

April 30, 1962
The Soviet Document which the Soviet Ambassador Personally Presented to Vice Minister Zhang Hanfu (Translation)

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Summary:

A Soviet account, presented to the Chinese Foreign Ministry of the cross border exodus in Xinjiang.

Credits:

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Original Language:

Chinese

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Appendix

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As the Embassy of the Soviet Union pointed out in its 24 April notice to Comrade Zhang Hanfu, for the sake of the friendly relations between our two nations, Moscow believes that it is necessary to promptly inform Chinese comrades of the fact that large numbers of residents of the People's Republic of China have crossed the border into the Soviet Union. The Soviet Government naturally feels perturbed by the unusual phenomenon that tens of thousands of people have entered Soviet territory from China at will and without the permission of the Chinese authorities or the authorization of the Soviet authorities. This entirely unexpected border crossing has put Soviet border defense agencies and local authorities along the Soviet border into a difficult position.

As instructed, the Embassy of the Soviet Union hereby declares that Moscow is seriously perplexed and astonished by the statement released on 24 April by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, which accused Soviet agencies of failing to follow "the normal practices in handling border crossers" and practically blames these agencies for encouraging border crossing.

As a matter of fact, China is well aware that Soviet border defense agencies have always strictly followed the practices established on the border in stopping residents of the People's Republic of China who are attempting to cross the border into the Soviet Union, persuading them to turn back, and handing them back to Chinese border defense agencies. Normally, it is easier for Soviet border guards to do this when border crossing is not massive in nature. Lately, however, a totally different situation has occurred in the Ba-ke-tu [sic] and Huoerguosi [Horgos] areas along the Sino-Soviet border. As stated in the notice, hundreds and even thousands of people are crossing the border at will on a daily basis.

It is not hard to understand that this extremely special situation has abruptly rendered Soviet border defense agencies totally incapable of observing the aforementioned practices. Border crossing has taken place over vast stretches of land (in the areas west of Ba-ke-tu alone, border crossing has occurred along a 60-kilometer stretch of the border). Most of the border crossers avoided the beaten track. They ignored Soviet border guards' signals for them to stop and proceeded farther into Soviet territory. The Soviet Union believes that it's unnecessary to deploy large numbers of border guards along the border with brotherly China. This is no secret to the Chinese comrades. The protection of the border is carried out by a small number of on-duty personnel from the border defense troops, and on certain sections of the border, there are just some regular patrols. Although in response to the massive border crossing, the relevant Soviet agencies have taken the special measure of deploying a significantly increased number of border guards in the border area, the border guards actually remain incapable of stopping the massive exodus. Use of force against peaceful civilians—civilians of a socialist nation—is out of the question.

The Soviet Government finds it difficult to understand the suggestion made by the Chinese Government in its 24 April statement that Soviet agencies take effective measures to "change this situation and restore the normal state of the Sino-Soviet border." After all, the border crossing began from the Chinese side, and before the escapees approached Soviet border guards, they must have passed by Chinese border guards and crossed the border from the side of the People's Republic of China. Obviously, the assembly and movement of the border crossers took place under the nose of Chinese border defense agencies and local authorities. They should have taken steps to stop the massive border crossing. Moreover, Soviet border guards did not receive any notification about this incident in advance from the Chinese authorities, including border guards. On 22 April, our border guard representatives in the Ba-ke-tu area sent signals from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. to the head of the Chinese border defense post to suggest a meeting so that he could be informed of the border crossing issue, but although he replied that he had received the signals, he

never showed up for the meeting. Consequently, the meeting was not held until 23 April. On the same day, that is 23 April, the Soviet Government instructed the Soviet Embassy to immediately notify the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China of the situation. By the way, for some reason out of his control, the Soviet Ambassador was not able to act according to the instructions until very late on the night of 24 April. Thus, it is the Soviet Union that initiated efforts to establish contact on both occasions, both on the border and through diplomatic channels.

The Soviet Union completely agrees with the assertion in the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China that hostile elements may take advantage of the incident to "drive a wedge in Sino-Soviet relations." As such, we believe that it is not proper to use the materials from those individuals who "had crossed the border into Soviet territory and then returned to China" for unknown reasons. The statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China also quoted reports by people who had returned to China from the Soviet Union, making certain assertions about the incident as if the Soviet Union had encouraged illegal border crossings and as if the wire fence along the Soviet order had been opened at several locations to provide "broad assistance with entry into Soviet territory" for the border crossers.

As a matter of fact, there is no barrier, literally, on the Sino-Soviet border. At certain locations, there is nothing but barbed wire to prevent cattle from trespassing. It has of course not been removed by Soviet border guards. Out of humanitarian concern, local Soviet authorities made arrangements for the border crossers—with sick persons and women and children among them—so that they could survive the bad weather (rainy, with the temperature at five degrees Celsius). Food and drinks were also provided. Obviously, Soviet personnel could not let these people starve to death. They should not be blamed for what they have done.

The statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China also mentions a Major General Ma-er-guo-fu [sic], who is believed to have personally received border crossers. Apparently, the man referred to is actually major general Iskhakov Marghub, who used to work for the Chinese authorities. Iskhakov Marghub came to the Soviet Union in 1961 in a private capacity with the approval of the Chinese authorities and currently resides in Alma-Ata [Almaty]. He holds no official position at present. Investigations have confirmed that Iskhakov has remained in Alma-Ata and therefore is not the person "receiving" the border crossers.

For the sake of the friendship and unity between China and the Soviet Union, the relevant Soviet authorities have offered explanations to the citizens of the People's Republic of China who crossed the border, telling them that what they have done is wrong and trying to persuade them to return to the territory of the People's Republic of China. However, these measures have proved futile. The flow of people across the border is increasing. The Soviet Union will continue to do everything possible to persuade the border crossers to return to the People's Republic of China. Moreover, if the Chinese friends are willing, the Soviet side will arrange for representatives of the People's Republic of China to meet with the border crossers so that work can be done. We will provide all assistance for this work.

The Soviet Government hopes that the Chinese Government will also take action to stop the residents of the People's Republic of China from disrupting the Soviet-China border and to restore normalcy to the border.

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