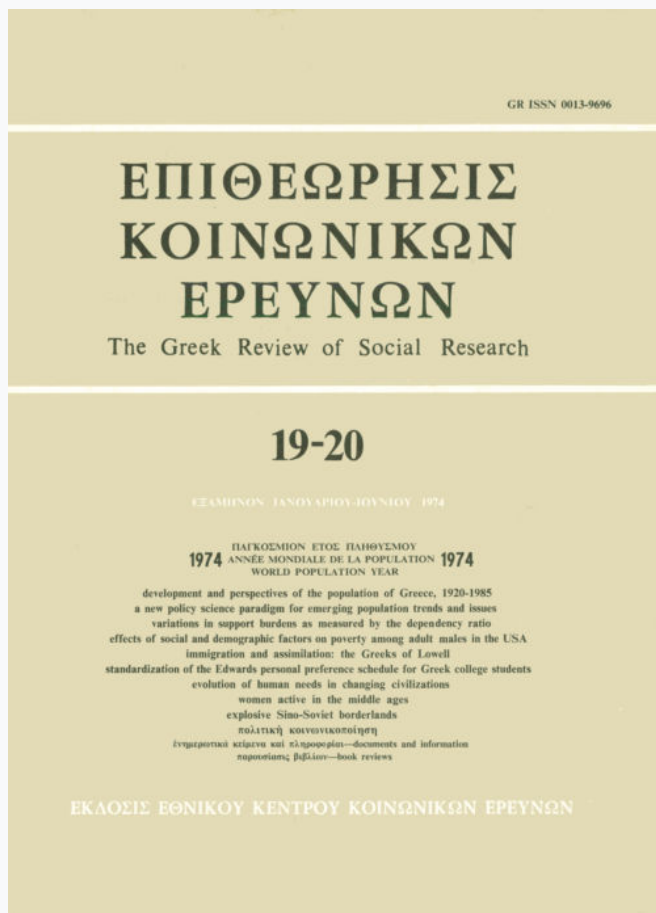


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Explosive Sino-Soviet borderlands

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explosive Sino-Soviet borderlands

by

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The region along the Russo-Chinese border occupied a prominent spot in the global geopolitical picture of the British political geographer, Sir Halford Mackinder, who expounded his famous theory that sea power played a supreme role in military strategies. At that time many strategists believed that victory in war depended upon the command of the sea. According to Mackinder, there was one impregnable fortress which was fully immune to any sea-based attack. He named that fortress *Asiatic Pivot* or *Heartland*.

It was an area encircled by mountains, deserts, and frozen seas. Mackinder described the area in his famous statement:

«Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland;
Who rules the Heartland commands the World Island;
Who rules the World Island commands the World.»

His Pivot Area included the present Soviet Union, China's Sinkiang, and all of Mongolia. Practically, all of this Pivot Area is now in the hands of two giant communist nations, the Soviet Union and China, which are no longer a single communist monolith. They have drifted apart, and can hardly be described as nations on friendly terms.

Quite often, when making comparisons between the two giant communist states, the Soviet Union and China, some writers trace the similarity in the population composition of these two countries. However, there are certain differences in the ethnic composition of these countries. Almost eighty per cent of the Soviet Union's population belongs to three Russian branches, and only about twenty per cent of the people, who are ethnically different from them, are not Russians. This picture of the supposedly multinational state is even more striking in China, where only six per cent of the population is non-Chinese.

These national minority groups in China are settled mainly along the borders of the country, principally in the north, all the way from Manchuria to Sinkiang and Tibet, as well as along the southwestern border of the country. Again, not many people realize that the bulk of China's enormous population numbering more than 800 million people, resides in one-third of its total area, east of an imaginary line drawn from Aigun in Manchuria to the Burmese border. Only slightly more than ten per cent of the people live in the western two-third of the country. Furthermore, the Chinese or Han people, are in the minority on 60 per cent of the total area of the country. This uneven distribution of the population makes the national minorities of the country more important than they should have been, especially if we remember that these minority groups comprise only six per cent of the total population. This geographic distribution of minority groups,

in particular along the Sino-Soviet border, is a very important factor in the study of these groups.

The Chinese are well aware of this lopsided distribution of the population, and have been trying hard to bring more Chinese settlers to the borderlands. In some areas they succeeded in changing the ratio in their favor, in others—they are still a minority. In two border regions, Manchuria and Inner Mongolia, where the Chinese were in the minority several decades ago, they have been able to increase the total population and make these regions predominantly Chinese. This task was accomplished by bringing many millions of Chinese farmers into Manchuria even before the advent of communism in China. Ever since the Russians built the Chinese Eastern Railway in Manchuria with its branch line, formerly known as the South Manchuria Railway, leading to Port-Arthur in the south, millions of Chinese farmers from the overpopulated Shantung and neighboring provinces have poured into Manchuria. These immigrants used the rail lines as funnels through which they flowed in and actually secured areas, formerly considered empty wastelands.

In Inner Mongolia the Chinese increased their own numbers not only by resettling large numbers of Chinese peasants, but also by skillful «gerrymandering.» i.e. by incorporating parts of Chinese provinces into the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region. These provinces were Ninghsia, Suyuan, and Chahar.

The remaining two border regions—Sinkiang and Tibet still have rather small Chinese ethnic groups, and in fact only ten per cent of the Sinkiang population is Chinese, while the remaining 90 per cent are people belonging to national minorities; some are members of the Turkic linguistic family, while others are members of the Mongolian family. A similar situation exists in Tibet, where the Chinese are still a definite minority.

The national minorities in China, by the official 1953 count, amounted to 35.3 million people or over six per cent of the total population at that time. The largest minority group is the Chuang, which accounts for more than 6.6 million people. However, this group chiefly resides in the southwestern part of the country, and, therefore, is outside of the scope of this discussion. Next come the Uighurs with 3.6 million people, the Hui with 3.5 million people, Tibetans with 2.6 million, Manchu-2.4 million, Mongols-1.5 million, and Koreans - 1.1 million. A major proportion of these minority groups resides along the Sino-Soviet border. Insignificant as they are in the face of the countless millions of Chinese, they are, nevertheless, actually a majority in several outlying regions of China.

The Sinkiang-Uighur Autonomous Region, for example, is settled predominantly by Uighurs (more

than 75 per cent of the total), who are people of the Turkic linguistic family, closely related to another language group, the Uzbeks. In addition, a large group of Hui also live in Sinkiang. The other large territorial regions of China, where a non-Chinese population is in a majority, are Tibet, and the former Sinkiang Province.¹

Border regions between China and Russia can be rightfully called classical irredenta areas where the native population on both sides of the border is ethnically the same and represents a majority. Both the Chinese and Russians on either side of the north-western border between China and Russia are in a minority. There are Uighurs, Kazakhs, Tadjiks, Kirghiz, Turkmen, Uzbeks, and Mongols along the border in both Chinese and Russian territory, and they represent the majority of people in Chinese Sinkiang and in Russian Central Asia. Before the Russian Revolution of 1917, these native groups wandered freely across the border, freely intermarried, and, in fact, did not feel that they were either the subjects of the Russian Tsar or of the Chinese Emperor. Administrative control on both sides of the border was practically non-existent, particularly on the Chinese side, which was so far away from the administrative and industrial centers of the country that the region was practically autonomous, if not *de facto* independent. A classical example was that Chinese officials often had to travel through Manchuria and via Russian railroads and highways in Siberia to reach Chinese Turkestan (Sinkiang).

There is no question that the geopolitical structure of the population on both sides of the Sino-Soviet border in the Central Asian region is the most explosive and apt to create a dangerous political situation. The Chinese administration is looking northward across the border with a certain amount of anxiety which is understandable, since there are more than 35 million people in the Soviet part of Central Asia, and only six or seven million in Chinese Sinkiang, south of the border.

With the strengthening of administrative control on both sides of the border, the situation became even more dangerous because the national minorities became restive and indignant at the curtailment of their traditional liberties. The Kazakhs and Uzbeks on one side of the border could not understand why could not they visit their cousins on the other side. This led to numerous incidents, minor and major riots, and even rebellions, more on the Chinese side than on the Russian for the reason that the Soviets exercised much firmer control over their border areas.

1. *Malaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, 3rd ed., Vol. 4, 1959, p. 805; *Nash Drug-Kitay* (Our Friend-China), Handbook, Moscow, 1959, pp. 262-263; *Kratkaya Geograficheskaya Entsiklopediya*, Vol. 2, 1961, p. 295, Moscow.

In the beginning of the Soviet rule, the Russians had to cope with a very serious Turkic rebellion, led first by the spectacular Turkish adventurer, Enver Pasha, a former member of the «Young Turks» group in Turkey. This Turkish general decided to take advantage of the internal strife in Russia, where the Civil War was gradually coming to an end, and of the weakness of the Russian State. He attempted to undertake the tremendous task of uniting between thirty and forty million Turkic people living along the Chinese-Russian border with those who lived in Turkey, and to create a new great Turkic State of about 100 million people. His ambitious scheme came to an end in Russian Central Asia where he was killed in 1922 during one of his raids on Russian territory. Isolated raids of his remaining «Basmachi» bands into Russian Central Asia continued to plague the Soviets for some years. While the Soviet Union was able to secure its region adjacent to the Chinese border because of better communication and transportation systems and firmer control over the entire territory, the Chinese Government of Chiang Kai-shek had very limited control over Sinkiang, where various minority groups were vying for a dominant position.

The majority of national minorities in Sinkiang had one cohesive force which united them in resisting the attempts of the Chinese to control the region. This unifying force was their common religion of Islam. When the Moslem people were oppressed by the Communist authorities in Russia, they packed their tents, gathered their cattle and horses, and moved *en masse* across the border into Chinese Sinkiang, where they found a refuge. However, in recent years, the Chinese Communist administration, after the completion of the construction of the railroad to Urumchi, the capital of Sinkiang, started to exercise a firmer control coupled with limitations of the traditional liberties and freedoms of these people, many of whom were still nomads. The people exploded and several riots occurred in a few cities of Sinkiang. These riots were crushed with the utmost cruelty. The result was that the nomads again packed their «gher» or «yurts» (felt tents), and thousands of them crossed the border into the Soviet Union.

The policy of the Chinese Communist government in Peking to eliminate religion in the region caused a new resentment and discontent. Cruelty has not stopped the spirit of revolt as was evidenced by recent events in Sinkiang, when many thousands of Kazakhs, Uighurs, Kirghiz, and others stormed Chinese Communist headquarters in Kuldja (I-ning) and other major cities only to be met by a rain of bullets. The discontent of the native Turkic people reached such proportions, that the Peking Government could no longer hide it, especially as thousands of refugees reached sanctuary in the Soviet territories of Central Asia.

According to Tom Stacey, the British correspondent of the London Sunday News, no less than 100,000 persons crossed the border in just three years, in the early thirties. There were three reasons for this mass migration: hunger, the ruthlessness of the Communist Chinese, and the attempts of the mass settlement of Chinese immigrants in parts of Sinkiang.¹ Some of these Chinese immigrants were soldiers of the PLA (People's Liberation Army).

The same source mentioned that Chinese officials have acknowledged that there were serious problems in the area: problems which they called «local nationalism» and «counter-revolutionary activity.» The situation in Sinkiang has been especially serious since 1958, some fourteen years ago, although some riots and uprisings there have been in evidence even earlier, since 1954. In 1963 the Chinese authorities openly accused the Soviet Union of fomenting illegal activities among the national minorities in Sinkiang. In fact, both the *People's Daily* in Peking and the magazine, *Red Flag*, vigorously protested that Soviet leaders in April and May 1962, «used their organs and personnel in Sinkiang, China to carry out subversive activities in the Ili region, and enticed and coerced tens of thousands of Chinese citizens into going to the Soviet Union.»²

The year 1962 saw the most serious outbreaks of riots and uprisings in Sinkiang. The one at Kuldja, which is the capital of the Ili Kazakh autonomous *chou*, was especially interesting and significant since the local Kazakhs decided to put their fate into the hands of the Soviet consulate there. A large crowd of demonstrators gathered in front of the Soviet consulate demanding military aid for an «independent movement.» When this aid was refused, they started to cross the border into the Soviet Union. Another uprising took place in Chuguchak (T'a-ch'eng) where the Kazakhs attacked Chinese government offices and an army building. In most cases the riots were cruelly suppressed.³

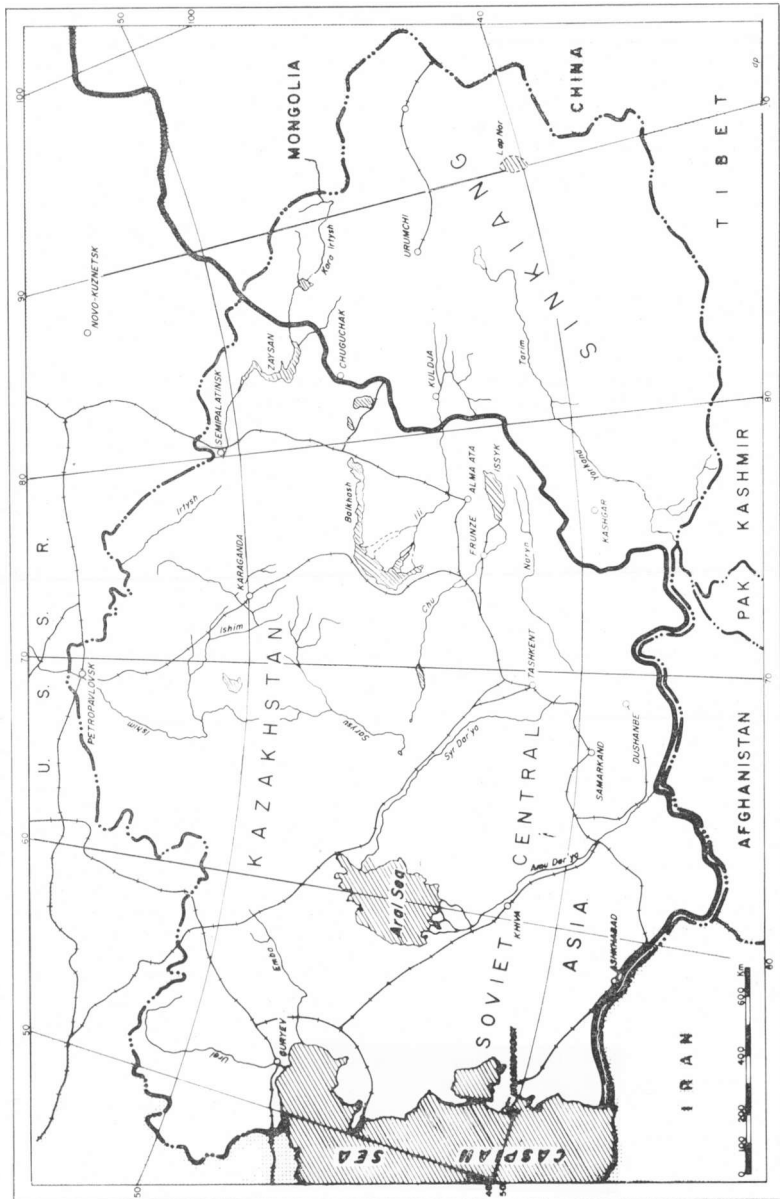
Another source gives a recapitulation of serious disturbances in Sinkiang, starting with an uprising in the region of I-ning (Kuldja) and T'a-ch'eng (Chuguchak) in 1956. There were a series of disturbances throughout Sinkiang and Tsinghai in 1957, very serious disturbances throughout Sinkiang in 1958 and 1959, and finally another serious uprising in 1962 when thousands fled to the Soviet Union. The latter is the uprising which the Chinese blamed on Soviet officials in their statements of 1963.⁴

1. Tom Stacey, *London Sunday Times*, December 8, 1963.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

4. K. Pavlov, «At the Meeting-Point Between Two Communist Empires,» *Bulletin of the Institute for the Study of the USSR*, Vol. XI, No. 1, Jan. 1964, p. 23 (Muenich, Germany).



It was in 1958 that the Chinese openly acknowledged the existence of separatist movements in the border regions. One article indicated that «the idea of local nationalism has witnessed new growth and has already become a dangerous trend which requires strict vigilance.»¹ It is significant that this article stated openly that among the national minorities, i.e. Mongols, Koreans, Uighurs, and others, there were people who demanded the establishment of a «Confederate Republic.» The Uighurs went even farther and demanded that Sinkiang be changed into an «Independent Uighurstan Government.» Perhaps the most serious movement was when the people of Sinkiang wanted to found a republic which they wanted to name, according to the *Sinkiang Daily*, the «Islamic Republic of Eastern Turkestan.»² Moreover, according to the *Kwang Ming Daily*, there were people in Sinkiang, who were secretly planning and actually forming a «Moslem Kingdom.»³

Even among the Mongols, there were some «rightists» who presented their «reactionary demands,» complained the *People's Daily*, for the separation of the Mongolian and Han Chinese administration, while some even demanded «Mongolian independence.»⁴

It is rather astonishing that in Manchuria, which is almost 95 per cent Chinese now, there was a movement in the Heilungkiang Province, whose leader, Pu Lin, demanded recognition and autonomy for the Tungusic groups in Manchuria. The same paper lamented that among national minorities, some openly declared that «it is all right not to have socialism; we want independence.»⁵ However, the Chinese were the most concerned with the attitude of the Islamic people of Sinkiang and Tibet, who even insisted that Arabia, their religious fatherland, was their country—not China. The *Kansu Daily* asserted that the Mohammedans considered Arabia their «Second Fatherland,» and some of them openly approached the government for permission to emigrate, asserting «the wish to return to settle down in Arabia.»⁶ And, finally, the *Kwang Ming Daily* wrote, «there are people who consider that the Han (Chinese) language belongs to the Hans, not to the indigenous nationality, and they maintain that each nationality should have its own language. Among the Mohammedans there are people who maintain that «Arabic» is the language of the Mohammedans.»⁷

This dangerous and rather explosive situation on a Sino-Soviet border, particularly along the border of Sinkiang and Manchuria, suddenly led to a flare-up of armed skirmishes at two widely separated border areas in 1968 and 1969. First, there were armed clashes between Chinese and Soviet troops over some islands (Damanski Island) in the Ussuri River, which were later followed by alleged incursions of Chinese Communist soldiers into the Soviet Central Asian regions. Again, armed clashes followed with casualties on both sides. Since that time, an uneasy truce has been kept along this unstable border. All these events forced both sides to increase numbers of military units in border areas.

The Chinese Communist leaders have been determined to keep their border areas secure. To assure an effective control over the borderlands, they have been using two measures, which could be described as economic penetration and political infiltration. The PLA (Army) plays a great role in these attempts. To secure the borderlands economically, an extensive program has been devised to construct numerous factories and plants. Manchuria, in this respect is better off than the other border regions, since it was and still is the major industrial region of the entire country. However, the other border regions also are witnessing an increased tempo in industrial development.

Inner Mongolia has also received its share of attention. The region formerly lacked any major industrial enterprise, as its Mongolian population was constantly moving in search of pastures for the heads of cattle and horses. While many Mongols are still nomads, those few thousand Chinese, who lived there in the past, were engaged mainly in agriculture. The Chinese Communists, to secure the region economically, created an imposing industrial base there by constructing the Paotow metallurgical complex. The agricultural side of the economy also received attention from the Chinese rulers. Since this region lacks sufficient precipitation, extensive irrigation systems have been developed with the result that the irrigated area of the farming communities has increased threefold since 1949.

A major step in bringing the region closer to the folds of the Chinese Communist State was to increase its Chinese population. Some Chinese sources now claim that the total population of the region has increased from its original 1 million people to almost 10 million. As was explained earlier, this was accomplished by incorporating the province of Suiyuan and parts of Ninghsia and Chahar into the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region. The region now is predominantly Chinese with the Mongols a poor second, accounting for slightly over 1.3 million people, while the Chinese number close to 8 million. In addition,

1. *Chiao-Hsueh yü Yen-chiu* (Teaching and Research), No. 6, June 1958, Peking.

2. *Sinkiang Daily*, December 17, 1957.

3. *Kwang Ming Daily*, Jan. 17, 1958; *Chiao-Hsueh yü Yen-chiu*, *op. cit.*

4. *People's Daily*, Feb. 14, 1957.

5. *People's Daily*, Jan. 11, 1958.

6. *Kansu Daily*, Jan. 23, 1958.

7. *Kwang Ming Daily*, Feb. 17, 1958.

there are some Manchus, Koreans, Evenki, Orochens, Hui, Tungus, and others.¹

The Northeastern border area of China, which in the past was known as Manchuria, demographically was divided into two parts: northern and southern. The northern part at the turn of this century was very sparsely populated, and the Chinese there were a minority. Since the construction of the Chinese Eastern Railway by the Russians, the Chinese settlers started to move in along the newly constructed rail line. This migration was on a small scale in the beginning, but reached the proportions of a deluge in the twenties. The population of North Manchuria in 1890 was calculated to be around 1.5 million, among which, strangely enough, the Chinese were the minority. The great migration began in the early twenties. During just one decade, 1923 to 1932, between 300,000 and 900,000 new colonists-farmers were arriving annually in North Manchuria from other parts of China. The Chinese took advantage of the struggle for supremacy between Russia and Japan after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, and started to move in. The Lytton Report of the League of Nations (1932) vividly stated that:

While Russia and Japan engaged in delimiting their respective spheres of interest in North and South Manchuria, Chinese farmers took possession of the soil, and Manchuria is now unalterably Chinese.²

The same opinion was expressed by Henry L. Stimson, who, describing (1936) the unsuccessful Japanese attempts to settle Manchuria with Japanese farmers, said that:

While the Japanese people as a whole have kept aloof, Chinese farmers have moved in and occupied the soil. The last thirty years have witnessed one of the greatest popular migrations of world history. Nearly thirty millions of people are said to have poured northeastward from the crowded Chinese provinces of Shantung and Hopei and have occupied Manchuria.³

There is no doubt that these millions of farmers who swarmed into rich and fertile Manchuria secured this corner of the Chinese land for the country better than it could have been done by any administrative measure.

As a result of this Chinese colonization of Manchuria the population of Manchuria started to increase rapidly. By 1930 there were 31-32 million people in Manchuria. The Japanese census of 1940 shows 39.2

million people, and according to the data for 1945 there were 46 million inhabitants. The figure is now exceeding 50 million.

Returning to the northwestern corner of the country, here lies Sinkiang, which has been renamed the Sinkiang-Uighur Autonomous Region. It is one of the five autonomous regions of the country which have large minority groups within their borders. Perhaps the most difficult task in the region was to organize the nomadic cattlemen and horsemen of Sinkiang into people's communes, but again Chinese Communist sources proudly declared that they had been able to «entice» no less than 70 per cent of the nomadic horsemen into the communes by 1959.⁴ When it comes to agriculture, only one per cent of the total area of the region was under cultivation in 1960, and it was concentrated along the river valleys and in isolated oases.⁵ This percentage of arable, cultivated land has been slightly increased since. Apparently, these determined efforts to cultivate more virgin lands have given some results, since it has been reported, for example, that within four years (1959-1962), more than 1.3 million hectares (2.2 million acres) of virgin land had been plowed and made productive by the use of irrigation systems.

To summarize what has been said on the status of the border regions, populated by national minorities, especially in the light of Peking's open admissions that it has been encountering difficulties in Sinkiang and other border regions, there is very little doubt that discontent is still smouldering in these areas, although any open uprising or revolt is apparently doomed to failure. No matter how eager the native groups are to separate themselves from Communist China for nationalist or religious reasons, their numbers are still too small. Some 35 million people belonging to national minorities (a formidable figure elsewhere) have no chance of withstanding the onslaught of more than 700 million Chinese. There are several drastic measures which the Chinese Communists could adopt to eliminate discontent among the national minorities: one is really drastic, and that is expelling native people from the border regions and resettling them in densely populated Chinese provinces, and in exchange pouring Chinese farmers into the vacant lands; the other method is to move in additional Chinese military forces, with numerous officials and cadres, to maintain a stronger administration with full powers to deal strongly and effectively with any form of discontent. This seems to be the present policy of the Chinese Communist administration in the border regions, in Sinkiang in particular.

1. Kwang-ming Jih-pao, Dec. 27, 1961, Peking; Druzhiba, No. 37, Sept. 9, 1959, p. 6.

2. League of Nations, Commission of Inquiry into the Sino-Japanese Dispute, Report, 1932 (Lytton's Report), p. 44.

3. Henry L. Stimson, *The Far Eastern Crisis* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publ., 1936), p. 18.

4. Nash Drug-Kitay, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

5. *Malaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 8, 1960, p. 511.

It seems the old plan of Enver Pasha to unify Moslem groups in China and Russia into one Moslem Central Asian State, and, perhaps, to unite all Turkic nations, including Turkey, into one formidable Moslem State of 100 million, is still alive. True enough it is only smoldering, and its center is a small group of emigres from Central Asia, now in Istanbul, Turkey. This group is trying to arouse an interest of Moslem countries in their cause, but, apparently, without any evident result, judging by their complaints in a *Memorandum Concerning Turkistan*, published by the above group in 1967. They bitterly stated that «the unbearable aspect of the problem is the indifference and callousness shown in their cause by their co-nationalists and co-religionists.»¹

There is not much this little group can do in the face of an apathy or indifference on the part of Moslem nations, but to dream and draw maps of a unified Moslem State in Central Asia, which would include all five Soviet Union's republics in Central Asia and the Sinkiang area of China.

As a postscript to this discussion of the geopolitical importance of the border regions along the long Sino-Soviet boundary, and particularly of China's Northwestern regions, I would like to mention that it was in this region, the Lop Nor area, that the Chinese Communist leaders selected a site for their atomic and nuclear installations.

The Soviet Union, during the time of cordial relations between the two countries, provided technical assistance and personnel for the construction of China's first atomic reactor. The first controlled chain reaction was achieved on June 13, 1958.

Chinese efforts to harness atomic energy go back to the year 1950, when both countries, the Soviet Union and Communist China, signed an agreement for the formation of the Nonferrous Metals and Rare Metals Joint Stock Corporation, which was to conduct a survey, search, and extraction of radioactive ores in Sinkiang and neighboring regions. Three years later, in 1953, an atomic energy experimental plant was constructed near Tihwa (Urumchi) in Sinkiang, which was directed by the well-known Italian atomic scientist, Bruno Pontecorvo, a defector from the West.

The next important step was taken in the fall of 1962, when the Peking Government ordered all important physicists from North and Northeast China to Sinkiang, where they were to engage in an accel-

erated program of nuclear research. This group of eminent atomic scientists was headed by Dr. Tsien Hsueh-shen (Ch'ien Hsue-sen), who had spent several years in the United States, before returning to Communist China in 1955. These Chinese scientists were to start where the program was halted with the withdrawal of the Soviet scientists.

It is really ironic that the progress in nuclear research and the consequent atomic bomb explosions in China are attributed to the teamwork of Chinese scientists headed by Dr. Tsien Hsueh-shen, formerly a professor at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) in the Los Angeles area. Professor Tsien, a US Air Force colonel, a director of the rocket section of the US National Defense Scientific Advisory Board, a consultant to the US Navy, and head of the Institute's department of rocket and jet propulsion, became the guiding light behind China's nuclear program. Dr. Tsien, considered a missile genius, together with Dr. Chao Chung-yao, creator of the A-bomb in China, were responsible for the bomb test on October 16, 1964.

The location of the Chinese nuclear research installations in close proximity to the Soviet Central Asian regions has been of great concern to the Communist rulers of China. As long as both countries were on the best of terms, as brother communist nations, there was nothing to fear. Now, however, the situation has drastically changed. There now exists the threat of a possible Soviet Russian attack on the Chinese nuclear research plants in the Lop Nor area, and also, the restive national minority groups in Sinkiang and in other border regions have been quite a problem.

Who could have imagined in the days of friendly relations between the two giant communist nations that they would split-up and follow different paths to their common goal? This possibility of a hostility, however, was suggested by this writer as far back as 1956 in an article written for the Royal Geographical Society in London, in which an opinion was expressed that these two friendly nations may eventually become ideological enemies. In that case, the province of Sinkiang with its newly constructed railway, now terminating at Urumchi, may become the invasion route for the Soviet military forces. By the same token, this railroad may become a dagger in the hands of the Chinese communists directed at underbelly of the Soviet Empire.²

1. *A Memorandum Concerning Great Turkistan*, SEHIR Matbaasinda basilmistir, Istanbul, 1967.

2. Victor P. Petrov, «New Railway Links Between China and the Soviet Union,» *The Geographical Journal*, London: The Royal Geographical Society, Vol. CXXII, Part 4, December 1956, pp. 471-477.

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«For many years I had wanted to see Outer Mongolia. What finally made me go ahead and obtain a visa for the Mongolian People's Republic was a map of China which I had bought in the bazaar at Peking during the summer of 1955. It was brand new (June 1957) and showed China with all its adjacent territories. The surprising thing about it was that it used two different markings to indicate the frontier of China. One marking looked like this: _____, _____, and was defined in the explanatory note as «frontier.» The other looked like this: _____ and indicated «frontier not yet finally determined.» The entire frontier between China and the Mongolian People's Republic was shown with _____.»

Klaus Mehnert: *Peking and Moscow*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, as translated by Leila Vennewitz in 1963.