



August 19, 1947

**Letter from Zhang Zhizhong to Mr. Savel'yev, Consul
General of the USSR in Urumqi**

Citation:

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Summary:

Zhang Zhizhong, the leading Guomindang official in Xinjiang, expresses his hope that China and the Soviet Union can cooperate in Xinjiang in maintaining Chinese sovereignty over the entire province.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Original Scan
Translation - English

[Handwritten:] Translation from Chinese

Dear General Consul Mr. Savel'yev,

Having found out that you are being recalled to your homeland to report I would like to talk with you privately in this letter.

The "Ghulja [Yining] events" which broke out in Xinjiang have gained a peaceful resolution, thanks to the mediation of your country. We should first of all express a feeling of deep respect and gratitude for this friendly and benevolent attitude to the leader of your country, Mr. Stalin, and Mr. Molotov.

More than a year has passed since you arrived in Xinjiang. During this time you have made a deep impression on me with your peace-loving and benevolent sentiments, penetrating view of things, and thoughtful statements, true qualities of an excellent representative of good diplomacy. Thanks to this our relations became friendly and close. This also obliges me to give you your due.

From the time the terms of the peace agreement were signed the situation in Xinjiang has not developed properly and normally. Moreover, it is apparent that the negative phenomena are getting worse. There are many such phenomena, they cannot all be counted. I will mention for example only such cases as: the outrageous killing in Chuguchak [Qoqek or Tacheng] of more than 30 refugees who had returned from the Soviet Union; the assassination of Turkestan Governor-General [Turkestan] and those accompanying him in Dörbiljin [Emin]; the "isolation" of three districts-Ili [Yili], Tarbaghatay [Qoqek or Tachang], and Altai-which continues to this day; the absolute non-compliance with the articles of the peace agreement relating to military issues; the movement in northern and southern Xinjiang for "East Turkestan" which is essentially agitation against the Chinese and against China; the sending of an official letter to me of a provocative nature by the Tarbaghatay governor on 9 November of last year with the stamp "East Turkestan Republic" in Russian and Uygur; an intentionally organized act [vystuplenie] which insulted me which I encountered in Kashgar [Kashi] in April of this year; and, finally, the recent actions inspired by the Ghulja side directed against the appointment of Mr. Masud Sabri to the post of chairman of the provincial government by the central government. This entire series of cases one following the other and mainly causing instability in the situation and alarm among the population undoubtedly also concerns you as a person maintaining the position of an impartial mediator.

I can tell you absolutely openly that when appointing me here the central government had a decision to pursue a policy here in two main directions: on the one hand, a policy of peace and, on the other, a policy of friendship with the Soviet Union. Occupying the position of the representative of the Chairman of the national government and combining at the same time the post of chairman of the provincial government of Xinjiang, I made a firm decision to pursue the policy set by the central government, remembering that having only by achieving peace can war be avoided and ensure normal friendly relations with the Soviet Union, and that on the other hand, having ensured normal friendly relations with the Soviet Union Xinjiang can be led to the path of normal development and a permanent peace secured for it. My work in this period of over a year can provide absolute proof that I have pursued a policy in these very two directions. I think that you will not find exaggerations in my words.

At this moment the main obstacle in the issue of Xinjiang is the existence of two contradictory ideas: on the one hand, the idea that "to be a friend of China means to be against the Soviet Union" and, on the other, the idea that "to be a friend of the Soviet Union means to be against China". All the problems which exist here are

caused by the existence of these two points of view. Therefore for us the most pressing, the most important task today is: on the one hand, to convince people who favor friendship with China to not only not be against the Soviet Union but to also favor friendship with the Soviet Union, and on the other, to convince people who favor friendship with the Soviet Union not only to not be against China but to also favor friendship with China. It is necessary for all the people of Xinjiang to live and develop in an atmosphere of peaceful harmony, in friendship with both China and the Soviet Union. This path is this only correct one for the people of Xinjiang both with respect to their fatherland as well as to a friendly neighbor. Otherwise, if one favors friendship with China one-sidedly while having anti-Soviet sentiments as a premise, or one favors friendship with the Soviet Union having anti-Chinese sentiments as a premise, and if moreover one considers that friendship with China obliges one to be against the Soviet Union or to think that it is impossible to be in a friendship with China without being against the Soviet Union but it is impossible to be in a friendship with the Soviet Union without being against China, such views and line of action are unquestionably mistaken. Such mistaken views and line of action give rise to an unavoidable result, namely they cause rivalry between China and the Soviet Union in Xinjiang and today's political rivalry might also lead to military rivalry in the future. I think that such a prospect is of course undesirable for the governments of both countries. This is my view of this problem. But how do you see it?

I would like to direct your attention to one more fact. In the recent period of over a year our government has been pursuing a policy in Xinjiang which is completely different from that which was pursued in the past. Does it not seem from the viewpoint of your country that the attitude, view, and approach with respect to Xinjiang have also been subjected to some reexamination in order to bring it into accord with the present state of affairs in Xinjiang and in order to ensure the development of friendly relations between the two countries? It seems that this issue merits attention.

It is recalled that when signing the Chinese-Soviet treaty of friendship and alliance the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, Mr. Molotov, made a statement that the Soviet government has no intention of interfering in the internal affairs of China. This noble promise evoked a feeling of gratitude from all the people of China and was greeted with great goodwill from the entire world. It goes without saying that your country is readily keeping this promise.

As regards peaceful international relations at the present moment and also Chinese-Soviet relations on the whole, both sides are of course searching for ways to a rational solution of all issues in order to ensure peace throughout the entire world. But if one looks from the point of view of Xinjiang, regardless of how international relations are headed in general and Chinese-Soviet relations in particular, the geographic position of Xinjiang is such that for China and the Soviet Union it seems a zone "untouched by artillery fire", a security zone, a zone without strategic importance. Such a zone might enjoy the blessings of a permanent peace and mutual security. If, for example, we take the distance from Khorgas [Huo'erguosi] across Lanzhou to Nanjing, this distance is two and a half times the distance from the border of Inner Mongolia across Beiping to Nanjing and one-third more than the distance from Sakhalyan (on the Amur) or from the Manchuria station across Changchun and Beiping to Nanjing. In addition, the route Khorgas-Lanzhou-Nanjing has no water arteries but only one-fourth of it is supplied with a railroad and it passes through sparsely-populated and unproductive regions. From the military point of view China naturally has no possibility of using Xinjiang to threaten the borders of the Soviet Union. At the same time, for its part the Soviet Union would feel no need to use Xinjiang for an attack on China. That is why from the military point of view Xinjiang is an obvious security zone.

As the Soviet Union has no expansionist ambitions, striving only to ensure the security of [its] borders, likewise China is without any aggressive intentions

whatsoever. It is striving only to ensure its territorial integrity. The desires of our two countries do not conflict with one another. On the contrary, both our countries have one common idea: to ensure a permanent peace in Xinjiang, to ensure a permanent peace for a Xinjiang [SIC] friendly to both China and the Soviet Union. Accordingly, the need for unwarranted rivalry, both political and particularly military, is precluded.

I have talked with you many times on the subject of Chinese-Soviet relations in Xinjiang. I have always been in favor of Xinjiang being not only a field on which friendly relations between our countries physically develop but also the bridge which would link China and the Soviet Union in their friendly relations. And this is completely achievable. This is my opinion, my faith, and my desire. I do not know, how do you see it?

I am a military man and have no diplomatic training. Everything that I said above I said with complete openness and sincerity, from my heart. Everything I have said is on my own behalf, in the form of a private friendly conversation. This is not by any means of a diplomatic nature. If I have said something wrong, please excuse me".

In conclusion, please allow me to wish you a good journey and speedy return. On your return we will welcome you wholeheartedly, warmly, and sincerely.

Zhang Zhizhong

7 July 1947

Dihua [Urumqi]

Authenticated: [illegible signature]