chinese in order to force them to make initiative in practical realisation of the agreements, reached between Kosygin and Zhou.”^[121] If so, the Soviet strategy succeeded. On September 18, Zhou Enlai sent Kosygin a letter, detailing measures, to be taken by China and the USSR, to which the two sides agreed a week earlier. The note again reflected the Chinese leaders’ anxiety concerning a possible Soviet attack: “The two sides”, it said, “promise that the armed forces of each side, including nuclear forces, will not attack and open fire on the other side.”^[122] On October 7 Zhou Enlai spoke to the Chinese delegation attending the border negotiations, and emphasised again that “The negotiation can only be carried out smoothly without being placed under any threat.”^[123] When the talks finally got underway, the Chinese side complained bitterly that “an atomic bomb is hanging over the negotiations table.”^[124] The negotiations finally stalled over the issue of “disputed areas.” Zhou pushed Kosygin into the

acceptance of the “disputed areas” when the two met, and thought he persuaded the Soviet premier to withdraw Soviet troops all border areas so identified, but when the Soviet delegation arrived in Beijing, it “refused to acknowledge that such an agreement had ever been reached”, upsetting Zhou Enlai.^[125]

The failure of the border talks to lift the battered Sino-Soviet relations off the ground and to lead to an overall normalisation cannot be squarely attributed to either side. For their part, the Chinese did not want to engage with the Soviet Union, treating with disbelief Soviet efforts to, as Brezhnev put it, build the Sino-Soviet relations “on a firm and just basis, in the spirit of equality, mutual respect and considering the two countries’ interests.”^[126] The Chinese press continued anti-Soviet propaganda, and Zhou himself reminded Kosygin Mao’s words to the effect that the ideological struggle between China and the Soviet Union will last for another ten thousand years. Chinese hostility can be partially justified in light of the Soviet threats, coercive diplomacy, and military deployment along the border. Moscow took its carrot-and-stick strategy too far – so far that the Chinese would see the stick, but discount the carrot as a logical impossibility, another of the new tsars’ tricks. In the absence of good will on both sides, the border negotiations gave no hope for the improvement in interstate relations. However, as a forum for discussion, they served their purpose: even as hostility persisted, the two sides kept political tensions within appropriate limits, ensuring that Sino-Soviet armed conflict would be henceforth avoided.

^[1] According to Senkov, the commander of the Far Eastern Border District forces, the Chinese violated the Soviet border more than 6 thousand times between 1964 and 1968. (Meeting of the Khabarovsk city and krai party leadership, transcript – TsDNI, F. 17, opis 105, p. 154).

^[2] Ostermann C., “New Evidence on the Sino-Soviet Border Dispute, 1969-71”, *Cold War International History Project* 6-7 (Winter 1995/96), p. 187.

^[3] Maxwell N., “The Chinese Account of the Fighting at Chenpao”, *The China Quarterly* 56 (Oct.-Dec. 1973), p. 733.

^[4] O. Borisov and B. Koloskov quoted in Usov, “A Tragedy at the Ussuri”, *Problemy Dalnevo*

Vostoka [The Problems of the Far East], 3(94), p. 85.

[5] Maxwell, 732

[6] Xu Yan in Yang Kuisong, p. 25

[7] Maxwell, 733

[8] Yang Kuisong, 28

[9] Li Ke and Hao Shenghang

[10] Relevant passages from Li Ke and Hao Shenghang, Wenhua Da Geming de Jiefang jun” are found in Usov, “A Tragedy at the Ussuri”, *Problemy Dalnevo Vostoka* [The Problems of the Far East], 3(94), pp. 86-88, in Yang Kuisong, “The Sino-Soviet Border Clash of 1969: From Zhenbao Island to Sino-American Rapprochement”, *Cold War History* 1(2000), and Wishnick E., “New Evidence about the Regional Factor in Sino-Soviet Relations” in Lukic R., Rethinking the International Conflict in Communist and Post-Communist States, Athenaeum Press: Gateshead, 1998.

[11] Yang Kuisong, 29

[12] Wishnick E. in Lukic R., Rethinking the international conflict in communist and post-communist states, Aldershot, England ; Brookfield, Vt., USA : Ashgate, 1998, pp. 53 & 51

[13] Yang Kuisong, 27

[14] Wishnick, 52

[15] Robinson T., “The Sino-Soviet Border Dispute”, 1970, p. 45.

[16] Barnoin B. & Yu Changgen, The Chinese Foreign Policy During the Cultural Revolution, London ; New York : Kegan Paul International, 1998, p. 90

[17] “Statement by a spokesman of the Foreign Ministry in connection with the provocation of the Chinese authorities on the Sino-Soviet border”, *Vneshnyaya Politika Sovetskogo Soyuz: Sbornik Dokumentov* [Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union: a collection of documents], Moscow: Mezhdunarodnie Otnosheniya, 1969, p. 45

[18] Borisov and Kolosokov, 423

[19] Brezhnev A., Kitai : ternisty put' k dobrososedstvu : vospominaniya i razmyshleniya, Moskva : Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya, 1998, p. 177

[20] Goncharov S. & Usov V., “Peregovory A. N. Kosygina i Zhou Enlaya v Pekinskom Aeroportu” [Conversation between Kosygin and Zhou Enlai in Beijing airport], *Problemy Dalnego Vostoka* 5 (1992), p. 43.

- [21] Yang Kuisong, 27
- [22] Ostermann, 187
- [23] “Conversation between Mao Zedong and Beqir Balluku” (01.10.68), reprinted in Chen Jian & Wilson D., “All Under Heaven is Great Chaos: Beijing, the Sino-Soviet Border Clashes, and the Turn Toward Sino-American Rapprochement, 1968-69”, *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 11 (Winter 1998), p. 157.
- [24] “Conversation between Mao Zedong and E. F. Hill” (28.11.68), reprinted in Chen Jian & Wilson D., “All Under Heaven is Great Chaos”, p. 159.
- [25] Ibid.
- [26] Ibid.
- [27] Ibid., 161
- [28] “Mao Zedong's Conversation with North Korean Official Choi Yong Kun” (01.10.69), reprinted in Chen Jian & Wilson D., “All Under Heaven is Great Chaos”, p. 172.
- [29] Mao Zedong, “Report to the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee of the Communist Part of China”, *Peking Review* 48 (November 29, 1968), p. 7
- [30] Ibid.
- [31] Robinson, “The Sino-Soviet Border Dispute”, 1970, p. 48.
- [32] Wenhua dageming yanjiu ziliao [*Research Materials on the Great Cultural Revolution*] (*Beijing: National Defense University, 1988*), vol. 2, p. 517.].
- [33] Robinson T., “The Sino-Soviet Border Dispute”, 1970, p. 54.
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- [35] Ibid., 262.
- [36] Robinson T., “The Sino-Soviet Border Dispute”, 1970, p. 50
- [37] Robinson T., “China Confronts the Soviet Union”, p. 263.
- [38] Short, Mao: a Life, (1999), p. 584.
- [39] “Confession in an impasse – a comment on Nixon’s inaugural address and the Despicable applause by the Soviet Revisionist Renegade clique” in Hinton H., The People's Republic of China, 1949-1979 : a documentary survey, vol. 5, Wilmington, Del : Scholarly Resources, 1980,

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- [40] Peking Review Feb 14, 1969, pp. 12 & 14
- [41] Barnoin and Yu, p. 89
- [42] “Mao Zedong’s Speech at the First Plenary Session of the CCP’s Ninth Central Committee” (28.04.69), reprinted in Chen Jian & Wilson D., “All Under Heaven is Great Chaos”, p. 164.
- [43] Ibid.
- [44] Mao Zedong’s Talk at a Meeting of the Cultural Revolution Group” (15.03.69), reprinted in Chen Jian & Wilson D., “All Under Heaven is Great Chaos”, p. 161.
- [45] Goncharov and Usov, 48
- [46] “Zhou Enlai’s Report to Mao Zedong and Mao’s Comments” (22.03.69), reprinted in Chen Jian & Wilson D., “All Under Heaven is Great Chaos”, p. 162.
- [47] Yang Kuisong, 35
- [48] “Report by Four Chinese Marshals: Chen Yi, Ye Jianying, Xu Xiangqian and Nie Rongzhen – to the Central Committee - ‘A Preliminary Evaluation of the War Situation’” [First Report], (11.07.69), reprinted in Chen Jian & Wilson D., “All Under Heaven is Great Chaos”, p. 166.
- [49] Yang Kuisong, 35
- [50] Barnoin and Yu, 95
- [51] “The CCP Central Committee’s Order for General Mobilisation in the Border Provinces and Regions” (28.08.69), reprinted in Chen Jian & Wilson D., “All Under Heaven is Great Chaos”, pp. 168-169.
- [52] Mao quoted in Yang Kuisong, p. 23
- [53] Goncharov i Usov, 41
- [54] Ibid.
- [55] Robinson T., “The Sino-Soviet Border Dispute”, 1970, p. 57, footnote 104.
- [56] See, for example, March 8 copy of *Izvestiya*, where anti-Chinese materials filled up the front page and a half of the second page.
- [57] Goncharov and Usov, 48
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- [59] “Zhou Enlai’s Report to Mao Zedong and Mao’s Comments”

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- [69] Goncharov I Usov, p. 50.
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- [74] Renmin Ribao, 25 May, 1969
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- [77] Ibid., pp. 136 & 138
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- [86] Ibid.
- [87] Ibid.
- [88] *The Times*, August 29, 1969
- [89] “Za Ukreplenie Splochnosti Kommunistov, Za Novy Pod'em antiimperialisicheskoi borby: vystuplenie na mezhdunarodnom soveshchani kommunisticheskikh i rabochih parti v Moskve 7 iyunya 1969 goda”, Brezhnev L. I., O Vnechshei politike KPSS i Sovetskogo Gosudarstva: Rechi i Statyi, Politizdat, 1975 (edition 2), Moscow, p. 171
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- [100] Yang Kuisong, 40
- [101] Ibid.
- [102] Ibid.

- [103] Second Report
- [104] First Report
- [105] Yang Kuisong, 43
- [106] Ibid., 45
- [107] “Further Thoughts by Marshal Chen Yi on Sino-American Relations”, reprinted in Chen Jian & Wilson D., “All Under Heaven is Great Chaos”, p. 171.
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- [110] Kapitsta, 84
- [111] Ibid.
- [112] Ibid., 89
- [113] Ibid., 90
- [114] Ibid.
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- [119] Ibid., 40
- [120] Ibid.
- [121] Goncharov i Usov, 57
- [122] “Letter, Zhou Enlai to Alexei Kosygin” (18.09.69), reprinted in Chen Jian & Wilson D., “All Under Heaven is Great Chaos”, pp. 171-172.
- [123] “Zhou Enlai’s Talk at a Meeting of the Chinese Delegation Attending the Sino-Soviet Border Negotiation” (07.10.69), reprinted in Chen Jian & Wilson D., “All Under Heaven is Great Chaos”, p. 172.
- [124] Goncharov and Usov, 58

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