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Kazakhs fled across the Sinkiang border into the Mongolian People's Republic, where they were given refuge. In March, 1944, Usman inflicted a heavy defeat on the Chinese forces in the field. Sheng had already charged publicly that a foreign power was aiding Usman's movement and now protested to the Soviet consulate general. The Soviets rejected Sheng's charge of intervention as "provocation"; and Tass at Ulan Bator on April 2 issued a fuller exposition of the matter in which it asserted that Chinese forces in pursuit of fleeing Kazakhs had crossed the Mongolian frontier — and had been expelled by MPR troops.

By the time Sheng departed the provincial scene in October of that year, the Kazakh rebellion had won (Sinkiang) Mongol converts and grown stronger. The Kazakh-Mongol actions influenced the Sarts of the Ili region, where there had already been organized a "Sinkiang Turki National Liberation Committee." On November 7, under the leadership of the Uighur Akhmedjan Kasimov, the Turki rebels launched an attack on Kuldja.

The rebel force took the town on January 31, 1945, and there was proclaimed the establishment of an "Eastern Turkestan Republic" headed by the Uzbek Ali Khan Türe as president. Usman had already reached agreement with the Ili group, and other dissident elements promptly joined the revolutionary movement. In July, the rebels occupied Chuguchak. They now controlled the whole of the Ili, Altai, and Tarbagatai regions, and turned to menace Urumchi. The "Ili rebellion" had taken on dimensions that threatened the Chinese rule in Sinkiang.

There were those Chinese who assumed that the uprising naturally had Soviet sympathy and support.¹⁴ But if Soviet influence were there, it would logically have been exercised with extreme care at that juncture: the Sino-Soviet treaty, designed to incorporate the winnings of Yalta, was under negotiation at Moscow, and the USSR was preparing to enter the war against Japan. Again, as at the time of Ma Chung-ying's rebellion, the major Soviet interest would have counseled against gambling recklessly in sideshows. There was too much at stake on the center stage.

The signature of the Sino-Soviet treaty and accompanying agreements, in one of which Moscow professed a policy of noninterference in the internal affairs of China, brought about a temporary relaxation of the tensions afflicting Sinkiang. But the issue of local autonomy had not yet been settled. The new chair-

man, Wu Chung-hsin, proved unable to bring peace back to the troubled province. During the 1945 summer, White Russian émigrés and others joined the Ili rebellion. In early September, the rebel forces administered a severe defeat to the Nationalist Second Army. The Chungking government dispatched General Chang Chih-chung, recently appointed director of the generalissimo's Northwest headquarters at Lanchow, to Urumchi to deal with the deteriorating situation. General Chang went to what presumably was thought by the Nationalists to be the source of the trouble: on September 13, he informed the Soviet consul general that, unless hostilities immediately ceased, China would make an international issue of the matter.¹⁵ This was implicitly a threat to evoke the interest of the United States in the developments, to exacerbate relations between that country and the USSR in the Asian sphere. Two days later, Moscow transmitted to Chungking a rebel request that the dispute be mediated, accompanied by an expression of Soviet willingness to act in such mediatory capacity.

Negotiations began at Urumchi on October 10, with Chang Chih-chung as chief negotiator for the Nationalist Chinese and Akhmedjan Kasimov heading a three-man mission from Ili. Soviet consular officials duly mediated. The talks centered on two main issues: (1) the composition of a new government for Sinkiang in which the non-Chinese peoples should be duly represented and (2) the future form of military organization for the province. As an essential preliminary move, the Ili group dropped the appellation "Eastern Turkestan Republic" for their domain.

On January 2, 1946, after prolonged bargaining, there was finally signed an agreement of "eleven points" that nominally guaranteed to the minority peoples of Sinkiang a considerable measure of cultural independence and an important share in the provincial government. Chiang Kai-shek reported on that agreement to a March 12 meeting of the KMT Central Executive Committee. He explicitly acknowledged that the Soviet Union had mediated the dispute and said that the resultant agreement provided for a large degree of autonomy for Sinkiang, within the framework of the Chinese Republic. It appeared as if the minority peoples of Sinkiang were at long last to be granted a substantial share in the government of their homeland. Chang Chih-chung replaced Wu Chung-hsin as provincial chairman and on June 6 reached a supplementary agreement providing for the de facto

autonomy of the dissident Ili, Altai, and Chuguchak districts, and also for a proportional representation of those districts in a re-organized provincial government.

The government envisaged by the January agreement was inaugurated on July 1, 1946, with Chang Chih-chung formally assuming his post as provincial chairman. The two vice chairmen, as chosen by the popular groups, were the Tatar Burhan Shahidi and the Uighur Akhmedjan Kasimov. Masud Sabri, a wealthy Uighur who had since 1935 been a member of the KMT Central Executive Committee and had long been associated with the reactionary C-C Clique,* was given the post of supervisory commissioner for Sinkiang. A Soviet source would later charge that Masud Sabri was a Pan-Turanian who had long served, seriatim, the intelligence services of Germany, Britain, Japan, and the United States.¹⁶ Turki leaders, Kazakhs, Tatars, Mongols, Dungs, and Chinese received other appointments in the new government at Urumchi.

In May, 1947, Chang Chih-chung resigned the post of provincial chairman, and was succeeded by Masud Sabri the C-C man. Masud organized a new government at Urumchi at the end of the month, and C-C policies were given fuller rein. Outraged at the open flouting of their nationalistic aspirations in disregard of the commitments earlier assumed, Akhmedjan Kasimov and his followers first formally protested the changed orientation. This move being fruitless, the Ili group in July once more went into open revolt against the Chinese authority, and in August, 1947, the "coalition" government at Urumchi fell apart. Chang Chih-chung remained in Urumchi to assist Masud, for the time being, in the arduous task of government.

Early in June, a clash had occurred on Sinkiang's border with the Mongolian People's Republic. The *China News Agency* duly reported that, on June 5, a Mongolian force in regimental strength supported by four planes marked with the Soviet red star had begun an invasion of Sinkiang in the vicinity of Peitashan. The National government, through its ambassador at Moscow, protested to the Soviet Union against the invasion. The Moscow radio broadcast a Tass denial that Soviet planes had been in-

* A KMT faction so named for the powerful, conservative brothers who led and dominated it, KMT organization chief Ch'en Kuo-fu and Minister of Education Ch'en Li-fu.

volved in the military action, and this was followed by a denial by Ulan Bator that Mongolian troops had attacked Sinkiang; on the contrary, said Ulan Bator, Peitashan was in MPR territory and the Chinese had done the attacking, thus causing the border incident. Those initial broadcast responses were followed by a formal Soviet note delivered to the National government at Nanking suggesting that an aggravation of the conflict might call into operation the Soviet-Mongol mutual-defense treaty of 1936. Minister of Information Hollington Tong on June 18 announced that the situation had quieted down.

The Mongol version of developments appears to have been closer to the facts than was the Chinese. Usman Bator had broken away from the Ili insurgent group in April and lost most of his following. General Sung Hsi-lien, the Nanking commander in chief in Sinkiang, thereupon enlisted the rebel on the Nationalist side. Usman and his force of half a hundred men participated in the Nationalist strike against an MPR frontier post, and the attackers overran the Mongolian position, killing the officer in command. But the initial success was due to exploitation of the surprise factor against a weak military position. The Mongols threw cavalry and planes against the invaders, and the Nationalist-Usman force was thrust out of the border region. The Mongols were thus left in possession of the territory they claimed—and it was then that the Chinese side took their complaint to the world airwaves. Maps going back as far as 1920, including the official Chinese Postal Map, indicate that the boundary in the Peitashan area was far from being clearly defined. But the so-called "Peitashan Incident" rested, a clear victory for the Mongolian People's Republic.

The Peitashan Incident was only a temporary diversion from the main business at hand. After the Ili delegation departed Urumchi with the quite evident intent of never returning, Chang Chih-chung went through the motions of striving for reconciliation. In a letter of September 1, 1947, addressed to Akhmedjan Kasimov at Ili,¹⁷ Chang remarked the circumstance that talk in the Ining (Kuldja) area was often of "running dogs of the Hans" and "reactionary elements." He presumed that such language must be based upon the premise that those supporting the Hans were reactionary while those in opposition were revolutionary, that those friendly to the Soviets and opposing the Hans were revolutionary also, whereas those friendly to the Hans and opposing

the Soviets were "reactionary elements." Chang said that if this was in fact the significance of the usage, it was in grave error, because China was "your [the Turki] fatherland," while the Soviet Union was for China a "friendly country." Chang added that the Turki phraseology was not susceptible of logical explanation; but if the Turki idea was that Sinkiang was not China's, then there was nothing to be said.

Akhmedjan Kasimov and Rahim-jan Sabir-hadji, in behalf of the Ili group, replied (lengthily) to Chang's letter only in mid-October. Their letter revealed the vast chasm that yawned between the Chinese rulers and their Turki subjects, and it seems to have elicited no immediate response from the Chinese side. Chang Chih-chung at last left Urumchi to return to Nanking. Failing any resolution of the issue of government, the situation remained stalemated, with the Ili regime lacking military strength to challenge the provincial forces, and the Chinese, given particularly the deteriorating military situation in China Proper, in no position to embark on an all-out campaign to suppress the rebellion. On December 31, 1948, Burhan Shahidi succeeded Masud Sabri as Sinkiang provincial chairman. But by this time Nationalist power over China as a whole was in collapse.

In January, 1949, to the accompaniment of the staggering Nationalist defeats on the battlefield and the retirement of Chiang Kai-shek from his position as head of the Chinese state, Chang Chih-chung returned to Urumchi to participate in negotiations with the Soviet side for a new agreement to replace the ten-year treaty signed by Sheng Shih-ts'ai in 1939 governing Sino-Soviet economic collaboration in Sinkiang. The advantage to the Soviets of having a new agreement to replace the old was obvious: Moscow could confront any successor regime with a valid document that would at least have to be taken into consideration in the working out of any new Sino-Soviet relationship. But the Nationalists, standing at the very eve of the expiry of their Mandate of Heaven, clearly could derive no advantage whatsoever from entering now upon treaty negotiations with the power whose approaches Chiang Kai-shek had spurned a short three years before. After several sessions with the Soviet negotiators, Chang Chih-chung returned to Lanchow. In May, Nanking and Moscow agreed on a five-year extension of Soviet rights to operate the airline between Urumchi and Alma-Ata, but nothing more was achieved in the months when the Nationalist regime was crumbling.

By July, General P'eng Teh-huai's Communist army stood at the gates of Sinkiang. In August, an imposing delegation of Turki leaders, led by Akhmedjan Kasimov, left Ili to participate in the proceedings of the national conference engaged in organization of a new government and to make the voice of Sinkiang's minorities heard in Peking, China's new capital. The whole group on August 27 was killed in a reputed plane crash—which, oddly, went unreported for several weeks. With the leading spokesmen for Turki nationalism dead, the function of representing the Turki peoples of Chinese Turkestan passed to one Uighur leader who happened not to be on the plane, Saifudin Azizov, and, more or less automatically, to Burhan. As, effectively, the sole survivor of the Ili regime's leadership, Saifudin was isolated politically; power flowed naturally into the hands of Burhan. Saifudin attended the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference as representative of the Ili group—and now spoke with the voice of Chinese nationalism. The Ili revolt, by the new (Communist) interpretation, had not been at all an effort of the Turki peoples to achieve independence of Chinese rule, but instead was a social antifeudal movement directed against the corrupt KMT regime. On September 29, the 80,000 Nationalist troops in Sinkiang turned over to the Communist side. Burhan had proved the instrumentality.

On October 1, the new Communist regime was inaugurated at Peking (Peiping); its political authority had already been confirmed in Sinkiang. PLA units entered the province on October 20. With their leaders dead or in the Chinese Communist camp, and Burhan working for the consolidation of Communist control over the province, the power of the Turki dissidents was broken. Chang Chih-chung in late November accompanied Communist military leader P'eng Teh-huai back to Urumchi and on that occasion made a speech asking rhetorically if the Kuomintang had not deserved defeat and sketching a glorious future in which, after having passed through the stages of (Mao Tse-tung's) New Democracy, socialism, and communism, humanity would be found in a state of world universalism (*shih-chieh ta-t'ung*).

The Ili rebellion was over. Sinkiang, given the new protestations of friendship between Peking and Moscow, had no friendly power to which it might turn for sympathy and aid, and had to be viewed as solidly in the Chinese political embrace. On December 18, 1949, Peking announced the establishment of a new political

regime at Urumchi. Burhan Shahidi and Saifudin Azizov were respectively chairman and vice chairman of the civil administration, while P'eng Teh-huai and Chang Chih-chung were put in command of the Urumchi headquarters of the Sinkiang military establishment. Usman Bator, who had once more taken up the banner of revolt against the Hans, was hunted down, captured, and executed.

The Chinese Communist power in Sinkiang was now consolidated beyond possibility of effective challenge from the Turki nationalists. Once more, the factionalism and political infighting of the Turki, Kazakh, and Mongol peoples of Sinkiang had critically weakened their campaign for independence from China. All outward appearances suggested that the opportunity would probably never come again. Yet, Yang Tseng-hsin had warned that "The history of several thousands of years can repeat itself." Besides, across the frontier demarcated between the expanding Chinese and Russian empires only in the nineteenth century, there resided the blood brothers of the peoples of Sinkiang, and also another and different type of Communist rule—the Soviet Russian. To the new rulers of China, history and contemporary circumstances alike dictated the desirability of amalgamating Sinkiang more solidly than before with the body of China, as Manchuria had been welded to the Eighteen Provinces a half century earlier, through political, economic, and ethnic measures.

27 MID-CENTURY: NEW DIRECTIONS

IN THE LAST DAYS of Nanking, the Nationalists undertook two final significant maneuvers with respect to the Soviet Union. One move was made by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. Facing military defeat, Chiang in his New Year's message of January 1, 1949, asserted that, "Being a strong believer in the Three People's Principles and abiding by Dr. Sun's bequeathed teaching, I did not have any intention to fight the Communists at the end of the war."¹ And when the National government on January 8 appealed for foreign mediators in its dispute with the Communists, it sent its request to Moscow as well as to London, Paris, and Washington. The Soviet government's reply of January 17, not surprisingly, as the American and British replies of two days earlier, offered no helping hand.

A second move originated in another Nationalist sector. Chiang Kai-shek retired from the presidency of China on January 21, 1949. His successor to the post, Vice President Li Tsung-jen, seemingly even before that date had established contact with the Soviet embassy at Nanking, and on January 23 a representative of General Li called on the American embassy to report that the Chinese and Soviet sides had reached a tentative three-point agreement, which the Soviet ambassador had taken with him on departing for Moscow a few days earlier. The agreement provided for: (1) China's strict neutrality in any future international conflict, (2) the elimination to the greatest extent possible of Ameri-